The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

50 Years Since Vatican II

A Debate That Has Not Taken Place
The Three Modernist Musketeers: De Lubac, Congar and Rahner
The History of the Preparatory Schemas

January - February 2012
50 Years Since Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council was instrumental for a revolution in the self-understanding of the Church, its inner life, and its relationship to other Christian denominations, other religions and the world. Pope John XXIII set the tone when opening the Council:

“The Church should never depart from the sacred treasure of truth inherited from the Fathers. But at the same time she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and the new forms of life introduced into the modern world.”

With the passage of time, and now on the cusp of the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Council, in the face of a tremendous crisis, there is a growing body of opinion that the Council, its teachings, and its spirit are major causes of the modern decline.
Welcome to the new and updated version of The Angelus. With the help of a new editorial team and a renowned European branding firm, we are happy to present the fruit of many months’ worth of work and planning. Every issue will feature a theme, made up of several short articles on the same topic, as well as unique regular sections and topics which will become familiar to you as the months go on.

On the one hand, we retained certain features: sections such as “Questions and Answers” and “SI SI NO NO” will continue as usual. On the other hand, we have instituted new sections, dedicated to such topics as education, history, and Catholic doctrine. You will notice that we now have a section for letters to the editor; we encourage feedback from our subscribers, whether or not it ends up in the magazine.

Our introductory theme is the 50th anniversary of the convocation of the Second Vatican Council. Your first reaction might be to wonder why we chose such a regularly-discussed question in traditional Catholic circles. Certainly it is not to preach to the choir. You will see, first, that we have emphasized the period leading up to the Council; Vatican II did not come out of a vacuum. The trends and ideas circulating well before the 1960’s contributed to an atmosphere where this kind of revolution was even possible. Second, and perhaps more importantly, there are voices outside the SSPX now leveling the same critiques as we have made for over 40 years against the Council and the post-conciliar era. We may hope and pray that these voices are heard and multiplied.

The Angelus aims at forming the whole man: we aspire to help deepen your spiritual life, nourish your studies, fight for the rights of Christ the King in the modern world, understand the history of Christendom, and restore Christian culture in every aspect. Read, discuss, share with your family and friends, and let us know what you think. The Catholic press may be under the same pressures as print media in general, but it is not the first time we have striven to be the exception that proves the rule!

May God bless you for your support of this apostolate.

In Christ the King,
Fr. Arnaud Rostand, Publisher
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Vatican Council II:

A Debate That Has Not Taken Place

by DICI

This book is a sequel to *The Ecumenical Council Vatican II: A Debate to Be Opened*, that appeared in Italian in 2009, and has since been translated into French, English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. In this new work, Msgr. Brunero Gherardini, canon of the Vatican Archbasilica and director of the international theological periodical Divinitas, does not content himself with deploring the fact that the debate on Vatican Council II has not taken place, but even goes so far as to show why it would be more indispensable than ever today. And above all, he indicates how this debate could be opened, giving the reader the first elements of a rigorous analysis, far from sterile invectives and blind ovations. With the amiable authorization of Courrier de Rome, we here publish in advance some particularly enlightening texts on the “spirit of the Council” and on its “counter-spirit.” Bishop Gherardini shows that it is not only the post-Council that is responsible for today’s crisis in the Church, but the Council itself whose spirit contained the seed of this “counter-spirit” (*gegen-Geist*) that Benedict XVI denounces, attributing it to the post-council alone. The former professor of the pontifical University of the Lateran indicates in what he is close to and in what he distances himself from the hermeneutics proposed by him who was then Cardinal Ratzinger in his interview on the Faith with Vittorio Messori (Payard, 1985):

“My two publications have two things in common with the Ratzinger hermeneutics; they point out and refuse the gegen-Geist (the counter-spirit of the Council), that is to say, this absurd judgment of Vatican II that has disregarded more than twenty centuries of history and imposed a way
of seeing things that is radically different from all ecclesiastical Tradition and from its integral content.

“My two works do not say that this gegen-Geist has erased, or tried to erase, the true ‘spirit’ of the Council. They even ask the paradoxical and provocative question of whether the authentic ‘spirit’ of the Council is not after all allied with the ‘counter-spirit.’” (p. 24)

“Thus, as regards traditional values, the ‘spirit of the Council’ was in itself a gegen-Geist, before this was even spread by the commentators involved. The ‘spirit of the Council’ had generally put the Council in opposition even with all that the Church had up till then accredited as its daily bread, especially the Councils of Trent and Vatican I. One cannot but be struck by the presence of several sentences, scattered here and there in certain documents, especially in the strategic paragraphs of the introduced innovation, with the single goal of ensuring between yesterday and today a correspondence that in fact does not exist.” (p. 30)

“We must not imagine that there has been a general overturning. Vatican II did not innovate upon all of the truths contained in the Credo and defined by the preceding Councils. The problem is not in the quantity, but in the quality. It is not for nothing that we speak of ‘spirit’ and ‘counter-spirit’ within the Council.

