

THE PROBLEM WITH VATICAN II

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



Michael Baker

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Ad Majoriam Dei Gloriam



Our Lady of Perpetual Succour

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

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

THE PROBLEM WITH VATICAN II

Michael Baker

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

This publication is a work of the website superflumina.org

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

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

This book consists of a series of essays published over the years 2005-2019 on the website superflumina.org addressing the incoherence with Catholic principle of various teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the consequences, flowing from such failure, in the teachings and conduct of popes, cardinals and bishops.

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

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

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

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

Michael Baker

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

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH VATICAN II

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

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

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

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

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

But the approach he took limited the scope for criticism—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Council Fathers often conducted themselves like squabbling children rather than adults. Neither John XXIII nor Paul VI, even when present at one or other of the Council’s sessions, appeared to exercise the discipline that his position demanded. Dr

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

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

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

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

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

Dr McInerny treats the frequent disorders of the Council dismissively:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Despite the fact that the focus of his book is Vatican II Dr McNerny spends a great deal of time on the dissent to Pope Paul's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. "It is clear," he says, "that 1968 marked the beginning of dissent in the Church. It would be impossible to find at any earlier time a claim that theologians had the professional task of appraising and assessing magisterial teachings of accepting or rejecting them. Now it was as if, when the Pope spoke, the theologians first scrutinized what he had said to see whether it was acceptable to them or not. This was utterly new, and it did not begin with Vatican II, but with *Humanae Vitae*."

He is wrong. The revolution of the theologians against the Church's magisterium *did begin* with Vatican II. Indeed, in *Dignitatis Humanae* it achieved a victory never

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

afterwards replicated, even with *Humanae Vitae*. For *Dignitatis Humanae* marked the triumph of the thinking of dissident theologians—the chief of them, the American Jesuit *peritus*, John Courtney Murray—over the Church’s Magisterial teaching. This triumph provided, at the doctrinal level, the precedent for the rebellion that was precipitated with *Humanae Vitae* and has continued ever since.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“to assist him in determining the subject matter of the Council... Twelve days after... Cardinal Tardini invited the Sacred Congregations of the Roman Curia to make a comprehensive study of all matters under their authority, and to offer specific proposals on matters which they felt could usefully be presented to the future preparatory commissions. Three weeks later [Cardinal Tardini] sent out 2,593 copies

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

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

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

of a letter to as many prelates around the world, informing them that Pope John XXIII desired their assistance in drawing up topics for discussion at the Council..."¹⁸

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹ *Adv. haer.* III, 24, 1.

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

²¹ The relevant principle is the Principle of Indeterminacy—that which can be many from itself is not one of the many. Leo XIII illustrates it in his Apostolic Letter, *Apostolicae Curiae* (13.9.1896), 'On the invalidity of Anglican ordinations': "[T]he *matter* of [the sacrament of Order] is by itself the indeterminate part which becomes determinate through the *form*... [T]he *matter* is the imposition of hands. This by itself does not signify anything definite, being used equally for the conferring of certain orders and administering Confirmation... [T]he *form* [of words uttered must] signify... the order of the priesthood." [nn. 24, 25] (*my emphases*). The Pope can summon the bishops of the world for any number of purposes as, for instance, Pope John Paul summoned them in 1985 to attend the Synod that marked the Council's 20th anniversary.

bishops. The *end* comes first; the *means* to the end, the council, is determined by it: *finality determines formality*. Pope Pius IX in his address opening the (first) Vatican Council in 1869 included the following criteria among the issues which might precipitate the calling of an ecumenical council—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁴ Even the best, and most faithful, of Catholic thinkers are influenced by the pervasive evils of modern philosophy. Part of its defective thinking is called *Nominalism* according to which there are no such realities as the natures of things, just *names* which, by convention, men give to blocks of reality that resemble each other. The obverse of this intellectual vice is that a man is free to give to some thing whatever name he chooses, whereupon the thing assumes the reality to which the name corresponds. Of such, we suggest, is the label “ecumenical” applied to the Second Vatican Council. The Popes, the bishops, the theologians, have all labelled it “ecumenical”; *therefore*, following this reasoning, *it must be ecumenical!* But whether it was, in truth, ecumenical is determined not by what men chose to call it, but by reality; for it is reality, not men’s opinion, which is the measure of truth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the wisdom (reason's right application) stored in the Church's archives. He will move the Church's ministers to apply these means if we pray diligently.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁷ While the Church has, in *Pastor Aeternus* (1870), spelt out the circumstances in which a pope is infallible, she has not as yet made the same determination in respect of a council.

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

APPENDIX

The Twenty Ecumenical Councils Prior to Vatican II

1. Council of Nicaea (325) repudiated Arianism and adopted the Nicene Creed; fixed the date of Easter; recognized the primacy of the sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch and granted to the See of Jerusalem a position of honour.
2. Council of Constantinople (381) repudiated Arianism and Macedonianism; revised the Nicene Creed in regard to the Holy Spirit by adding *qui simul adoratur*.
3. Council of Ephesus (431) defined the true personal unity of Christ; proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the Theotokos (The Mother of God); repudiated Nestorianism; and repudiated Pelagianism.
4. Council of Chalcedon (451) defined the two natures of Christ against Eutyches and excommunicated him; deposed Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria; and elevated the bishoprics of Constantinople and Jerusalem to the status of patriarchates.
5. Second Council of Constantinople (553) repudiated certain propositions known as 'The Three Chapters' as Nestorian; condemned Origen of Alexandria, and certain writings of others; confirmed the first four Councils of the Church.
6. Third Council of Constantinople (680-681) defined the two wills of Christ as two distinct principles of operation, thus repudiating Monothelitism.
7. Second Council of Nicaea (787) restored the veneration of icons (condemned at the iconoclast *Council of Hieria*) and repudiated iconoclasm.
8. Fourth Council of Constantinople (869-870) condemned the acts of a Council convoked by the Patriarch Photios of Constantinople against the Pope; deposed Photius as usurper and reinstated his predecessor, Ignatius. [The Photian schism triumphed in the Greek Church, however, and no further Councils were held in the East.]
9. Lateran Council (1123) abolished the right of lay princes to investiture of the Church's bishops to benefices; dealt with Church discipline; and recovery of the Holy Land.
10. Second Lateran Council (1139) reaffirmed the determinations of the Lateran Council; addressed clerical discipline (including dress and marriage).
11. Third Lateran Council (1179) restricted papal election to cardinals; condemned simony; introduced minimum ages for ordination (thirty for bishops); condemned the Albigensians and Waldensians.
12. Fourth Lateran Council (1215) defined transubstantiation; addressed papal primacy and clerical discipline.
13. First Council of Lyon (1245) deposed the Emperor Frederick II; introduced a levy to support the Holy Land; directed a new Crusade against the Saracens and Mongols under King Louis IX of France (St Louis) to the Holy Land.

14. Second Council of Lyon (1274) confirmed the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit—adding the word *filioque* to the Creed; approved the Franciscan and Dominican Orders; established the procedures for the conclave to elect the Pope.
15. Council of Vienne (1311-1312) addressed the errors of the Knights Templar, the Fraticelli, and others; addressed the reformation of the clergy;
16. Council of Constance (1414-1418) met to resolve the Great Western Schism. It did not become ecumenical until its confirmation by Gregory XI who endorsed only its last four sessions. It condemned the errors of Hus and Wycliffe.
17. Council of Florence [of Basel, Ferrara and Florence] (1431-1445) addressed church reform and reunion with the East. The Pope confirmed only its first 25 sessions.
18. Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1514) addressed church discipline.
19. Council of Trent (1545-1563) addressed church reform and repudiated Protestantism; redefined the role and the canon of Sacred Scripture and confirmed the seven sacraments; strengthened clerical discipline and education.
20. Vatican Council (1869-70) defined the primacy of the pope and the circumstances in which he spoke infallibly; repudiated rationalism, materialism and atheism; addressed the question of revelation and the interpretation of sacred scripture and the relationship of faith and reason.

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

²⁹ Orange in what is now France.

'RELIGIOUS LIBERTY' & THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

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

St Vincent of Lerins³⁰

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

American theologian, Fr John C. Ford S.J.³¹

The most celebrated speech on the subject of religious liberty was delivered by the Belgian bishop of Bruges, Bishop Emile de Smedt, on 19th November 1963 in the course of the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council when, on behalf of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, he presented to the Council Fathers Chapter V of the draft schema *On Ecumenism*. The speech is set out in full in the Appendix to this paper. The reader should study it before considering the criticisms offered below. We have drawn on *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*³², the fine analysis of the late Michael Davies.

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

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

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

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

³⁰ *Commonitoria*, 23, 28; trans. by W A Jurgens in his *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Volume Three, Collegeville, Minnesota, (The Liturgical Press,) 1979, p. 265.

³¹ Quoted by Paul Blanshard in *Paul Blanshard on Vatican II*, Boston, 1967, p. 88; reproduced by Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, Collegeville, Minnesota (The Liturgical Press), 1979, at p. 210.

³² The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992

“We, truly mindful of Our Apostolic duty, and especially solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls divinely entrusted to Us, and about the good of human society itself, have decided to lift our voice again. And so all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned in this letter, by Our Apostolic authority We reject, proscribe and condemn; and We wish and command that they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned by all the sons of the Catholic Church.”³³

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

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

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

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

Twenty four years after Pius IX’s formal condemnation of religious liberty, in his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888) Pope Leo XIII set out in detail the reasons behind it.³⁴

3. Fast forward 100 years to 29th June 1998: contemporaneously with the promulgation of *Ad tuendam fidem* (Pope John Paul’s *motu proprio* enlarging the content and sanctions in the *Code of Canon Law* and in the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*) the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, under the presidency of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, provided a *Doctrinal Commentary* on the concluding formula of the new *Professio Fidei*, the oath required of any person appointed to an office in the Church. Among the issues requiring full and irrevocable assent—an assent based on faith in

³³ *Quanta Cura*, n. 6

³⁴ These are reproduced in the chapter entitled *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae* below.

the Holy Spirit's assistance to the Magisterium and on the Catholic doctrine of the infallibility of the Magisterium [n. 8]—the *Congregation* listed “each and every thing definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.” [n. 6]

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

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

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

In the Walter M. Abbott English edition of the Documents of the Second Vatican Council³⁵ the *peritus* primarily responsible for its content, the American Jesuit, John Courtney Murray, provided a commentary on *Dignitatis Humanae* in the course of which he said this:

“In no other conciliar document is it so explicitly stated that the intention of the Council is to ‘develop’ Catholic doctrine... In regard to the right of man to religious freedom, even *Pacem in terris* is unclear and ambiguous. What precisely does religious freedom mean? Does it find place among the inalienable rights of man? These are the questions to which for the first time, the Church gives an unmistakably clear and entirely unambiguous answer. The Council brings forth out of the treasury of truth a doctrine that is at once new and also in harmony with traditional teaching.”³⁶

This paragraph isolates the issues well—

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

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5. Let us now look at Bishop de Smedt's Speech on behalf of the Secretariat, in the drafting of which Fr Murray played a large hand, and see what there is of truth in it.

³⁵ *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor, London, 1966.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 677, footnote.

Omitting persiflage, its argument (if such it may be termed) may be reduced to the following fourteen propositions.

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

6. We will address each proposition in turn.

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

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

Nowhere does the Secretariat consider the essence of human liberty, or make an attempt to distinguish it into its various subcategories to uncover the reality (or realities) the expression 'religious liberty' comprehends, as Leo XIII had in *Libertas*

praestantissimum (20th June 1888). The Secretariat makes passing, and selective, reference to this encyclical but is silent about Leo's analyses which had, of course, confirmed Pius IX's condemnation of the concept whose validity the Secretariat was now asserting.

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

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

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

We will return to this claim shortly.

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

Protestantism's signal characteristic, as English historian Sir Maurice Powicke remarked in 1941, is the assertion of the supremacy of conscience.³⁷ Here the Secretariat adopts the Protestant principle.³⁸ The dictate imposed by conscience is *eo ipso* something subjective. Now rights do not follow *subjective* inclinations—whether or not these are in accordance with the rule of morals—but *objective* reality. The comment of American theologian, Msgr John A Ryan, is to the point:

"The fact that an individual may in good faith think that his false religion is true gives no more right to propagate it than the sincerity of the alien anarchist entitles him to advocate his abominable political theories in the United States, or the perverted ethical notions of the dealer in obscene literature confers upon him the right to corrupt the morals of a community."³⁹

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

Here something remarkable is essayed in Catholic thinking: individual conscience is made determinative of objective reality. "The absolute demands of God's rights" require a man to embrace the religion which God founded and established, the Catholic religion.⁴⁰ That teaching was now, so the authors of the speech said, to be ignored in favour of the demands of individual conscience for, as they assured the Council Fathers, "the man who sincerely obeys his conscience intends to obey God

³⁷ "The claim of conscience in the end took the place of Rome." Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, London, 1941.

³⁸ It is a principle to which the Council Fathers were to give qualified support. 'Supremacy of conscience' has bedevilled the Catholic Church ever since.

³⁹ *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, 1940, pp. 317-8; quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴⁰ Cf. Leo XIII in *Libertas praestantissimum* (On Human Liberty) 20.6.1888, n. 19 et seq.; cf. also the same Pope's *Immortale Dei* (On the Christian Constitution of States) 1.11.1885.

Himself...” Fifty years on we, who must daily endure reports of the murderous conduct of Muslim extremists, each “sincerely obey[ing] his conscience”, can have little patience with the stupidity of this claim.

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

The constant teaching of the Catholic Church is that man’s supreme and ultimate end, union with God, can be achieved only through faith in Jesus Christ and adherence to the teachings and practice of His Church.⁴¹ Only in so far as the expression ‘religious liberty’ is confined to the freedom to embrace *the one true faith*, then, is this proposition true.

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

This provision is self contradictory because the common good, by its very nature, precludes the notion of ‘religious liberty’.⁴² The Secretariat felt itself constrained by this limiting principle because it purported to rely on John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in terris* which, so frequently does the Pope refer to that reality, might be called ‘the encyclical of the common good’. Inevitably, in their subsequent adoption of the alleged principle of ‘religious liberty’, the Council Fathers abandoned the need to comply with the common good in favour of what is no more than its material foundation, ‘the preservation of public order’ [Cf. *Dignitatis Humanae*, nn. 2, 4 and 8].

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

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

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

⁴¹ That is, in the ordinary course of things. Almighty God is not constrained by His own laws. He may bring to heaven those who have not heard of His Son but who have yet believed in God as their Judge, and who have acted in charity or in perfect contrition for their sins. [Michael Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, revised and edited by Fr P. Joseph, London (St Austin Press), 2001, p. 288.]

⁴² This is explained in the paper *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae—Error Masquerading As Right*, below under the sub-headings *A Problem of Expression* and *The Absence of Argumentation*.

with their blood.’ [*Libertas praestantissimum*: Acta Leonis XIII, VIII, 1888, pp. 237-238; EE 3.]⁴³”

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

The Secretariat’s subsequent assertion [“To this right corresponds the duty incumbent upon other men and the public authority to recognise etc...”] relies on a provision which appears later in the encyclical where Pope John confirmed the Church’s teaching that not only are rights and duties correlative but there is a reciprocity of rights and duties between men.⁴⁴ But this latter provision was premised (in the immediately preceding paragraph) on the existence of “the natural rights with which we have been dealing...”⁴⁵ It cannot be used to buttress the rights gratuitously asserted by the Secretariat. That its endeavours to do so are fraudulent is clear from the following two paragraphs towards the close of *Pacem in terris*:

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

“In such relations let the faithful be careful always to be consistent in their actions so that they may never come to any compromise in matters of religion and morals. At the same time, however, let them be—and show themselves to be—animated by a spirit of understanding and

⁴³ “In hominis iuribus hoc quoque numerandum est, ut et Deum, ad rectam conscientiae suae normam, venerari possit, et religionem privatim publice profiteri. Etenim, quemadmodum praeclare docet Lactantius, ‘hac conditione gignimur, ut generanti nos Deo iusta et debita obsequia praebeamus, hunc solum noverimus, hunc sequamur. Hoc vinculo pietatis obstricti Deo et religati sumus, unde ipsa religio nomen accepit’. [*Divinae Institutiones*, 1. IV, c. 28, 2: Patrologia Latina 6, 535.] Qua de eadem re Decessor Noster imm. mem. Leo XIII haec asseverat: ‘Haec quidem vera, haec digna filiis Dei libertas, quae humanae dignitatem personae honestissime tuetur, est omni vi iniuriaque maior: eademque Ecclesiae semper optata ac praecipue cara. Huius generis libertatem sibi constanter vindicare Apostoli, sanxere scriptis Apologetae, Martyres ingenti numero sanguine suo consecraverunt’. [*Libertas praestantissimum*: Acta Leonis XIII, VIII, 1888, pp. 237-238; EE 3.]”

⁴⁴ Quibus probatis, consequens est etiam, ut in hominum consortione unius hominis naturali cuidam iuri officium aliorum hominum respondeat: officium videlicet ius illud agnoscendi et colendi. Nam quodvis praecipuum hominis ius vim auctoritatemque suam a naturali lege repetit, quae illud tribuit, et conveniens iniungit officium. Qui igitur, dum iura sua vindicant, officia sua vel omnino obliviscuntur, vel aequo minus praestant, iidem sunt cum iis veluti comparandi, qui altera manu aedem exstruunt, altera evertunt.

⁴⁵ Quae hactenus commemoravimus iura, a natura profecta...

detachment, and disposed to work loyally in the pursuit of objectives which are of their nature good, or conducive to good."⁴⁶

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

"The schema smacks of naturalism. It does not speak of the relationship between man and God... We are wrong to seek a new doctrine in *Pacem in terris*, which is being poorly interpreted."⁴⁷

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

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

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

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

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

The saintly Pope's condemnation was not confined to an attempt to subvert the Church to the demands of a particular ideology. It condemned all assertions that the Church had no entitlement to involvement in the operations of the state. The Catholic Church was established by God Who also created society, the ground of every state.⁴⁸ There could, then, be no more fitting influence upon the workings of a state than God's Church. The evils, *religious liberty* and *separation of Church and state*, are related: once accept one of them and you are bound to endorse the other.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ These two paragraphs bear the marginal numbers 184 and 185 in the *Australian Catholic Truth Society* edition of the English version of the encyclical. In the last paragraph (italicised here) the Pope is quoting his own words from the earlier encyclical *Mater et Magistra*.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., at p. 134.

⁴⁸ The Catholic Church is the only church that has that right: every other is but a human creation.

⁴⁹ As occurred once the doctrine of 'religious liberty' was adopted by the Church's bishops. The removal of the Church's influence over various states secured through *concordats* followed quickly.

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

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

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

This claim, emulating the misplaced irenicism in certain remarks of Pope John XXIII in his *Opening Speech* to the Council Fathers, contains the seeds of a denial of the effects of Original Sin. The claim is fatuous as the recent past history (the Nazi regime in Germany; the Communist regime in Russia) showed to anyone of common sense. Subsequent history has only confirmed its folly.⁵⁰

L. *Pius XI fought for religious liberty not only of the Catholic faithful but of all mankind.* The claim is false. It evidences a deliberate obtuseness, if not downright dishonesty, in respect of the teaching of Pius XI in three encyclicals. We deal with each in turn.

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

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

⁵⁰ As to the naivety generally of Pope John's *Opening Address* see the paper *Failure of the Executive Power* below.

attacked a regime *which itself had urged 'religious freedom'*. In its very essence *Non abbiamo bisogno* contradicted the Secretariat's thesis.⁵¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵¹ That ‘religious liberty’ is a Masonic concept is amply demonstrated by Pope Leo XIII in *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), nn. 16, 21. Cf. also the author's *Life Under The Bane of Subjectivism* Part III, in particular nn. 31 et seq., at http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/life_under_the_bane_conflated.pdf

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

Radio Message of 1st June 1941

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

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

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

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

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

Radio Message of 24th December 1942

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

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

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

Ci Riesce—6th December 1953:

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

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

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

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

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

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

render the adjective 'religious' inclusive of every vague human inclination. That interpretation obliterates the distinction between *tolerating* religious error and *endorsing* the error.

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

Perhaps the simplest response to this *cri de coeur* was provided by G. K. Chesterton —
“What is needed is not a Church that moves with the world, but a Church that will move the world.”⁵²

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7. One must understand the Secretariat's thesis in the light of the subjectivist impulse. Once a subjectivist seizes upon an idea and elevates it to the status of a certain truth he sees in the sources he quotes only a meaning which accords with that idea. He is incapable of viewing reality other than through the rose coloured glasses of his preconception.⁵³

8. The pre-eminent problem with the term 'religious liberty' is ambivalence. It can mean any one of a number of things *or all of them* — the freedom to believe in the one religion founded by Almighty God (the Catholic principle) the freedom to believe in any religion at all (the Masonic principle); or (inevitably) the freedom *to believe in no religion* (the atheistic principle). This ambivalence is sufficient to alert any objective student to the perils attendant upon the use of the expression as a claim of right. The Secretariat sought to confine the meaning it wished to apply to the term, but in vain; for it embraced — and it invited the Council Fathers to embrace — the Masonic principle *that one is free to believe in any religion at all*.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the disclaimers subsequently made in *Dignitatis Humanae* the term 'religious liberty' is universally understood to permit the freedom to embrace any religion, *or no religion*, precisely the peril Leo XIII had identified eighty years earlier.⁵⁵

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

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

⁵² The author has not found the original of this quotation but renders it from speech reported in Joseph Pearce, *Old Thunder, A Life of Hilaire Belloc*, San Francisco (Ignatius Press), 2002, p. 82.

⁵³ As to subjectivism's cause and development, see *Life Under The Bane Of Subjectivism*, I, n. 5; II, nn. 9-28; III, nn. 29, 42 et seq. http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/life_under_the_bane_conflated.pdf

⁵⁴ It is difficult for the objective observer not to regard the Secretariat as having been infiltrated, in some measure, by Freemasons.

⁵⁵ *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), n. 32. “To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism however it may differ from it in name...”

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX

Relatio (introduction) to the Chapter of *De Oecumenismo* on Religious Liberty of
Bishop Emile de Smedt, 19th November 1963⁵⁶

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

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

⁵⁶ Reproduced from Appendix IV of Michael Davies’ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*. The emphases appear in the document reproduced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I

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

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

II

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

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

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

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

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

III

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Because of sufferings of this kind, with what sadness are We affected, and how deeply We are grieved, when We behold that in some territories religious liberty, together with the other principal rights of man, is suppressed by the principles and arts of those who do not tolerate opinions different from theirs on politics, on races of men, or on religion of any kind. We are sorrowed also by the many injuries which are done to those who would like to profess their religion honestly and freely."

IV

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

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

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

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

In this way, there has arisen in two areas a distinction which no one has explained more clearly than Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in terris*: 1. A clearer distinction between false *philosophical teachings* and the *endeavours and institutions* which these ideologies give rise to or nourish. While on the one hand the ideologies are always to be condemned, on the other hand the economic, social and civil institutions which have arisen therefrom can contain something that is good and worthy of approval. 2. A clearer distinction between *errors* and the person who *errs* in good faith. While on the one hand errors must always be rejected, on the other hand the man in error "does not cease to be endowed with human nature, nor does he ever lose his dignity as a person, due consideration of which must always be maintained" (ibid. pp. 299-300).

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

V

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

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

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

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

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

These freedoms can be tolerated (cf. *Ibid.*, p. 174; *Libertas praestantissimum*, ASS 20, 1887, pp. 609-610). And yet they were to be *tolerated* only. The reason was evident. For at that time in Europe, the regimes which proclaimed the modern freedoms, religious liberty among them, consciously drew their inspirations from the laicist ideology. There was danger, therefore—and Leo XIII sensed this—that the civil and

political institutions of this kind of republic, since they were of laicist orientation, would lead to such abuses that they would necessarily do violence to the dignity and true liberty of the human person. In accordance with the law of continuity, what was dear to Leo XIII is always dear to the Church—the safeguarding of the human person.

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

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

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

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

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

Deeply sharing the pastoral solicitude of his predecessor, Pius XII developed further and expanded his doctrine (law of progress). One thing he kept before his mind, the human person, created by God, redeemed by Christ, yet placed in stringent circumstances and surrounded on all sides by dangers.

In this context of doctrine and pastoral solicitude (law of continuity) must we read the text which in this matter is supreme. Enumerating "the fundamental rights of the person" which must be recognised and respected in every well-ordered society, he repeats the doctrine of Pius XI and vests it with new authority, affirming "the right to

the private and public worship of God, including religious *actio caritativa*" (*Nuntius radiophonicus* 24 Dec. 1942, AAS 35, 1943, p. 19).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We hope that it will be possible to complete the discussion and the approbation of this very brief, but very important, decree before the end of this second session. How

fruitful our work would appear to the world if the Conciliar Fathers, with the voice of Peter's successor, could announce this liberating doctrine on religious liberty!

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

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

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

Matt. 13: 24 et seq.⁵⁷

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

“This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious liberty.”⁵⁸

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

- In matters religious a man may not be compelled to act otherwise than in accordance with his beliefs. [n. 2]⁵⁹
- The exercise of religion consists in the acts whereby a man directs his course to God. [n. 3]
- Religious bodies have the right not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith... [n. 4]

The claim presented an immediate problem.

A Problem of Interpretation

In the first place, “liberty” names two realities, 1) natural liberty, and 2) moral liberty. The first is the fountainhead from which all other liberties flow. The second is the liberty proper to man as a creature ruled by reason and confers on him the dignity that “he is in the hand of his counsel”⁶⁰ and has power over his actions. “[T]he manner in which such dignity is exercised,” as Pope Leo XIII says, “is of the greatest moment inasmuch as on the use that is made of [it] the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend.” The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council did not specify to which of these two they were referring. In some places they seem to refer to the first; in others to the second. And at times they run the two together as in n. 11 —

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

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

⁵⁷ Cf. footnote 17 to the original Latin text of the Declaration. The reader should note that there are a number of different sets of footnotes in the English editions which include interpolations and excisions from the authorised text.

⁵⁸ *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 2: *Haec Vaticana Synodus declarat personam humanam ius habere ad libertatem religiosam.*

⁵⁹ This right is expressed twice, once positively, once negatively, but the two are reduced to the same.

⁶⁰ *Ecclesiasticus* 15: 14

Next, they did not specify what they meant by the noun “religion” (*religio*) or its cognate adjective “religious” (*religiosus*).⁶¹ That this left the scope of the asserted right obscure may be seen from an analysis of each of the three subsidiary claims instanced above.

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

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

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

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

The exercise of religion consists in the acts whereby a man directs his course to God.⁶² “The exercise of religion” (*exercitium religionis*) here must refer to the attitude of the believing individual. The same questions recur. Did the Council Fathers mean belief in the One True God, or in one or other of the various alternatives suggested? Save for belief in God according to the revelation He has made to mankind each of these alternatives resolves into what the respective believer conceives to be God. In the absence of a clear explanation the Fathers’ subsequent claim that “no merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind” does not logically follow. It may be true; but it may equally be false. For if the ‘God’ to which they refer is only a product of the believer’s conception a “merely human power” might be entirely justified “in commanding or prohibiting acts of this kind”.

Religious bodies have the right not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith...⁶³

What did they mean by “religious bodies”? Any society whose members claim to follow some religion or other? Experience demonstrates that the term “religious” can be claimed for activities that range from the honest to the fraudulent; from the benevolent to the plainly murderous. In the absence of essential distinctions, it does not follow necessarily that a “religious body” should not be hindered in its public teaching or witness to its faith.

⁶¹ As they comment on the exercise of this right they introduce qualifications but this seems to the reader to have been done *ad hoc*, as if to deal with objections that might arise, rather than to modify its force.

⁶² *Exercitium namque religionis ex ipsa eius indole, consistit imprimis in actibus internis voluntariis et liberis, quibus homo sese ad Deum directe ordinat.*

⁶³ *Communitates religiosae ius etiam habent, ne impediuntur in sua fide ore et scripto publice docenda atque testanda.*

How, then, is one to interpret *Dignitatis Humanae*? It is all very well to make claims of principle but they must be consistent with reason. “Why,” the reader might ask, “did the Council Fathers not commence their considerations with a study of the nature of the religious belief of their own, the members of the Catholic Church?” They were, after all, *Catholic* bishops not experts in other forms of belief. Moreover, their experience as bishops, if not their knowledge of theology, ought to have told them that Catholic belief is radically different from every other.⁶⁴ Yet here they were speaking as if Catholic faith and every other form of faith were but species of a common genus. Two evils follow on this failure of precision: 1) they reduce the Catholic faith to the level of a merely human thing; and (worse) 2) they elevate merely human categories of faith to the level of the Catholic.

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

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

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

“[T]he hour is coming—in fact it is already here—when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants...”⁶⁵

“It is my Father’s will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life...”⁶⁶

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

“In many and various ways in times past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets. But now, in our day, He has spoken to us through His Son.”⁶⁷

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

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

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

“Do not harness yourself together with unbelievers. Virtue is no companion for crime. Light and darkness have nothing in common. Christ is not the ally of Belial, nor has a believer anything to share with the unbeliever. The temple of God has nothing in common with idols, and that is what we are, the temple of the living God”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ It may be argued against the thesis advanced here that it was not so much the bishops as their *periti* who were responsible for the document. This cannot seriously be advanced. The relevant distinction is that between principal and instrument. The *peritus* may advise; but it is the principal, the bishop, who is responsible when he adopts his advice.

⁶⁵ *John* 4: 23

⁶⁶ *John* 6: 40

⁶⁷ *Hebrews* 1: 1

⁶⁸ *2 Corinthians* 6: 14-16

A Problem of Expression

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

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

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

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

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

“What is more, the doctrine [i.e., ‘of religious liberty’] has its roots in divine revelation”⁶⁹.

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

The impression is reinforced via the adverb *praesertim* in another passage:

“Especially is religious freedom in society consonant with the freedom of the act of Christian faith.”⁷⁰

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

There are similar passages of concern in n. 12.

⁶⁹ Immo haec doctrina de libertate radices habet in divina revelatione, quapropter eo magis a Christianis sancte servanda est.

⁷⁰ Praesertim libertas religiosa in societate plene est cum libertate actus fidei christianae congrua.

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

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

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

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

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

“Religious freedom... has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society.

Therefore it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies towards the true religion and towards the one Church of Christ.”

