

# TWENTY YEAR REPORT

*Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur...*

Today is the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Pope Leo XIII and the twentieth anniversary of this website *superflumina.org* whose name derives from the opening words of Psalm 136 – *super flumina babilonis illic sedimus et flevimus* – ‘by the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept...’ “What Catholic,” we wrote in July 2003,

“bemused by the devastation that has taken place in his Church over the last forty years, could fail to be moved at the expression of the psalmist in this song of sorrow from the Babylonian captivity? We are like the Jewish exiles on alien soil. We remember the glory that was the Catholic Church, the adherence of its members in ages past to its principles of faith and morals and we lament its current state. Babylon is the world. And the world wants us to trivialise our religion for its amusement.”

The project could never have been accomplished, nay even embarked upon, without the application with his computer skills of Dr Mark Smith and his suggestions as to content from time to time. Others have contributed including Mr Matthew Murphy whose expertise in Latin and Greek has preserved me from egregious error. Dr Don Boland, former lecturer at Sydney’s Aquinas Academy, has provided advice and his paper *God and the Theory of Everything* available on the website is a valuable resource.<sup>1</sup> The same must be said for Fr Peter Joseph’s answer to the chimeric thesis of ‘creation science’, *Genesis and Literalism*, available here with Father’s permission.<sup>2</sup> Inspiration and advice was also provided prior to his untimely death in 2011 by Mr Paul Brazier who first alerted me to the perils of modernism and the importance of Pius X’s encyclical *Pascendi Dominice Gregis* (September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1907).<sup>3</sup>

It is appropriate that we provide a report on those twenty years of operation, on the development of views, the changes that have occurred among the episcopacy, clergy and faithful - almost all of them for the worse - and the remedies I, and others, have suggested. This report will not deal with every issue but those with the greatest significance.

## *The Loss of Metaphysics*

The first major paper bore this title.<sup>4</sup> Events have shown that its focus was appropriate for innumerable of the evils that afflict the Church today result from the besottedness of modern clergy and religious with the facile thinking of the Enlightenment whose chief effect is abandonment of the doctrine of causality in favour of the opinion that matter alone sufficiently explains reality. This error is bolstered by the thesis, deriving from the thinking of René Descartes, that knowledge precedes being. If a majority holds a certain view, the thesis contends, that view must be right. There was lost also a right understanding of truth

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/d-boland-god-the-theory-of-everything.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/d-boland-god-the-theory-of-everything.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/genesis-literalism-PJ-30-3-06.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/genesis-literalism-PJ-30-3-06.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/brazier\\_tribute.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/brazier_tribute.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/metaphysics.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/metaphysics.pdf)

as the identity between what is asserted and reality which Avicenna, one of Aristotle's Muslim commentators, restated as "the adequation of intellect with thing".<sup>5</sup>

I explored how this fundamental intellectual resource of the Church came to be lost. Pius XII's analysis of looming philosophical and theological errors in *Humani Generis* (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1950) could not prevent them flourishing as the modernist heresy again reared its head. It gutted Catholicism of all that is transcendent, explaining the truths of the Catholic faith as no more than assertions, moving Pius X to label it "the synthesis of all heresies".<sup>6</sup> Although Descartes is the source of its subjectivism it began with Martin Luther's assertion - *Not God's authority as to what I should believe, but mine!* Esau sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage. So also, when they discarded her metaphysics did disobedient bishops and theologians sell the Church's patrimony for a mess of pottage. And as Esau suffered over his loss so have the members of Christ's Church suffered from their rejection of principle.

The abandonment of the Church's philosophy brought with it profound consequences. The first was departure from the first principle of logic and of reality, the *Principle of Non-Contradiction: It is impossible that a thing should together be and be-not under the same respect.* Another, more serious, error was loss of perception of the need for distinction.

"It is the intellect... which has the... power of distinguishing two things which in nature are inseparably conjoined, of severing its roundness from the sun, its transparency from the glass. Thus I can look at a single object, e.g., the paper I am using, and consider separately its whiteness, its smoothness, its oblong shape, its opacity, etc. The mind's power of... separating in thought things which in the real order are one, is known as its power of abstraction."<sup>7</sup>

Distinction is fundamental to human thinking and acting, distinctions such as between—

- distinction (itself) and division
- objective and subjective
- formal and material
- real being and mental being
- act (what *is*) and potency (what *can be*)
- lawfulness (liceity) and validity
- quantity and quality
- ontological order and temporal order
- (the logical terms) *univocal* and *analogous*.