Energy against Thomism

“The rupture, before bearing upon specific matters, bore upon the fundamental inspiration. Certain ostracism had been decreed, but not towards one or another of the revealed truths proposed as such by the Church. This new ostracism attacked a certain way of presenting these truths. It thus attacked a theological method, that of scholasticism, that is no longer tolerated. With a particular energy against Thomism, considered by many as outdated and now very far from the sensibility and problems of modern man.

“One did not realize, nor did not want to believe, that rejecting St. Thomas Aquinas and his method would entail a doctrinal collapse. The ostracism had begun by making itself subtle, penetrating and all-encompassing. It threw no one out the door, or any theological theory, and still less certain dogmas. What it evinced was the mentality that in its time had defined and promulgated these dogmas.

“It was thus a true rupture because it was strongly wished for, as a necessary condition, as the only way that would allow an answer to hopes and questions that had up till then—since the Enlightenment, that is—remained unanswered.

“I ask myself if truly all the conciliar Fathers realized that they were objectively in the process of tearing themselves away from this multi-century mentality that until then had expressed the fundamental motivation of life, of prayer, of the teaching and government of the Church.

“In all, they proposed again the modernist mentality, that against which St. Pius X had taken up a very clear position, expressing his intention of ‘instaurare omnia in Christo,’ restoring all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). It was thus clearly a manifestation of gegen-Geist.” (pp. 31-32)

Spirit of the Council

“All the same, it is difficult to ignore that all began precisely with Vatican Council II. Someone has observed that Vatican Council II could be compared to Aeolus' goatskin (which in the Greek legend holds all the contrary winds). It is since Vatican II that this hurricane that we call ‘the spirit of the Council’ has been let loose, a spirit in which I have without trouble recognized the presence of ‘against.’ Yes, ‘against’:

– against the spirituality that guided the Church from its origin until 1963;
– against its dogmas, reinterpreted not theologically, but in a historicist way;
– against its Tradition, suppressed as a source of Revelation and reinterpreted as the acceptance of what one meets on one’s way, above all in the modern cultural pluralism, be it homogenous or no in relation to its ontological status.

“If we wish only to blame the post-Council, so be it, for it is not at all free of wrongs. But also, >
we must not forget that it is the natural son of the Council, and that it is in the Council that it has found the principles upon which it has then founded its most devastating contents, to the point of exhausting them.

“We must however say a few words concerning one aspect of the conciliar aggiornamento. This is particularly important to me because it is a part of the Tridentine tradition and because it is in conformity with the sacramental reality of the priest. It is of him that I wish now to speak.

“As much in Lumen Gentium 28/1, that says textually: ‘The priests...are consecrated to preach the Gospel,’ as in Presbyterorum Ordinis 13/2, which voluntarily places the ministry of the Word at the highest place in the priest’s functions, we see a clear modification of the Tridentine tradition, according to which the priest is ‘ad consecendam eucharistiam.’ He is, of course, destined to other finalities, but all are placed after that of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

“But in the Vatican II texts, all that is not in relation to the ministry of the Word becomes secondary, forgetting the condition of the priest as a mystical continuation of Christ, and thus the Christic basis of sacrifier and glorifier of the Father, which reflects on the priest [13] and forms his first characteristic.

“Consequently, how can it be coherent to declare that such a radical overturning of the Tridentine tradition is also perfectly coherent with the preceding magisterium, and constitutes the material of infallible, irreformable and dogmatic validity? I candidly admit that I do not understand.” (pp. 82-83)

Level of Innovations

Then, Msgr. Gherardini offers to the theologian who would accept to “open the debate” a work method, and he invites him to begin with distinguishing four levels in the conciliar documents:

“It seems to me that to begin, and always after having considered all the implications, a good critic should consider Vatican Council II on four distinct levels:

a. the generic level of the ecumenical council as an ecumenical council;
b. the specific level as pastoral;
c. the level of reference to other councils;
d. the level of innovations.” (p. 84)

“The Vatican Council...presents a fourth level, that of its innovations. If we look not at each teaching, but at the spirit that conceived and produced them all, we could maintain that the Council was entirely on a ‘fourth’ level, or that all can be found on this level. The ‘against’ that I mentioned earlier places Vatican Council II, whether we like it or not, on the level of innovation; and even of a singular innovation, the most radical, that which, before looking at things, took on a “Garibaldi,” that is, a revolutionary allure; and let us say that before coming concretely to surprising and manifest ruptures, the ‘against’ was a loud and decided no to the fundamental inspiration of the former magisterium. The innovations that were successively decided were the logical consequence.