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

There is more. The Declaration uses as the criterion for determining the limits of this religious freedom the preservation of public order.⁷¹ It does not appeal to the standard the Catholic Church has insisted upon for at least eight centuries, the common good.⁷² Public order has to do with social justice. It is a precondition, a necessary foundation, for the common good which is a much greater reality. The common good is all encompassing: it respects the fundamental health of society, not only justice but charity, which as St Thomas says, is the mother of all virtues.⁷³

“[S]ocial charity and social justice ... both serve the common good... Social justice demands that each individual in the social organism give to others their due in the interest of the common good; and social charity lays obligations of brotherly love on

⁷¹ In nn. 2, 4 & 8.

⁷² St Thomas teaches: “He that seeks the good of the many seeks in consequence his own good for two reasons. First, because the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom. Hence Valerius Maximus says of the ancient Romans *they would rather be poor in a rich empire than rich in a poor empire*. Secondly, because, since man is a part of the home and state, he must needs consider what is good for him by being prudent about the good of the many. For the good disposition of parts depends on their relation to the whole; thus Augustine says (*Confessions*, iii) *that part is unseemly that does not harmonise with the whole*.” *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 1, 47, a. 10, ad. 2

⁷³ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 23, a. 8, r. 3

all in society with a view to promoting the common good by mutual service and cooperation.⁷⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why should this be a desideratum? Does not the Church look to another and higher standard than any posited in the secular world? With its use of verbs in the indicative rather than the subjunctive mood, the Declaration reads in places like a statute promulgated by an institution of world government.⁷⁵ The interlarding of Catholic principle seems largely irrelevant.

The Problem of Contradiction

In footnote 2 to the Latin authorised edition of the Declaration, the Fathers cite Leo XIII in *Libertas praestantissimum* (20th June 1888) as authority for the proposition —

"the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself."

⁷⁴ Bishop Aloisius J Muench, *Social Charity*; in *Summa Theologica, First Complete American Edition*, Benziger Brothers, Inc., Vol. III, 3326 at 3327.

⁷⁵ For instance, in n. 6: "Therefore government *is* to assume the safeguard of religious freedom..." "Government *is* also to help create conditions..." In n. 7: "In the use of all freedoms the moral principle of personal and social responsibility *is* to be observed..." ; Men *are* to deal with their fellows in justice and civility." "[G]overnment *is not* to act in an arbitrary fashion..." "Its action *is* to be controlled by juridical norms..."

But the great reforming Pope said no such thing, whether in that encyclical or anywhere else in his writings.⁷⁶ And this brings us to the most significant problem with the Declaration.

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

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

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

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

Leo here expounds⁷⁷ the truth proclaimed by his predecessor, Pius IX, in the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, on 8th December, 1864, in condemning (in n. 15) the following proposition:

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

⁷⁶ The dishonesty implicit in the misuse of footnotes occurs all too frequently in modern Church documents. English layman Michael Davies notes that not one of the authorities cited by the Council Fathers in support of this proposition in the footnote in fact does so: cf. his *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 211-2. [Note that Davies refers to Leo’s encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* throughout as *Libertas humana*.]

⁷⁷ But not for the first time: he had earlier, in *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), endorsed Pius IX’s condemnation.

Pius IX had formally endorsed the teaching of *his* predecessor, Gregory XVI (1831-1846), in the encyclical *Mirari vos* (August 15th, 1832) condemning certain propositions of the French priest, Félicité de Lamennais⁷⁸.

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

“We, truly mindful of Our Apostolic duty, and especially solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls divinely entrusted to Us, and about the good of human society itself, have decided to lift our voice again. And so all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned in this letter, by Our Apostolic authority We reject, proscribe and condemn; and We wish and command that they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned by all the sons of the Catholic Church.”⁷⁹

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

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

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

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

“The Catholic Church... is a perfect society and has as its foundation the truth of Faith infallibly revealed by God. For this reason, that which is opposed to this truth is, necessarily, in error, and the same rights which are objectively recognized for truth cannot be afforded to error. In this manner, liberty of thought and liberty of conscience have their essential limits in the truthfulness of God in Revelation.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Félicité de Lamennais (1782-1854) was a French priest whose views were most influential in his day. At first those views were orthodox, but later he lapsed into heresy. He eventually abandoned his priesthood and, finally, all adherence to Christianity.

⁷⁹ *Quanta Cura*, n. 6

⁸⁰ Discourse *Ecco che gia un anno* of 6th October 1946, quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

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

Liberty—St Thomas and Pope Leo XIII

Before a man can speak of “religious liberty” he must first understand the nature of liberty. *Liberty* (or freedom), as we noted above, names two things: 1) natural liberty; and 2) moral liberty. *Natural liberty* is simply the name we give to the faculty and exercise of free will. Free will, as St Thomas says, is a power of man, the intellectual being, and is indifferent to good or evil as an object of choice.⁸¹ *Right* (in Latin *ius*) signifies the object of justice⁸². Right is either natural or positive,⁸³ but the human will cannot posit as just something contrary to natural justice⁸⁴—as e.g., no legislator can make it lawful for a woman to abort her child. The assertion of *liberty*, as, for instance in the slogan of the French Revolutionaries, is the assertion not of the exercise of the power of free will, but the unspoken assertion of a *right* in man to exercise it. As in all slogans there is as much of error as of truth, for it makes no distinction between *natural liberty* and *moral liberty*. The bland assertion of “liberty” without distinction, then, is not only misleading, but dangerously so.

In *Libertas praestantissimum* Leo XIII lays out the reasoning behind his predecessor’s condemnation in *Quanta Cura*. We set out his argument here with the paragraph numbers added to assist the reader’s analysis.

- a. When the Pope speaks of “liberty” in this encyclical he is referring not to natural liberty but to moral liberty. [n. 3]
- b. The end or object both of the rational will and of its liberty is that good only which is in conformity with reason. [n. 5]
- c. The choice of something contrary to reason is an abuse of human liberty and, indeed, corrupts its very essence, which is why Our Lord says “anyone who commits sin is a slave”. The man who sins loses his liberty in the very act. [n. 6]
- d. Man’s liberty, in order that it be liberty, must be conformed to law, i.e., the ordinance of intellect, whether in natural or posited law. “Nothing more foolish can be uttered or conceived than the notion that, because man is free by nature, he is therefore exempt from law.” [n. 7]
- e. The natural law is nothing but the eternal law of God (commanding good and forbidding evil) implanted in man. [n. 8]

⁸¹ *Summa Theologiae*, I, 88, 2

⁸² *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 1

⁸³ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 2

⁸⁴ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 57, 3, ad 2. When the Council Fathers’ claimed in *Dignitatis Humanae*—“the human person has a right to religious liberty”—they were either asserting a *positive* right or declaring a *natural* right. But if there was no such natural right, no assertion by the Council Fathers of the existence of a positive right could render it so.

- f. Therefore, human liberty demands conformity of a man with the eternal law; and it is precisely in this conformity that man's liberty is protected and perfected. [n. 11]
- g. If something be suggested as liberty from which conformity with law is removed, this is not freedom at all, but a most foolish licence. [n. 14]
- h. Of all the duties that man has to fulfil, the chief and the holiest is that which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety in that religion which God enjoins upon us, which men can easily recognise by certain notes whereby Divine Providence has willed it should be distinguished. [n. 20]
- i. Hence, when a so-called liberty of worship, that is "religious liberty", [n. 19] is offered to man, the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil. This is no liberty at all but its degradation and involves the abject submission of the soul to sin. [n. 20]

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

The Influence of de Lamennais and Freemasonry

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

In a second volume of his *Essai*, published in 1820, he advanced a philosophical position designed to combat that of René Descartes.

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

De Lamennais taught *inter alia* that—

- the individual citizen should have a freedom of conscience which is full, universal, without restriction or privilege;
- governments only exist to maintain unity and harmony among the citizens of the State;
- the only power the State should have is the power to repress crimes which would attack the liberties of its citizens;

- the only prohibited religious (or anti-religious) propaganda should be that calculated to incite violence or sedition;
- error should be accorded the unlimited power of diffusing itself;
- there should be absolute separation between Church and State;
- all concordats between the nations and the Holy See should be abolished.

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

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

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

“[Certain Catholics] behave as though at the time of former Councils everything was a full triumph for the Christian idea and life and for a proper religious liberty... Today... the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations... [Fallacious teaching, opinions and dangerous concepts] are so obviously in contrast with the right norm of honesty and have produced such lethal fruits that by now it would seem that men of themselves are inclined to condemn them... They are ever more deeply convinced of the paramount dignity of the human person and of his perfections, as well as of the duties which that implies...”⁸⁵

In his encyclical, *Humanum Genus* (20th April, 1884)⁸⁶, Pope Leo XIII set out the program that Freemasonry seeks to bring about in the world. Many of the heads of that program are reflected in the teachings of de Lamennais including the following:

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

⁸⁵ Abbott at p. 712. We have remarked elsewhere on the naivety of the late Pope’s views; cf. *Failure of the Executive Power* below.

⁸⁶ In sections 12 to 23.

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

The Absence of Argumentation

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

The Church had spoken previously on the critical distinction between natural liberty and moral liberty. Why did the Council Fathers choose not to repeat it? There can be only one answer. It would have impeded, not assisted, their novel claim. In every report of the many preparatory debates among the Council Fathers⁸⁷ it is clear that the Church's earlier teachings were in issue. They were debated *in extenso*. Why, then, is there nothing in the document stating them? Or addressing them? Or at least attempting to resolve them? Nowhere in any of the footnotes to the authorised Latin edition of the document will a reader find any mention of the *Syllabus of Errors* attached to Pius IX's Bull, *Quanta Cura*; or of proposition n. 15 which it condemned; or of Leo XIII's studied endorsement of that condemnation in *Libertas praestantissimum*. A cynic would be justified in opining that these matters were not mentioned because the Fathers had no answer to them; or no answer which would bear the light of critical analysis.

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

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

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

⁸⁷ As, e.g., the commentators' papers in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966; Ralph M Wiltgen in *The Rhine flows into the Tiber; A History of Vatican II*, New York, 1967 (my copy a reprint by TAN Books, 1985); and Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit.

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

Any reference to the common good demands that due order be observed with regard to man and society. In respect of matters religious this entails that respect be given not to any religion at all but to that religion established by Almighty God because the common good cannot ultimately be secured save by the religion established by the Founder of society. Now, as St Thomas says "the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom"⁸⁸; but religious liberty *simpliciter* is against the common good of any of these. Hence it is impossible that it be for the good of the individual; for which reason any appeal to the common good would have betrayed the Council Fathers' claim that *the human person has a right to religious liberty*.

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

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

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

⁸⁸ For convenience we repeat footnote 75 quoting St Thomas. "He that seeks the good of the many, seeks in consequence his own good for two reasons. First, because the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state or kingdom. Hence Valerius Maximus says of the ancient Romans *they would rather be poor in a rich empire than rich in a poor empire*. Secondly, because, since man is a part of the home and state, he must needs consider what is good for him by being prudent about the good of the many. For the good disposition of parts depends on their relation to the whole; and thus Augustine says (*Confessions*, iii) *that part is unseemly that does not harmonise with the whole*.

THE DEVASTATION THAT FOLLOWED

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

Monsignor John A. Ryan⁸⁹

The Problem of Subjectivism

One of the deficiencies of reasoning in the modern world manifests itself in the insouciance with which a man arguing will pass from the real to the mental order, or vice versa, quite unconscious of the fact that in doing so he is breaching the rules of logic. Another mark of this lack of rigour is the reasoner's unwillingness to define his terms. Blandly he will arrive at conclusions which the premises, properly defined, could not possibly justify. Both failures derive from the intellectual evil of the age, subjectivism.⁹⁰

Truth (logical truth) is the identity of what is asserted with what is, i.e., reality. For the subjectivist, however, truth is the identity between what is asserted and what he thinks is real. The realist⁹¹ begins with the facts and follows where they lead: thus Aristotle; thus St Thomas Aquinas. The subjectivist begins with an idea, something he thinks to be true then plumbs the facts to find some that will support it: thus Karl Marx⁹²; thus Charles Darwin; thus Félicité de Lamennais. The realist arrives at the truth; the subjectivist arrives where he started, surrounded by his own illusions. Subjectivism has two evil effects: it overlooks real distinctions; it discovers distinctions which do not really exist.

These evils are manifest in *Dignitatis Humanae*. The Council Fathers did not, as we have demonstrated in the first paper in this series, begin their consideration of the subjects of liberty and religion by analysing those realities and teasing out from them the truth of their interchange. They began with an idea then endeavoured to justify it. They refused to define their terms. They asserted as a reality something (freedom from coercion) which has no existence distinct from natural freedom.⁹³ They failed to acknowledge the impossibility of a natural freedom unfettered by a corresponding moral freedom.

⁸⁹ *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, 1940, pp. 317-8; quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Minnesota, 1992, p. 51. John A Ryan Ph.D., STD (1869-1945), was Professor of Political Science and of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America from 1916 until 1939.

⁹⁰ On the nature and causes of the intellectual evil of subjectivism see *The Loss of Metaphysics* below at pp. 148 et seq.

⁹¹ Or, more properly, "the objectivist".

⁹² Cf. Paul Johnson's study "Karl Marx: Howling Gigantic Curses", in his *Intellectuals*, London (George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited), 1988.

⁹³ It is simply natural freedom under a different conception.

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

"It was, of course, the most controversial document of the whole Council, largely because it raised... the issue of the development of doctrine... The course of the development between the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) still remains to be explained by theologians. But the Council formally sanctioned the validity of the development itself..."⁹⁴

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

The Evolution of Dignitatis Humanae

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

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

With the third text the Declaration assumed independent status..."⁹⁵

In his book *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, English layman Michael Davies gives a more comprehensive account of the Declaration's progress from the rejection of the original (and orthodox) text of the Preparatory Commission through to its promulgation in heterodox form more than three years later.⁹⁶

Objective and Subjective Moral Responsibility

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

The Consequences of Dignitatis Humanae for the Church and the World

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

⁹⁴ In his introduction to *Dignitatis Humanae* in the Walter M. Abbott edition of the *Documents of Vatican II*, London, 1966, pp. 672-4.

⁹⁵ *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966, p. 672.

⁹⁶ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 106 et seq.

Error works harm, and the greater the error the greater the harm. But the harm is increased if the body that makes it is of greater dignity, for the body lends its authority to the error: three reasons, therefore, why the evils worked in the Church and in the world as a result of the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae* are proportionally great.

We list here the chief of those evils. There are, doubtless, others equally pernicious.

1. The Promotion of Atheism

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

“To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God.”⁹⁷

He confirmed this teaching in *Libertas praestantissimum*:

“Civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. Justice therefore forbids, as reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges...”⁹⁸

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

“Every sin consists formally in aversion from God... Hence the more a sin severs man from God, the graver it is. Now man is more than ever separated from God by unbelief, because he has not even true knowledge of God: and by false knowledge of God, man does not approach Him, but is severed from Him... Therefore it is clear that the sin of unbelief is greater than any sin that occurs in the perversion of morals.”⁹⁹

2. The Abandonment of the Church’s Rightful Position as regards the State

No politician on earth opens his mouth to speak of religion today but he must first deny the entitlement of the Church to involve itself in the affairs of the State. The

⁹⁷ *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), n. 32

⁹⁸ *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888), n. 21

⁹⁹ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 10, a. 3

mantra repeated without exception is “separation of Church from State”. This is not Catholic teaching but, as has been shown, Masonic doctrine given free scope by the conduct of the Council Fathers in *Dignitatis Humanae*. As Leo XIII remarked:

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

“Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty... because the marks of truth are, as it were, engraved upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect if they would provide—as they should—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community. For public authority exists for the welfare of those whom it governs; and, although its proximate end is to lead men to the prosperity found in this life, yet in so doing, it ought not to diminish, but rather to increase, man’s capability of attaining to the supreme good in which his everlasting happiness consists, which never can be attained if religion be disregarded.”¹⁰⁰

Driven by the ethos in *Dignitatis Humanae* the Popes and bishops of the Church have abandoned her rightful claim to establishment in nation states. They have taken active steps in those countries where the Church has enjoyed her proper position to destroy the *status quo* by eviscerating the relevant concordats or treaties.¹⁰¹ What is the result? Countries formerly determinately Catholic have permitted the entry of Protestant sects and pagan religions with detrimental effects to the common good and individual good of their citizens. Countries determinately Catholic have fallen under the sway of ideology. The Church formerly had concordats with Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The reader may recall the contempt with which Pope John Paul II was treated by the ruling juntas in these countries on his visit in March, 1983. Why should anyone be surprised? The Church’s leaders having abandoned her claim to precedence in the world, why wonder when secular leaders, their heads filled with ideology, choose to do the same with the Pope?¹⁰²

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

¹⁰⁰ *Libertas praestantissimum*, n. 21

¹⁰¹ Cf. Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 250-1, on the initiative of the Holy See in seeking the suppression of the Christian constitution of Columbia, and the admission by the Apostolic Nuncio to Switzerland in March 1976 that the same had occurred in respect of the Christian constitution of the Swiss Catholic canton, the Valais.

¹⁰² In a sense Pope John Paul II brought the obloquy on himself with his support of *Dignitatis Humanae*.

"[B]efore Vatican II, Jehovah's Witnesses were not allowed to proselytise. Now Maltese who have apostasized in such countries as Australia and the U.S.A. are coming back in large numbers and systematically visiting every home on the island, persuading thousands of Catholics to join this pernicious sect."¹⁰³

3. The Concession that Error has Rights¹⁰⁴

The Catholic Church exists to lead men to God. She is the force for good in a world of evil. She possesses all truth. Yet in the last forty years an independent observer would be hard pressed to accept this. Popes and bishops seem to be afflicted by a sort of terror at defending the truth. Since the death of Pius XII, for example, the world has been increasingly afflicted by ideologies such as Secular Humanism, Feminism, Darwinianism and other of the ideological fruits of subjectivism encapsulated under the heading "political correctness". Yet where is the encyclical that has addressed any of them? Or addressed the philosophical defect (subjectivism) which has given them rise?

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

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

"[W]hen once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority. But, from what has been said, it is clear that all this is in contradiction to reason. To refuse any bond of union between man and civil society on the one hand, and God the Creator and... supreme Law-giver on the other, is plainly repugnant to the nature, not only of

¹⁰³ *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 51-2.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Davies rightly rejects John Courtney Murray's contention that the phrase 'error has no rights' is meaningless: "The formula is just a convenient way of stating that persons holding erroneous beliefs do not possess a natural right to propagate them." Cf. *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 52.

man, but of all created things; for, of necessity, all effects must in some proper way be connected with their cause; and it belongs to the perfection of every nature to contain itself within that sphere and grade which the order of nature has assigned to it, namely, that the lower should be subject and obedient to the higher.

“Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honour and dishonour differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and, a code of morality being provided which can have little or no power to restrain or quieten the unruly propensities of man, a way is naturally opened to universal corruption...”¹⁰⁵

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

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

The loss by the world of the influence proper to Catholicism has brought in its train a loss of the sense of the evil present in all merely human religions. Psalm 95 v. 5 in the Vulgate makes the issue plain: *omnes dii gentium daemonia*—“all the gods of the nations are devils”.

The orthodox Catholic possessed of the truth understands, for example, how Mohammedanism inverts and mocks the religion established by Almighty God. He is a God of love; He created us in love. That the Muslims’ ‘Allah’, in contrast, is seen as a ruthless tyrant demanding obedience is reflected in the violence that characterises proselytism in that religion and the violence offered any ‘believer’ who defects from it. Almighty God creates each man free to accept His revelation or reject it: with its resort to fear and intimidation, Mohammedanism effectively denies human freedom. Almighty God created man in his own image and likeness—*male and female He created them*—establishing man and woman in a proportional equality. For the Muslim, however, a woman is virtually a slave.¹⁰⁶ Almighty God moves a man to martyrdom in imitation of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who gave up His life for all mankind. The Muslim regards as a ‘martyr’ one who slaughters his fellow man in the name of ‘Allah’.

¹⁰⁵ *Libertas praestantissimum*, nn. 15, 16

¹⁰⁶ This may be regarded as an excessive judgement. The writer has certainly known Muslim women who were treated with dignity by their fathers, husbands and brothers. But this does not accord with the ‘normal’ attitude of Muslims towards women.

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

5. The Indulgence of Ideologies

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

The worst of these, Communism, is in decline save in China and North Korea. There were members of the Vatican Curia notorious for their sympathy with Communist ideology.¹⁰⁷ The collapse of the Russian Communist state resulted from the felicitous interaction of a profound level of information provided to the West by Oleg Georgievski, a disaffected member of Russia's Security Service, a man-made disaster (the explosion of the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl) and the personal charisma of Pope John Paul II. But the late Pope might have achieved much more and achieved it more quickly had he condemned publicly the evil which grounds both Communism and Western materialism. Had he done so, moreover, the reaction of the subjugated peoples to the overthrow of the Communist tyranny might have been better focussed. Instead, they turned to that other atheistic pathway, the materialism promoted by Western culture. The equation is a simple one—atheism = materialism: materialism = atheism.

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

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

¹⁰⁷ Such as Cardinals Casaroli and Silvestrini whose apparent Masonic affiliations disposed them to indulge the parallel errors found in Communism. Casaroli oversaw the betrayal of Cardinal Mindszenty, the saintly Metropolitan of Hungary.

teachings. All that is needed to demonstrate the folly of Darwinianism is to plumb those teachings.

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

"Possessed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they burn like him with a deadly and implacable hatred of Jesus Christ and of His work; and they endeavour by every means to overthrow and fetter it. This war is at present waged more than elsewhere in Italy, in which the Catholic religion has taken deeper root; and above all in Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and the See of the Universal Pastor and Teacher of the Church."¹⁰⁸

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

Leo XIII exposed the evils of Freemasonry in a number of encyclicals.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the most significant remark he made for the purposes of identifying the influence of the cult on the actions of its members was this —

"[N]o matter how great may be men's cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. *A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit.* [Matt. 7: 18] Now, the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savour."¹¹⁰

The bitter fruit that have resulted from *Dignitatis Humanae* is testimony to the extent of the influence of Freemasonry among the Council's bishops.

¹⁰⁸ Encyclical on Freemasonry in Italy, *Dall'alto dell' apostolico seggio*, October 15, 1890.

¹⁰⁹ Summarised by the author, with appropriate references, in three articles on the superflumina website: 'Leo XIII and Freemasonry'; 'Freemasonry, the Church's Law up to Vatican II and Beyond'; and 'Freemasons in the Church'.

¹¹⁰ *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), n. 10.

6. The Attempt to Modify the Church's teaching on Salvation

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

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

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

"[C]urial officials and some bishops around the world wondered whether John Paul was not veering dangerously close to the heresy of syncretism with one of the most innovative initiatives of his pontificate—a World Day of Prayer for Peace, involving non-Catholic and non-Christian religious leaders from all over the globe..."¹¹¹

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

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

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

"What you set forth here are the rights and fundamental duties of man; his dignity; his liberty, and above all his religious liberty. We feel that you are the interpreters of what is most exalted in human wisdom, we would almost say its sacred character."¹¹²

The Pope did not wait for the document's formal promulgation to assert the licitness of "religious liberty". The draft, in its fourth redaction, had passed with 1,997 bishops

¹¹¹ *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II, 1920-2005*, HarperCollins, London, revised edition, 2005, p. 511,

¹¹² "Ce que vous proclamez ici, ce sont les droits et les devoirs fondamentaux de l'homme, sa dignité, sa liberté, et avant tout la liberté religieuse. Nous sentons que vous êtes les interprètes de ce qu'il y a de plus haut dans la sagesse humaine, Nous dirions presque: son caractère sacré."

in favour and 224 against it just thirteen days prior, at the conclusion of a debate described by the Italian *peritus*, Msgr Pietro Pavan, as “perhaps the most violent ever to have taken place in the *aula*”.¹¹³ If the Council Fathers had not, the Pope had certainly made up *his* mind on the subject.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains these provisions—

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

...

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

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

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

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

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

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

“[S]ince God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is utterly ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to [His laws] or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only

¹¹³ Cf. Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 153.

to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who in their government of the State take no account of these laws abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end, and from what nature itself prescribes... [And] assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfil, that, without doubt, is the chief and the holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This follows of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and, having come forth from Him, must return to Him... And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practice that one which God enjoins, and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes, whereby Divine Providence has willed that it should be distinguished, because, in a matter of such moment, the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error...¹¹⁴

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

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

8. The Attempt to Compromise the Church's Theology

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

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

¹¹⁴ Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (June 20, 1888), nn. 18, 20.

corpus known as the 'Theology of the Body' whose title, a contradiction in terms, is as bemusing as its content.

The Pope and bishops countenance, if they do not completely accept, that the Church's theology must somehow conform itself with yet another ideology, Darwinian evolutionary theory. This is grounded in nothing more than an idea about reality. Modern science accepts Darwinian ideology not because it is an inevitable conclusion of scientific research, but because science has, since before the time of Newton, committed itself to materialism's philosophic view. Were it to abandon that foolish philosophy in favour of the Church's metaphysics, there would be no need to rely upon Darwin's facile explanations for the natural world.

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The Resolution of the Conflict

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

Hasten the day!

*Magna est veritas et praevalabit!*¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ "The truth is great and it will prevail." From the apocryphal *III Esdras* 4: 41

AMERICANISM & AMERICA'S PROBLEMS WITH RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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

Matthew 15 : 14

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

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

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

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

"[Its] underlying principle... is that, in order more easily to attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age, relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions... not only in regard to ways of living, but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. [Many] contend that it would be opportune, to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of less importance and tone down the meaning the Church has always attached to them... The Vatican Council [1870] says concerning this point: '[T]he doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed as if it was a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity... Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, nor is that meaning ever to be departed from under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension... "We cannot consider as altogether blameless the silence which purposely leads to the omission or neglect of some of the principles of Christian doctrine, for all the principles come from the same Author and Master, 'the Only Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father.' - John i, 18..."

That the rot of Americanism was well entrenched among the American clergy even as the Leo XIII addressed it is manifest in the denial by the Archbishop of Baltimore,

James Cardinal Gibbons—to whom the encyclical was addressed—and other American prelates that American Catholics held any of these positions. There was no fire that had caused the smoke the pontiff had detected.

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

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

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

- to defend the Church's insistence, against the claims of the US Constitution and its component States, that it is the right and duty of parents not of the state, to educate their children, a right which includes the concomitant right that they not to be deprived by state exaction of the means to fulfil their duty ;
- to point out that any rights the state may have in education are limited to the setting of standards consistent with the natural moral law and oversight as to compliance with those standards ;
- to insist that the state exists to support, not to derogate from, these parental rights ;
- to point up the systematic injustice of a system of state patronage founded on the erroneous assertion of state rights over education ;
- to fulfil their duty of proclaiming that the Church Christ instituted is the one true religion on earth and that all other religions are but human inventions ;
- to insist, against the claim in the American Constitution, that no reality corresponds to the alleged right to 'religious liberty', that is, a liberty to adopt any but the one true religion established by Almighty God on earth, the

Catholic faith ;

- to insist, moreover, that the American Constitution is defective in its exclusion of the assistance that the Catholic Church, the Church that God has established on earth, could give it—

and failed to support these various issues with appropriate rational arguments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"to deny that there ever existed a heresy called Americanism, at least on the shores of America itself. The usual line is that it was only ever a living idea in France, and even there, it meant little more than the liberalism of advocating the absolute separation of Church and State..." (*Resurgent in the Midst of Chaos*, Kettering Ohio, Angelico Press, 2014, ch. 4)

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

There is hardly an American Catholic commentator, bishop, priest, theologian or layman—even the best of them—capable of recognising the problem besetting his faith.¹¹⁶ In 2014 Anthony Esolen published a study of the social teachings of Pope Leo XIII (*Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching*, Sophia Press, Manchester, New Hampshire) analysing the content of various of the great Pope's encyclicals. He did not neglect his most important encyclical, that on the nature of human liberty, *Libertas praestantissimum* (20th June 1888), or those addressing the evils of Freemasonry. Nor did he ignore *Longinqua Oceani* (6th January 1895) or *Testem Benevolentiae* (22nd January 1899). But he offered no comment on the influence on American Catholics of Masonic protocols or on the mindset that immersion in them has wrought.

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

As far as the internet goes, *The Catholic Thing* website might better be termed *The Americanist Thing*, and *First Things* website termed *First Americanist Things*. Hardly a month goes by where some commentator on one or other does not appeal to the 'religious liberty' guaranteed in the Constitution as the way to relieve the Catholic faithful of the burden of Masonic impositions which daily grow heavier. Contributor George Weigel is on record as saying that John Courtney Murray S J, signal promoter of Americanism, should be raised to the ranks of the blessed.¹¹⁷ Principals of the

¹¹⁶ Dr John Rao of The Roman Forum is an exception. See his *Americanism And The Collapse Of The Church In The United States* at <http://jcrao.freeshell.org/Americanism.html>. Dr Peter Kwasniewski is another.

¹¹⁷ Misreading Murray, Yet Again', *First Things*, 9th October, 2013

various American Catholic blogsites, even as they give judgement on every passing issue, are similarly bereft of insight.

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In his address to the Houston Baptists Archbishop Chaput condemned John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Democrat candidate for the US Presidency, for an address he gave to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960 in which he endorsed the Masonic doctrine of separation of Church and State.¹¹⁸ Archbishop Chaput's condemnation was, with respect, fifty years too late. The vast majority of the bishops of the Catholic Church had long since adopted this Masonic protocol as a consequence of the acceptance of the Americanist position at the Second Vatican Council, manifest most clearly in the final document, *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty.

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

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

That he may understand the Americanist character of Fr Courtney Murray and his influence, and that of his sponsors at the Council, we refer the reader to the studied analysis of the late Michael Davies in Chapter XII of his *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* (The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992). Canadian commentator, John R T Lamont, has recently argued, and persuasively, that the mentality promoted by the Council Fathers owed more to the influence of French thinkers such as Jacques Maritain than to the Americans. (*Catholic Teaching on Religion and the State*¹¹⁹) It is, with respect, neither here nor there for the evils adopted by the

¹¹⁸ See the author's consideration of certain of those evils in the next chapter.

¹¹⁹ https://www.academia.edu/877072/Catholic_teaching_on_religion_and_the_state . A slightly

Americans, entrenched in the US Constitution and endorsed time out of number by America's Catholic episcopacy owe their provenance ultimately to the Masonic French and to the shades of Rousseau and Voltaire.