In one of his many audiotapes theologian and canon lawyer the late Fr Gregory Hesse<sup>8</sup> demonstrated how abandonment of distinction marked the utterances of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council:

"In *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 7 the Council confuses... the presences of Christ in the Church by saying - *To accomplish so great a work Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical*

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<sup>5</sup> On this see St Thomas *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, ch. 59, 2, footnote 2 in transl. by Anton C. Pegis, Image Books, New York, 1955, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Modernism and Dr Guthridge* at [https://www.superflumina.org/modernism\\_guthridge.html](https://www.superflumina.org/modernism_guthridge.html)

<sup>7</sup> G.H. Joyce S.J., *Principles of Logic*, London, 1916, Ch. II, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Quondam* secretary to Alphons Maria Cardinal Stickler, Archivist of the Vatican Secret Archive and Librarian of the Vatican Library.

celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,' but especially in the Eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised 'where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.

"So how is He present now? How? In the old days the Church would never have written [this]... would have said Christ is [sacramentally], that is, body, blood, and with it, soul and divinity, present in the tabernacle and on the altar during the sacrifice of Mass. He is *spiritually* present when two or three are gathered in His name as when you say your rosary together you can get a plenary indulgence... but not when you say it alone... And He is present *in persona* in the priest offering because... when I say Mass Christ is offering the sacrifice not I. This is why I don't say at the words of consecration... 'This is the body of Christ' but *Hoc est enim corpus meum*, 'This is *my* body'...

"But the Council does not make these distinctions. The Council says 'He is present'. And indeed this is why in one of the provisions... of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, the Instruction on how to use the new Roman missal, in n. 27 it says 'the Mass is when Christ is present because he said 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst'. This is... heretical..."<sup>9</sup>

### *Failure of the Executive Power*

The next paper of significance on the website, published originally in August 2005, bore this title.<sup>10</sup> It explored the consequences of Pope John XXIII's remarks in his *Opening Speech* to the Second Vatican Council on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1962.

"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."

Events were to show that those prophets were right and the Pope egregiously wrong. Two influences operated, we argued, to produce the harm that afflicted the Church in the years that followed. One was from without - *feminism*. The other, foreshadowed in John XXIII's remarks, was the loss of understanding of the need for discipline within the Church.

### *The Second Vatican Council*

From concern over ambivalence in the documents of Vatican II, in and around 2009 I came to the realisation that, contrary to the opinion of popes, bishops, clergy and theologians throughout the world, the Council *had not been* an ecumenical, or general, council of the Catholic Church. The critical issue was the reason, or end, for which John XXIII summoned the bishops to Rome. The metaphysical principle involved is this: *Finality determines formality* - *why something is determines what that thing is*. To be an ecumenical council the gathering of

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZOZDi33DzY> from the 29<sup>th</sup> minute onwards. Fr Gregory Hesse S.T.D., S.J.D., died in January, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/executivefailure\\_2.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/executivefailure_2.pdf)

bishops had to have *as its object or end* something essential to the good of the Catholic Church. In his *Opening Speech* the Pope showed there was no such object. He said he hoped that—

“by bringing herself up to date where required, and by the wise organisation of mutual cooperation, the Church [would] make men, families and peoples really turn their minds to heavenly things...

“The salient point of this council is not... a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church... repeatedly taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and... presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a council was not necessary. But from... adherence to all the teaching of the Church... the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the... world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and formation of consciousness... in conformity to authentic doctrine... to be studied and expounded through the methods of research and... the literary forms of modern thought...”<sup>11</sup>

In other words the Pope intended that the Church *should adapt herself* to the times and the demands of ‘modern thought’. This expectation radically misconceived the Church’s reality.