Thomas Storck has remarked appositely —

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

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

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

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

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

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AMERICANISM, THE US SUPREME COURT & THE CATHOLIC EPISCOPACY

The problem with American Catholics is *Americanism*, their acceptance of the Masonic doctrines of separation of Church and state and religious freedom. The heresy derives from the errors of the French Revolution. It manifests itself among the American Catholic faithful in conscious or unconscious subjection of the Church's teachings to the demands of the world's greatest nation state. It afflicts bishops, clergy, religious and laity alike.

On 16th June 2015, American layman Hadley Arkes penned a piece for *The Catholic Thing* website which reflected, quite unconsciously, his infection with the virus. The piece, anticipating a decision of the United States Supreme Court, was entitled 'Waiting for the Decision on Marriage'. The issue before the Court involved, as a peripheral matter, whether homosexuals in one of the American States, had 'married' in accordance with a 'law' of that State. Contrary to the implication in the title and in its text, the status of marriage does not depend on the fiat of any judge or on the legislation of any state. The essence or *quiddity* of marriage (what it is) is not something within the power of man. True, whether one marries or not is a matter of will, but the institution itself is of nature. It was established by nature's Author.

Men and women marry pursuant to a law implanted in their being for the good of mankind. Long before governments or 'marriage laws' had existed men and women married: they will do so long after government has fallen into disarray, a reality which may be with us shortly. Nor does a 'marriage celebrant' marry a man and a woman no matter what any law may say to the contrary. They marry each other. Not even a priest in a Catholic wedding marries the couple: they confer the sacrament on each other. The state's authority is limited to ensuring marriage is conducted in an orderly fashion, that its demands as regards consent, competence and lack of impediment are met, and its celebration is recorded. This, which accords with right reason, has ever been the Catholic Church's teaching.

The business was, all of it, quite clear until 500 years ago when the English king, Henry VIII, decided to arrogate to himself authority over marriage by forcing parliament to declare he had never been married to his lawful wife, Queen Catherine, so he could 'marry' his mistress. The virus of thinking that men can subvert, or control the natural order by human legislation has been with us ever since the Protestant disruption.

Americanism manifests itself in systematic silence on moral and social questions by the Church's bishops. For the best part of 100 years they have assisted the subjugation of natural (and Catholic) principle to secular demands and aided the flourishing of these errors in the secular world. They have conceded the Protestant, and secular, view that marriage is of human will, and so tacitly endorsed the falsity imposed by the English

tyrant. Had they insisted—and persisted in insisting—that marriage is of nature and not of human will the folly of 'homosexual marriage' might never have arisen.

Conjugal union is of the essence of marriage: there can be no conjugal union between homosexuals. Any 'marriage' between them, then, is a paper marriage only no matter what any 'law' or a judge may say to the contrary.

The evil is not confined to America. Most Catholic bishops throughout the world are infected for it was transmitted to them via the Second Vatican Council's embrace of Masonic doctrines and the Vatican's enthusiastic enforcement of their poison. The effects, the permission of secular access to the Church's sacred precincts, reduction of the sacred liturgy to a species of entertainment, denial of proper philosophical formation to seminarians and the removal of the *raison d'être* for personal religious dedication, are manifest in the harm wrought among two generations of the Catholic faithful. Not the least of the harm worked is the brainwashing that followed; the categorical denial by a majority of bishops and clergy that the Council was responsible for these evils.

One of the evils deserves special mention, the compromise over the involvement of Catholic lawyers in the evil of divorce. On 28th January 2002 Pope John Paul II addressed the Roman Rota on the question of marriage and its indissolubility.¹²⁰ He laid down the conditions subject to which a lawyer might involve himself in divorce without incurring the sin of proximate material cooperation, namely, *when in the intention of the client, it is not directed to the break-up of the marriage, but to the securing of other legitimate effects that can only be obtained through such a judicial process in the established order*. He was repeating here, as was his duty as Sovereign Pontiff, the Church's perennial teaching.

Bishops around the world went out of their way to 'white-ant' the Pope's condemnation to justify continued cooperation of Catholic lawyers in divorce. In Australia, the conspiracy to diminish the force of the Pope's words was particularly offensive.¹²¹ Some time after the resulting coup this commentator suggested to one of Australia's regional bishops that he had full power in his own diocese and was free to eschew this rejection of the Pope's teaching. The bishop promised to consider the proposal. His response, two days later, was a vehement refusal. Reading between the lines, he had been given his riding instructions by the other bishops of the Australian Episcopal Conference.

The scandal of the involvement of Catholic lawyers in divorce continues unabated around the world. If the bishops of the Catholic Church find their arguments against

¹²⁰ It is reproduced here—http://www.superflumina.org/pope_on_divorce.html

¹²¹ Cf. Commentary on Press Release by the President of Sydney's St Thomas More Society at http://www.superflumina.org/commentary_on_divorce.html

'gay marriage' falling on deaf ears, they have no one to blame but themselves. Having contributed to the denigration of marriage by tacitly conceding it may be modified by human will, they have aided that deafness.

II

On March 1st, 2010, Charles J Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, addressed the members of Houston Baptist University on the subject of the vocation of Christians in American public life. His speech is set out in the Appendix. Archbishop Chaput used the occasion to place his Protestant audience within the Catholic understanding of salvation. He had some refreshing things to say on the order of the obligations to God and to one's country, and, perhaps unwittingly, he cast light on the provenance of an evil that has afflicted the Church for fifty years.

In the course of his address Archbishop Chaput endorsed the verdict of English historian, Paul Johnson, that America was "born Protestant".

"Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity."

This analysis was, with respect, a little simplistic. As well as Protestant believers among America's Founding Fathers, there were many Freemasons. While the latter accepted that they must endorse the Protestant cast in the country's founding documents, they were at pains to interpret them in accordance with Masonic principle when they could. With the passage of time the Protestant influence has diminished and the Masonic has increased.

Protestantism is Catholicism eviscerated of those elements of Catholic belief its adherents refuse to accept. The Protestant does not believe as the Catholic believes, conforming himself *to* God's authority *on* God's authority in one faith.¹²² The Protestant believes on his own authority, in any of a multitude of faiths. The one faith, the Catholic faith, is from God, a gift [*Ephesians* 2: 8].¹²³ Protestant faith in all its varieties comes from man; any passing influence may shake it. The lives of many celebrated men show this passage: they begin as Protestants, often leading practitioners of their sect, only to lose faith in its tenets as the cares of life multiply and they end as atheists. The order follows logically: the Protestant rejects what God has revealed; implicitly he rejects God's authority, and he rejects God. Explicit atheism is but a step away. In Protestantism lies the root of modern atheism.

On such a shifting foundation it was inevitable that some Protestants would follow the path of Michael Servetus and reject even the most fundamental elements of God's

¹²² Submitting his conscience to the teaching of God's Church because he knows he can trust its authority.

¹²³ There is an apodictic proof of this in a phenomenon of which Catholics—and only Catholics—are aware. When a man loses the Catholic faith he loses all memory of the thing he once possessed. If the Catholic faith was of man and not of God, one who had forsaken it would yet remember the reality he had forsaken.

revelation; deny that in the One God there are three Persons; deny that Christ is God. It is a short step from this (Unitarianism) to reducing the understanding of God to whatever the heretic chooses to make it. This is Freemasonry.

Archbishop Chaput's Address is a timely reminder of the extent to which the Masonic *zeitgeist* has flourished since the end of World War II not only in America but throughout the world. This malign influence has affected the thinking even of members of the Catholic Church. It affected that of the American bishops. It affected John Fitzgerald Kennedy who, in September 1960, in the course of an address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, thought he must appeal to it to secure the support of the American people.¹²⁴ It affected the ruminations of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and marked certain of their determinations, as Freemasons afterwards frankly acknowledged.

Kennedy's appeal to the Masonic principle of Separation of Church and State had followed its adoption thirteen years earlier by the United States Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education*. Archbishop Chaput refers with approval to the answer the American bishops gave to the Court's ruling in *Everson*, their pastoral letter of November 1948 entitled *The Christian in Action*. The letter contained, indeed, some admirable passages. But it failed to address at least three injustices, each of them rooted in Masonic principle. A copy of the pastoral letter is set out in the Appendix.

Freemasonry, since it is of the Devil, attacks human society where it is most vulnerable, in the family. It aims its blows at parents and at their children, made in the image and likeness of God, to disturb the pursuance of their eternal destiny at the very earliest opportunity. The moral right and corresponding duty to educate children is vested by nature in their parents not in the state. This right and duty belongs to them from the very nature of the family. No state *no matter what its constitution or laws may say* has the right to deprive parents of either right or duty by purporting to shoulder them itself. It is a corollary of this principle that no state has the right to exact from parents the moneys they require to educate their children, even under colour of the return of those moneys by way of 'grant' or 'subsidy' or similar device. Freemasonry, aided and abetted by Protestantism, had by 1948 ensured that its protocol that the state *does have* rights in child education was well established in the laws and usages of the American states.

A serious departure from justice such as this in any country ought to be among the principal considerations in any pastoral letter of the country's bishops dealing with Christian activity. The American bishops did not deal with it in *The Christian in Action*, nor did they set forth the evils that would flow from its continuance. To the contrary they seemed to accept the *status quo*. They complained of the Masonic push to refuse funding to Catholic schools. "[Secularism] has banned religion from tax-supported education..." They asked for a deeper appreciation of the contribution Catholic

¹²⁴ "I believe," he said, "in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute."

institutions of higher learning were making to a Christian reconstruction of society and urged “a more generous support of their work” including, it would seem, a claim on Federal and State authorities for more generous *financial* support. It does not seem to have occurred to them that while they were objecting to *one* application of Masonic principle they were busily endorsing *another*.

The second injustice arose from the bishops’ failure to distinguish the only religion to which a man can be bound by duty to adhere, the religion established by Almighty God, the Catholic faith, from Protestantism or from any other religion for that matter. They said—

“The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government.”

In the absence of appropriate distinction, this statement was inaccurate. There are a variety of meanings that might have been accorded the word ‘religion’ and its cognate adjective, ‘religious’, in 1948. As we in the 21st century know only too well, ‘religion’ can be advanced to excuse mass murder or mass suicide. Even in the mid-20th century the word could not have been used without qualification. The cults of Unitarianism, Mormonism, and Jehovah’s Witness-ism, to name but three, could each have claimed to be classified under the heading ‘religion’, yet each was problematic, and none of their adherents would have subscribed to the American bishops’ sentiments. Even if the bishops’ claim was read as embracing only Protestantism and Catholicism, it was inaccurate.

For Protestantism is a false religion; it is redeemed only by the Catholicism which underpins it. The Protestant, the *renegade*, part of it—the rejection of what God has revealed at the instance of human opinion (of how so many different human opinions!)—is evil. Insofar as Protestantism achieved any good in American society it did so because of Catholic principle not yet abandoned. As time has gone by more and more of that underlying principle has been lost.¹²⁵ Chesterton spoke to the point when he said (of England) almost 100 years ago that it was living on its Catholic capital, and it was rapidly running out.

The third injustice arose upon the bishops’ use without distinction of the expression ‘religious freedom’. At best that expression means the freedom to exercise some sort of religion, without insisting that it be the religion founded by Almighty God. At worst it means that one is free to choose to reject any form of religion and embrace atheism. In neither case can its use be justified as indicating the existence of a right. The Church had formally declared this to be the case—

¹²⁵ The great attacks on society, divorce, contraception and abortion, have all emanated from adherents of one sect or another of Protestantism.

“[W]hen [religious] liberty... is offered to man the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable good for evil; which... is no liberty, but its degradation, and the abject submission of the soul to sin.”¹²⁶

In contrast to this statement of certain truth by the Church the American bishops said this:

“We feel with deep conviction that for the sake of both good citizenship and religion there should be a reaffirmation of our original American tradition of free cooperation between government and religious bodies—cooperation involving no special privilege to any group and no restriction on the religious liberty of any citizen.”

But ‘religious liberty’ is a *Masonic* ideal! It has been part of the Masonic program since the French Revolution. Let the reader peruse sections 12 to 23 of Leo XIII’s encyclical *Humanum Genus* (20. 4. 1884) to see that program laid out in detail.

Here was a remarkable thing: Catholic bishops sought to answer *one* element of Masonic doctrine—separation of church and state—by advancing *another*. Bemused by centuries of custom in which the dominant religious force in their country was Protestantism, the American bishops had aligned their thinking with a Protestant, instead of a Catholic, view of the issues and adopted a Protestant tolerance of Masonic principle. Seventeen years later something even more remarkable occurred. At the urging of the American Church’s *illuminati*, including one John Courtney Murray¹²⁷, almost every one of the Catholic Church’s bishops renounced the solemn teaching of their Church and embraced Masonic doctrine with their “Declaration on Religious Liberty” *Dignitatis Humanae*.

Archbishop Chaput argues that—

“[Kennedy’s] Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America’s public life and political conversation...”

Did they? Or is the fault, rather, to be laid at the feet of America’s bishops for their failure to deal with the crucial issues of justice referred to above?

A good argument can be mounted that if they had addressed them the blunder of *Dignitatis Humanae* would never have occurred.

¹²⁶ Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (On the Nature of Human Liberty), 20.6.1888, n. 20. Leo expounded here the reasons underlying the formal condemnation by his predecessor, Pius XI, of the proposition “Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion.” *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, 8th December, 1864; n. 15.

¹²⁷ In passing, it should be said that Archbishop Chaput was unwise to quote Murray in support of his argument to the Houston Baptist University. The often poetic way Murray had of expressing himself gave an impression of profundity but it masked an inability to think rigorously. One of the less happy actions of Francis Cardinal Spellman (Archbishop of New York 1939-1967) was his summoning of Murray to Rome as *peritus* during the second session of the Second Vatican Council. He ignored the fact that the Vatican had earlier ordered Murray to cease writing on religious freedom because of his heterodoxy.

APPENDIX

Part A

THE VOCATION OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Charles J. Chaput

One of the ironies in my talk tonight is this. I'm a Catholic bishop, speaking at a Baptist university in America's Protestant heartland. But I've been welcomed with more warmth and friendship than I might find at a number of Catholic venues. This is a fact worth discussing. I'll come back to it at the end of my comments. But I want to begin by thanking Drs. Sloan and Bonicelli and the leadership of Houston Baptist University for their extraordinary kindness in having me here tonight. I'm very grateful for their friendship.

I also want to thank my friend Dr. John Hittinger of the University of St. Thomas. Part of my pleasure in being here is to encourage his efforts with the John Paul II Forum on the Church in the Modern World. The Forum is hugely important – and not just for Catholics, but for the whole Christian community. I'm grateful to the leadership of the University of St. Thomas for supporting him.

I need to offer a few caveats before I turn to the substance of our discussion.

The first caveat is this: My thoughts tonight are purely my own. I don't speak for the Holy See, or the American Catholic bishops, or the Houston Catholic community. In the Catholic tradition, the local bishop is the chief preacher and teacher of the faith, and the shepherd of the local Church. Here in Houston you have an outstanding bishop – a man of great Christian faith and intellect – in Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. In all things Catholic tonight, I'm glad to defer to his leadership.

Here's my second caveat: I'm here as a Catholic Christian and an American citizen – in that order. Both of these identities are important. They don't need to conflict. They are not, however, the same thing. And they do not have the same weight. I love my country. I revere the genius of its founding documents and its public institutions. But no nation, not even the one I love, has a right to my allegiance, or my silence, in matters that belong to God or that undermine the dignity of the human persons He created.

My third caveat is this: Catholics and Protestants have different memories of American history. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote that America was “born Protestant” (1). That's clearly true. Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity. But it's also true that, while Catholics have always thrived in the United States, they lived through two centuries of discrimination, religious bigotry and occasional violence. Protestants of course will remember things quite differently. They will remember Catholic persecution of dissenters in Europe, the entanglements of the Roman Church and state power, and papal suspicion of democracy and religious liberty.

We can't erase those memories. And we cannot – nor should we try to – paper over the issues that still divide us as believers in terms of doctrine, authority and our understandings of the Church. Ecumenism based on good manners instead of truth is empty. It's also a form of lying. If we share a love of Jesus Christ and a familial bond in baptism and God's Word, then on a fundamental level, we're brothers and sisters. Members of a family owe each other more than surface courtesies. We owe each other the kind of fraternal respect that “speak[s] the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). We also urgently owe each other solidarity and support in dealing with a

culture that increasingly derides religious faith in general, and the Christian faith in particular. And that brings me to the heart of what I want to share with you.

*

Our theme tonight is the vocation of Christians in American public life. That's a pretty broad canvas. Broad enough that I wrote a book about it. Tonight I want to focus in a special way on the role of Christians in our country's civic and political life. The key to our discussion will be that word "vocation." It comes from the Latin word "vocare," which means, "to call." Christians believe that God calls each of us individually, and all of us as a believing community, to know, love and serve him in our daily lives.

But there's more. He also asks us to make disciples of all nations. That means we have a duty to preach Jesus Christ. We have a mandate to share his Gospel of truth, mercy, justice and love. These are mission words; action words. They're not optional. And they have practical consequences for the way we think, speak, make choices and live our lives, not just at home but in the public square. Real Christian faith is always personal, but it's never private. And we need to think about that simple fact in light of an anniversary.

Fifty years ago this fall, in September 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy, the Democratic candidate for president, spoke to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. He had one purpose. He needed to convince 300 uneasy Protestant ministers, and the country at large, that a Catholic like himself could serve loyally as our nation's chief executive. Kennedy convinced the country, if not the ministers, and went on to be elected. And his speech left a lasting mark on American politics. It was sincere, compelling, articulate – and wrong. Not wrong about the patriotism of Catholics, but wrong about American history and very wrong about the role of religious faith in our nation's life. And he wasn't merely "wrong." His Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America's public life and political conversation. Today, half a century later, we're paying for the damage.

Now those are strong statements. So I'll try to explain them by doing three things. First, I want to look at the problems in what Kennedy actually said. Second, I want to reflect on what a proper Christian approach to politics and public service might look like. And last, I want to examine where Kennedy's speech has led us – in other words, the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about those realities.

*

John Kennedy was a great speaker. Ted Sorensen, who helped craft the Houston speech, was a gifted writer. As a result, it's easy to speed-read Kennedy's Houston remarks as a passionate appeal for tolerance. But the text has at least two big flaws (2). The first is political and historical. The second is religious.

Early in his remarks, Kennedy said: "I believe in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute." Given the distrust historically shown to Catholics in this country, his words were shrewdly chosen. The trouble is, the Constitution doesn't say that. The Founders and Framers didn't believe that. And the history of the United States contradicts that. Unlike revolutionary leaders in Europe, the American Founders looked quite favorably on religion. Many were believers themselves. In fact, one of the main reasons for writing the First Amendment's Establishment Clause – the clause that bars any federally-endorsed Church – was that several of the Constitution's Framers wanted to protect the publicly funded Protestant Churches they already had in their own states. John Adams actually preferred a "mild and

equitable establishment of religion” and helped draft that into the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution (3).

America’s Founders encouraged mutual support between religion and government. Their reasons were practical. In their view, a republic like the United States needs a virtuous people to survive. Religious faith, rightly lived, forms virtuous people. Thus, the modern, drastic sense of the “separation of Church and state” had little force in American consciousness until Justice Hugo Black excavated it from a private letter President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptist Association (4). Justice Black then used Jefferson’s phrase in the Supreme Court’s *Everson v. Board of Education* decision in 1947.

The date of that Court decision is important, because America’s Catholic bishops wrote a wonderful pastoral letter one year later – in 1948 – called “The Christian in Action.” It’s worth reading. In that letter, the bishops did two things. They strongly endorsed American democracy and religious freedom. They also strongly challenged Justice Black’s logic in *Everson*.

The bishops wrote that “it would be an utter distortion of American history and law” to force the nation’s public institutions into an “indifference to religion and the exclusion of cooperation between religion and government.” They rejected Justice Black’s harsh new sense of the separation of Church and state as a “shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism” (5). And the bishops argued their case from the facts of American history.

The value of remembering that pastoral statement tonight is this: Kennedy referenced the 1948 bishops’ letter in his Houston comments. He wanted to prove the deep Catholic support for American democracy. And rightly so. But he neglected to mention that the same bishops, in the same letter, repudiated the new and radical kind of separation doctrine he was preaching.

The Houston remarks also created a religious problem. To his credit, Kennedy said that if his duties as President should “ever require me to violate my conscience or violate the national interest, I would resign the office.” He also warned that he would not “disavow my views or my church in order to win this election.” But in its effect, the Houston speech did exactly that. It began the project of walling religion away from the process of governance in a new and aggressive way. It also divided a person’s private beliefs from his or her public duties. And it set “the national interest” over and against “outside religious pressures or dictates.”

For his audience of Protestant ministers, Kennedy’s stress on personal conscience may have sounded familiar and reassuring. But what Kennedy actually did, according to Jesuit scholar Mark Massa, was something quite alien and new. He “secularize[d] the American presidency in order to win it.” In other words, “[P]recisely because Kennedy was not an adherent of that mainstream Protestant religiosity that had created and buttressed the ‘plausibility structures’ of [American] political culture at least since Lincoln, he had to ‘privatize’ presidential religious belief – including and especially his own – in order to win that office” (6).

In Massa’s view, the kind of secularity pushed by the Houston speech “represented a near total privatization of religious belief – so much a privatization that religious observers from both sides of the Catholic/Protestant fence commented on its remarkable atheistic implications for public life and discourse.” And the irony – again as told by Massa – is that some of the same people who worried publicly about Kennedy’s Catholic faith got a result very different from the one they expected. In effect, “the raising of the [Catholic] issue itself went a considerable way toward ‘secularizing’ the American public square by privatizing personal belief. The very effort to ‘safeguard’ the [essentially Protestant] religious aura of the presidency... contributed in significant ways to its secularization.”

Fifty years after Kennedy’s Houston speech, we have more Catholics in national public office than ever before. But I wonder if we’ve ever had fewer of them who can coherently explain how their faith informs their work, or who even feel obligated to try. The life of our country is

no more “Catholic” or “Christian” than it was 100 years ago. In fact it's arguably less so. And at least one of the reasons for it is this: Too many Catholics confuse their personal opinions with a real Christian conscience. Too many live their faith as if it were a private idiosyncrasy – the kind that they'll never allow to become a public nuisance. And too many just don't really believe. Maybe it's different in Protestant circles. But I hope you'll forgive me if I say, “I doubt it.”

*

John Kennedy didn't create the trends in American life that I've described. But at least for Catholics, his Houston speech clearly fed them. Which brings me to the second point of my talk: What would a proper Christian approach to politics look like? John Courtney Murray, the Jesuit scholar who spoke so forcefully about the dignity of American democracy and religious freedom, once wrote: “The Holy Spirit does not descend into the City of Man in the form of a dove. He comes only in the endlessly energetic spirit of justice and love that dwells in the man of the City, the layman” (7).

Here's what that means. Christianity is not mainly – or even significantly – about politics. It's about living and sharing the love of God. And Christian political engagement, when it happens, is never mainly the task of the clergy. That work belongs to lay believers who live most intensely in the world. Christian faith is not a set of ethics or doctrines. It's not a group of theories about social and economic justice. All these things have their place. All of them can be important. But a Christian life begins in a relationship with Jesus Christ; and it bears fruit in the justice, mercy and love we show to others because of that relationship.

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets” (Mt 22:37-40). That's the test of our faith, and without a passion for Jesus Christ in our hearts that reshapes our lives, Christianity is just a word game and a legend. Relationships have consequences. A married man will commit himself to certain actions and behaviors, no matter what the cost, out of the love he bears for his wife. Our relationship with God is the same. We need to live and prove our love by our actions, not just in our personal and family lives, but also in the public square. Therefore Christians individually and the Church as a believing community engage the political order as an obligation of the Word of God. Human law teaches and forms as well as regulates; and human politics is the exercise of power – which means both have moral implications that the Christian cannot ignore and still remain faithful to his vocation as a light to the world (Mt 5:14-16).

Robert Dodaro, the Augustinian priest and scholar, wrote a wonderful book a few years ago called “Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine”. In his book and elsewhere, Dodaro makes four key points about Augustine's view of Christianity and politics (8).

First, Augustine never really offers a political theory, and there's a reason. He doesn't believe human beings can know or create perfect justice in this world. Our judgment is always flawed by our sinfulness. Therefore, the right starting point for any Christian politics is humility, modesty and a very sober realism.

Second, no political order, no matter how seemingly good, can ever constitute a just society. Errors in moral judgment can't be avoided. These errors also grow exponentially in their complexity as they move from lower to higher levels of society and governance. Therefore the Christian needs to be loyal to her nation and obedient to its legitimate rulers. But he also needs to cultivate a critical vigilance about both.

Third, despite these concerns, Christians still have a duty to take part in public life according to their God-given abilities, even when their faith brings them into conflict with public

authority. We can't simply ignore or withdraw from civic affairs. The reason is simple. The classic civic virtues named by Cicero – prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance – can be renewed and elevated, to the benefit of all citizens, by the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity. Therefore, political engagement is a worthy Christian task, and public office is an honorable Christian vocation.

Fourth, in governing as best they can, while conforming their lives and their judgment to the content of the Gospel, Christian leaders in public life can accomplish real good, and they can make a difference. Their success will always be limited and mixed. It will never be ideal. But with the help of God they can improve the moral quality of society, which makes the effort invaluable.

What Augustine believes about Christian leaders, we can reasonably extend to the vocation of all Christian citizens. The skills of the Christian citizen are finally very simple: a zeal for Jesus Christ and his Church; a conscience formed in humility and rooted in Scripture and the believing community; the prudence to see which issues in public life are vital and foundational to human dignity, and which ones are not; and the courage to work for what's right. We don't cultivate these skills alone. We develop them together as Christians, in prayer, on our knees, in the presence of Jesus Christ – and also in discussions like tonight.

*

Now before ending, I want to turn briefly to the third point I mentioned earlier in my talk: the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about them. As I was preparing these comments for tonight, I listed all the urgent issues that demand our attention as believers: abortion; immigration; our obligations to the poor, the elderly and the disabled; questions of war and peace; our national confusion about sexual identity and human nature, and the attacks on marriage and family life that flow from this confusion; the growing disconnection of our science and technology from real moral reflection; the erosion of freedom of conscience in our national health-care debates; the content and quality of the schools that form our children.

The list is long. I believe abortion is the foundational human rights issue of our lifetime. We need to do everything we can to support women in their pregnancies and to end the legal killing of unborn children. We may want to remember that the Romans had a visceral hatred for Carthage not because Carthage was a commercial rival, or because its people had a different language and customs. The Romans hated Carthage above all because its people sacrificed their infants to Ba'al. For the Romans, who themselves were a hard people, that was a unique kind of wickedness and barbarism. As a nation, we might profitably ask ourselves whom and what we've really been worshipping in our 40 million "legal" abortions since 1973.

All of these issues that I've listed above divide our country and our Churches in a way Augustine would have found quite understandable. The City of God and the City of Man overlap in this world. Only God knows who finally belongs to which. But in the meantime, in seeking to live the Gospel we claim to believe, we find friends and brothers in unforeseen places, unlikely places; and when that happens, even a foreign place can seem like one's home.

The vocation of Christians in American public life does not have a Baptist or Catholic or Greek Orthodox or any other brand-specific label. John 14:6 – "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me" – which is so key to the identity of Houston Baptist University, burns just as hot in this heart, and the heart of every Catholic who truly understands his faith. Our job is to love God, preach Jesus Christ, serve and defend God's people, and sanctify the world as his agents. To do that work, we need to be one. Not "one" in pious words or good intentions, but really one, perfectly one, in mind and heart and action, as Christ intended. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "I do not pray for these only, but also those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father,

art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:20-21).

We live in a country that was once – despite its sins and flaws – deeply shaped by Christian faith. It can be so again. But we will do that together, or we won't do it at all. We need to remember the words of St. Hilary from so long ago: "Unum sunt, qui invicem sunt", they are one, who are wholly for each other (9). May God grant us the grace to love each other, support each other and live wholly for each other in Jesus Christ – so that we might work together in renewing the nation that has served human freedom so well.

(1) Paul Johnson, "An Almost-Chosen People," *First Things*, June/July 2006; adapted from his Erasmus Lecture.

(2) Full text of the Kennedy Houston speech is available online from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

(3) John Witte, Jr., "From Establishment to Freedom of Public Religion," Emory University School of Law, Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series, Research Paper No. 04-1, 2003, p. 5.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

(5) U.S. Catholic bishops, pastoral letter, "The Christian in Action," No. 11, 1948; see also Nos. 12-18; reprinted in "Pastoral Letters of the American Hierarchy, 1792-1970," Hugh J. Nolan, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 1971.

(6) Mark Massa, S.J.; quotations from Massa are from "A Catholic for President? John F. Kennedy and the 'Secular' Theology of the Houston Speech, 1960," *Journal of Church and State*, Spring 1997.

(7) John Courtney Murray, S.J., "The Role of Faith in the Renovation of the World," 1948; Murray's works are available online from the Woodstock Theological Center Library.

(8) Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.; see private correspondence with speaker, along with "Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine," Cambridge University Press, 2008 (first published in 2004), and "Ecclesia and Res Publica: How Augustinian Are Neo-Augustinian Politics?," collected in "Augustine and Post-Modern Thought: A New Alliance Against Modernity?," Peeters, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium*, 2009.

(9) Referenced in Murray, "The Construction of a Christian Culture;" essay originally delivered as three talks in 1940, available as noted above.

Part B

US Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter 1948, *The Christian In Action*

HUMAN life centres in God. The failure to centre life in God is secularism—which, as we pointed out last year, is the most deadly menace to our Christian and American way of living. We shall not successfully combat this evil merely by defining and condemning it. Constructive effort is called for to counteract this corrosive influence in every phase of life where individual attitudes are a determining factor—in the home, in the school, at work and in civil polity. For as man is, so ultimately are all the institutions of human society.

To combat secularism, the individual Christian must get the full vision of Christian truth. It is not divisible. One cannot pick and choose from it. Either it is accepted as a whole or it counts for little in real life. When the Christian does get this full vision, he becomes enthusiastic in trying to share it with the world about him. It is a wonderful vision which gives new meaning to human life and an impelling urge to selfless action.

The sorry fact is that many, very many, Christians see this vision only dimly and vaguely and miss its impact on reality. They hold themselves to be Christians and are accepted as Christians, but they have never been thrilled by the glory of the truth of Christ in action. By their apathy they actually abet those who work for destruction and chaos. They criticise and even deplore the decay of morality and the spread of corruption in public life, but they feel no obligation to do anything about it. They simply do not realize that the great wonder of Divine Love is that it brings the Divine into human life and that godliness in living is giving self to God.

The great Christian paradox is that to find, you must lose ; to get you must give. Much of the confusion and chaos about us is attributable more directly to the inaction of Christians than to the effectiveness of the feverish efforts of the destroyers. The destroyers are definitely a minority and yet the work of destruction goes on. The crisis is at hand.

Today every Christian must face the full Christian vision and with no thought of compromise must seek vigorously to live it. Every day he must ask himself : 'What am I doing . to build a Christian world ? ' No matter what his condition or state, there is much that he can do. The reconstruction must start with the individual. He must be vigorously Christian in thought and in action—in the home, in the training of his children, in his office or workshop and in his community.

Religion in the Home

In the full Christian vision, there is the Divine ideal of the home—the basic social institution. It is not enough to profess the Christian truths of the stability and sanctity of the marriage bond and to keep in mind the purposes of marriage. The Christian must make his home holy. It remained for modern history to record the first experiment in secularizing the home, an experiment which is at the root of so many of our greatest social evils. The Christian home must realize the Christian ideal. The whole atmosphere of the home must be impregnated with genuine Christian living. The domestic virtues must be practised and family prayer made a daily exercise. It is in the home that the children learn their responsibility to God and in this responsibility their duty to others. The home is the child's first school, in which he is taught to make the vision of Christian truth the inspiration of all living. We strongly commend organized effort to make the home more truly Christian.

Our Catholic Family Life Bureau plans and offers programmes which make for a veritable apostolate of the Catholic home. It is gratifying to see the use that is being made of the programmes by our Catholic lay organizations and the spread of this work in our dioceses. These activities serve as a powerful antidote to the venom of secularism and withstand its withering effect on piety and virtue in the American home. All of us are familiar with the problems which the family faces in our complex and maladjusted society. In trying to solve these problems, we must not compromise our Christian principles. The solution of these problems is only a part of the solution of the wider social problems of our day. To do their part, our homes must be thoroughly Christian and must let the glory of the full vision of Christian truth illuminate them.

Religion in Education

We know the sacrifices made by our people to educate their children in schools in which the superabundant wisdom is the Gospel of Christ. Catholic parents closely associate their schools with their Christian homes because they know that human living must centre in God. Year after year we are making wider provisions for the education of our Catholic youth.

At a time when secularism has captured the minds of very many leaders in education, it is heartening that Catholic parents are becoming more insistent in their demands for schools in which the best standards of instruction and training are integrated in the teaching of religion. It behooves us to see that we enable our schools to work out fully the Christian educational ideal. The field of higher education in particular demands a wider and more active interest. Our institutions of higher learning are the natural training grounds for Christian leadership. The ranks of Christian leadership will draw recruits largely from the undergraduate schools, but these ranks will not be filled without the Christian scholars who are formed in graduate schools.

Perhaps much of the success of the secularist is due to the fact that the number of excellent Christian scholars is inadequate for the needs of our times. We ask a deeper appreciation of the contribution our institutions of higher learning are making to a Christian reconstruction of society and we urge a more generous support of their work. For if we as Christians are to do our part in restoring order to a chaotic world, Christ must be the Master in our classrooms and lecture halls and the Director of our research projects.

Religion in Economic Life

Christian principles should be put into action in economic life. It is not enough to find fault with the way our economic system is working. Positive, constructive thought and action are needed. The secularist solutions proposed by eighteenth century individualism or twentieth-century statism issue either in perpetual conflict or deadening repression. Christian social principles, rooted in the moral law, call insistently for co-operation, not conflict ; for freedom, not repression in the development of economic activity. Co-operation must be organized—organized for the common good ; Freedom must be ordered—ordered for the common good.

Today we have labour partly organized, but chiefly for its own interests. We have capital or management organized, possibly on a larger scale, but again, chiefly for its own interests. What we urgently need, in the Christian view of social order, is the free organization of capital and labour in permanent agencies of co-operation for the common good. To ensure that this organization does not lose sight of the common good, government, as the responsible custodian of the public interest, should have a part in it. But its part should be to stimulate, to guide, to restrain ; not to dominate. This is perfectly in line with our Federal Constitution, which empowers government not only to establish justice' but also 'to promote the general welfare.'

The Constructive Catholic Programme

Catholic social philosophy has a constructive programme for this organic development of economic life. Pope Pius XI, rounding out the social principles formulated by Leo XIII, laid down the broad outlines of this programme seventeen years ago. In line with that constructive programme, we advocate freely organized co-operation between the accredited representatives of capital and labour in each industry and in the economy as a whole, under the supervision but not the control of government.

The agencies of this freely organized co-operation have been called by various names : Occupational Groups, Vocational Groups, or, more recently Industry Councils. American Catholic students of the Social Encyclicals have expressed their preference for the name Industry Councils' to designate the basic organs of a Christian and American type of economic democracy into which they would like to see our economic system progressively evolve.

This evolution can come only as the fruit of painstaking study and effort to safeguard, in justice and charity, the rightful interests of property and the rightful interests of labour in the pursuit of the dominant interest of all, which is the common good. Such a constructive

programme of social order seems to us to be the answer to the questionings of high minded leaders of industry and to the explicit proposals of sound and responsible leaders of organized labour. We bespeak for it in these critical times dispassionate consideration and calm, open discussion in an atmosphere of good-will and in a disposition to seek solutions by agreement rather than by force, whether political or economic.

We call upon men of religious faith and principle, both in management and labour, to take the lead in working out and applying gradually if need be a constructive social programme of this type. For the moral and social ideals which it would realize are their heritage.

Religion and Citizenship

The inroads of secularism in civil life are a challenge to the Christian citizen—and indeed to every citizen with definite religious convictions. The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government.

This American tradition clearly envisioned the school as the meeting place of these helpful interacting influences. The third amendment of the North-west Ordinance passed by Congress in 1787, re-enacted in 1790, and included in the Constitution of many States, enjoins: 'Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good citizenship and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall for ever be encouraged.' This is our authentic American tradition on the philosophy of education for citizenship.

In the field of law our history reveals the same fundamental connection between religion and citizenship. It is through law that government exercises control over its citizens for the common good and establishes a balance between their rights and duties. The American concept of government and law started with the recognition that man's inalienable rights—which it is the function of government to protect—derive from God, his Creator. It thus bases human law, which deals with man's rights and their correlative duties in society, on foundations that are definitely religious, on principles that emerge from the definite view of man as a creature of God. This view of man anchors human law to the natural law, which is the moral law of God made clear to us through the judgments of human reason and the dictates of conscience. The natural law, as an outstanding modern legal commentator has written, 'is binding over all the globe, in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.' Thus, human law is essentially an ordinance of reason, not merely a dictate of will on the part of the State. In our authentic American tradition, this is the accepted philosophy of law.

On this basically religious tradition concerning the preparation of the citizen through education and the direction of the citizen through law, secularism has in the past century exercised a corrosive influence. It has banned religion from tax-supported education, and is now bent on destroying all co-operation between government and organized religion in the training of our future citizens. It has undermined the religious foundations of law in the minds of many men in the legal profession, and has predisposed them to accept the legalistic tyranny of the omnipotent State. It has cleverly exploited to the detriment of religion and good citizenship the delicate problem of co-operation between Church and State in a country of divided religious allegiance.

That concrete problem, delicate as it is, can be solved in a practical way when good-will and a spirit of fairness prevail. Authoritative Catholic teaching on the relations between Church and State, as set forth in Papal Encyclicals and in the treatises of recognized writers on

ecclesiastical law, not only states clearly what these relations should normally be under ideal conditions, but also indicates to what extent the Catholic Church can adapt herself to the particular conditions that may obtain in different countries.

Examining, in the full perspective of that teaching, the position which those who founded our nation and framed its basic law took on the problem of Church-State relations in our own country, we find that the First Amendment to the Constitution solved that problem in a way that was typically American in its practical recognition of existing conditions and its evident desire to be fair to all citizens of whatever religious faith. To one who knows something of history and law, the meaning of the First Amendment is clear enough from its own words: Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or forbidding the free exercise thereof.' The meaning is even clearer in the records of the Congress that enacted it. Then, and throughout English and Colonial history, an 'establishment of religion' meant the setting up by law of an official Church which would receive from the government favours not equally accorded to others in the co-operation between government and religion—which was simply taken for granted in our country at that time and has, in many ways, continued to this day. Under the First Amendment, the Federal Government could not extend this type of preferential treatment to one religion as against another, nor could it forbid or compel any State to do so.

If this practical policy be described by the loose metaphor 'a wall of separation between Church and State,' that term must be understood in a definite and typically American sense. It would be an utter distortion of American history and law to make that practical policy involve the indifference to religion and the exclusion of co-operation between religion and government implied in the term 'separation of Church and State' as it has become the shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism.

Unprecedented Victories

Within the past two years secularism has scored unprecedented victories in its opposition to governmental encouragement of religious and moral training, even where no preferential treatment of one religion over another is involved. In two recent cases, the Supreme Court of the United States has adopted an entirely novel and ominously extensive interpretation of the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment. This interpretation would bar any co-operation between government and organized religion which would aid religion, even where no discrimination between religious bodies is in question. This reading of the First Amendment, as a group of non-Catholic religious leaders recently noted, will endanger 'forms of co-operation between Church and State which have been taken for granted by the American people' and 'greatly accelerate the trend towards the secularization of our culture.'

Reluctant as we are to criticise our supreme judicial tribunal, we cannot but observe that when the members of that tribunal write long and varying opinions in handing down a decision, they must expect that intelligent citizens of a democracy will study and appraise these opinions. The Journal of the American Bar Association, in a critical analysis of one of the cases in question, pertinently remarks: 'The traditionally religious sanctions of our law, life and government are challenged by a judicial propensity which deserves the careful thought and study of lawyers and people.'

Lawyers trained in the American tradition of law will be amazed to find that in the McCollum case the majority opinions pay scant attention to logic, history or accepted norms of legal interpretation. Logic would demand that what is less clear be defined by what is more clear. In the present instance we find just the reverse. The carefully chiselled phrases of the First Amendment are defined by the misleading metaphor 'the wall of separation between Church

and State.' This metaphor of Jefferson specifies nothing except that there shall be no 'established Church,' no State religion. All the rest of its content depends on the letter of the law that sets it up and can in concrete imply anything from the impartial co-operation between government and free religious bodies (as in Holland and traditionally in our own country) all the way down to the bitter persecution of religion (as in France at the turn of the century). As was pointedly remarked in a dissenting opinion: 'A rule of law cannot be drawn from a metaphor.'

A glance at the history of Jefferson's own life and work would have served as a warning against the broad and devastating application of his 'wall of separation' metaphor that we find in his case. The expression first appears in a letter written by Jefferson in 1802 and, significantly enough, in a context that makes it refer to the 'free exercise of religion' clause rather than to the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment. Twenty years later, Jefferson clearly shows in action that his concept of 'separation of Church and State' was far different from the concept of those who now turn to his metaphor as a norm of interpretation. As the rector of the State University of Virginia, Jefferson proposed a system of co-operation between the various religious groups and the university which goes far beyond anything under consideration in the case at hand. And Mr. Madison, who had proposed the First Amendment and who led in carrying it through to enactment by Congress, was one of the visitors of the University of Virginia who approved Jefferson's plan. Even one who is not a lawyer would expect to find in the opinion of the Court some discussion of what was in the mind of the members of Congress when they framed and adopted the First Amendment. For it would seem that the intent of the legislators should be of capital importance in interpreting any law when a doubt is raised as to the objective meaning of the words in which it is framed.

In regard to the 'establishment of religion' clause, there is no doubt of the intent of the legislator. It is clear in the record of the Congress that framed it and of the State Legislatures that ratified it. To them it meant no official Church for the country as a whole, no preferment of one religion over another by the Federal Government—and at the same time no interference by the Federal Government in the Church-State relations of the individual States. The opinion of the Court advances no reason for disregarding the mind of the legislator. But that reason is discernible in a concurring, opinion adhered to by four of the nine judges. There we see clearly the determining influence of secularist theories of public education— and possibly of law. One cannot but remark that if this secularist influence is to prevail in our Government and its institutions, such a result should be, in candour and logic and law, achieved by legislation adopted after full, popular discussion and not by the ideological interpretation of our Constitution.

We, therefore, hope and pray that the novel interpretation of the First Amendment recently adopted by the Supreme Court will in due process be revised. To that end we shall peacefully, patiently and perserveringly work. We feel with deep conviction that for the sake of both good citizenship and religion, there should be a reaffirmation of our original American tradition of free co-operation between government and religious bodies—co-operation involving no special privilege to any group and no restriction on the religious liberty of any citizen. We solemnly disclaim any intent or desire to alter this prudent and fair American policy of government in dealing with the delicate problems that have their source in the divided religious allegiance of our citizens. We call upon our Catholic people to seek in their faith an inspiration and a guide in making an informed contribution to good citizenship. We urge members of the legal profession in particular to develop and apply their special competence in this field. We stand ready to co-operate in fairness and charity with all who believe in God and are devoted to freedom under God to avert the impending danger of a judicial 'establishment of secularism' that would ban God from public life. For secularism is threatening the religious foundations of our national life and preparing the way for the advent of the omnipotent State.

The statement is signed by Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia ; Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit ; Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago ; Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York ; Francis P. Keough, Archbishop of Baltimore ; John T. McNicholas, O.P., Archbishop of Cincinnati ; Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio ; Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston ; Joseph E. Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis ; John Mark Gannon, Bishop of Erie ; John F. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne ; Emmet M. Walsh, Bishop of Charleston ; Karl J. Alter, Bishop of Toledo ; Michael J. Ready, Bishop of Columbus.

FAILURE OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

"I bend my knee to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its name."

Ephesians 3:14-15

It belongs to the father of a household to exercise discipline in his family. This is true equally of the household of the Church. The Pope and each of the bishops of the Church, indeed each priest, is a father in charge of a household. Each has duties to rule and govern his household with authority given him by God. If he fails in those duties the harm that results is as extensive as the reach of his authority.

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On 11th October, 1962, in his Opening Speech to the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII said this—

"In the daily exercise of our pastoral office, we sometimes have to listen, much to our regret, to voices of persons who, though burning with zeal, are not endowed with too much sense of discretion or measure. In these modern times they can see nothing but prevarication and ruin. They say that our era, in comparison with past eras, is getting worse, and they behave as though they had learned nothing from history, which is, none the less, the teacher of life... We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom, who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand."

Almost fifty years later this declaration makes embarrassing reading. For the era *did* get worse. And those who foresaw ruin and disaster lived to see their prophecies realised. One statistic alone is telling: in the twenty years that followed 46,000 priests throughout the world abandoned their ministry¹²⁸

Two Influences

It is two generations since these words were uttered and in that period the greatest harm in the Catholic Church has been wrought by two causes, two influences, working in tandem. One came from outside the Church. It was not the greater of the two but it had the greater effect because the other, from within, disposed the members of the Church to accept it.

The influence from outside the Church was Feminism, the ideology which seeks to reduce men and women to a common level. A corollary of Marxism, many of whose marks it bears; disposed for by the disorders wrought in society by two world wars; preached by the evil Sartre and his mistress, de Beauvoir, in the cafés of Paris; fed by that lack of sense of any values transcending the material which is the dowry of modern philosophy; adopted by the irreligious; vaunted as the wisdom hidden from

¹²⁸ Figure quoted by George Weigel in *The Courage to be Catholic*, New York, 2002, p.27. It would seem to understate the position. Romano Amerio says that a comparison of figures published by the Secretary of State for 1969 and 1976 shows the number of priests fell in those seven years alone by 70,000: Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum, A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the XXth Century*, Sarto House, transl. from 2nd Italian Edition by Fr John P. Parsons, Kansas City, 1996, p.182.

all previous ages: this simplistic ideology took hold of modern thought and came at last to infect the priests and bishops of the Catholic Church. But it would not have done so without the influence from within the Church which disposed many to accept its simplistic claims.

The second influence was the loss of the sense of discipline in the Church which began with remarks of Pope John XXIII made in the speech quoted above, the Opening Speech to the Second Vatican Council. The Pope said—

“The Church has always opposed... errors. Frequently she has condemned them with the greatest severity. Nowadays however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than the arms of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations. Not, certainly, that there is a lack of fallacious teaching, opinions, and dangerous concepts to be guarded against and dissipated. But these are so obviously in contrast with the right norm of honesty, and have produced such lethal fruits that by now it would seem that men of themselves are inclined to condemn them, particularly those ways of life which despise God and His law or place excessive confidence in technical progress and a well-being based exclusively on the comforts of life. They are ever more deeply convinced of the paramount dignity of the human person and of his perfection as well as of the duties which that implies. Even more important, experience has taught men that violence inflicted on others, the might of arms, and political domination, are of no help at all in finding a happy solution to the grave problems which afflict them.”

This paper will first consider the influence of these words. It will then consider Feminism and show how these two influences coalesced to produce the harm in the Church that has resulted.

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*The Abdication of Authority*¹²⁹

When, in the words quoted above, the Pope addresses error he uses the figure of speech called metonymy. The evil, ‘error’, stands for *the people affected by the evil*. When the Pope refers to *the arms of severity* he is referring, metonymically again, to *discipline* of which severity is a quality. He refers to mercy. Mercy is sorrow at another’s misfortune accompanied by a desire to help him.¹³⁰ Condemnation of error is a work of mercy since, by exposing it for what it is, those labouring under it are corrected and others are preserved from falling into it. It makes no sense, then, to juxtapose discipline to mercy when discipline is itself a part of mercy. Whatever the weakness in his reasoning, the Pope’s words established as a principle the renunciation of the Church’s authority to discipline the erring.

After this the Pope went on to assert something novel in the history of the Catholic Church that the men of the present age enjoyed a wisdom that those of former ages had not. This was a remarkable claim when weighed against the constant teaching of

¹²⁹ I have adopted in large measure the studied analysis of John XXIII’s speech by Italian theologian Romano Amerio in *Iota Unum*, op. cit., pp. 79-82.

¹³⁰ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.30, a.1.

the Catholic Church on the effects of Original Sin in the human soul, the wounds of ignorance, malice, weakness and desire, wounds compounded by other sins.¹³¹ Almighty God formed the Catholic Church, a Divine thing in the midst of the mundane, precisely to deal with those wounds, to provide inspiration, to heal, to direct, to bring peace and to lead to heaven. The Pope seemed almost to be denying the efficacy of that teaching. Experience has given the lie to the Pope's claim. Indeed *history... the teacher of life* ought to have warned him, if Catholic doctrine had not, that the claim was ill founded and naïve. Less than eight months later he was dead. But his legacy has lived on to work harm in the lives of the Catholic faithful.

Italian theologian, Romano Amerio, provides this analysis of the late Pope's proclamation—

"The general effect of renunciation of authority is to bring authority into disrepute and to lead it to be ignored by those who are subject to it, since a subject cannot hold a higher view of authority than authority holds of itself."¹³²

Once the Pope failed to act up to his name *Il Papa*—the father—other fathers, bishops, priests and laymen, would fail in sympathy. And this bad example would carry over to the world outside the Church.

The Influence of Feminism

Feminism is founded on the assertion of a simple equality between men and women; on the face of things it is an attractive proposition. It says that men and women have equal rights; that they are equally talented in every respect, whether at the material level or the spiritual, at the physical level or the psychological. Women have hitherto been oppressed by men, Feminism asserts, and their rights suppressed. This is why they have been unable to achieve the same status as men in work and in social and public life. Women must, so the argument goes, struggle to throw off this oppression imposed on them for so long.

Feminism is a materialist ideology. It ignores, as does Marxism from which it draws its energy and characteristic antipathy, essential distinctions. It sees success only materially, the achievements written on the pages of history the only desiderata, the things done behind the scenes as beneath dignity. It exalts pride; it derides humility. The only ends worth pursuing are those which men pursue. Women, the thesis proceeds, have been conditioned to believe that they are incapable of performing the activities or achieving the ends that men achieve. They must put aside that conditioning. A paradox follows: while Feminists are loud in their call for 'women's rights', they are not seeking 'women's rights' at all but 'men's rights', that is, the right to conduct themselves as men.

From its insistence on this one idea, simple equality between the sexes, the ideology spreads its influence throughout society. It begins with woman but because she is at the heart of mankind it affects her husband and, more significantly, her children. It

¹³¹ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q.85, a.3.

¹³² *Iota Unum*, op. cit. p.147

brings a revolution in the way men and women regard each other and it attacks the structure of the family.

The Feminist assertion is wrong. While men and women are equal *they are also unequal*.¹³³ They are equal in that they are persons with all the rights and duties that attach to the person: they are unequal in that their ordinations differ fundamentally. Their equality is not a simple but a *proportional* equality. Woman, taken in relation to the rights and duties that attach to womanhood, is equal to man taken in relation to the rights and duties which attach to manhood.

This distinction in ordinations, a difference placed in them by their Author, determines the relationship between them. Ordination signifies 'end'. There is an end proper to the man and another, not identical, end proper to the woman. Separate man from the ordination proper to him, separate woman from the ordination proper to her, and you do violence to each and to society of which they constitute the elements. There follows confusion over what constitutes masculinity and femininity, an evil characteristic of our time.

The father is the head of the family as the mother is its heart. Feminism denies to a man the authority to guide, to govern, to be a provider, to protect, to be the head of his family. It denies he has authority over his wife and his children in flat contradiction of Divine revelation¹³⁴ discouraging men from the virtue proper to manhood of *fortitude*, the courage to cope with the demands of a hard life, to exercise his true vocation as leader and father, to shoulder responsibilities. Just as Feminism has moved many women to adopt the mindset and the habits of men it has moved many men to adopt those of women—to become effeminate, another evil of our time.

Through its attack upon the subordination of wife to husband, Feminism attacks Christ and his Church. St Paul teaches—

"Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is the head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything." [Ephesians 5: 23-24]

Feminism denies that a wife is subject to her husband: hence it must deny that the Church is subject to Christ. This is the reality behind the Feminist complaints that the Church is 'paternalistic' and represses women. The attack on Christ extends to the Church's hierarchical structure. Feminism attacks the Pope as the Holy Father of all

¹³³ Although he was not addressing the claims of Feminism, which was still in the stages of gestation in his day, Pope Leo XIII spoke to the point when, in *Humanum genus*, he wrote: [N]o one doubts that all men are equal one to another so far as regards their common origin and nature; or the last end which each one has to attain; or the rights and duties which are thence derived. But as the abilities of all are not equal, as one differs from another in powers of mind or body, and as there are very many dissimilarities of manner, disposition and character, it is most repugnant to reason to endeavour to confine all within the same measure and to extend complete equality to the institutions of civil life. [n. 26]

¹³⁴ Cf. Ephesians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:4, 5

the people of God; the bishops as fathers in their dioceses; priests as fathers in their parishes.

Feminism's simplistic ideas and arguments have penetrated every level of society. They could have been countered effectively had the wisdom to do so been exercised as it should. The fount of this wisdom, since it is of God, lies within the Catholic Church. Yet the Church's authorities have not seen fit to address Feminism's follies much less to take resolute action to isolate and condemn them. Instead a great number of bishops and cardinals have embraced them. The late Pope John Paul II endorsed them, only excepting from this their logical consequences—contraception, abortion, and the inclination to effeminacy.

To the failure by the Pope to exercise his proper authority as father of the faithful, then, in a sort of malevolent fortuitousness, was added Feminism's attack on the authority of the father in his household. Little wonder many priests and bishops came to refuse to exercise in their own households the duties proper to their state; declined from the virtues proper to fatherhood of manliness, courage and authority; became effete in the exercise of their office, ceding to women the conduct of certain of their priestly functions and authority; and, finally, argued for bestowing, if it were possible, the priesthood of Jesus Christ on women.

The Effects

The consequences of this executive paralysis have manifested themselves at every level of the Church's hierarchy, papal (including the Vatican dicasteries), episcopal and clerical, for close on fifty years. They have been felt most strongly at the parish level where the perception of the priest as father of his people has largely been lost. There are few priests who know and understand that despite the failures of the Catholic hierarchy the priest is the father of his parish and has the rights and duties of that office. Even fewer realise how they must juggle the exercise of their rightful authority with the knowledge that they will not be supported in the exercise of it by their bishop—that they must *be as wise as serpents yet as harmless as doves*.¹³⁵

As a general rule, the Catholic faithful throughout the world—those who not only profess all the truths of the Catholic faith but practise them¹³⁶—live in a state of perpetual exasperation over episcopal negligence. They look to their bishop for leadership, but in vain. They look to him to act to uphold the teachings and practice of the faith; again in vain. There is almost a terror amongst the Catholic episcopacy of being seen to be acting with authority. Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, in the United States, stood out among the bishops of the western world for doing so. He was treated as a pariah by many of his fellow bishops in consequence.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ *Matthew* 10: 16

¹³⁶ The distinction is between *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxis*. Many proclaim their orthodoxy, but fail when it comes to living out their alleged faith.

¹³⁷ Witness the disavowal of his Mandate to the members of his diocese dated 19th March 1996 by American Cardinals Bernardin, Mahoney and Law.

The current scandals in the Church over episcopal failures to act on sexual abuses carried out by members of their clergy are merely the fruit of this neglect of duty in one area, a notable area, of morality.

Paul VI

The abdication of authority mandated by John XXIII flourished under Paul VI. In his book, *The Courage to be Catholic*¹³⁸, George Weigel addresses the failures of the American bishops over the systematic neglect of their duties. He deals with the problems of the 1960s and 1970s following the Second Vatican Council, “problems,” he says, “exacerbated by what often seemed to be uncertain papal leadership during the fifteen year pontificate of Pope Paul VI (1963-1978).”¹³⁹ In three of his actions in particular the abdication of authority by Paul VI appears forcefully.

The first was his failure after the receipt by him in mid 1966 of a report from the *Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, the Family and Birth* to rein in false expectations among the faithful of an imminent change in the Church’s teaching on contraception. This was fuelled by the actions of certain theologians associated with the Commission in leaking one of the Commission papers favourable to change to *Le Monde* in France, *The Tablet* in Great Britain, and the *National Catholic Reporter* in the United States in April 1967.

Two years were to pass before the Pope addressed the issues definitively in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. There never was any doubt as to how the Pope would rule on this issue. Eminent American moral theologian, Fr John C. Ford S.J., made the point trenchantly when he remarked that if the Pope had ruled in any other way than he had, he, Fr Ford, would have had to leave the Church. The failure of the Pope to warn the faithful of the falsity of these hopes—to act as a true father—caused incalculable harm.

The second turned on the procurement by Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, Paul VI’s emissary, of the withdrawal of József Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, from the American embassy in Budapest. After his imprisonment by the Communist authorities and condemnation in a show trial repudiated by the free world the Cardinal took the opportunity presented by the 1956 Hungarian uprising to take refuge in the American embassy. He remained there for fourteen years a thorn in the sides of the Communist regime and of Communist fellow travellers within the Vatican. These prevailed upon Paul VI to seek his removal.

In the course of negotiations with Cardinal Mindszenty to secure his removal Casaroli hid from him that one of the terms to which the Vatican had agreed with the Communists was that it would ensure he would do or say nothing that could displease

¹³⁸ *The Courage to be Catholic*, Perseus Books, New York, 2002

¹³⁹ *Ibid* p.67

the Hungarian government. On his arrival in Rome on 29th September, 1971, Paul VI assured him—

“You are and remain Archbishop of Esztergom and primate of Hungary. Continue working, and if you have difficulties, always turn trustfully to us.”

When the Cardinal endeavoured to exercise his authority he was hindered at every turn. When he learned subsequently of the secret undertaking he remarked—

“Had I known about any guarantee of this sort, I would have... asked the Holy Father to rescind all the arrangements that had been made in conjunction with my departure from Hungary.”

The actions of the Pope’s emissary were, of course, attributable to the Pope.

The third was the failure of Paul VI over what came to be known as ‘the Washington Case’. The details are set forth in *The Courage to be Catholic*.¹⁴⁰ Priests of the Archdiocese of Washington joined the public dissent against *Humanae Vitae*. With commendable application Patrick Cardinal O’Boyle issued a number of warnings and subsequently disciplined nineteen of his priests over the issue, suspending several of them. The priests publicised their cases and appealed to the authorities in Rome. After intervention by the head of the Congregation for the Clergy, John Cardinal Wright, Cardinal O’Boyle was persuaded to lift the sanctions against such of the priests who would agree to certain findings of a report by the Congregation. Those findings did not require the priests to repudiate their dissent or to affirm the teachings in *Humanae Vitae*. Weigel remarks—

“According to the recollections of some who were present, everyone involved understood that Pope Paul VI wanted the ‘Washington Case’ settled without a public retraction from the dissidents because the Pope feared that insisting on such a retraction would lead to schism.”¹⁴¹

This failure in exercise of authority had the most scandalous effect as Weigel goes on to explain—

“Theologians, priests and nuns who publicly dissented from *Humanae Vitae*... were encouraged by the Truce of 1968 to continue, even amplify, their dissent... [It] taught the Catholic bishops of the United States that the Vatican would not support them in maintaining discipline among priests and doctrinal integrity among theologians... Catholic lay people also learned something from the Truce of 1968, even if they [had] never heard of it. The tacit vindication of the culture of dissent during the *Humanae Vitae* controversy taught two generations of Catholics that virtually everything in the Church was questionable: doctrine, morals, the priesthood, the episcopate, the lot.”¹⁴²

An instance, from the other side of the world serves to illustrate its effect—

At a clergy conference in Hobart [Tasmania] on November 6, 1968, a senior priest from the North West coast moved that the priests send an assurance of their acceptance of the Encyclical and their complete obedience to the Pope. During heated discussion which followed, [Archbishop Guildford] Young was accused of lack of leadership. In an

¹⁴⁰ Ibid pp. 68-72

¹⁴¹ Ibid pp.69-70

¹⁴² Ibid pp.70-2

emotional speech he summarised statements from world hierarchies on freedom of conscience and claimed he had saved Australia from the 'Alice in Wonderland' situation which had arisen in the Washington (U.S.A.) Archdiocese of Cardinal O'Boyle. 'One day,' he said, 'the full story would be told.' He refused to accept the motion."¹⁴³

A former priest of the Hobart Archdiocese who had known Archbishop Young well told this commentator and others in a private meeting many years later that the Archbishop had suffered great anguish when in the last years of his life he came to realise the error of his views on conscience with respect to *Humanae Vitae*.