The Catholic Church is not something human. She is not man’s creation but God’s and just as God does not exist in time nor is the thing He established on earth, His Church, fettered, save *per accidens*, with concern for time or the times. With Vatican II the ordination which had marked each of the previous twenty Councils was reversed: instead of the resolution of an issue giving legitimacy to a Council, a Council resolved to give legitimacy to an issue. What was the result? The end being absent, the formality ensuring that the determinations of the Council would be infallible was likewise absent. Vatican II lacked the charism of *extraordinary* infallibility that marks an ecumenical council.<sup>12</sup>

The absence of an object adequate to render the Council ecumenical was reiterated by Paul VI on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965 in his *Concluding Address during the last General Meeting of the Council*. The burden of this rambling peroration may be paraphrased as follows:

The council did not devote itself to divine truths, even to reaffirming the Church’s rights and explaining her law. Rather it devoted itself to the modern world to penetrate, serve and evangelise society, to get to grips with it - almost to run after it – an attitude which was strongly and unceasingly at work. The council has been concerned not just with herself and her relationship with God but with man on whom it has concentrated principally, man who dares to claim that he is the principle and explanation of all reality, such that we may say, a knowledge of man is a prerequisite for a knowledge of God.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, since it was not the Church which spoke at Vatican II, only her bishops, nothing uttered by the Council could bind the Catholic faithful. Insofar as the bishops repeated Catholic doctrine what they said was guaranteed by what the Church had previously taught.

Many years later I discovered that Fr Hesse had reached the same conclusion around 2001.

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<sup>11</sup> A copy is available in Walter M Abbott S.J., *The Documents of Vatican II*, London, 1966, pp. 710 et seq.

<sup>12</sup> See [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/dignitatis\\_humanae\\_2.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/dignitatis_humanae_2.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> See [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19651207\\_epilogo-concilio.html#:~:text=He%20will%20be%20recognized%20as,apex%20of%20all%20human%20activity](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_epilogo-concilio.html#:~:text=He%20will%20be%20recognized%20as,apex%20of%20all%20human%20activity)

The fathers of the *Vatican Council* of 1870 adopted the definition of the Church's apostolic tradition laid down by the *Council of Trent* and elaborated it in *Dei Filius* (April 24<sup>th</sup> 1870) as—

“that which has been received by the Church from the mouth of Christ Himself, or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and has been handed down by the Apostles themselves and has thus come to us.” Dz. 1787; DS ...

To which they added this—

“For, the doctrine of faith which God revealed has not been handed down as a philosophic invention to the human mind to be perfected, but has been entrusted as a divine deposit... to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted. Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding ‘Therefore... let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but in its own genus alone, namely in the same teaching, with the same sense and same understanding (*eodem sensu, eademque sententia*)’.” [Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 23, 3]. Dz. 1800; DS ...

Far from endorsing this, the Church's teaching, the bishops of Vatican II sought, in *Dei Verbum* n. 8, to *replace it* with a collection of errors condemned in *Pascendi*. They said:

"The Tradition that comes from the apostles progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth."

Let the reader remark their explicit contradiction of the principle the *Vatican Council* had laid down in 1870 that *there must never be recession from [the meaning which Holy Mother Church has once declared] under the specious name of a deeper understanding*. This flaw in so fundamental a matter marked the *Second Vatican Council* for what it was, an imposture.

In various papers published since we have sought to show its heterodox effects.<sup>14</sup> The Council's modernist infection is exemplified in the obsession of the current papacy with 'synodality' where, *inter alia*, authority is accorded the laity in breach of Pius X's specific condemnation of such a course. Infected with Vatican II's modernism, the popes who followed Paul VI and the bishops who people the Curia have sought to entrench the Council's authority. An eminent way of doing this suggested itself: elevating those who had inspired the Council or implemented its teachings to the level of saints!

We have argued on *superflumina* that the Catholic faithful have been systematically betrayed over Vatican II. Speaking for the faithful in Australia one is justified in averring that there is not one Catholic bishop in the country. They are, each of them, officers in another church, a counterfeit, the 'church of Vatican II', a 'democratic' church, which apes the Church Christ founded and strives to reduce her and the Catholic faithful to their collective will.

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<sup>14</sup> See for example the three papers entitled *The Trouble with Dignitatis Humanae* and *What Went Wrong with Vatican II* in the index at [https://www.superflumina.org/contents\\_vatican\\_ii.html](https://www.superflumina.org/contents_vatican_ii.html)

One final thing needs to be said on the topic because of the scandal it involves. The vast majority of orthodox theologians who are alive to the invalidity of the Council and the harm it continues to work *decline to condemn it publicly*. In his encyclical *Inimica Vis* (December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1892) Pope Leo XIII quoted words of Pope Felix III (483 - 492) which are to the point:

“An error which is not resisted is approved; a truth which is not defended is suppressed... He who does not oppose an evident crime is open to the suspicion of secret complicity.”

By their silence these theologians aid and abet the flourishing of the modernist heresy among the faithful, a heresy which, as Pius X taught, ends in atheism.