John Paul II

Karol Wojtyla, who became on 16th October 1978 Pope John Paul II, was a stronger character than Giovanni Battista Montini, Paul VI. He brought to the office of Pope an unbounded admiration for his predecessors.—

"I chose the same names that were chosen by my beloved Predecessor John Paul I... I wish like him to express my love for the unique inheritance left to the Church by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI and my personal readiness to develop that inheritance with God's help..." (*Redemptor Hominis*, 4.3.1979)

Regrettably, this inheritance included the inclination to refrain from executive action. There are any number of instances of this throughout the twenty six and a half years of his pontificate. What follows is a sample.

* Swiss theologian, Hans Küng, denied 1) the divinity of Christ, 2) the bodily Resurrection of Christ, 3) that Christ founded an institutional Church, 4) that the Mass is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary. He called for a revision of Church teaching on papal infallibility, on contraception, on mandatory celibacy for priests. The Vatican put up with 15 years of his recalcitrance before it took action against him. On 18th December 1979 the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith withdrew Küng's *missio canonica* stating that he could *no longer be considered a Catholic theologian nor function as such in a teaching role*. Küng was not suspended; he was not excommunicated. He continued to be free to celebrate Mass, to hear confessions, to preach and to advise, notwithstanding his rejection of the Pope's infallible teaching in 1994 against the ordination of women.¹⁴⁴

* Richard P. McBrien, Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, was another described as 'a priest in good standing', a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. He was responsible for detailed and consistent dissent from the teachings of the Catholic Church over more than 20 years. His misnamed book *Catholicism* went to a third edition. The work was theologically defective in 1980. It remains so. Among other things he teaches that 1) Christ did not found the Catholic Church; 2) though He was God Christ could have sinned; 3) Christ's death was not a sacrifice but a peace offering; 4) Christ was ignorant of who He was. He casts doubts

¹⁴³ *The Wisdom of Guildford Young*, W.T. Southerwood, Stella Maris Books, George Town, Tasmania, 1989, p. 419.

¹⁴⁴ Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 22nd May 1994.

on the perpetual virginity of Our Blessed Lady. He teaches that papal judgments in matters of faith and morals (if not infallibly proclaimed) do not bind the consciences of the faithful and that the sinfulness of contraception and homosexual acts are to be left to the supremacy of the individual conscience.

* American priest, Charles Curran, was permitted to teach error for close on 20 years. The following extract from his curriculum vitae is taken from an advertisement placed in the *Rochester Democrat-Chronicle* by a group of concerned Catholics of the American Diocese of Rochester in 1986—

“Since his 1968 dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, Fr. Curran has repeatedly undermined Catholic teaching on faith and morals, giving scandal to faithful Catholics in this Diocese and throughout the world. In his writings and lectures, he has contradicted Catholic doctrine on premarital sex, masturbation, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, divorce, euthanasia, and in vitro fertilization.”

* Peter Leo Gerety was appointed Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, in June 1974. He sponsored the Call To Action movement which supports birth control, homosexuality and lesbianism, rejected papal infallibility and encouraged Charles Curran to teach in his Archdiocese. His conduct was an open scandal in the Church in the United States.

* In July 1983, Cardinal Silvio Oddi, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, addressed a public meeting in Arlington, Virginia, in the USA. He was pressed as to why the Holy See did not remove people such as Curran and did not correct and disavow bishops such as Gerety. The Cardinal replied with words which reflected precisely John XXIII's abdication of authority—

“The Church no longer imposes punishments. She hopes instead to persuade those who err... The Church believes it is better to tolerate certain errors in the hope that when certain difficulties have been overcome, the person in error will reject his error and return to the Church.”

The advertisement in the *Rochester Democrat-Chronicle* quoted above was placed there on March 23rd, 1986. The Catholics of the Diocese of Rochester were doubtless voicing their frustration at the inaction of authorities of the Church when they added to what is set out above—

“It has been an intolerable situation that Fr. Curran has been allowed to teach in the name of the Catholic Church while denying its teachings.”

Their efforts eventually bore fruit. In July of the same year the Vatican acted by stripping Curran of his status as a theologian. It had taken them seven years to move Rome to act. In the same year the Vatican forced Archbishop Gerety to withdraw his *Imprimatur* from a questionable catechetical text called *Christ Among Us*. Gerety did so but tendered his resignation from the Archdiocese of Newark with effect from June 1986 two years before he was due to resign.

* The Church suffered persistent problems with the bishops of Germany in the 1990s. In 1993 three of them gave permission for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive

Holy Communion as long as they believed in conscience that their first marriage was invalid. Here was another instance of the plague that has afflicted the Church since Karl Rahner first exalted conscience above the authority of the Church in 1968 in his commentary on *Humanae Vitae*.¹⁴⁵ It took a year of negotiation with the Vatican before these bishops would agree to cease giving this permission.

In 1998 the Vatican had to take the German bishops to task again. According to German law no woman may submit herself for an abortion unless she has a certificate indicating that she has attended for counselling. The German bishops were providing such certificates and, in doing so, giving proximate, material (that is, culpable) cooperation to the killing of the unborn. Again the issue was settled not by a peremptory directive from Rome backed by the threat of sanction but by negotiation.

* Throughout the course of John Paul II's pontificate, of the many who might have been, only one theologian was ever excommunicated, Fr Tissa Balasuriya OMI, in Sri Lanka in January 1997. The excommunication was lifted a little over a year later not on the terms laid down by the Vatican, but on terms insisted upon by the offender and accepted by the Vatican. Fr Balasuriya is reported to have said subsequently that he had taken nothing back.

There were any number of admirable directives from Rome during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II: amongst them—

- the instruction *Inaestimabile Donum* (17.4.1980) concerning worship of the Eucharist within and outside Mass;
- the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (22.5.1994) reserving priestly ordination to men alone;
- the reply to a *Dubium* concerning the teaching in this apostolic letter affirming that the teaching belonged to the deposit of faith (28.10.1995);
- the instruction regarding collaboration by the laity in the sacred ministry of priests (15.8.1997);
- the motu proprio *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (28.5.1998) strengthening the force of certain provisions in the Code of Canon Law;
- the declaration *Dominus Jesus* (6.8.2000) reaffirming the unicity and universal salvific effect of Jesus Christ and His Church in the face of theories seeking to justify religious pluralism;
- the motu proprio *Misericordia Dei* (7.4.2002) addressing abuses of the Sacrament of Penance particularly ceremonies of so called 'general absolution'.

Yet these directives were rarely enforced by any exercise of executive power.¹⁴⁶ The result was that the despite these and many other documents issued by the late Pope and the Vatican dicasteries abuses continued more or less unabated. If they are not

¹⁴⁵ Rahner's assertion of the primacy of conscience over the teaching of the Church is simply a restatement of the assertion of Martin Luther. It is Protestantism.

¹⁴⁶ An exception was the excommunication on 5th August 2002 of seven women who had undergone a purported 'ordination' in June 2002. The excommunication was confirmed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 21st December 2002.

borne out by action all the words in the world will achieve nothing. The wise father does not waste his time speaking to his disobedient child. He acts.

The extent of the executive paralysis in the Vatican is manifested most tellingly, perhaps, in the following admission by Msgr Camille Perl, Secretary of the Pontifical *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, to a member of the Society of St Pius X Lefebvrist reported by Bishop Bernard Fellay in an address he gave in Kansas City, Missouri on 7 January 1999—

“One of our faithful in France wrote a letter to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger describing the scandalous behaviour of a particular French bishop. On behalf of the Cardinal, Msgr. Perl answered, ‘Yes, you’re right. The situation in the Church is anarchy. If you expect that an order from Rome regarding the above will solve the situation, you are in total illusion.’”

The so-called theologians, Küng, Curran, McBrien and their ilk continued to spread their errors. What they taught was not Catholicism but some religion of their own devising; yet they have been allowed to continue to mislead the faithful. Any suspension of the ability of one or other to teach in Catholic institutions achieves little without explicit condemnation accompanied with either suspension *a divinis* or excommunication. The faithful are infected with the illegality of the age and, in the absence of action by the leaders of the Church to enforce her authority, they see no danger to their immortal souls in continuing to favour false teachers like these.

John Paul II and Feminism

Pope John Paul II brought to the office of the papacy a philosophical inheritance which inclined him to accept the tenets of Feminist ideology.¹⁴⁷ He endeavoured to incorporate them into Catholic theology by radically re-interpreting sacred scripture.

Before proceeding we should address the concerns of those who might be scandalised at the assertion that a Pope may err. Every Pope is human; he can, and often will, commit error. The definition of the First Vatican Council, in setting out the precise circumstances in which a pronouncement of the Pope bears the character of infallibility¹⁴⁸, concedes implicitly that he may err. Pope Benedict XVI summarised the situation in an impromptu address to the priests of Aosta on 29th July 2005: *The Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations...* George Weigel quotes Melchior Cano, theologian to the Fathers of the Council of Trent, to the point—

“Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See—they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Message for Celebration of World Day of Peace*, 1.1.1995; *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday*, 25.5.1995; *Message to Mrs Gertrude Mongella, Secretary General of U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women*, 26.5.1995; *Letter to Women*, 29.6.1995.

¹⁴⁸ ‘...when in discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church...’ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, n. 1839.

¹⁴⁹ Melchior Cano, quoted in *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, George Weigel, New York, 2001, p.15.

The Pope cannot, in pursuit of some personal preoccupation, depart from the Church's constant teaching. He may not, for example, infer that baptism is no longer necessary for salvation; or say that Adam was not created by God before Eve; or deny that Eve was formed from Adam's body. Should he express views along these lines, they cannot be a valid exercise of his authentic teaching authority.

Teaching from 1979 Wednesday Audiences—on Genesis

There are in the Book of *Genesis* two accounts of creation, one each in Chapters 1 and 2. In the catechesis in his 1979 Wednesday Audiences Pope John Paul II compared these two accounts. He said—

“the first account... the one held to be chronologically later, is much more mature both as regards the image of God, and as regards the formulation of the essential truths about man... [It] is concise, and free from any trace whatsoever of subjectivism.”¹⁵⁰

In this first account there was not, what he called, “the problem of solitude...man is created in one act as ‘male and female’.”¹⁵¹ In the second chapter of *Genesis* he said—

“The woman is made ‘with the rib’ that God-Yahweh had taken from the man. Considering the archaic, metaphorical and figurative way of expressing the thought, we can establish that it is a question here of homogeneity of the whole being of both.”¹⁵²

His conclusion of the comparative study of these two accounts of creation was that after God had cast a deep sleep over him—

“the first man, awakens from his sleep as ‘male and female’.”¹⁵³

Or, to express it in terms which he said accorded with the first chapter of *Genesis*—

“man, in fact, is ‘male and female’ right from the beginning.”¹⁵⁴

A little later he expounded the thesis in this way —

“[M]an became the ‘image and likeness’ of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the beginning... Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion...”¹⁵⁵

Insofar as this teaching can be understood it seems irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine that the first man, Adam, was first created by God and the body of the first woman, Eve, was formed from his body.

¹⁵⁰ General Audience 12.9.1979. Reproduced in *Original Unity of Man and Woman—Catechesis on the Book of Genesis*, 1981, pp.22, 23. Also at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/jp2tb2.htm> The content of the various Audiences can be found by exploring this website.

¹⁵¹ General Audience 10.10.1979. *Original Unity of Man and Woman* etc., op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁵² General Audience 7.11.1979. *Original Unity*, p. 65.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ *Original Unity*, p. 61

¹⁵⁵ *Original Unity*, pp. 73-4.

Teaching in Mulieris Dignitatem—on Genesis

In August, 1988, in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, the Pope built upon this foundation. In n. 10 he said—

“[The words *Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you* (Genesis 3:16)] refer directly to marriage, but indirectly they concern the different spheres of social life: the situations in which the woman remains disadvantaged or discriminated against by the fact of being a woman.”

He went on to endorse what he called—

“the rightful opposition of women to what is expressed in the biblical words ‘He shall rule over you...’”

Elsewhere in the same section he described this subordination, ordained by God, as indicating—

“the disturbance and loss of the stability of that fundamental equality which the man and the woman possess in the ‘unity of the two’.”

This teaching appeared to enlarge the discordance with the Church’s teaching mentioned for now it bore upon the doctrine of Original Sin; it seemed to contradict the Church’s teaching about women manifest in—

Genesis 2:18—“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Tobit 8:6—“You made Adam and you gave him a wife, Eve, to be his help and support...”

Ecclesiasticus 17:5 in the Vulgate—“Out of (Adam) he created a helper similar to him.”

1 Corinthians 11:9—“[I]t was not man that was created for woman’s sake but woman for man’s.”

Teaching in Mulieris Dignitatem—on Ephesians Ch. 5

In n. 24 of *Mulieris Dignitatem*, referring to St Paul’s admonition in *Ephesians* 5:22-23: “Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of his wife...” the Pope said—

“The author knows that this way of speaking, so profoundly rooted in the customs and religious tradition of the time, is to be understood and carried out in a new way: as a ‘mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ’...”

There is no objective evidence to support this gloss. St Paul does not say there is to be mutual subjection of husband and wife. His words are clear: *Let women be subject to their husbands...* Verse 21 is adjectival to the content of the previous paragraph which deals with general admonitions. The sentence is grouped this way in the Latin Vulgate, the only edition of Sacred Scripture the Church has declared to be authentic.¹⁵⁶ The verbs in verses 19, 20 and 21 of *Ephesians* 5 in the original Greek are all in the present imperative participle—*Speaking to yourselves... singing and making melody in your hearts... Giving thanks always... Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ*. The verb in verse 22, in contrast, is in the present subjunctive—*Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord*. St Paul is dealing with a different subject.

¹⁵⁶ Council of Trent, Session iv, April 8, 1546; D. 785.

The sense in which the passage has been consistently interpreted by the Church appears, for example, in the following extracts from the Catechism of Trent—

“It is the duty of the husband to treat his wife generously and honourably. It should not be forgotten that Eve was called by Adam his companion. The woman, he says, whom you gave me as a companion. (Gen.3:12). Hence it was, according to the opinion of some of the holy Fathers, that she was formed not from the feet but from the side of man; as, on the other hand, she was not formed from his head, that she might understand that it was not hers to command but to obey her husband...” (Part II, Ch. VIII *On the Sacraments in General*, Q. XXVI *The Chief Duties of a Husband*)

“On the other hand, the duties of a wife are thus summed up by the Prince of the Apostles: ‘Let wives be subject to their husbands ... For after this manner the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, subjecting themselves to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord’ (1 Peter. 3:1 ff)... Let wives never forget that next to God they are to love their husbands, to esteem them above all others, yielding to them in all things not inconsistent with Christian piety, a willing and ready obedience.” (Q. XXVII *What the Duty of a Wife requires*)

This sense is to be found also in the works of—

St John Chrysostom (*Homily 20, On Ephesians 5:22-33*);
St Augustine (*De Moribus Ecclesiae* 1, Ch.30, n.63); and,
St Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* I, Q.93, Art.4, ad 1).

It is to be found in the encyclicals, or addresses, of—

Pope Leo XIII (*Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae*—On Christian Marriage [10.2.1880] nn.11, 16; *Diuturnum Illud*—On the Origin of Civil Power [29.6.1881] n.11; *Immortale Dei*—On the Christian Constitution of States [1.11.1885] nn. 19, 20);
Pope Benedict XV (*Natalis trecentesimi*—to the Superior General of the Ursulines [27.12.1917]);
Pope Pius XI (*Casti Connubii*—On Christian Marriage [31.12.1930] nn. 4, 26, 27, 74 to 77); and of
Pope Pius XII (*Address to Married Couples*, 10 September, 1941; *Address to Women of Catholic Action*, 21 October, 1945).

The Council of Trent said that no one should dare to interpret Sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which is held by Holy Mother Church.¹⁵⁷ Leo XIII added to this when he said that an interpretation of Sacred Scripture is to be rejected “as senseless and false which [would make] inspired authors in some manner quarrel amongst themselves.”¹⁵⁸ But the interpretation posed by Pope John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem* would make St Paul’s teaching in *Ephesians* 5 quarrel with his teaching in his letters—

¹⁵⁷ Session iv, April 8, 1546; D.786

¹⁵⁸ *Providentissimus Deus*, D.1943

1 Corinthians 11:3—*The head to which a wife is united is her husband, just as the head to which every man is united is Christ;*
 Colossians 3:18—*Wives must be submissive to their husbands as the service of the Lord demands;*
 1 Timothy 2:12—*a woman shall have no leave from me to teach or to issue commands to her husband; and in*
 Titus 2:4, 5—*the younger women must learn... how to be... submissive to their own husbands.*

It would make it quarrel also with the teaching of St Peter in 1 Peter 3:1 and in 1 Peter 3:6 referred to by the Council of Trent in the passage quoted above.

We do not say that Pope John Paul's teaching *is* discordant with the Church's constant teaching, only that *it appears to be so*. It is for theologians to address the question whether that teaching can be reconciled with the Church's teaching.¹⁵⁹

In any event, his teachings added to the dilemma for priests, bishops and fathers of families who wished to exercise the authority given them by God. Not only had they to face the facts that dissenters within the Church would not be corrected or punished and that their own endeavours to exercise their God given authority would not be supported by their bishop, but any argument they might put at an intellectual level to ground their rightful claims to authority was undermined by the Pope's public support for this contrary position.

Conclusion

It must be assumed that, at all times, each of the Popes referred to has acted in what he regarded as the best interests of the Church. The criticisms that have been offered should not be taken as a reflection on the personal integrity of any one of them for we have dealt here with matters in the external, not the internal, forum and God alone is the Judge of the soul. Moreover, the First See is judged by no one.¹⁶⁰ Yet we insist that each of these Popes has played a part in the abdication of the Church's authority, an authority which must be restored if the Church is to exercise to the full her sanctifying role in the world.

¹⁵⁹ Fr Brian Harrison, for instance, deals with the issue as an objection to his exposition of the Church's teaching on the formation of Eve from the side of the sleeping Adam in his *Did Woman Evolve From The Beasts?* Cf. his articles at <http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt97.html> and <http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt98.html>. He argues that it would be unwarranted to conclude that the Pope was necessarily implying a negation of the traditional doctrine. He was not addressing the historicity of the accounts in *Genesis* of how the first human bodies were formed. Moreover, it could not be argued that he intended to require the assent of the faithful to the exegetical observations expressed in those comments as if this were in itself a teaching of faith or morals.

¹⁶⁰ *Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur*; Decree of Gratian (1140 AD). Cf. *Code of Canon Law* c. 1404. 'Neither by Augustus, nor by all the clergy, nor by religious, nor by the people will the judge be judged... The first seat will be judged by no one.' Epistle by Pope Nicholas I to Michael the Emperor, 865, quoting words attributed to St Sylvester, and to the apocryphal synod of Sinuessa 303. [cf. Denzinger n. 330];

The solution lies in the resumption by Pope Benedict XVI, or his successors, of the full powers of the office given them by Christ to be Father of all the faithful and to exercise those powers with vigour. The Pope must visit with the sanctions at his command—suspension, removal, interdict, excommunication—those theologians, bishops, priests and lay people who persist in denying the Church’s teaching or in proclaiming as true some departure from that teaching. He must, moreover, expose systematically the evils of Feminism for what they are, and prudently, but firmly, move to extirpate them from the Church—from top to bottom.

THE POPE AND THE QUESTION OF 'CONDOMS'

I

Many Catholics have been less than pleased to hear the Church's teaching in the critical moral matter of the use of the 'condom' or 'french letter' proclaimed by the Pope in an interview with a journalist rather than with the application and precision it deserves in a formal Church document; especially when there seems to be no such Church document dealing with the topic. Commentators refer the enquirer to Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, but that encyclical bears upon the device only in passing. It is plain that the 'condom' has more perverted uses than contraception. Why have the Church authorities remained silent? Why has the field been left to the misguided opinions of people like Professor Martin Rhonheimer of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross?

There are two reasons, a theological reason, and a philosophical reason. The theological reason is a reluctance to exercise the Church's authority, a legacy of the abandonment of its enforcement proclaimed by John XXIII in his *Opening Speech* to the bishops of the Second Vatican Council, coupled with an attitude of deference to the secular which followed the Council. The philosophical reason is a comprehensive failure in understanding of the philosophy underlying the Church's moral teachings.

There has been no moral theologian pope capable of solving the dilemmas that seem to confound the Vatican dicasteries since Pius XII. One instance will illustrate the problem and its extent. The faithful have been waiting now for fifteen years for a definitive ruling on the difficult teaching of Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 73. The matters covered by the late Pope permit of clarification in line with Catholic principle, but Vatican authorities seem incapable of performing the task. Apart from an ambivalent expression in a document issued by the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* in January 2003,¹⁶¹ the Vatican has remained silent. In consequence, innumerable Catholic intellectuals persist in the erroneous view that the provision allows that one may, in certain circumstances, cooperate in evil. It does not.

Pius XII solved difficult moral questions because he was grounded in the Church's metaphysics. Since his death, Church authorities have accompanied lickspittle deference to the intricate and comprehensive teaching of St Thomas with a practical refusal to study, or to adopt, that teaching. This denial of the Church's philosophical riches reached its nadir when, in an encyclical allegedly devoted to human reason, Pope John Paul II misquoted Pius XII as authority for the proposition that the Church has no philosophy of her own, contradicting the teaching of innumerable of his predecessors.

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¹⁶¹ *Doctrinal Note On Some Questions Regarding The Participation Of Catholics in Political Life*, 16. 1. 2003.

One will find it difficult to discover whether, in the tradition of recent popes, Pope Benedict XVI has adopted a motto. Some authorities assert that the motto he used whilst head of the CDF, *Cooperatores veritatis*, should be attributed to him—in the singular, rather than the plural, presumably. Others say he has adopted that of St Benedict, *Pax*. In the Preface to the 2007 work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict said his book was not to be regarded as an exercise of the Church's Magisterium, solely an expression of—

“my personal search for ‘the face of the Lord’. Everyone is free, then, to contradict me.” The commentator, Sandro Magister, remarks glibly that this phrase, “Everyone is free to contradict me”, may be taken as the Pope's motto; hardly an appropriate one for the man who stands in the shoes of Truth Himself.

Yet there may be an element of truth in the remark, for it is not difficult to detect an uncertainty in the Pope's make up. He seemed, for instance, to doubt the extent of his own powers in his very first public speech:

“The Pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations, as we know. Therefore, I share with you these questions, these problems. I also suffer...”¹⁶²

And facts would seem to indicate that, when head of the CDF, he was in doubt as to just when it was that the Pope spoke infallibly, exemplified by the commentary he issued in June 1994 on the authority of Pope John Paul's teaching in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. The teaching in that apostolic letter fulfilled each of the conditions laid down by the Vatican Council in *Pastor Aeternus* (18.7.1870), yet Cardinal Ratzinger was not prepared to state that it was infallible. It took another year and a half for that declaration to be made.¹⁶³

Whether this analysis does him justice or not, let us assume, for the purposes of the present exercise, that the Pope is open to criticism about his actions in speaking as he did in the long interview now published under the title *Luce del Mondo*, “Light of the World”.

At the heart of the failure of the Vatican to teach definitively on the ‘condom’ is a failure on the part of its theological advisers to understand the distinction between the realities encapsulated in two Latin phrases—*finis operis* and *finis operantis*. These can only be understood once the theologian grasps—that is, understands and realises—the causes to which they refer. The two phrases translate literally as ‘end of the work’ and ‘end of the agent’. The critical word in each is *end*. This word invokes a whole world of meaning grounded in the metaphysical doctrine of causality.¹⁶⁴

Of every thing that exists in the universe, St Thomas teaches, there are four causes, four influences that bring about its existence. There are not less than four; there are

¹⁶² Impromptu Address to the priests of Aosta, July 29, 2005.

¹⁶³ Through a formal *Responsum ad Dubium* dated October 28, 1995.

¹⁶⁴ What follows is a short explanation of the doctrine of causality. The author has set out the teaching in greater detail elsewhere; cf. http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/essential_encyclical.pdf

not more than four. It assists in understanding his teaching to use as example the homely illustration of a carpenter who sets about making a table. The first cause of the table he produces is the *formal* cause, that which determines this thing to be a table. It is not the form of gate, or of chair, or of house, or of boat that he is going to impose on the materials at his disposal, but of table. If this *form* ('table-ness') was absent, the thing would not be a table. *Form* is what gives it the essence, so to speak, of what it is.¹⁶⁵

The next cause is the *material* cause, that which can be any thing but which is determined (by the formal cause) to be *this* thing, a table. Matter is that which is determined. If the *matter* was absent, there would be no table. The third cause is the agent, or *efficient* cause, the carpenter who puts the form of table into the matter. If the *efficient* cause was absent, there would be no table. The fourth cause, and the most critical, is the *final* cause. Every agent acts on account of an end; so *the end, or final cause*, must exist in the mind of the carpenter before the table can come into existence. It is the first thing intended by the agent, and the last to be attained.

Now, human art is nothing but the application by a man of his intellect to the works of nature, in imitation of those works. By art man reproduces in the things he makes the fourfold causality that obtains in all natural things. Just as there are four causes of the table produced by the carpenter, there are four causes of the carpenter. His *material* cause is patent; it is the matter out of which he is made. The *formal* cause, that which makes him be a man (and not a mineral, or a tree, or a monkey, donkey or other beast) is his human (and immaterial) soul. The *efficient* cause is his Creator. And the *final* cause is the reason why his Creator made him and the end He intends for him consistent with his human nature. *End*, then, is that for the sake of which something is done. It is the most important of all the causes—first in intention, and last in execution. But, as appears from what follows, ends are specified in different ways.

Finis operis—the end embodied in the very nature of the action

A rifle is an instrumental cause. When a man fires a rifle, he is bound by the peculiar nature of the instrument.¹⁶⁶ The end of the action of firing it is the forcible penetration of whatever lies in the path of the projectile it emits. Over that 'natural' end, the gunman has no control. He has control only over what he aims at. Once he elects to use the instrument he is bound by the consequences of doing so.

Finis operantis—the end of the agent

The gunman intends to kill a fox; that is his end. To achieve, or attempt to achieve, that end, he uses the end built into the instrument and may or may not, succeed. But there is something else at stake. Because the agent is a man—and not a brute animal, or a blind force such as gravity—his every action is marked by a supervening character

¹⁶⁵ Though artificial things do not strictly have essences.

¹⁶⁶ Using that term analogically; 'nature' is said properly only of natural things. A rifle is, on the contrary, an artificial thing, contrived from natural materials and using their properties to attain the ends of its designer and maker.

flowing from his human nature, morality, i.e., conformity or disconformity with the rule of morals.¹⁶⁷ His act of shooting the rifle involves him—whether he likes it or not—in the issue of his own ultimate end, beatitude or damnation. He can no sooner deny the reality of this character than he can force water to flow uphill.

The rule of morals is simple: *do good avoid evil*. No man may breach the rule, no man may do evil, without indelible prejudice to his ultimate end and the loss of that dignity which is proper to him as a man. That prejudicial effect the Catholic Church calls mortal sin; *mortal* because it kills something within him.

The rule of morals has a number of corollaries; the chief of them is this: *it is not licit to do evil that good may come of it*. That is, one may not choose an evil means to achieve a good end; one may not use a good means to achieve an evil end. What follows in the present discussion of *ends*? Neither in the end he adopts, the end embodied in the instrument (*finis operis*), nor in the end he intends in so using it (*finis operantis*), may a man breach the rule of morals without ultimate damage to his soul.

In the light of these principles let us proceed.

The ‘condom’ is an instrumental cause. The morality of an instrument is generally indeterminate.¹⁶⁸ Whether it is used for good or for ill is dependent upon the moral choices of the one using it, the principal. Thus, a knife may be used to cut food or to kill an innocent man. However, an instrument may be so designed that *its very ordination* is immoral. Its *end*, (its finality as instrument), and its form, that which makes it be the peculiar instrument that it is, are built into the ‘condom’. Its end is the prevention of transmission of semen and the concourse of bodily secretions during intercourse: its form is ordained to that end.

It is impossible for there to be any setting in which the use of a ‘condom’ as a ‘condom’ (not as a balloon, or a temporary fluid container, or something similar) could ever be licit. The thing has an inbuilt ordination to immoral activity. It can only be used in a situation of sexual excitement which, by definition, occurs licitly only between husband and wife in marriage and in such a setting its use can never be licit.¹⁶⁹ The sin is single—

- 1) contraception.

¹⁶⁷ The distinction is between the act a man may commit without attention, *actio hominis*, and the act in which he applies his human attention, *actus humanus*. When a man scratches his nose in the course of speaking, the former is a mere *actio hominis*; his speech is an *actus humanus*; We are concerned and concerned only, with those acts done with human advertence.

¹⁶⁸ In metaphysical terms, it is *matter* awaiting the *form* of the moral act.

¹⁶⁹ Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* [31.12.1930]; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [25.7.1968]. This is the case even if either should seek by means of such instrument to avoid the parallel evil of transmission of venereal infection, as to which, see below.

The use of a condom in *extra marital* natural intercourse is illicit, in an intercourse which is itself illicit. There are two sins—

- 1) fornication, and
- 2) contraception.

To the first sin here is added the additional malice of preventing, or endeavouring to prevent, the natural consequences of intercourse.

The use of a condom in homosexual activity is illicit in intercourse which is not only illicit but unnatural. There are three sins, or rather, three grievous elements in the one sin which add to the heinousness of what is done—

- 1) sexual activity for the sake of pleasure alone;
- 2) conducted against the order of nature;
- 3) using an instrument to circumvent the sanction which is the natural consequence of commission of the first and the second.

There is malice in the unnatural way in which the sin is committed; added malice in the use of a condom in the endeavour to avoid the natural sanction.

An age which has become hardened to self-disfigurement and bodily abuse and blinded to their malice will have difficulty accepting that a 'condom' is something whose ordination (as 'condom') is intrinsically evil. That is not a problem with objective truth: it is a problem for those who have abandoned the path of moral rectitude. Our bodies are not our own to do with as we please. They are only to be used in accordance with the rule of morals, and for the uses we make of them we will be called to account. Pope Pius XII dealt with the issue definitively—

“[T]he principle is inviolable. God alone is the Lord of man’s life and bodily integrity, his organs, members and faculties, particularly those which are instruments associated in the work of creation.”¹⁷⁰

It may be objected that a 'condom' is simply a species of prosthesis. A prosthesis is an artificial part designed to assist the body to perform its natural functions or to supply for a bodily defect. Its licitness, indeed its only justification, derives from its ordination for the good of the body and so of the person. Of such are false teeth, spectacles, and artificial limbs. A 'condom' operates in the very opposite way to a prosthesis; it is a sort of anti-prosthesis, designed to interfere with the way God has made our bodies. In that interference lies its illicitness. This may be seen when its use is considered in the light of the *Principle of the Double Effect*.¹⁷¹

It is not licit to do an act wherefrom flow two effects, one good, the other evil, unless four conditions are fulfilled—

1. The act itself is good, or at least morally neutral;

¹⁷⁰ *Allocution to the Fourth International Congress of Surgeons*, May 20, 1948.