#### *The Novus Ordo*

From measured antipathy to Pope Paul VI's 'new order' of Mass I graduated to its outright rejection moved by the burden of Fr Hesse's reasoning—*Celebrate a false liturgy and you teach a false religion*. Paul VI sought to displace the Roman rite the Church had celebrated for more than fifteen centuries adherence to whose terms the *Council of Trent* had mandated and whose form Pius V had canonised in the bull *Quo primum* (July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1570).

No pope can bind his successors in a matter of discipline. He can, and does, bind them when he rules in a matter of faith as, in 1854, Pius IX bound each of his successors when he proclaimed the *Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* and, in 1950, Pius XII bound them when he proclaimed the *Dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*. Likewise in 1896 did Leo XIII in his Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae Curae* bind his successors irrevocably when he ruled against the validity of Anglican orders.

The way in which Mass is to be offered is a matter of faith. No action is more fundamental to the faith than the re-enactment of Christ's offering on the Cross in the Mass. This is clear in the way Pius V in 1570 and the Council of Trent in Session 7 Canon 13 anathematised anyone, *including a pope*, who would dare to contradict the Church's teaching on the issue. For almost 400 years each of the popes down to John XXIII, thirty three in all, accepted this as the Church's teaching. The three popes among them who published documents on the Missal, Urban VIII, Clement VIII and Pius X, endorsed *Quo primum*. They did not, as would have been the rational course if the mode of offering Mass was a matter of discipline, rescind it. Each sought to supplement, that is *to endorse*, what Pius V had laid down. Let the reader consider again Leo XIII's *Apostolicae Curae*. Here in 1896 a pope taught formally, *and bound his successors*, on an issue which goes to the essence of the Mass as Trent and Pius V had done before him.

Blinded by the facile categories of modern philosophy and insouciant of the anathemas condemning anyone who would commit such an action Paul VI chose to treat this matter of faith as a mere matter of discipline. Objectively taken he is deserving of the condemnations uttered by Trent and by Pius V.

Fr Hesse pursued the issue to its logical end. Not only was the *novus ordo* a defective and illicit rite, he argued, but since *lex orandi statuit legem credendi*, and the 'new rite' preached a faith which was not the Catholic faith, it was a schismatic rite. Since it is illicit for any Catholic

to attend a rite of Mass offered by a schismatic church, *even if its sacraments are valid*, it followed that no Catholic could attend the *novus ordo* to satisfy his Sunday obligation!<sup>15</sup>

#### *The Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei*

Moved by Fr Hesse's reasoning, from acceptance of the illegality of the consecrations conducted by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1988, and acknowledgement of the entitlement of Pope John Paul to condemn him and the other bishops involved and acknowledgement of the force of *Ecclesia Dei*, I reversed my opinion.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre established the *Society of St Pius X* in 1970 to ensure the Mass canonised by Pope Pius V would continue to be offered. His attitude was opposed by the *zeitgeist* generated by Vatican II and Pope Paul's 'new' rite. Concerned that soon he might not be able to ordain such priests, the Archbishop endeavoured to obtain permission to consecrate bishops who would do so. Discussions that seemed to be heading towards permission were stifled with the imposition of *ad hoc* conditions and the Archbishop realised the required pontifical mandate would not be forthcoming. With the assistance of retired Bishop Antonio de Castro Meyer of Brazil he consecrated as bishops four of the priests of *the Society*, Bernard Felay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Alfonso de Galarreta and Richard Williamson. The Vatican reacted on July 1<sup>st</sup> by declaring that the penalty in canon 1382 of the *Code* operated so that the bishops who had taken part and the bishops so consecrated had each incurred *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See. The following day the Pope issued the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei*.

Before proceeding it will assist the reader to understand something of the history of canon law. The penalty for neglecting to obtain a papal mandate before consecrating a bishop was, under the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*, one of suspension (can. 2370). In 1951 and in 1976 there occurred cases involving consecrations without papal mandate where it was appropriate that a charge of schism be upheld because the participants made it clear that they rejected the Pope's authority, of Pius XII in 1951, of Paul VI in 1976. The exceptions presented by these cases prompted those preparing the new Code of Canon Law (published in 1983) to enlarge the penalty for illicit consecration to excommunication. This was imprudent: it made a rule of what was exceptional, illustrating the force of the maxim - *Hard cases make bad law*.