¹⁷¹ The principle is contained in the teaching of St Thomas on whether it is lawful to kill in self defence. “Moral acts,” he says, “take their species according to what is intended, and not according to what is beside the intention, since this is accidental...” *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 64, a. 7.

2. The good effect alone is intended;
3. The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy from the act, and not the evil effect prior to the good; and,
4. The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh that of the good effect.

1. *The act is good.*

What is the act? It is unnatural sexual intercourse using a 'condom'.¹⁷² Is such an act a good act? Neither with nor without the impediment is it good because the act, carried out purely for sexual gratification, is against the order of nature. The failure of this, the first of the four conditions, is sufficient to condemn the act as illicit. For the more perfect demonstration of the evils involved, however, we will proceed to consider the three further conditions.

2. *The good effect alone is intended.*

What is the good effect of the act of impeded unnatural intercourse? The *allegedly* good effect is the prevention of the transmission of viruses such as AIDS, the incident of promiscuous sexual activity. Whether such means can ever be an effective preventative for such transmission is beside the point. Is this the only effect intended? It is not. An evil effect, the enjoyment of sexual pleasure in the unnatural act, is also intended. It follows that this second condition is not fulfilled either.

3. *The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy...but not the evil prior.*

By 'immediacy' here is not meant *temporal*, but *ontological*, immediacy—i.e., immediacy not in the order of time, but in the order of reality.¹⁷³ The two effects do not flow at least with equal immediacy. The evil effect, the perversion of the natural order, is ontologically prior to the alleged good, the prevention of the transmission of the virus. Hence, neither is this condition fulfilled.

4. *The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh the good of the good effect*

The good lost by the evil effect is objectively infinite in that the one who performs it places himself in a state of eternal perdition. The allegedly good effect, the prevention of attack of the virus, is but a relative good for, in the first place, it is conditional and, in the second, it goes only to the good of the body, a material, and therefore, limited good and that at the expense of the soul which is eternal.

¹⁷² The fitting of the device is not to be treated as if this was hardly different to putting gloves on the hands, or shoes on the feet. The fitting is but the *matter* of that act, and the peril for modern thinkers blinded as they are by materialism, is to regard its *matter* as the whole of the act. It is not. Of infinitely greater importance is the *form* of the act. This is specified by the *end* for which the act is done. Gloves are not placed on the hands without a reason, nor are shoes on the feet. Likewise, a 'condom' is not fitted without a reason. In each case it is the reason which gives the act its formal character. Insofar as the act—the whole act, *matter* and *form*—conforms with the rule of morals, it is good; insofar as it is unconformed to that rule it is evil.

¹⁷³ For example, in the temporal order a man may be regarded as existing together with his shadow. But in the ontological order the man is prior to his shadow. It cannot exist unless he first exists.

Once these distinctions are made, the shortcomings in the article by Martin Rhonheimer in the edition of 10th July 2004 of *The Tablet*, entitled *The Truth about Condoms*, become manifest. The principle according to which he proceeds is the subsidiary principle of harm minimisation. This has no place in the Church's moral lexicon when it conflicts with the principles of theology and of the moral law. The first theological principle is that of charity—*Love God first above all things, and love your neighbour as yourself*. The first moral principle, in the form of its first corollary, is this—*It is not licit to do evil that good may come of it*. Any use of a 'condom', as 'condom', is immoral and against the law of God. It offends against both these primary principles and no appeal to 'harm minimisation' can save it.

Rhonheimer fails to understand that the relevant moral principle applies in respect of both *finis operis* and *finis operantis*. One may not choose an evil means, an instrument whose very use interferes with the natural order, to achieve a good end. Nor can a good intention on the part of the 'condom' user ever justify its use. It follows that his conclusion—the Church [cannot] possibly teach that people engaged in immoral lifestyles should avoid [condoms]—is in error.

And what of Pope Benedict's passing comments about the male prostitute 'condom' user in the interview published as *Luce del Mondo*? As has been said above, the use of a 'condom' in unnatural intercourse adds to the malice of the sin. How, then, could it be justified to say—

"There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralisation..."

Or, as another translation has it—

"There can be individual cases that are justified, for example when a male prostitute uses a condom, and this can be the first step toward a moral sensitisation..."¹⁷⁴

Or, as a third—

"I would say, if a (male) prostitute uses a condom, that can be the first act towards a moralisation, a first step to responsibility, toward developing a consciousness that not everything is permitted..."¹⁷⁵

The only justification possible derives from the metaphysical distinction between what is *essential* and what is *accidental*. An act may be evil *per se* yet result *per accidens* in some good. The murder of a man, evil in itself, may bring in train some salutary good such as the conversion of soul of a witness. But just as this accidental good could never

¹⁷⁴ See <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345667?eng=y> The text runs as follows: "Die bloße Fixierung auf das Kondom bedeutet eine Banalisierung der Sexualität, und die ist ja gerade die gefährliche Quelle dafür, dass die Menschen in der Sexualität nicht mehr den Ausdruck ihrer Liebe finden, sondern nur noch eine Art von Droge, die sie sich selbst verabreichen. Deshalb ist auch der Kampf gegen die Banalisierung der Sexualität ein Teil des Ringens darum, dass Sexualität positiv gewertet wird und ihre positive Wirkung im Ganzen des Menschseins entfalten kann. Ich würde sagen, wenn ein Prostituiert ein Kondom verwendet, kann das ein erster Akt zu einer Moralisierung sein, ein erstes Stück Verantwortung, um wieder ein Bewusstsein dafür zu entwickeln, dass nicht alles gestattet ist und man nicht alles tun kann, was man will. Aber es ist nicht die eigentliche Art, dem Übel beizukommen. Diese muss wirklich in der Vermenschlichung der Sexualität liegen".

¹⁷⁵ Translation of James Bogle, cf. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345781?eng=y>

justify the killing of the innocent man, neither can an accidental good justify the appalling abuse of the natural order involved in the use of a 'condom'.

The Pope's indiscriminate mixing of the subjective with the objective and the failure to make clear this distinction has led some to say that the Pope's view permits one to endorse Rhonheimer's erroneous opinions. Here is testimony enough of the problems the Pope's words have created.

The toleration of Rhonheimer's opinions implicit in the failure of the Vatican to correct him is of a piece with its toleration implicit in the failure to correct the equally erroneous interpretation of Pope John Paul's teaching in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 73 by Rhonheimer's fellow academic, Professor Angel Luño. At root, each academic advances the moral fallacy *that in certain cases one may do evil that good may come of it*. If that principle is once allowed free rein, the Church's moral teaching will be destroyed.

These are worrying times for Christ's faithful people.

II

"[W]hile the article drew public criticism, mainly from colleagues in moral theology, I was informed that the *Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith*, then headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, had no problem with it or its arguments."

Martin Rhonheimer¹⁷⁶

Some may regard the views expressed in the first part of this article as too critical of the attitude of the Vatican dicasteries on moral questions. Those views have been borne out, however, by another of the objects of that criticism, the moral theologian Professor Martin Rhonheimer speaking of his controversial article in *The Tablet* of 10th July 2004, in a commentary published on the *chiesa* website on 11th December 2010.

Rhonheimer says he wrote that article in response to views advanced by Hugh Henry, then education officer with London's Linacre Centre, in a previous edition of *The Tablet*.¹⁷⁷ According to Rhonheimer Henry had argued that the use of a 'condom' by prostitutes or in homosexual acts, even exclusively to prevent the infection of one's sexual partner, —

"fails to honour the fertile structure that marital acts must have, cannot constitute mutual and complete self giving and thus violates the sixth commandment."

Against this, Rhonheimer argued —

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *On the condom and AIDS, the Pope has come down from the Cathedra*, on the *chiesa* website at <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1345909?eng=y>

¹⁷⁷ Hugh Henry is now editor of the Australian Catholic journal *Fidelity*.

“But this is not the teaching of the Catholic Church. There is no official magisterial teaching... about condoms... Condoms cannot be intrinsically evil; only human acts; condoms are not human acts, but things...”

From what Rhonheimer has to say in his *chiesa* commentary, however, it would seem that Henry was arguing against the view of Godfried Cardinal Danneels, then Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, premised on the supposition of a refusal by a person infected with HIV to abstain from intercourse, that he had a duty to protect his sexual partner by using a ‘condom’ lest he be guilty of a breach of the fifth commandment. It was the gratuitous comment of *The Tablet’s* then editor, Austen Ivereigh, mocking Henry’s view as inappropriate to address the issue of the protection of a prostitute from contracting the virus from a ‘client’ carrier that Rhonheimer sought to address in his article.

Henry was right to say that the use of the device fails to honour the fertile structure proper to marital acts, and right to say that it constituted a breach of the sixth commandment. But a more universal principle than the prohibition against contraception is necessary to address the greater evil of sexual perversion. This was enunciated by Pope Pius XII and quoted in the first part of this article—

“God alone is the Lord of man’s life and bodily integrity, his organs, members and faculties, particularly those which are instruments associated in the work of creation.”¹⁷⁸

The answer to the questions posed is simple: if the use of a condom is intrinsically evil, that use cannot be justified by any good that may result.

If Rhonheimer had not been caught up with subsidiary principle rather than charity and the moral law he would have acknowledged Henry’s point about the fifth commandment. His assertion, that there is no official magisterial teaching about ‘condoms’, is inaccurate. The condemnation of the device is implicit in the teachings of the popes. It is implicit also in the text books of moral theology of the mid-20th century dealing with external sins against chastity.¹⁷⁹ His assertion is accurate, however, insofar as it contends that nothing has issued from the Vatican authorities on the topic since John XXIII’s ascension of the papal throne. This is a grave failure of attention in an era when the use of the device has become epidemic.

Rhonheimer remarks—

“Condoms cannot be intrinsically evil, only human acts; condoms are not human acts, but things...”

This is partly right and partly wrong. Any thing, whether natural or artificial, insofar as it is a being, is good because it was created by God. Hence, nothing natural can ever be intrinsically evil. But an artificial thing can be so devised that its purpose is

¹⁷⁸ *Allocution to the Fourth International Congress of Surgeons*, May 20, 1948.

¹⁷⁹ Cf., e.g., Henry Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, London, 1952, Eighth ed. Vol. II, pp. 200-254. Sensitive to the degrading effect of the discussion of sexual perversion on their readers, the moral theologians of the time took the precaution of issuing their teaching on its more morbid aspects in Latin.

intrinsically evil. Of such is the 'condom' when used as it is designed. Hence, using the analogy of attribution, it *can* be said that the 'condom' is intrinsically evil.¹⁸⁰

Having made the point that, if one speaks rigorously (rather than analogically), only human acts can be intrinsically evil, Rhonheimer seems to confine the category to acts which are contraceptive.

"But what of promiscuous people, sexually active homosexuals, and prostitutes? What the Catholic Church teaches them is simply that they should not be promiscuous, but faithful to one single sexual partner; that prostitution is a behaviour which gravely violates human dignity, mainly the dignity of the woman, and therefore should not be engaged in; and that homosexuals, as all other people, are children of God and loved by him as everybody else is, but that they should live in continence like any other unmarried person. But if they ignore this teaching, and are at risk from HIV, should they use condoms to prevent infection? The moral norm condemning contraception as intrinsically evil does not apply to these cases..."

The reader will observe here, first, that he misstates the Church's teaching; then, he lumps together various sinful activities as if there was no distinction between their respective causes.

The Church *does not* teach that the promiscuous should be faithful to one sexual partner. She teaches that there is only one licit use of the sex act that between a man and a woman united conjugally in marriage. Fornication, even with one only sexual partner is sinful because it rejects the institution which God has established and, in doing so, betrays the dignity of each of the participants. On the other hand, sexual activity between those of the same sex is sinful because it is a perversion of the sexual powers given to each by God. Such activity is intrinsically disordered, and hence intrinsically evil. It is not contraceptive (in the sense that it prevents what could result in new life); it is perverted.

In the next sentence he appears to contradict himself—

Nor can there be church teaching about this; it would be simply nonsensical to establish moral norms for intrinsically immoral types of behaviour..."

What is he speaking of here except homosexual and other perverted sexual behaviour? If the Church can lay down norms about the intrinsic evil of contraception, why "would [it] be simply nonsensical" to assert that the Church has authority to do the same about these intrinsic evils? Christ's Church is able to rule on any and every evil to which man is subject: no human perversion is beyond her compass.

However, a perusal of his *chiesa* commentary reveals that what Rhonheimer meant was this—

"There are contexts in which moral orientations completely lose their normative significance because they can at most lessen an evil, not be directed to the good..."

¹⁸⁰ In the same way might we call life in a sunny climate 'healthy' because it contributes to health.

And he cites as instance—

“The only thing the Church can possibly teach about rape... is the moral obligation to completely refrain from it, not how to carry it out in a less immoral way.”

Perhaps. But the Church can certainly teach about the grades of evil, and how some additional feature may add to the evil committed. Moreover, she is bound to warn those who contemplate such conduct accordingly.

Almighty God has established a setting—fixed and immutable; ordered and ordained—in which He placed man, the most noble of His material creatures. So long as he lives in accordance with that order and setting, man is happy. Whenever he departs from that order, he suffers.

The prophet Job said *Naked I came into the world, and naked I shall return...* [Job 1: 21] The critical word in this text is *naked*: for the word signifies that order and setting. *What do you have that you have not been given?* St Paul asked rhetorically [1 Corinthians 4: 7]. The critical word in this text is *given*: for (again) the word signifies that order and setting. The Roman poet Horace [65-8 BC] wrote in his epistles: *Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret*.¹⁸¹ The critical word in this text is *naturam*: for (yet again) the word signifies that order and setting. The root *na-* means ‘given’. We are born in the *na-*: we live in the *na-*: we are, at once, determined and yet free, in the *na-*. There is nothing that we have, down to the very air we breathe, that has not first been given us through the medium of nature.

Of this immense reality, St Thomas says profoundly: *res (naturalis) inter duos intellectos constituta...*¹⁸²—“The (natural) thing [is] established between two intellects.” The Uncreated Intellect has placed before man (the created intellect) for his edification, nature, that—

“from the good things he sees, he is enabled to discover Him who is; and by studying the works, he is able to recognise the Artificer...”¹⁸³

The modern world is besotted with nature at the *material* level; and lives in a state of fundamental denial, even terror, of nature at the *formal* level. For to acknowledge nature’s *formality* would entail tacit acknowledgement of its *finality*.¹⁸⁴ And there can be no *finality*, no *end* in nature, without an intellect that intends that end. And the

¹⁸¹ You can drive nature out with a pitchfork, she will always return. *Epistles* I, x

¹⁸² *De Veritate* I, 2

¹⁸³ A paraphrase of *Wisdom* 13: 1 whose text mocks those who refuse to acknowledge the reality: “Naturally stupid are all men who have not known God and who, from the good things that are seen, have not been able to discover Him who is; or by studying the works have failed to recognise the artificer...”

¹⁸⁴ For *formality* follows on *finality*. *What* something is, its essence, quiddity or nature, is determined by *the end* for which it exists. Even in artificial things this principle applies, as the form of the artificial reality, *bridge*, is determined by the end which it is intended to serve, to enable the passage from one side to another across a gulf, of people, on foot or in conveyances.

acknowledgement of such an intellect means one must accept the existence of God. And from this, the modern world has long since turned its face away.

Every human act affects a man's ultimate destiny as we remarked in the first part of this article. Man does not exist *sui juris*, as modern philosophers like to think, but subject to the demands of that setting in which God has established him: and not simply demands, but ordinations. For nature has indelible laws whose breach brings inevitable consequences, evidenced in the aphorism—

“God always forgives; man sometimes forgives; nature never forgives.”

Now, the penalty that a law imposes to preserve the order it mandates is called a *sanction*, a word rooted in the wisdom of our Roman fathers; for it is derived from the Latin verb *to make holy*.

If men ignore the natural order in which God establishes them and ignore the Church's teaching which codifies that order, they incur the sanctions that nature imposes spontaneously to punish its abuse. Each such sanction is ordained for the sinner's correction that he might throw off his evil ways, confess his sins and return to a state of innocence, and union with the God Who made him.

The first, and most important, of these sanctions is eternal perdition. The one who engages in illicit sexual activity loses the possibility of eternal beatitude in the moment he consents to the sin. In that moment of embrace of the will, he is damned. And he will be so eternally should he die before undergoing conversion of heart. This primary sanction manifests itself in disturbance of conscience and disorder of soul. The sinner suffers, additionally, a weakening of will manifest in reduction of self control in sexual matters; a weakening of the intellect in both speculative and practical judgements; and the burden of vice (evil habit) which affects his behaviour and inclines him to things yet more degraded. In a moment of introspection he may admit to himself that he lives not so much like a man as a beast. His state recalls that recited in parable by Christ our Lord—

*[T]he younger son... left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine and he began to feel the pinch; so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything...*¹⁸⁵

But the sanctions of the natural law are not only these non-material, or *immaterial*, ones (using that word in its proper meaning); there are also *material* sanctions, signified in the parable by the famine that afflicted the prodigal son. Among the *material* sanctions that afflict the sexually debauched are the physical *sequelae* of disturbance of the psyche and the internal senses, and venereal diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS.

¹⁸⁵ Luke 15: 13-16

Now, while the sinner who persists in his sins cannot hope to avoid the *immaterial* sanctions, he can try and avoid the *material* ones.¹⁸⁶ This is the context in which the morally defective and their advisers attempt to justify the use of the ‘condom’ in illicit sexual behaviour. He who uses one of these devices, since he seeks to avoid the natural sanction, compounds the offence he commits. He sets himself against correction, willing to have the sinful pleasure while taking pains to avoid the penalty. He hardens his soul against contrition and conversion to the good; he acts with malice.

One who sins through malice, rather than through passion, St Thomas teaches, is ill disposed in respect of the end of his conduct, since malice signifies the application of willed attention. Now *end* has the character of a principle *that wherefrom something proceeds*, as Aristotle teaches in the *Metaphysics*.¹⁸⁷ But a defect of principle is the worst of all defects, for everything that flows from the principle is affected by it. Therefore a sin committed through malice is worse than one committed through passion.¹⁸⁸ Hence, the use of a ‘condom’ in illicit sexual activity adds grievously to the evil committed.

Once this is understood, it can be seen how defective is the argument that the use of such a device by one who persists in engaging in such behaviour ostensibly to protect the party with whom he commits it “may be a first step to responsibility, (or moralisation)”. Such an argument involves the assertion that one may do evil that good may come of it. The reader will understand immediately how crucial is this judgement. We will return to it.

Rhonheimer goes on in his *Tablet* article to argue—

“Equally, a married man who is HIV-infected and uses the condom to protect his wife from infection is not acting to render procreation impossible, but to prevent infection. If conception is prevented, this will be an—unintentional—side effect and will not therefore shape the moral meaning of the act as a contraceptive act...”

This is a specious attempt to invoke the *Principle of the Double Effect* in aid of the subsidiary principle of harm minimisation at the expense of the moral law. The principle of morals is not *First ensure that you avoid harm*: it is, *Do good; avoid evil*. A correct analysis of the application of the *Principle of the Double Effect* under the moral law in respect of impeded natural intercourse is as follows.¹⁸⁹

The principle—It is not licit to do an act wherefrom flow two effects, one good, the other evil, unless four conditions are fulfilled—

1. The act itself is good, or at least morally neutral;

¹⁸⁶ For instance by taking drugs to correct psychological imbalance.

¹⁸⁷ *Metaphysics* I

¹⁸⁸ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 78, a. 4. In fact St Thomas says there are *three* reasons why a sin committed through malice is the more grievous. The reason referred to here seems the most telling of the three.

¹⁸⁹ The parallel analysis of the application of the *Principle* in the case of *unnatural* sexual intercourse appears in the first part of this article.

2. The good effect alone is intended;
3. The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy from the act, and not the evil effect prior to the good; and,
4. The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh that of the good effect.

1. *The act is good.*

What is the act? It is the use of a 'condom' in the act of natural sexual intercourse. Is such an act a good act? Without the impediment, the act is not only good, but mandated for those who are conjugally united. With the impediment the act is incapable of achieving its end, the possibility of procreation, and is therefore evil.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, since acts are specified by their ends, and the end in such an act—pure sexual gratification—differs from the end of natural intercourse between spouses, it is a different act.¹⁹¹ The failure of this, the first of the four conditions, is sufficient to condemn the act as illicit.

2. *The good effect alone is intended.*

What is the good effect of the act of impeded natural intercourse? The *allegedly* good effect is the prevention of the transmission by the husband of his wife with the HIV virus. Is this the only effect intended? It is not. Another effect, the enjoyment of sexual pleasure is also intended *with the procreative order of nature excluded*. The husband cannot ignore the *finis operis*, the consequences of the operation of the instrument he uses, by pretending preoccupation with his own end (*finis operantis*), and those consequences are contraceptive. The second condition is not fulfilled.

3. *The good and evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy...but not the evil prior.*

On the hypothesis of the effectiveness of the 'condom', neither the ordination of the natural act, nor the transmission of the virus can occur. That is, the good and the evil effects flow at least with equal immediacy. Thus, the third condition is fulfilled.

4. *The good lost by the evil effect does not outweigh the good of the good effect.*

The good lost by the evil effect is objectively infinite, the possibility of creation of a human life. The good effect, the prevention of transmission of the virus, is a relative good for it is conditional and it goes only to the good of the body, a material, and therefore, limited good. The fourth condition is not fulfilled.

Accordingly, the act is illicit and Rhonheimer's assertion is false.

¹⁹⁰ Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* [31.12.1930]; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [25.7.1968].

¹⁹¹ In the argument on the application of the *Principle of the Double Effect* in our earlier paper, we asserted the act under consideration was "The use of a condom in the act of unnatural sexual intercourse". One questioner has queried whether there are not in fact two acts rather than one, the act of intercourse and the act of wearing a 'condom'. There is only one act. The performance of an act of unnatural intercourse is really different from the performance of an act of unnatural intercourse using a 'condom' as the performance of the act of walking down a public street by a man fully clothed is really different from the performance of that act by a man naked. The distinction between the two in each instance is found in the accident *habitus*. Nine accidents qualify every material substance, viz., *quantity, quality, relation, when, where, action, passion, habitus* and *situs*. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7: St Thomas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Bk. V, 9, 886 et seq.

Rhonheimer makes this further statement—

“There may be other reasons to warn against the use of a condom in such a case, or to advise total continence, but these will not be because of the Church’s teaching on contraception but for pastoral or simply prudential reasons—the risk, for example, of the condom not working. Of course, this last argument does not apply to promiscuous people, because even if condoms do not always work, their use will help reduce the evil consequences of morally evil behaviour.”

It is patent that he is a materialist. While paying lip service to the Church’s teaching as to the eternal worth of the individual person, he regards the evil consequences of evil behaviour as primarily *material*, rather than *immaterial*. His approach allows the limited values of this present life to take precedence over the infinite value of the person created in the image and likeness of God. That infinite value demands that the eternal welfare of the prostitute, the homosexual, be given pre-eminence by the moral theologian over every other consideration *in every instance*.

Not only is Rhonheimer wrong here, he is doubly wrong. Far from “help[ing] to reduce the consequences of morally evil behaviour”, the use of a ‘condom’ *adds to* those evil consequences in that it makes the return of the sinner to moral rectitude more difficult as he strays the further from its path. Moreover, since those consequences occur at the *immaterial* level, they are infinitely more significant than any hoped for reduction of evil at the *material* level.

In his *chiesa* commentary, he says this—

“What the Linacre Centre proposed as the authentic catholic position was that there exists a moral obligation for unchaste people engaging in sinful sexual acts at least to abstain from using condoms—so as to avoid a further sin against the sixth commandment and therefore to render their sinful acts less sinful, even if they thereby will infect other people or themselves with a deadly disease. Such an argument makes people falsely believe that it is the Church’s teaching on contraception which leads to such counter intuitive consequences... but that teaching does not apply in such circumstances...”

That the Linacre Centre was right in its conclusion—if wrong in the authority on which it sought to rely—appears from the application of the principles set out above.

1. A person who engages in illicit sexual acts commits a grave sin.
2. One who in the course of so doing uses a ‘condom’ adds to the gravity of the sin he commits.
3. It is no justification that he may achieve some good in using it, because it is not licit to do evil that good may come of it. This is the case even if the good he intends may be the preservation of the other party from infection with a deadly disease.
4. In the event that the offence occurs in a natural sexual act (i.e., between a man and a woman), the sin is fornication, and the use of a ‘condom’

constitutes the sin of contraception, for the *finis operis* of the device—which the agent adopts—is contraceptive.

5. In the event that the offence occurs in an unnatural sexual act, the sin is sodomy (or one of its variants), and the use of a 'condom' constitutes an act of added malice, for the *finis operis* of the device—which the agent adopts—serves to avoid the natural material sanctions of the sin.

The above points solve each of the difficult cases Rhonheimer puts forward as well as Cardinal Danneels' bizarre suggestion.

This final quote from *The Tablet* article confirms Rhonheimer's materialism.

"Stopping the worldwide AIDS epidemic is not a question about the morality of using condoms, but about how to effectively prevent people from causing the disastrous consequences of their immoral behaviour. Pope John Paul II has repeatedly urged that the promotion of the use of condoms is not a solution to this problem because he holds that it does not resolve the moral problem of promiscuity. Whether generally, campaigns promoting condoms encourage risky behaviour and make the AIDS pandemic worse is a question for statistical evidence which is not yet easily available. That it reduces transmission rates in the short term among highly infective groups like prostitutes and homosexuals is impossible to deny. Whether it may decrease infection rates among 'sexually liberated' promiscuous populations or, on the contrary, encourage risky behaviour, depends on many factors."

We do not need to waste time proceeding *a posteriori* when, through His Church, Christ has provided us *a priori* with the essential principles to solve the problem.¹⁹² Since the 'condom' is intrinsically evil, it is *morally impossible* that the solution to the problem can ever be achieved by means of it.

As we have explained above, the consequences of immoral behaviour are but elements of the sanction that Divine Providence imports to correct sinful men. There is only one way to avoid those consequences: the behaviour must cease, or at least be substantially curtailed. One institution on earth alone is capable of achieving in the hearts of men that conversion, the Catholic Church—because it is of God. The Catholic bishops of Uganda have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of the Church's teaching among their flocks with their appeal to men to be men and not weaklings, and abstain from immoral sexual behaviour.

It is only through the salutary influence of the Church that the AIDS epidemic will be curtailed but the operation of that influence has just received its worst possible setback.

¹⁹² Conclusions reached *a posteriori*, that is, proceeding from observed effects to a cause, can rarely arrive at absolute certitude as one can never be sure that sufficient instances of the relevant effects have been gathered. On the other hand, conclusions reached *a priori*, that is, proceeding from cause to effect, provide a certitude identical with the certitude of the cause, because the effects are simply corollaries of the cause.

From what has been said above it is demonstrable that Pope Benedict XVI has erred in the opinion he expressed on the issue of the use of 'condoms' in his interview with journalist, Peter Seewald. Because sexual immorality has become epidemic throughout the world, that opinion is capable of causing immense scandal.

No pope is indefectible: he can err. This is the reason the *Vatican Council* laid out in the Decree *Pastor Aeternus* [18.7.1870] the precise circumstances that must obtain in order that when a pope speaks he *does not* err. The Dominican, Melchior Cano, theologian to the Fathers of the Council of Trent, summarised the issue before us:

"Peter has no need of our lies or flattery. Those who blindly and indiscriminately defend every decision of the supreme Pontiff are the very ones who do most to undermine the authority of the Holy See—they destroy instead of strengthening its foundations."¹⁹³

We are bound, then, in accordance with the teaching of the Church's Angelic Doctor, to correct in charity even so eminent a figure as the Pope.

"A subject is not competent to administer to his prelate the correction which is an act of justice through the coercive nature of punishment: but the fraternal correction which is an act of charity is within the competence of everyone in respect of any person towards whom he is bound by charity..."¹⁹⁴

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Principal

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, should forthwith withdraw the opinion he has expressed that the use of a 'condom' (by a male prostitute) "may be a first step to responsibility (or moralisation)",¹⁹⁵ and publish that withdrawal as extensively, and in as many languages, as its publication in the book *Luce del Mondo*.

Ancillary

His Holiness should, moreover, forthwith direct that the license to teach in any Catholic institution of Professor Martin Rhonheimer be suspended pending an acknowledgement in acceptable terms by that moral theologian that he has corrected his views in line with the mind of the Catholic Church.

¹⁹³ Quoted in George Weigel, *Witness To Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, London, 2005, p. 15.

¹⁹⁴ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 33, 4.

¹⁹⁵ "Ich würde sagen, wenn ein Prostituerter ein Kondom verwendet, kann das ein erster Akt zu einer Moralisierung sein, ein erstes Stück Verantwortung, um wieder ein Bewusstsein dafür zu entwickeln, dass nicht alles gestattet ist und man nicht alles tun kann, was man will."

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE *NOVUS ORDO*

I

The final cause, or end, of any thing or any action is the chief of its four causes for it is on account of the end that the other causes are activated. It is first in intention and last in execution; it exists first in the mind and, at the last, in what the mind produces. I desire to shelter my family. This moves me to build a house and, after much labour, I bring the house into existence. First I consider my family's needs; then I adopt the means to secure them, and finally, I secure those needs. Local men desire to improve their town's facilities. They apply their differing talents to the project and the facilities are improved.

What was the final cause of the Second Vatican Council? What was it that Pope John XXIII intended in summoning that convention of the Church's bishops and which the bishops went on to achieve? To answer this question we must extract the relevant parts from the Pope's *Opening Speech* on 11th October 1962. He said:

"The salient point of this Council is not... a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a Council was not necessary. But... the Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in... conformity with authentic doctrine which, however, should be studied and expounded through methods of research and... the literary forms of modern thought...

From this we may gather that the Pope was not entirely sure just what it was the Council would achieve, though he had coined a word for what he had in mind, *aggiornamento*, which indicated that he thought the church should be 'brought up-to-date'. What he *did not* have in mind—he was clear about it—was that the Church's teaching should be refined or developed in any way.

Next let us turn to what Pope Paul VI had to say at the Council's close on 7th December 1965, and extract from it his understanding of what the Council had achieved.

"[T]he Council devoted its attention not so much to divine truths but rather, and principally, to the Church... This secular religious society, which is the Church, has endeavoured to carry out an act of reflection about herself, to know herself better, to define herself better and, in consequence, to set aright what she feels and what she commands...

"The Council... has been deeply committed to the study of the modern world. Never before perhaps, so much as on this occasion, has the Church felt the need to know, to draw near to, to understand, to penetrate, serve and evangelize the society in which she lives; and to get to grips with it, almost to run after it, in its rapid and continuous change...

.....

“Yes, the Church of the Council has been concerned, not just with herself... but with man—man as he really is today: living man, man all wrapped up in himself, man who makes himself not only the centre of his every interest but dares to claim that he is the principle and explanation of all reality...

.....

“The modern mind, accustomed to assess everything in terms of usefulness, will readily admit that the Council's value is great if only because everything has been referred to human usefulness. Hence no one should ever say that a religion like the Catholic religion is without use, seeing that when it has its greatest self-awareness and effectiveness, as it has in council, it declares itself entirely on the side of man and in his service.”¹⁹⁶

Let us note, first, the restatement of Pope John's words: the Council's focus was *not* the Church's teachings. Its focus, rather, was rapprochement between the Church and man. The Catholic faith was to adapt its teachings and its practice to the demands of the world.

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It does not seem to have occurred to either of the Popes or to the bishops that what they had striven for was the very opposite of what was appropriate. It is not for the Church to adapt herself to the world. The Church's function is encourage man, to encourage the world, to adapt to her and her reasonable demands, for she is the One, the Unique, body in time and human history founded by God for man's salvation.

It is not as if the issue was obscure. The gap between the Church and the world is immense as St Paul shows—

“Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. Therefore we teach not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches...” (I *Cor.* 2: 12-13)

This is the reason St Peter called the members of Christ's Church—

“a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”. (I *Peter* 2: 9)

But the Popes and the bishops of the Council seem to have had another idea. One is driven to the view they thought the first pope had overstated things when he wrote:

“anyone who has escaped the pollution of the world once by coming to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who then allows himself to be entangled by it a second time, and mastered, will end up in a worse state than he began”. (II *Peter* 2: 20)

In the years that followed, Pope Paul and the bishops worked to implement the Council's focus on man. The *novus ordo* liturgy is part of that work. It has problems,

¹⁹⁶ Address Of Pope Paul VI During The Last General Meeting Of The Second Vatican Council, 7 December 1965.

problems that flow from its attempt to accommodate the faith that God established with the demands of the world.

First, there is the loss which the new form facilitates and encourages of the sense of the sanctity and the immense dignity of the priest as one set apart to take the place of Christ. The debasement flows from the Council's misconception of the priesthood as a "function of the People of God", as if that ineffable office depended for its legitimisation on the faithful; the view that Our Lord, at the beginning, "established ministers among his faithful" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* n. 2). But Christ did no such thing. He chose and prepared the Apostles as priests long before there were any faithful—in order that there might be faithful.

Second is the abandonment of the rigour that characterised the Church's sacred liturgy of the Mass for almost twenty centuries in favour of a calculated laxity in imitation of the secular. The rigour in the strictures that attended readings, words and rubrics governing the celebration of the Mass ensured that God would be honoured in a seamless fashion, universally, as He deserves. The *novus ordo* indulges novelty and experimentation for its own sake.

Third is the degradation of the Mass from a solemn exercise of the duty to give glory to God to a species of entertainment in which, as little more than an incident of the action—almost an afterthought—bread and wine are consecrated. It may be said that this overstates the case. Certainly, there are priests who conduct themselves becomingly as priests within the limitations of the new rite. But the average *novus ordo* priest seems to regard himself as a performer, the chief actor in a drama, with his vestments the necessary stage props. With official endorsement of the abuse which abandons the disposition *ad orientem*, the priest finds that he has a stage and an audience. The male and female assistants who throng the sanctuary provide a supporting cast. He has the opportunity for 'business', interpolating his own contributions in the drama's text and directions. No wonder the members of congregations think themselves entitled, from time to time, to indulge in applause.

Fourth is the effect of the error contained in the Council's directive that among the "functions" of the priesthood, the first place is be given to preaching, *sub textum* "proclaiming the Gospel of God to all" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* n. 4). This contrasts dramatically with the Church's millennial understanding of what characterises the priesthood, confirmed by the Council of Trent:

"If any one says that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood; or that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins; but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel... let him be anathema." (Session XXIII, Canon I)

When, in the Protestant revolt, renegade Catholics abandoned the Mass in protest against Christ and His Church they were left with nothing but its paraphernalia. The

pulpit replaced the altar and unctuous declamations of right replaced the eternal sacrifice. This is the aberration Trent addresses in the Canon cited above. Historian H.J.A. Sire has remarked how “the rich economy of salvation given us in the sacraments and the Mass is reduced to a religion of preaching at people”.¹⁹⁷ He adds, acerbically, “If words were sufficient to bring men to Him, God would not have needed to become man and die for us; He could have founded a newspaper”.

The scope given to preaching provides priests of Modernist inclinations (and their name is ‘legion’) with a platform in which to air their heterodoxy. How many faithful Catholics have said to themselves, “if only Father — — was prevented from preaching we could attend his Masses with impunity”?

Fifth, and deserving of special mention, is the phenomenon of ‘prayers of the faithful’. Such prayers were used at the time of the early Fathers and are referred to by St Justin and St Augustine. They were discontinued in the Roman rite with the realisation that they were unnecessary. The Church has for centuries confined the exclamation of specific prayers, the Great Intercessions, to a ceremony once a year on Good Friday, the one day of the year, be it noted, when no Mass is celebrated.

In *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 50 the bishops of the Council directed that scope was to be given for restoration “to the earlier norm of the holy Fathers” of “elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history”. The suppression of these prayers had not been an accident but a step taken with sound theological understanding, shown by the fact that the Church adopted it as her permanent practice. Nor did it follow that, because a practice had once been followed by the Church Fathers, it should be resurrected. The Mass is the perfect act of impetration for the living and the dead, for it is Christ who is doing the praying. The ‘prayers of the faithful’ of the *novus ordo* are otiose. They are, moreover, tedious and repetitious. But the chief objection to them is that they denigrate the right understanding of the Mass as the central act of impetration.

Typically a deal of time is devoted to these intercessory prayers which should be given to the proper celebration of the Offertory (emasculated in the *novus ordo*) and to the Canon. Time which should be spent on the act of *perfect* impetration is wasted in a ceremony of *imperfect* impetration. In practice, the time so wasted moves the priest to adopt one or other of the shorter Eucharistic Prayers, a choice which diminishes further a right focus on the re-enactment of Christ’s sacrifice.

The intercessory prayer ethos has affected, too, the offices of *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer*—formerly *Lauds* and *Vespers*—the chief hours of the Divine Office, at the expense of two of the five psalms that marked those hours. The Divine Office is the Canticle of Praise of God brought into the world with the coming of Our Saviour

¹⁹⁷ *Phoenix from the Ashes - The Making, Unmaking, and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, Kettering, Ohio, Angelico Press, 2015, p. 262

Jesus Christ and continued by His Church. It is grounded in a tradition formalised by St Benedict of reciting each week all one hundred and fifty psalms. That tradition has been abandoned in favour of the recitation of a majority, but not all, of the 150, over four weeks with certain of the psalms shortened or emasculated. Other padding has been added by interpolating extracts, as if they were psalms or canticles, from the Epistles.

The Office was always focussed on Christ's sacrifice and each hour reflected the Mass, as its aureole reflects the glory of the Sun, in the repetition of the Collect. This unity was fractured when the smorgasbord mentality of the *novus ordo* invited the use of other prayers.

Sixth is the obsession with following *seriatim, litterate et ad nauseam*, the texts of Old and New Testaments in cycles (three years for Sundays, two years for weekdays) that disrupt the unity of the Church's liturgical year. Why, after centuries of ordered access to those parts of sacred scripture that best suit the Church's sacred liturgy, was it necessary to engage in a slavish study of every book in the Bible large parts of which involve passages which are either tiresome or difficult? Why must the faithful bear the evil of dislocation to the Propers of the Mass that follows? Memorials of the saints are accompanied by readings, mandated to satisfy this burdensome regime, which are utterly inappropriate. There can be no explanation for the disorder that followed other than a perceived need to defer to Protestant views about the Bible.

Seventh is the loss of the unifying principle entailed in the use of the common liturgical language, Latin. There is a species of theft involved in the removal of this mark of the universality of the religion whose name, Catholic, it signifies. The fracturing of the unity of his faith is patent for any member of the faithful who finds himself in a foreign country attending Mass in the vernacular.

Eighth is the corresponding loss of the majesty of the solemn celebration of the Mass in the Gregorian form, something Catholics shared universally irrespective of country or local imperatives. This is made manifest, in its negation, by the mockeries of that majesty that accompany solemn celebrations of the *novus ordo*, where songs in imitation of the secular take the place of hymns, secular instruments replace the organ, and the ethos of the Mass as entertainment is most manifest.

Ninth is the impertinence that characterises many *novus ordo* celebrations where a few appoint themselves, or are appointed, to dictate to the rest of the faithful how they should conduct themselves in the course of the liturgy. Abstracting from the right, and duty, to correct another when necessary, no Catholic is entitled to do this. A feature of this abuse is the pressure to communicate with others during Mass whose bad example leads to a lack of silence and indulgence in conversation where respect for Almighty God demands the contrary — *Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Deus* (Psalm 45 v.11).

The unwarranted extension to all the faithful of the kiss of peace, a feature of High Mass confined to those on the sanctuary—deacon, sub-deacon and servers—where it reflected the loving cooperation of those assisting the priest in his presentation of Christ's sacrifice, has no justification. The motivation seems to be to enhance the ethos of 'the priesthood of the laity' conceived, falsely, as a sharing in that of the priest, and further the endeavour to reduce the Mass to conformity with the secular.

Tenth is the toleration of the abuse of women (or girls) on the sanctuary, to the permission of which novelty a pope allowed his preoccupation with ideology and deference to its adherents to destroy a tradition as old as the Church herself.

Eleventh is the syndrome of de-sacralisation in which many *novus ordo* priests think themselves bound to indulge. Even the best feel they must be 'hail-fellow-well-met' in their behaviour towards the faithful. Many actively encourage the faithful to conduct themselves as if they were in a place no different from the secular, as if the real presence of Almighty God, their Creator and Saviour reserved in the church in the Blessed Sacrament, was no different to any natural presence.

The prime offender, by his silence if not by his active encouragement, is the priest. The syndrome of de-sacralisation is part of the loss of sense of the dignity of the office of the priesthood mentioned above. At root is the absence of the Gift of the Holy Spirit called *Filial Fear*. There is no better illustration of the evils of deferring to the secular let loose by the bishops of Vatican II and the Pope who encouraged them.

Twelfth is the raft of ersatz Eucharistic Prayers, the second, third and fourth of the ordinary form, and the novel versions authorised by the Vatican for various occasions. The smorgasbord mentality at work typifies the deference to the secular at the expense of the solemnity demanded by the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice.

Thirteenth is the degradation of the Church's solemn feast days. Days of Obligation have been diminished to the point where there is hardly a member of the faithful who recognises those that remain, or recognises his duty to attend Mass on such days. Solemn celebrations have been sidelined to accommodate the secular. Thus the Ascension has been moved from Ascension Thursday to the Sunday following and its celebration forty days after Christ's Resurrection has been falsified. The Mass for a feast or memorial that falls on the date of some secular celebration such as, in Australia, Australia Day and Anzac Day, is suppressed in favour of endorsement of some worldly event.

Fourteenth is the reinvention of the liturgical calendar. Whatever the reasons given for this act of disruption, its motive would seem to be to show that the 'new Church', the Church that came into being after Vatican II, was discontinuous with the old. The chaos that has followed this revolution has only grown with the passage of time as innumerable saints of the new dispensation have been added to the calendar.

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In his recent paper, *The New Synthesis of All Heresies*, Peter Kwasniewski remarks the way Catholic values have been ‘transvalued’ as a result of Vatican II.

“Every bit of the Mass, every aspect of the Divine Office, every sacramental rite, every blessing, every piece of clerical and liturgical clothing, every page of Canon Law and the Catechism—all had to be revamped, reworked, revised, usually in the direction of diminution and softening: “the Word was made bland, and dwelt in the suburbs”. The beauty and power of our tradition was muted at best, silenced at worst. No form was safe, stable, or deemed worthy of preservation as it stood, as it had been received.”¹⁹⁸

We have argued elsewhere that it can be proven *a priori* and *a posteriori* that the Second Vatican Council was *not* a general or ecumenical council of the Church. *If this is the case*—and it is for the Church to pronounce verdict formally—none of the directives issued by the Council’s bishops, even though endorsed by Pope Paul VI, are binding on the Church or the faithful, for they lack legitimate authority. Its teachings, where they departed from the perennial teachings of the Church are no more than the collective opinions of its bishops.

If this is the case there was no need to interfere with the Church’s liturgical practices; no need for a new order of the Mass. *That* is the chief problem with the *novus ordo*.

Many Catholics are coming to the view that, with the increasing availability of the *extraordinary form* of the liturgy, they will submit themselves to the fatuities of the *ordinary form* no longer.

II

“Is it really possible for an ecumenical council to say that any heretic has the right to draw the faithful away from Christ, the Supreme Pastor, and to lead them to pasture in their [sic] poisoned fields?”

Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney 1940-1971¹⁹⁹

Whether they did so wittingly or unwittingly the bishops of Vatican II attacked three elements of the Church’s undertaking—

- the Blessed Eucharist,
- the sanctity of the office of the priesthood, and
- the truth that membership of the Catholic Church is necessary for all men for salvation.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. <https://onepeterfive.com/the-new-synthesis-of-all-heresies-on-nietzschean-catholicism/> May 16, 2018.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in John W O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge Mass., 2010, p. 218.

The Church's sacred liturgy, as Peter Kwasniewski reminds us in a recent paper, *The Ninefold Kyrie*,²⁰⁰ is not something useful. Some things are useful, some things are useless. But some things are above use such as fine music and art. These are ends in themselves and it is for this reason that we call them 'fine'.²⁰¹ Now, the things which most deserve to be called 'fine' are the ceremonies of true religion, the Mass, the Divine Office and the celebration of the Sacraments, for these concern *man's ultimate end*, union with his Creator and Redeemer here on earth and forever in heaven. The very last consideration in our celebration of the Church's liturgy, then, should be its utility. We have a duty to 'waste' our time in its action because it is infinitely more important than what is merely useful.

Their blindness to this distinction (*inter multa alia*) warped the thinking of the bishops of Vatican II. It grounded their condemnation of what they asserted, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, to be 'useless repetitions' in the liturgy. It sullied the whole approach of those who set about reforming the liturgy after the close of the Council. Of this defective attitude the *novus ordo* (the *forma ordinaria*) is the apotheosis. Let's look at the three elements the Council bishops attacked in reverse order.

The Council attacked the truth of the doctrine that membership of the Catholic Church is necessary for all men for salvation.

This is most manifest in the Council's final document, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* in which, after giving the doctrine lip service (in chapter 1), the bishops proceeded to betray it in the chapters that followed. If man is free to embrace any religion he chooses, as the Council held, if he has a fundamental right to do so regardless of the demands of right reason and the revelation of Almighty God, it was utterly illogical for them to assert that their teaching "[left] untouched the Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men... toward the true religion and... the one Church of Jesus Christ".

The Council attacked the Office of the priesthood

In adopting the Protestant perception of the priest as a function of the people of God the Council's bishops rejected the Church's position that he is chosen by God to stand in the place of Christ before men. The Protestant view is that the priest (or pastor) is a servant, a means to an end. The Catholic view is that the priest is an end, as Christ (Whom he represents) is an end, and that we are bound to heed him as we would heed Christ if we are to embrace the salvation promised us by God.

The sanctity of the office of the priesthood appears nowhere more clearly than in the celebration of High Mass in the Tridentine rite (*forma extraordinaria*). The celebrant,

²⁰⁰ *The Ninefold Kyrie: An Example of "Useless Repetition"?* The New Liturgical Movement website—<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/07/the-ninefold-kyrie-example-of-useless.html#.W2I0x9IzbIU> An edited version is reproduced in the Appendix to this paper.

²⁰¹ 'Fine' is from the Latin noun *finis*, meaning end.

the one who stands in the place of Christ, is the focus. The centrality of his position is adverted to again and again in the ceremonies—

- in the emulation of his posture by servers and faithful in standing for the opening psalm (*Psalm 42*) and *Confiteor*, in sitting for the *Gloria*, in standing for the Gospel, for the Creed;
- in the precedence accorded him in all the actions of the Mass;
- in the conduct of those who exercise the priestly functions on his behalf—sub-deacon in chanting the Epistle, deacon in the chanting of the Gospel;
- in the order of precedence in which the deacon and the *thurifer* use the censer;
- in the deference with which his hand is kissed by deacon and by *thurifer* in the execution of their offices.

The celebrating priest consummates the action of the Mass by his invocation of Christ's words in the double consecration. He is the *alter Christus* for all who attend, the one who performs the functions Christ Himself would perform. Indeed, Christ *is* present among them, present in the person of the priest.

The effect of the Council's abandonment of the Church's understanding of the sanctity of the priesthood is seen in the utter devastation of priestly and religious vocations and the disruption of the life of the faithful that followed the Council.

The Council attacked the Blessed Eucharist

The reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament is reflected in the detail and the rigour of ceremony that has marked the holy sacrifice of the Mass since time immemorial. It is reflected in the attitude, one of respect for the sacred, given the altar on which the eternal sacrifice is offered.

"The essential principles of the liturgy were... strongly preserved by the traditional Church, foremost among them the understanding of the altar, which, far above any text, is central to the sense of Christian worship. This understanding has been destroyed by modern changes. The altar was replaced by a table, following an amateur's deduction from church archaeology, and the whole sense of what an altar is was lost in the disruption. What we see in modern churches is, in effect, not an altar but a platform for the priest's apparatus. We have all seen altars on which the most prominent object is a microphone—an apt symbol of the mechanical communication to which the liturgy has been reduced... [O]n the traditional altar... the only permitted things are the sacred vessels and the missal... In the traditional liturgy, as in the primitive Church, neither crucifix nor candles stand on the altar itself, and even less is there a place for flowers, which are extraneous to liturgical tradition... The placing of candles, and even more, of flowers on the altar is precisely the kind of late custom that the liturgists professed to be reforming; the result of their work has been to produce aberrations of which even the most ignorant priest of the old order would not have been guilty." (H.J.A. Sire, *Phoenix from the Ashes: the Making, Unmaking and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, Kettering Ohio (Angelico Press) 2015, p. 263)

The Council bishops' attitude to the Blessed Eucharist, and to the Mass of which it is the Divine fruit, may be gathered from their behaviour at the discomfiting of

Cardinal Ottaviani, Secretary of the Holy Office, in the Council's First Session on October 30th, 1962.

[The Cardinal said] "Are we seeking to stir up wonder, or perhaps scandal, among the Christian people, by introducing changes in so venerable a rite that has been approved for so many centuries and is now so familiar? The rite of Holy Mass should not be treated as if it were a piece of cloth to be refashioned according to the whim of each generation." Speaking without a text, because of his partial blindness, he exceeded the ten-minute time limit which all had been requested to observe. Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of Council Presidents, showed his watch to Cardinal Alfrink, who was presiding that morning. When Cardinal Ottaviani reached fifteen minutes, Cardinal Alfrink rang the warning bell. But the speaker was so engrossed in his topic that he did not notice the bell, or purposely ignored it. At a signal from Cardinal Alfrink, a technician switched off the microphone. After confirming the fact by tapping the instrument, Cardinal Ottaviani stumbled back to his seat in humiliation. The most powerful cardinal in the Roman Curia had been silenced, and the Council Fathers clapped with glee. (Ralph A Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into The Tiber*, New York, 1967; my copy Tan Books, 1985, pp. 28, 29)

The loss of the respect due to the Blessed Eucharist was confirmed in what followed, described by Sire as a "tide of anarchy... let loose in the Church as soon as the Council ended". (op. cit., p. 245) There followed—

- admission of ministers other than the priest for the distribution of Communion,
- reception of Communion while standing,
- reception of Communion in the hand,
- wholesale distribution of the Precious Blood with the inevitable desecration that follows on human clumsiness,
- celebration of Mass in places other than a dedicated church ('home Masses').

Sire goes on:

"In May 1967 the official process of desacralising the Mass was taken a long step further by the instruction *Tres Abhinc Annos*. It sanctioned the abandonment of the Latin Canon, and, in addition, gestures were abolished such as the laity's genuflection at the *Incarnatus* in the Creed, the repeated signs of the cross made by the priest during the Canon, the first genuflection at the Consecration, and most of the kissings of the altar; the priest was no longer required to keep his forefinger and thumb together after consecrating the Host, and the washing of hands at the end of the Mass was made optional. The attack on reverence and on the concept of the Mass as an action in which gesture is as expressive as words, was embodied in these changes." (Sire, op. cit., pp.245-6)

All that the modern Catholic has grown to expect of his local priest, his—

- inability to refrain from adding his own input in the vernacular to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice;
- deliberate acts, or words, of desacralisation after Communion;
- inappropriate bonhomie towards the faithful in the sacred place;

- diminution, or denial, of one or other elements of the Church's doctrine in his sermons or interventions—

derive from this threefold attack initiated by the Council's bishops. They have produced in the faithful a languishing of the seventh of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, *Fear of the Lord*. And, since as St Thomas teaches, the Supernatural Virtues and the Gifts grow like the fingers on a hand, it has produced a diminution generally of the force of the Virtues and of the Gifts among the faithful.

The Novus Ordo is doomed

Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret, the Roman poet Horace wrote:²⁰² "You may toss nature out with a pitchfork she will always return." Grace imitates nature. *A fortiori, ergo*, though the sacred has been pitched aside by the reformers it is inevitable it will return. The Church's dedicated reverence for her Founder, Jesus Christ, will not abide the de-sacralisation and trivialising of the Mass which the reformers have embodied in the *novus ordo*, as it will not abide the prevarications and compromises of the faith embraced by the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and their successors.

Come the Pope who will return the faithful to the fullness of their calling, it is inevitable the rite will be condemned as it deserves to be.

But why wait? Every bishop has the fullness of the priesthood. Any bishop may heal the rite of its major defects in his diocese. Let him direct his priests to abandon the ersatz Eucharistic prayers (which are nothing but novelties for the sake of novelty) in favour of the Roman canon, 'the First Eucharistic Prayer'. Let him direct that Mass be offered *ad orientem*, i.e., facing Almighty God, not *versus populum*. Let him direct that his priests abandon:

- all interventions in the vernacular in the course of the Mass;
- limit their contribution in the vernacular to a sermon exploring the lessons in Gospel and Epistle, and only on Sundays and solemnities;
- offertory processions,
- the 'kiss of peace'
- interventions by anyone other than the priest before, during or after Mass, for any purpose.

Let him forbid, moreover, the presence of any woman or girl on the sanctuary. Let him insist that Communion will be given only to those kneeling, and never in the hand. Let him direct that a sacred silence, one that respects the immensity of the Divine Presence, shall be ever maintained by priests and people in all his churches at all times.

Let the bishop put his episcopacy on the line in these matters. Let him be a leader of his people; a shepherd not a sheep.

²⁰² *Epistles* bk. 1, n. 10, I, 24

APPENDIX

THE NINEFOLD KYRIE: AN EXAMPLE OF “USELESS REPETITION”?

Peter Kwasniewski,
New Liturgical Movement website, 30th July 2018

Like the Byzantine liturgy, the traditional Roman liturgy is characterized by many examples of what we might call “purposeful repetition.”

The *Asperges* antiphon and the Introit antiphon are repeated after their verses and doxologies. The doxology is said many times throughout Mass. *Psalm* 42 as laid out at the start features a number of repeated phrases. The *Kyrie*, of course, has nine petitions in three sections (3 x 3), of which the outer members are verbally identical. The *Confiteor* is said by the priest, then repeated by the servers with small differences, and then said again later in the Mass, right before the communion of the faithful. The *Domine, non sum dignus* is said three times by the priest, and then three times by the servers (either alone or together with the faithful). If we look beyond the Mass to the Divine Office, we see many more examples.

Most of these repetitions were discarded or brutally reduced in the liturgical reform, purportedly in pursuance of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 34, which called for the reduction of “useless repetitions” (*repetitiones inutiles*, or *ineptas* as the original draft read).

St. Gertrude the Great was privileged with some of the most wondrous and detailed visions that any saint has ever received. In her *Revelations*, we read about a mystical Mass celebrated by Our Lord, in which Gertrude saw the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ offering the High Mass in the convent. Here is the part that pertains to the *Kyrie*:

At the first *Kyrie eleison*, He granted her the remission of all the sins which she had contracted through human frailty; after which, the angels raised her up on her knees. At the second, He pardoned her sins of ignorance; and she was raised up by these princes, so that she stood before God. Then [at the third] two angels of the choir of Cherubim led her to the Son of God, who received her with great tenderness.

At the first *Christe eleison*, the Saint offered our Lord all the sweetness of human affection, returning it to Him as to its Source; and thus there was a wonderful influx of God into her soul, and of her soul into God, so that by the descending notes the ineffable delights of the Divine Heart flowed into her, and by the ascending notes the joy of her soul flowed back to God. At the second *Christe eleison*, she experienced the most ineffable delights, which she offered to our Lord. At the third *Christe eleison*, the Son of God extended His Hands, and bestowed on her all the fruit of His most holy life and conversation.

Two angels of the choir of Seraphim then presented her to the Holy Spirit, who penetrated the three powers of her soul. At the first *Kyrie eleison*, He illuminated her reason with the glorious light of Divine knowledge, that she might always know His will perfectly. At the second *Kyrie eleison*, He strengthened the irascible part of her soul to resist all the machinations of her enemies, and to conquer every evil. At the last *Kyrie eleison*, He inflamed her love, that she might love God with her whole heart, with her whole soul, and with her whole strength. It was for this reason that the choir of Seraphim, which is the highest order in the heavenly hosts, presented her to the Holy Ghost, who is the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, and that the Thrones presented her to God the Father, manifesting that the Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost are One God, equal in glory, co-eternal in majesty, living and reigning perfect Trinity through endless ages. [1]

On another occasion, we read of how “the saint receives a triple absolution and benediction from the Blessed Trinity, through the merits of Jesus Christ.” Once again this threefold mystical grace was granted precisely during the *Kyrie* of the Mass:

As the saint heard Mass one day with the greatest fervour, it appeared to her that her guardian angel took her in his arms as if she were a little child, at the *Kyrie Eleison*, and presented her to God the Father, to receive His benediction, saying: “Eternal Father, bless Thy little child.” And because for a time He replied not, as if He would testify by His silence that so miserable a creature was unworthy of this favour, she began to enter into herself, and to consider her unworthiness and nothingness with extreme confusion. Then the Son of God arose, and gave her the merits of His most holy life to supply her defects, so that she appeared as if clothed with a rich and shining robe, and as if she had attained to the full age and strength of Jesus Christ.

Then the Eternal Father inclined lovingly towards her, and gave her His absolution thrice, as a sign of the triple remission of all the sins which she had committed against His omnipotence in thought, word, or deed. The Saint offered in thanksgiving the adorable life of His only Son; and at the same time the precious stones with which her garments were adorned emitted a harmonious concert to the eternal glory of God, which testified how agreeable it is to Him to offer Him the all-perfect and holy life of His Son.

The same angel then [at the *Christe*] presented her to God the Son, saying: “Bless Thy sister, King of Heaven”; and having received from Him a triple benediction, to efface all the sins she had committed against the Divine Wisdom, he then presented her to the Holy Spirit, with these words: “O Lover of men, bless Thy spouse”; and she received from Him also a triple benediction, in remission of all the sins which she had committed against the Divine Goodness.

Let those who read this reflect on these three benedictions at the *Kyrie Eleison*. [2]

By the time St. Gertrude was beholding these visions (she lived from 1256 to ca. 1302), most of the great *Kyrie* chants of the Gregorian repertoire had already been composed. These chants artistically exploit the musical balance and contrast made possible by a 3+3+3 structure. Perhaps the most stunning example is the *Kyrie* of Mass IX, the *Missa cum jubilo*.

The very fact that an age-old structure, numerologically luminous, on which mystical visions and musical masterpieces had been built up, was put aside by a committee of self-styled “experts” shows the extent to which the reform proceeded from crass contempt for liturgical tradition and sacred music, in spite of what *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had said elsewhere. How many examples of this sort of thing, examples sadly available *ad nauseam*, would it take to convince the fence-sitters that the reform deserves nothing better than the rubbish bin?

The ninefold *Kyrie* of the Mass is obviously directed to the Holy Trinity, as its oddness of number blocks any impression of “call and response”. It is not a dialogue between “presider and assembly” but a cry of the faithful to the Most Holy Trinity. The sixfold *Kyrie*, on the other hand, is a textual expression of the anthropocentric “closed circle” of which Ratzinger wrote: the priest or cantor calls out “Lord, have mercy” to the people, and they respond to the priest or cantor. The *object* of the prayer (the Holy Trinity) is in tension with the *structure* of it (a binary this-that, back-and-forth)—since *one* set of *Kyrie eleison/Christe eleison/Kyrie eleison*, as in the monastic Office, would have sufficed, if God were the one being addressed.