The conduct of Archbishop Lefebvre, Bishop de Castro Meyer and the bishops they consecrated was dramatically different from these two cases. None of them rejected the Pope's authority. They simply acted in what they regarded as an emergency, something for which canon law has always provided. No member of *the Society* rejected the Pope's authority; no member of *the Society* rejects it today. The Pope is included in the Canon of every Mass its priests offer. They offer prayers for him and for his intentions regularly.

In the light of what is said above it is patent that *Ecclesia Dei* has four major defects:

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<sup>15</sup> See Craig Allan, *The Holy Office on worship with non-Catholics from 1622 to 1939* at [http://www.latinmassmagazine.com/articles/articles\\_2006\\_AC\\_Allan.html](http://www.latinmassmagazine.com/articles/articles_2006_AC_Allan.html)

1. it confuses disobedience to a papal directive with an act of schism;
2. it proceeds on a misunderstanding of what is meant by sacred tradition;
3. it betrays the Pope's ignorance over the limits of his own powers; and,
4. it demonstrates that he did not regard himself as bound by canon law.

Let us deal with each in turn.

\* The offence of schism cannot be committed by a person simply refusing one of the Pope's commands for a bishop, priest, religious or member of the laity might be justified in doing so, as a soldier refusing an immoral command of a superior does not thereby deny his authority, only his entitlement to abuse his authority.

\* The meaning of the term 'tradition' or 'apostolic tradition' was established at the *Council of Trent* and confirmed by the *Vatican Council* as noted above. Instead of relying on this, the Church's teaching, the Pope sought to rely on the defective statement set forth in *Dei Verbum* n. 8 referred to above. Thus he said in *Ecclesia Dei*—

“[t]he root of this schismatic act can be discerned in an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition. Incomplete, because it does not take sufficiently into account the living character of Tradition.”

But the Church's sacred tradition is not something 'living'. It does not 'progress'; it does not profit from 'the contemplation and study of believers' or from 'the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [the faithful] experience', as *Dei Verbum* n. 8 claims. These are modernist inventions.

\* The *Vatican Council* spelled out clearly in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1870) the limits of a pope's powers with respect to the Church's sacred tradition:

“The Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by His revelation they might disclose new doctrine, but that by His help they might guard sacredly the revelation transmitted through the Apostles and the deposit of faith, and might faithfully set it forth.” Dz. 1836; DS...

But in the *motu proprio* the Pope offends this provision. In asserting that tradition 'progresses' and 'grows' he implies that it develops in new ways. Indeed his complaint of the Archbishop is that he will not accept *this heterodox understanding* of tradition.

\* The Pope confused disobedience to a papal directive with an act of schism. There is no provision in the 1983 *Code* that renders an illicit consecration a schismatic act. In so labelling it the Pope demonstrated that he did not consider himself bound by canon law.

Accordingly, the *motu proprio* was defective as a statement of the actions it mandated. It will be for the Church to determine in due course what if any was its legal effect. It is difficult to imagine that the then head of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, had played no part in its formulation. It is significant, then, that as Pope Benedict XVI on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009, he remitted the penalties *Ecclesia Dei* had sought to justify.

Archbishop Lefebvre's initiative precipitated Pope John Paul, adjunct to his condemnations in the *motu proprio*, in setting up a Commission—

“for the purpose of facilitating full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, religious communities or individuals until now linked in various ways to the Fraternity founded by Mons. Lefebvre... who may wish to remain united to the Successor of Peter in the Catholic Church, while preserving their spiritual and liturgical traditions” (the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission).



This flawed document has, thus, provided some sort of justification for those wishing to adhere to the ancient Mass. But truth is blended with falsity for the *motu proprio* and the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI that followed (*Summorum Pontificum*, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007) both rely on the defective premise grounding Paul VI's *Missale Romanum* (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1969) that the manner of offering Mass is no more than a matter of discipline. This is the understanding on which Pope Francis relies in his attempts to outlaw the ancient Mass *and he is entitled to do so if the issue is one of discipline only*. Theologians around the world who laud *Summorum Pontificum* against Pope Francis seem incapable of understanding this simple truth.

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò sees the point. He says the Vatican uses—

“the moderate ‘conservatives’ to give an appearance of offering freedom to the faithful... *Summorum Pontificum*... for example, while granting the celebration in the extraordinary form, demands *saltem impliciter* that we accept the Council and recognise the lawfulness of the reformed liturgy. This ploy prevents those who benefit... from raising any objection, or they risk the dissolution of the *Ecclesia Dei* communities. And it instils in the Christian people the dangerous idea that a good thing, in order to have legitimacy in the Church and society, must necessarily be accompanied by a bad thing, or at least something less good. However, only a misguided mind would seek to afford equal rights to both good and evil.”<sup>16</sup>

#### *Canonisations since January 1983*

Pope John Paul II was moved to modify, or to seek to modify, the Church's long endorsed protocols on the canonisation of saints to accommodate the demands of members of the *Opus Dei* movement that their founder, Jose-Maria Escrivá, be canonised. In January 1983 the Pope emasculated the punctilious protocols laid down by his predecessor Benedict XIV<sup>17</sup> endorsed by popes for the 240 years that followed. He canonised Escrivá in line with this new regime in October 2002 as one who might be termed ‘the first of the Vatican II saints’. Escrivá had maintained throughout his life that the laity provided the factor of progress in the Church which Vatican II's bishops embodied in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, contradicting Pius X's explicitly condemnation.<sup>18</sup> John Paul ignored, as had Vatican II before him, Pius X's teaching.

The error at the heart of Pope John Paul's reinvention of the rules for canonisation is yet another instance of the debility that followed the loss of the Church's metaphysics, abandonment of distinction in logical terms. Before Vatican II every prelate and clergyman in the Church understood the term ‘saint’ to be *univocal*, that is, as signifying in each of its inferiors (those of whom it was said)<sup>19</sup> a character simply the same, one of heroism even to death for Christ's sake. Beginning with utterances of Paul VI in 1965, this signification began to be degraded to the level of the *analogical*. Thereafter it would suffice that one be termed ‘saint’ if he or she had manifested at some time or other some marks of sanctity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In his Address to the *Catholic Identity Conference*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Prior to his elevation to the papacy in 1740.

<sup>18</sup> “Already we observe, Venerable Brethren, the introduction of that most pernicious doctrine which would make of the laity the factor of progress in the Church.” *Pascendi*, n. 27

<sup>19</sup> As, for example, St Peter, St Paul, St Augustine, St Ignatius Loyola, St Catherine and St Teresa.

<sup>20</sup> Parallel is the abuse of the term ‘hero’. [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/canonisations-since-vii.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/canonisations-since-vii.pdf)

### *The Popes*

John XXIII died on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1963. He was canonised by Pope Francis on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 but the date of canonisation assigned to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, allegedly for his performance of the singular service to the Church of calling the Second Vatican Council, the second of 'the saints of Vatican II'. John Paul II died on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 and was canonised by Pope Francis on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 - the third of 'the saints of Vatican II'. Paul VI died on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1978 and notwithstanding innumerable events throughout his life that militated against his being raised to the altars,<sup>21</sup> he was canonised by Pope Francis on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the fourth of 'the saints of Vatican II'.

John Paul's successor, Benedict XVI, proved a disappointment but only for those who regarded him as a champion for Catholic orthodoxy. His resignation after a little less than eight years in office confirmed the views of those who understood that he was never going to solve the problems posed by Vatican II. He had always been part of them.

Pope Francis who succeeded him embarked on a road whose signposts were put in place by Vatican II. His use of language to raise doubts in matters of faith and morals without resolving them (which St Thomas compares to leaving the cover off a sewer<sup>22</sup>); his refusal to answer questions on doctrinal matters (*dubia*) in exercise of the power of the Keys; his letting it be known that from 2020 he no longer considered himself Vicar of Christ, Head of the Church; and in innumerable other ways demonstrate his dalliance with heterodoxy. The orthodox Catholic faithful owe Pope Francis a singular debt; he has demonstrated just how riddled with modernism were the determinations of Vatican II.

### *Atheism and the Eclipse of Natural Morality in favour of New Moralities*

The twenty years since 2003 have seen a flourishing throughout the world of the atheist imperative. The loss of views held in common has accompanied the abandonment of belief in God and with it the flourishing of opinion as determining truth (i.e., subjectivism) coupled with mindless aggression and a refusal to listen to reason.