Let me try to express this point again: the ancient ninefold *Kyrie* was replaced with a sixfold *Kyrie* in order to facilitate an “active participation” construed verbally and extrinsically, for there is no other textual, ritual, or musical justification for it.[3] We see here how utilitarian considerations outweighed continuity with tradition, aesthetics, and theological coherence. The lumbering sixfold

Kyrie is symptomatic of the entire mentality behind the *Novus Ordo*, a point Henry Sire captures well in his book *Phoenix from the Ashes*:

The achievement of the liturgical purists, as they condemned the incoherences of the old rite, has thus been to introduce far more incoherences in the rite they have invented. The reason for this is the lack of integrity in their intentions, but it also stems from the method used when the Consilium set about recasting the liturgy. The Mass was divided into sections and each one given to a separate committee to revise. The result was that each part of the Mass had to be slightly tampered with; otherwise the committee concerned would not have justified its existence. The changes made follow no liturgical logic. In the *Kyrie eleison*, the old threefold repetition, going back to the earliest days of the Church, has been replaced by a twofold one. This was in pursuance of the Modernists' principle of abolishing ritual repetitions. Yet, if that were logically followed, there is no reason why the prayer should not be reduced to *Kyrie eleison*, *Christe eleison*, or indeed to *Kyrie Christe eleison*. Thus both logic and tradition go overboard so that a committee should do its petty meddling. At the same time, while one committee pruned repetitions here, another was introducing them in another part of the Mass, those of the responsorial psalm and the bidding prayers, which show repetitions of a kind from which the old rite was free. In their poverty of conception, the innovators' rule was that repetition was wrong unless they could think of nothing better themselves. [4]

Sire has put his finger on an irony that few have dared to speak about, namely, that the *Novus Ordo* exhibits more and worse defects in some of the very areas against which the cancer-phase Liturgical Movement directed its blazing arrows. Thus, we find far more useless repetition in the *Novus Ordo* than in the traditional Mass. Think about the Prayer of the Faithful: how many millions of times have we wearily said "Lord, hear our prayer" to the laundry-list of ill-formulated, poorly-read petitions at the podium? Or how many times have we repeated the response to the responsorial psalm, while visions of Hallmark cards danced in our heads, or we wondered if we or the rest of the people would remember the response, or whether all this has any point to it except to give the unemployed some work to do? Those who rejected the repetitions of tradition were punished for their pride with the lacklustre redundancies of concocted rites. [5]

In the Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, *Lord, have mercy* is sung over 40 times by the people. The cascading petitions create an aura very like that which silence creates in the Roman Rite. An Eastern Orthodox Christian online wrote the following, to someone's objection about the number of *Kyrie's* in the liturgy:

I have found that the more I say it, the more genuine I get. It's like the first 10 times I'm slowly getting rid of all distracting thoughts. The next 10 times, I'm starting to get myself in the right frame of mind for prayer. The next 10 I'm starting to think about the meaning behind each word. Then during the final 10 I can actually pray it from my heart. [6]

The fact that lip service is paid to the "ancient and glorious East" by the very liturgists who savagely denuded the Roman Rite (or the Ambrosian or Mozarabic, etc.) or who today defend its naked state, shows up the intellectual dishonesty of the reforms and their pursuit of agendas at all costs, even at the price of consistency of principle. The Eastern liturgical tradition contains countless examples of textual and ritual repetition on a scale far more extravagant than anything the Latin tradition ever boasted. Take the liturgy of baptism, with its many threefold statements; or the multitude of prostrations in penitential seasons.

At the end of the day, the problem boils down to this: is *usefulness*, "cash value" so to speak, the best or ultimate criterion of whether something belongs in the liturgy or not? Let us ask this question: Is it *useful* to contemplate God? Do we justify our contemplation by saying that research shows that it strengthens the brain, promotes good sleep and low blood pressure, and leads to statistical improvements in cheerfulness? Or is it something worth doing for its own sake, or rather, for God's sake—and *therefore*, not surprisingly, something beneficial to us? Similarly, repetition, which is always meaningful and profitable when done in faith, hope, and charity, is a

discipline primarily aimed at offering God praise, adoration, and glorification, an earthly likeness of the song of angels crying out “Holy, holy, holy...” in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity.

It is therefore strange, passing strange, that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy should tell us that repetition must be “useful”. It is useful, but not in a utilitarian way, as David Clayton has recently explained—and yet, it is hard to see how the Council meant anything other than a surrender to modern American pragmatism: let’s get things done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Boyz, we got things to do!

The solution, as it always has been and always will be, is to treat with the utmost respect all that proceeds from the mouth of God in His liturgical Providence. The ninefold Kyrie of the Mass was just such a thing, coming to us from ancient times, stretching unbroken through the dark centuries of Roman decline, the bright centuries of the Middle Ages, the tempestuous centuries of Reformation and Revolution. No one would have thought of changing it—no one, that is, until the [cretins] who believed that their lego-brick liturgies, assembled in study weeks, were superior to the vintages of Christendom matured over long ages. In verses that apply equally well here:

“When they knew God, they have not glorified him as God, or given thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (*Rom* 1:21–22).

And:

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 *Cor* 3:20).

Or perhaps most aptly of all:

“Omnes declinaverunt, simul *inutiles* facti sunt” (*Ps.* 13: 3).

Kyrie, eleison.

NOTES

[1] Source: *The Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude* (London: Burns & Oates/New York: Benziger, 1870), of which a typo-ridden version is available...

[2] Ibid.

[3] I am aware that when litanies are recited, there is a doubling of the Kyrie rather than a tripling. But this is the authentic structure of the litanies, even as the ninefold structure was the authentic structure in the Mass. It flies in the face of all respect for inherited rites to do violence to an ancient (6th-century) structure in order to bring it into conformity with a modern predilection for call-and-response mechanisms.

[4] H. J. A. Sire, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2015), 261.

[5] And please do not tell me that the responsorial psalm was something ancient that, having been forgotten, was rightly revived. In the form in which it was re-launched in 1969, and above all in the manner in which it is done, it has nothing to do with ancient practice.

[6] This comment is from a thread in which various Orthodox laymen are discussing the benefits of repetition in liturgical prayer. It interests me especially because there is no indication that anyone in the discussion is a theologian or a liturgist; they are just ordinary folks trying to live their tradition, as we should do.

<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/07/the-ninefold-kyrie-example-of-useless.html#.W2I0x9IzbIU>

III

The Ceremonies of Holy Week

“Sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est, et dum male tractaretur, non aperuit os suum: traditus est ad mortem, ut vivificaret populum suum...”

Response 1, Matins (1st Nocturn) *Tenebrae*, Holy Saturday²⁰³

When, after decades of attendance at the *novus ordo*, the writer began a return to the Latin rite which he had served as a boy, something occurred at Mass at St Brigid’s, Canberra, which highlighted the difference between the two and exposed one of the new rite’s fundamental flaws.

After the consecration the priest intoned *Praeceptis salutaribus moniti, et divina institutione formati, audemus dicere*, and began the *Pater Noster*. Following the rubric of the *novus ordo* the writer joined in aloud only to desist as he realized that no other member of the congregation was doing so. The issue to which, in due course, this solecism woke him was the ineffable reality and dignity of the priesthood, for it is the priest *in persona Christi* who celebrates the Mass. The part of the faithful is that of witnesses of the Divine sacrifice. When the priest recites the *Pater Noster* it is Christ, *He Who has just sacrificed Himself anew via the double consecration*, Who prays it on behalf of the faithful. Christ calls upon His Father with the evidence of the sacrifice of Calvary before Him anew to have mercy on the faithful and all the world.²⁰⁴ This is evidenced further by the fact that only once in the Year does the Church in her liturgy *in forma extraordinaria* require the faithful to join the priest in the *Pater Noster*, on Good Friday before they receive the Eucharist reserved from Holy Thursday. It is the one day in the year when the priest does not celebrate Mass.

The dysfunctional rubric of the *novus ordo* which mandates lay intervention here reflects the falsity encapsulated in Vatican II’s Protestant inspired assertion of ‘the priesthood of the laity’.

At Low Mass in the *Tridentine* rite one may follow *ipsis verbis* the priest in his actions. The Latin is not hard and a translation in the vernacular reduces the difficulties. The rubrics assist with their punctuation of the text. You can accompany the priest as he makes his way. In a *Missa Cantata* or Solemn High Mass, however, one is relegated with the schola to singing the Introit, Gradual and other parts of the Proper, and the Kyrie, Gloria and other parts of the Common. Being prevented from following each step of the Mass (so to speak) matters not for *it is the priest* who is performing the sacred action, and one can leave to him one’s intentions for the living and the dead.

²⁰³ Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter: and though shamefully dealt with he did not open his mouth; he was delivered to death that he might give life to his people.

²⁰⁴ A point made by the late Bishop Fulton Sheen in Ch. 42 of his *Life of Christ*: “The High Priest must offer the sacrifice alone.”

Nothing demonstrates so vividly the shortcomings of the *novus ordo* as the banality of its celebration of Holy Week, the most critical passage in the Church's liturgical year. The pomp that marks the original rite in Latin and the manner in which it fills the days of the Easter Triduum contrast dramatically with the diminution of ceremony, the shifting texts and the optional shortenings that characterise the *novus ordo*.

Palm Sunday Ceremonies

In the *forma extraordinaria* the long Gospel passage is fixed; it is that of St Matthew. The threefold division of the voices (reflected, in bland recitation, in the *novus ordo*) of Christ, of the Narrator, and of all the other players in the passage related (the Other voices) is observed in the drama of what is sung. The Narrator observes a middle tone suitable to narrative; Christ speaks, or responds, in a lower tone, the pitch of reason and counsel. The Other voices take a higher tone, the pitch at which anger, regret and sorrow are expressed. By exciting the emotions in this way the Church enhances the effects of the narrative upon the faithful who attend. There is one other difference to the protocol introduced with the *novus ordo*. The three are faced, not towards the faithful—as if performing for an audience—but at ninety degrees to the altar (and nave).

Tenebrae

On the mornings of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, priests, deacons and choir sing the Offices of *Matins* and *Lauds*, the *Tenebrae*, with great solemnity.²⁰⁵ The psalms of *Matins* are interspersed with nine Lessons, three after every three of the psalms, the most celebrated of which (the first three each day) are taken from the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah. The cantor sings them from the centre of the apse facing towards the altar. The nine psalms of *Matins* and the five of *Lauds* proceed without *Gloria Patri* in the presence of an elevated candelabrum whose fifteen candles are extinguished one by one as the psalms are completed until one alone remains. All other lights including those on the altar are extinguished as the *Benedictus* (Canticle of Zachary) is sung at the close of *Lauds*. After the final antiphon all kneel and sing—

*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem.*²⁰⁶

The *Pater Noster* is then said silently after which the celebrant recites, in sombre voice, the final prayer—

²⁰⁵ In this they follow the direction of Pius XII that these offices are not to be anticipated by being sung on the evening of the previous day (*Maxima Redemptionis*, November 16, 1955). It is asserted that this directive has detracted from the setting that demands that *Tenebrae* (lit. 'darkness', or 'night') should be sung at night. The complaint lacks logic. Nothing prevents them being sung between 3.30 or 4.00 am and dawn, the proper time for *Lauds*.

²⁰⁶ On Friday there is added: *Mortem autem crucis*. On Saturday there is added further: *propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen*.

*Respice, quaesumus Domine, super hanc familiam tuam, pro qua Dominus noster Jesus Christus non dubitavit minibus tradi nocentium et Crucis subire tormentum. (then silently, Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate...)*²⁰⁷

The ceremony closes dramatically with the *Strepitus*. Every participant joins in thumping the pew and stamping his feet to produce a sound symbolising the earthquake that accompanied the death of Our Blessed Lord. After this all depart in silence.

Good Friday Ceremonies

The Gospel sung is that of St John (retained in the *novus ordo*). As on Palm Sunday the voices are heard at their respective pitches. Again the three are faced across the nave as they sing. After this, for the one and only time in the liturgical Year, the celebrant priest intones *The Great Intercessions* which address every possible intention. This is the only day of the Year (if one takes Holy Saturday as blended with its midnight celebration) when Mass is *not* said—that is, when Christ does not intercede for the faithful and for all the world in the repetition of His sacrifice. It is the only day of the Year in which prayers of the faithful are offered.



After the frightful fire on Monday in Holy Week 2019 in *Notre Dame de Paris* what remains? The altar on which for 800 years the immemorial sacrifice was celebrated until the advent of the *novus ordo*.

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The loss of the celebration of the *Tenebrae* connived at by the reformers under Paul VI has led many in the *novus ordo* to try and fill the lacuna. Typical of such attempts was a proto-liturgy at the Cathedral of St Patrick in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta²⁰⁸ on the evening of Monday, April 15, 2019, presided over by the Bishop, Vincent Long.

²⁰⁷ On Saturday the prayer runs: *Concede quaesumus, Omnipotens Deus: ut qui Filii tui resurrectionem expectatione praevenimus; eiusdem resurrectione gloriam consequamur* (and in silence, *Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesus Christum...*)

²⁰⁸ Referred to facetiously as ‘St Aldi’s Cathedral’ for its appalling architecture and adornment.

Despite its participants' best intentions the result, anachronistic, dislocated and disordered, was no part of the Church's liturgy. To be more specific—

- *Tenebrae* does not occur on the Tuesday or Wednesday of Holy Week;
- Pius XII directed that the office was *not* to be anticipated by singing it the evening prior to the relevant day;
- it was inappropriate to lard the texts of the *novus ordo* Office of Readings for the Tuesday with excerpts from the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah;
- polyphony (the proto-liturgy featured four motets) has no part to play in the aridity of the *Tenebrae*.²⁰⁹

The result was not liturgical in either *forma ordinaria* (even with its smorgasbord approach to the liturgy) or *forma extraordinaria*. It was, in truth, little more than an evening concert.

Yet in fairness the event paid tribute to, and perhaps expressed regret over, the abiding loss of profundity that characterises the *novus ordo* in its celebration of the holiest week of the Church's Year.

One might usefully address its proponents and those who entertain doubts that the *novus ordo* could ever satisfy the demands of the Catholic soul with the call of the prophet Jeremiah in his *Lamentations* repeated each day in the *Tenebrae*—

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

²⁰⁹ The gratuitous addition of Allegri's *Miserere* at the end of the ceremony in the Sistine Chapel from the mid-Seventeenth Century was abolished in 1870.

THE ROT BEGAN WITH JOHN XXIII

For close on two millennia the Catholic Church, her popes and bishops, taught that the Jews were responsible for the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Calvary. Objective evidence bore out the claims in the texts of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St Peter and St Paul. The faithful were never in doubt about the matter until the advent of Pope John XXIII, Guiseppe Roncalli, to the papacy.

This Pope had a bee in his bonnet, a sentimental sympathy for the Jewish nation afflicted so appallingly by the Nazis before and during the Second World War, the extent of whose persecution at their hands has absorbed the world's peoples for decades since. That the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis was irrelevant to the issue of the responsibility of the Jewish nation for the death of Christ never seems to have occurred to him.

Pope John was not alone among the clergy in refusing to make necessary distinctions. The intellectual weakness it evidences had grown exponentially among the Church's ministers with the loss of the metaphysical perception of reality in favour of a materialist and subjectivist one. Allied to this was an attitude that saw no difficulty in subjecting what is perennially true to the demands of the times, a position C.S. Lewis labelled 'historical parochialism'.

By insisting that all references in the Church's liturgy that blamed the Jews for Christ's death should be excised John XXIII abused his office. Christ's Church, her popes, her bishops, her doctors and theologians, may have insisted on the truth for close on twenty centuries but 'good' Pope John knew better; and he would have his will, the exercise of which has served to mislead generations of the faithful since. This weakness was matched by the Pope's arrogance.

In this obsession and wilful insistence are the seeds of the chaos that flowered at the Second Vatican Council. Two principles are advanced. First is the contention *that the Catholic Church is in error on a fact central to Christ's sacrifice on Calvary*. It may be thought only a small error; it is an error notwithstanding. Second, is the insistence that *no matter what the Church had maintained in the past she must now defer to the demands of the secular*. These two principles underlie the chief error for which Vatican II is responsible, its teaching in breach of the Church's long held rejection of the claim—formally proclaimed in the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX—that every man has a right to pick and choose as he will among the religions on earth, a right to 'religious freedom'.

1. The Church may have taught against this in the past: she is in error.
2. Whatever position she may have held, she must now defer to the secular.

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The chief effect of Vatican II, it can be argued, was a reform of the Church's liturgy which abandoned a fixed and determinate structure, one that had obtained from time

immemorial, in favour of one whose chief characteristic was novelty. The reform attacked the Catholic faith by attacking her liturgy—attacked the *lex credendi* by attacking the *lex orandi* and, in consequence, the *lex vivendi*. As Dr Kwasniewski has noted: *The course of our prayer cannot but affect the course of our doctrine, and the course of our doctrine will necessarily spill over into the realm of behaviour.*²¹⁰

One need only study the extracts from St Augustine’s teaching on the psalms in the Second Nocturn of the office for Good Friday (*On Psalm 63*) to see how, by excising it, the reformers obeyed John XXIII’s demand of the Church’s liturgy. This is what St Augustine and the Church taught before the *novus ordo* came along:

“We know of the malignant gathering of the Jews and what a multitude there were working iniquity. What was the nature of the iniquity? In that they willed to kill the Lord Jesus Christ. Many good works, he said, have I showed you: for which of these do you desire to kill me? He bore all their infirmities. He healed all their sick. He preached the kingdom of heaven. He did not keep silent over their iniquities that they might be moved to hate them rather than the Physician who would heal them. Yet being ungrateful for all these, his remedies, like men possessed by a high fever, they raged against the Physician who had come to heal them and took counsel as to how to achieve his destruction. It was as though they would put it to the proof whether he were man that could die, or whether he were something more than man so that he would not suffer himself to die. In chapter 2 of the Book of *Wisdom* we have, as it were, their very words: Let us examine him. ‘Let us condemn him to a shameful death: for he shall be visited, we have his word for it; if the just man be the Son of God, God will help him and deliver him from the hand of his enemies.’” (Lesson V)

And—

“They have sharpened their tongue like a sword. Let not the Jews say: We did not kill Christ. For they delivered him up to Pilate’s tribunal in order that they should themselves seem innocent of his death. Thus when Pilate said to them: take him and crucify him, they answered: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. Thus they sought to cast the guilt of their crime upon a human judge. But could they by this deceive God the Judge? What Pilate did made him, perforce, in some sort a partaker of their crime. But in comparison with them he was less guilty. For he did what he could to rescue him out of their hands, and therefore ordered him to be scourged and brought before them. That is to say, not by way of persecution did he scourge the Lord but as wishing to satisfy their rage, that when they saw him scourged, they might relent and cease to desire his death. Nevertheless he did kill him. But if we hold him to guilty who did it against his will, shall they be innocent who forced him to do it? By no means. Pilate did pronounce sentence on him and commanded him to be crucified and so in some wise it might be said that he did kill him. But, you, his own Jewish people, you in truth did kill him. And how did you do it? With the sword of the tongue. For like a sword you sharpened your tongue. And when did you strike the blow? When you cried out, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’” (Lesson VI)

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²¹⁰ *Hyperpapalism and Liturgical Mutation...*, Lepanto lecture, February 19, 2019

Of a piece with Pope John's insouciance towards the Church's perennial teaching was his disregard for the Church's discipline manifested in his *Opening Speech* to the Second Vatican Council to which we have referred. The departure from principle and example of wrong teaching set forth there were confirmed when, under pressure from a vocal cadre bent on departing from the rigour of the Church's teaching and her discipline, he chose to abandon rules he had laid down for the conduct of the Council.

The confusion of mercy with indulgence coupled with a practical denial of the effects of Original Sin on modern man expressed in the *Opening Speech* was a further mark of the Pope's problems.

The second of these vices appeared in the thinking of the pope who borrowed his name, John Paul II, whose early encyclicals,²¹¹ one would be forgiven for thinking, advanced the thesis that men were saved simply by being born, an utterly heterodox position. John Paul's deference to the ideology of Feminism with the divisive effects among the faithful wrought by his whimsical decision to allow women and girls access to the altar are further instances of the operation of the two principles.

1. The Church may have taught against this in the past: she is in error.
2. Whatever position she may have held, she must now defer to the secular.

In his splendid study of the chaos that has beset the Church as a consequence of the Second Vatican Council and the popes who promoted and supported it, *Phoenix from the Ashes* (Angelico Press, Kettering Ohio, 2015), H J A Sire maintains that John XXIII inflicted a wound on the Church from which it will take centuries to recover (p. 182). Anyone who has grasped just how radical are the problems that beset the Church would find it hard to disagree.

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The happy-clappy religion of many—perhaps a majority of—Catholics in our time follows on the Council's endorsement of a rapprochement with Protestantism and secularism. Their religion is a sort of proto-Protestantism. "The Church," G K Chesterton had said, "is the one thing that saves a man from the degrading servitude of being a child of his time." The bishops of Vatican II and its popes did their best to change that. Today the body of the faithful in the average Catholic church at the conclusion of Mass resembles nothing so much as a tea party after a public meeting. Loud talk and laughter, aided and abetted, *incited*, by the parish priest, drown the silent worship due to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle. The modern Catholic thinks it his duty to be a child of his time.

In 1970 Robert Speight summarised the evils the Second Vatican Council had precipitated:

"We were concerned to sacralise the world, not to secularise the Church. We may

²¹¹ *Redemptor Hominis* (March 4, 1979) for instance.

have wished to simplify the altar, in so far as we bothered about such things at all; we had no desire to displace it for a kitchen table. The Latin of the Mass was not only familiar but numinous, and we had no wish to barter it for a vernacular which has justified our worst fears. We did not wish priests to dress like parishioners, any more than we wished judges to dress like jurymen. We were anti-modernist and even, except in aesthetics, *anti-modernes*; radical only in the sense that we wanted to get down to roots, not in the sense that we wanted to pull them up. We were more anxious to preserve the values of an ancient civilisation than to set about the construction of a new one." (Quoted in Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, ch. 27)

According to the mind of the bishops of Vatican II the Church was to enter a new, and radically different, phase of her existence in the process of being "brought up to date" (*aggiornamento*), a phase marked by rupture with what had obtained in the past. A significant instance of this rupture was a recasting of the calendar of the Church's liturgical year.

It is vain to assert that Vatican II did not authorise the abandonment of Latin in favour of the vernacular in the celebration of Mass and the Divine Office, or the turning of the priest towards the people, or other of the aberrations in the sacred liturgy sanctioned by Paul VI. It is vain, also, to assert that Paul VI's claim in his address of 26 November 1969 that "our first obedience is to the Council" was disingenuous, that these changes were his own initiative. One cannot acquit the Council's bishops of the consequences of their actions. In opening the Church to Protestant and secular influences they paved the way for the abuses that followed. It was their compromise with these influences that led Paul VI to assert:

"It is Christ's will, it is the breath of the Holy Spirit, which calls the Church to make this change. A prophetic moment is occurring in the mystical body of Christ which is the Church. This moment is shaking the Church, arousing it, obliging it to renew the mysterious art of its prayer."

Replacing Latin with the vernacular diminished the universality of the Mass. It detracted from the catholic character of the Catholic sacrifice.

"The existence of a common liturgical language... is a sign of the Church's mission to reverse the curse of Babel and to create a bond of unity between the peoples." (Christopher Dawson, quoted in Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, ch. 27)

The (yet still Anglican) Ronald Knox understood the Catholic Church's insistence on its universal language. When he was asked to perform a baptism in the vernacular he said this:

"The baby doesn't understand English, and the Devil knows Latin." (Quoted in Evelyn Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, London, 1959, p. 94).

Latin is not a dead language; it is fixed language. You can't fiddle with it. The liturgy is a formalised ritual of worship. It is not open to personal input. The fixity of Latin suits it perfectly.

A member of the faithful long immersed in the reinvented liturgy who, of a sudden, finds himself at weekday Mass in the *usus antiquior* is immensely surprised. The priest offers no gratuitous remarks at the beginning, in the course of, or at the end of Mass. He preaches no homily. There are no normative 'prayers of the faithful' where mostly banal intercessions are matched by spontaneous and hardly controlled outpourings from one or other of the congregation. There is no 'offertory procession'; no fumbling for the right 'acclamation' after the consecration; no compulsory 'kiss of peace'; no scope for the priest to adapt the words of the liturgy to some passing fancy. The canon of the Mass with its appeal to the exclusive cadre of the canonical saints is unchanging; its momentous process rigorous and circumscribed. All the elements of *material* participation imported by Paul VI into the reinvented liturgy are missing. What our surprised Catholic hears is Mass *simpliciter*; unadulterated; the eternal sacrifice for the living and the dead in a form fixed from time immemorial. In twenty five minutes or so he is free to return to the obligations of his state with his religious duties complete. He would be forgiven for reflecting that, in the reinvented liturgy to which he is accustomed, the sacrifice of the Mass has been subverted.

What matters in the liturgy is not material but *formal* participation. Evelyn Waugh's comment is apposite:

"'Active participation' doesn't necessarily mean making a noise. Only God knows who are participating. People can pray loudly like the Pharisee and not be heard."
(Quoted in Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography*, London, 1994, p. 619)

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How poorly the Catholic faithful have been served by the popes since 1960. And how extensively has Christ's Church suffered under their aegis. Consider the one outstanding exercise of his office by John Paul II, the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, and balance against it his master-stroke of incompetence in allowing the admission of females to the sanctuary. Just how much harm to the faithful and to the work of the Church this fiat precipitated will only be known on the Day of Judgement.

Unmitigated admiration for his predecessors has been a feature of each of the last five pontiffs, an admiration formalised now by papal pronouncement that certain of these limping successors of St Peter enjoy the vision of God in heaven.

Almost forty years have passed since English commentator Michael Davies laid out the shortcomings of the Second Vatican Council in *Pope John's Council* (Kansas City [Angelus Press], 1977). "No rational person can deny," he wrote, "that up to the present Vatican II has produced no good fruits" (p. 4). Nothing has occurred in the interim to alter the accuracy of that judgement.

What must amaze an objective observer over those forty years is the systematic failure of the Catholic clergy, of bishops in particular, to address the issue, to condemn the Council for the evils for which it is responsible. There is not one, *not one*, of the 5,000

odd bishops of the Catholic Church, even the best of them, who will say that the Council was flawed; none, that is, save the followers of the late Archbishop Lefebvre. It has been suggested—and who would disagree?—that it has been a master stroke on the part of Satan to achieve disobedience to Catholic principle on the part of the clergy through slavish obedience to papal and curial directives. At the heart of this longstanding, ultra-montanist, mentality is an inability to distinguish between pope and Church. The Pope is not the Church. He is her servant; he can, and does, err. The Church, in contrast, is indefectible; she cannot err. A Catholic's primary allegiance is not to the Pope but to Christ's Church.

It would seem that Divine Providence has allowed the election, at last, of an incompetent pope so that the clergy might wake to the error of their ways and admit to themselves the systematic exercise in folly that was the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Francis travelled to Lund, Sweden in October 2016 to “celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation”, that is, of Martin Luther's apostasy from Christ's Church. This visit was entirely consistent with the rapprochement with Protestantism embraced by the bishops of Vatican II and disguised under the totem of ecumenism. It is consistent with the foolish, not to say blasphemous, conduct in which John Paul II engaged at Assisi in October 1986. Pope Francis's initiative diminished, as Protestants desire, the heroism of the saints who suffered as a result of the Protestant Revolt, John Fisher, Thomas More, Edmund Campion, Robert Southwell, Margaret Clitheroe and hundreds of others.

On the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 1972, not seven years after the close of the Council, Pope Paul lamented publicly that what he called “the smoke of Satan” had somehow entered the Church of God. All the expectations of renewal, of a splendid future for the Church, had fallen to the ground. Who could disagree with Michael Davies judgement that “[i]t was the Council itself which provided the breach in the ramparts of the City of God through which the mysterious enemy of man wormed his way into the very bosom of the Church...”? (*Pope John's Council*, op. cit., p. 9)

Nothing the Council decided which departed from the Church's constant teaching can bind the Church, or the faithful. All rapprochement with the Protestant and the secular in which its bishops engaged served only to obscure adherence to Catholic truth and Pope Paul's initiative to alter the sacred liturgy was not, as he thought, the fruit of Christ's will or “the breath of the Holy Spirit” but endorsement of the Council bishops' collective folly. Vatican II has produced immense harm to the Church and to the faithful. With Pope Francis that harm is coming, at last, to its crisis.

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To mark the anniversary of *Mortalium Animos*, Pius XI's encyclical (on the Feast of the Epiphany, 1928) in which the Church's understanding of religious unity was concisely expressed, the website *Rorate caeli* featured a comment on the understanding of ecumenism by Vatican II's bishops by Don Pietro Leone.²¹² Don Leone asserts that in their reasonings the bishops breached the principle of non-contradiction.

Italian philosopher, Paolo Pasqualucci, has produced a list of twenty six departures from Catholic principle in the Council's documents which he refers to as 'points of rupture'. The list, reproduced on the website *OnePeterFive*, is taken from the Introduction to his book *Unam Sanctam* (Chieti, 2013).²¹³ These 'points of rupture' are no news to those who have studied the Council and its ravaging effects on the faith and faithful over fifty years. Indeed on some matters, such as the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae*, Pasqualucci could have gone much further. Historian H J A Sire has written in his celebrated work *Phoenix from the Ashes*:

"The fact needs to be clearly stated: the Second Vatican Council was a betrayal of the Church's faith. Its consequences cannot be put right until that betrayal has been recognised and reversed."²¹⁴

The question can only be determined by a meeting of the Church's bishops with the approval of the Pope under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in what would be truly an ecumenical council because summoned to resolve a problem threatening the Church's very life. But before this can occur there is a threshold to be crossed—the bishops must be moved to act. Theologian John Lamont put the dilemma succinctly in February 2018:

"[The] almost unanimous betrayal of their office by Catholic bishops, and the episcopal infidelity that this betrayal reveals, is the fundamental problem in the Church."²¹⁵

Each of the academics cited above is a layman and criticism of the Council has been conducted in the main by members of the laity. Very few of the clergy have been prepared to join them. Given their duties of obedience and deference to the ruling mentality it is understandable that they should be reticent to challenge the Council's status. Yet obedience to Christ and respect for His Church must always take precedence over obedience to, and respect for, the Church's prelates.

But where is the bishop who is prepared to put Christ and His Church before Pope, cardinals and bishops?

²¹² <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/01/ecumenism-essay-on-ecumenism-by-don.html#more>

²¹³ <https://onepeterfive.com/the-points-of-rupture-of-the-second-vatican-council-with-the-tradition-of-the-church-a-synopsis/>

²¹⁴ *Phoenix From The Ashes: The Making, Unmaking, And Restoration Of Catholic Tradition* (Kettering Ohio, 2015) p. 205

²¹⁵ *The Meaning Of Amoris Laetitia According To Pope Francis*, February, 2018 - <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2018/02/important-guest-essay-meaning-of-amoris.html>

The Holy Spirit is the Soul of the Church. When He decides the rot has gone far enough, a bishop or bishops will appear with the necessary courage. Christ's Church is ever the guardian and protector of the truth and to her alone it falls to determine the matter as, in the fullness of time, she will.

The Threshold Issue

Acknowledgement by the bishops of the Catholic Church, severally and collectively, that they are bound to examine the claim that the Second Vatican Council was a general, or ecumenical, council.