An apt vehicle for this tendency has been social media whose rise to prominence has provided anyone and everyone with an outlet for outpourings owing more to emotion than reason. The subjectivist protocol has been adopted by journalists and their employers inverting the principle expressed by the editor of the *Guardian* newspaper C. P. Scott in May 1921, *Comment is free but facts are sacred*.<sup>23</sup> The poison has penetrated political parties and even the thinking

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<sup>21</sup> For a summary of them see [https://www.superflumina.org/PDF\\_files/paul-vi-of-infelicitous-memory.pdf](https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/paul-vi-of-infelicitous-memory.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> In a sermon in July 1270 at the University of Paris. Quoted in Ceslaus Spicer O.P., *St Paul & Christian Living*, Dublin, 1964, ch. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Here is the quotation in its context, an essay entitled *One Hundred Years*. "A newspaper is of necessity something of a monopoly, and its first duty is to shun the temptations of monopoly. Its primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong. Comment is free, but facts are sacred. 'Propaganda', so called, by this means is hateful. The voice of opponents no less than that of friends has a right to be heard. Comment also is justly subject to a self-imposed restraint. It is well to be frank; it is

of the judiciary so as to compromise the reasonable expectations of citizens for justice. This disturbance of rational life has been aided by the lack of any criticism of the systematic breaches of natural moral principle by the Catholic episcopacy, a result of the emasculation of their office by Vatican II. Their behaviour betrays their claims to be Catholic.

In the 1970s there was sufficient drive from the Catholic faithful with support from one or two bishops and some priests to support public demonstrations against calls for the systematic murder of the innocent unborn. To prevent this evil developing it was essential there be concerted opposition by the bishops. It never happened. By July 2003 the faithful, aided by a few conscientious Protestants and Muslims, were struggling to oppose the growing tide of immorality symptomatic of the developing atheism. For all his faults, Paul VI had spoken prophetically in *Humanae Vitae* (July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968) when he said –

“Responsible men [ought to reflect] on the consequences of methods and plans for the artificial restriction of increases in the birth-rate. Let them first consider how easily this course of action can lead to the way being wide open to marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards... Another effect... is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection. Finally, grave consideration should be given to the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law... [n. 17]

The trickle of indulgence in contraception facilitated by the Anglican Church at its Lambeth conference in August 1930 had by the 1960s turned into a flow which saw the moral aberration defended publicly. With natural morality in so fundamental a matter relegated to the dustbin other moral norms began to go awry. The calls to permit abortion followed logically. But man cannot live without morality and Chesterton’s aphorism - *He who ceases to believe in God will believe in anything* – has been borne out. New ‘moralities’ have arisen with demands as irrational as atheism’s belief system whose advocates afflict the populace with the stridency of their demands.

#### *The Universe and Dr Christopher Decaen’s Paper on Aristotle’s Aether*

After expatiating on these theological and moral issues our insistence on a return to metaphysical principle (enunciated by Aristotle, adopted by the Church’s Angelic Doctor) in dealing with the discoveries of modern science might seem peripheral. But time may prove it to be of the greatest moment if metaphysical analysis, grounded in acknowledgement of the reality of an Orderer of the universe, manages to address problems whose solution has eluded scientists.

In 2006 in the course of an internet search I stumbled upon a paper written by American philosopher, Christopher A Decaen, *Aristotle’s Aether and Contemporary Science* (*The Thomist* Vol. 68, n. 3, July 2004, pp. 375-429). It answered a question that had puzzled me for some 40 years, namely, the nature of that substance or body which constitutes what modern scientists

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even better to be fair. This is an ideal. Achievement in such matters is hardly given to man. Perhaps none of us can attain to it in the desirable measure. We can but try, ask pardon for shortcomings, and there leave the matter.”

calls 'space', Aristotle's 'heavenly body' or *aether*. A study of the thinking of Aristotle and St Thomas's commentaries showed that although it is material this heavenly body does not share a common matter with other material things. The terms 'matter' and 'form' in *aether* are not *univocal* with what those terms signify in common material things. They are said *analogously*.

There was much else in Dr Decaen's paper and after lengthy rumination on the thinking of Aristotle and conversation with those versed in the findings of modern science I arrived at a view about the constitution of the universe which differs radically from current explanations. I put my thoughts together in a paper, *How the Universe Operates*, to be found on the website. Seventeen years on from the original discovery a publisher for the work has been found and the book should be available shortly.

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In 2003 I anticipated we had twenty years in which to make, or endeavour to make, a difference to the thinking of Catholics and men of good will via the internet. That period has now expired. Any influence the website can have hereafter must be regarded as a bonus.

Michael Baker

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Pope Leo XIII