“A reader who would not necessarily be a specialist, but who would have a few historico-theological notions, will be able to distinguish between them with no trouble. Let us take a formal point of view, the new concept of constitutio: it is at this new point that it engendered copies of constitutions in which the constitutive mode disappeared behind an improper and vague language, voluntarily deprived of definitory intentions, and often replaced by profane language; and that, at the invitation of Pope Roncalli, repeated afterwards by his successors. What is more, this concept opened the doors of the ‘constitutive’ even to foreign elements. You must read Gaudium et Spes attentively and without preformed ideas: one might ask, in sum, what link there can be between the vast majority of themes treated, not only in the second part, but also in the first part of this text, with the nature and the specific apostolic activity of the Church. The novelty places the Church on the level of the States and their institutions; it makes of the Church an intervening party among others, and robs her not so much of her function as the conscious critic of history, but rather of her nature as ‘sacramentum Christi’ and of the responsibility that follows from this as regards...
eternal salvation. The Church thus becomes an entity in dialogue with other entities. The Church promotes dialogue to realize ends that are indeed lofty—progress, peace—that turn her away from her specific task which is to preach the Gospel, to actualize and apply the merits of the Redemption, and to propagate the reign of God: in all, all that has to do with the life of grace until the moment of Parousia.” (pp. 87-88)
It is impossible to speak of the genesis of the Second Vatican Council without mentioning the leading figures of the whole movement. Let us mention three names who manifest clearly how people of such different cultures and formations reached similar conclusions: Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar, and Karl Rahner.

Many things unite these three men. They all had a long history as university professors; all were under theological scrutiny for modernist ideas under Pius XII; all were somehow disciplined or exiled from their positions. All were then miraculously reinstalled as Council periti on the eve of the Council. Their teaching ideas were broadly known as “the new theology” and they came to influence the principles of conciliar teaching. They all became the experts of subsequent popes and therefore were granted many praises and honors by the post-conciliar Church.

Pius XII had little time for the new theology and its avant-garde teachers. They represented for him the rear guard of the old modernist wave so forcefully condemned by St. Pius X in Pascendi of 1907. The pope again reiterated the condemnation of the new—old—trends in Humani Generis: “Others [de Lubac] destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say,
cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the be- 
atific vision....1 Some [de Lubac, Congar] reduce to a meaningless formula the 
necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation. 
Others finally belittle the reasonable character of the credibility of Christian 
faith.

The Heirs of the Modernists

De Lubac, in his Mémentes,2 explains that he would passionately devour 
the strange philosophy of philomodernist Blondel, but also of the more openly 
modernist Lachelier. “In those days, such readings constituted, in the main, 
a forbidden fruit. But thanks to indulgent professors and counselors, they 
were never considered to be a clandestine or underground activity.”3 As a 
professor, de Lubac spent the better part of his time teaching and writing at a 
safe distance from polemics, adroitly managing to avoid censorship. 

Congar did not have the same luck. More outspoken, he was repeatedly 
exiled to Jerusalem, then recalled to Rome and Cambridge, before ending the 
pre-conciliar era in Strasbourg. From Rome, he could write in all impunity: 
“The course I am currently teaching, De Ecclesia, despite its naïve tone, is 
my real answer; it is my real dynamite under the seats of the scribes! Wait and 
take advantage of the occasions as they arise to express outwardly my refusal 
of the lies of the system.”4

Of Rahner’s early life little is known, yet it seems as if the duplicity of his 
confreres was not foreign to him. Else, how could he quote St. Thomas on ev- 
every page of his philosophy which is the exact opposite of Thomism? How could 
he pretend to be a Catholic theologian when he explained the fundamental 
mysteries of our faith as a sort of pantheism? The Italian Fabro rightly accus- 
es Rahner of being a systematic distorter, crashing around amongst Thomistic 
theses like a deaf man at a musical concert.5

The “New Theology”

The term “New Theology” was coined to describe the school of thought 
around the person of de Lubac, who drew in many friends among the Jesuits 
of Fourvière, his residence while teaching at the university of theology of 
Lyons. This high-powered team included the future cardinals Daniélou 
and von Balthasar. They had also some influence on the Jesuit Teilhard de 
Chardin and the Dominicans Chenu and Congar. A brilliant mind and an ac- 
complished writer, de Lubac’s culture was universal; yet, his preference went 
to historical and patristic criticism, profusely quoting the dubious Origen, all 
the more readily for his aversion to scholastic theology.

The new theology is also characterized by the rejection of an authoritative 
sovereign magisterium which must pave the way for the living tradition, the 
definition of Revelation as the living Person of Christ, and the rejection of 
the supernatural order which leads to praise man’s dignity for being simply a 
man. Both the exaltation of man and the downgrading of the Church’s mag-
isterium open the door to a universal dialogue with Christians and non-Christians alike. One formula, which encapsulates the entire Lubackian spirit, would consecrate his fame at the Council: “By revealing the Father and by being revealed by Him, Christ completes the revelation of man to himself....It is through Christ that the person reaches maturity, that man emerges definitively from the universe....” Cardinal Siri once described Fr. de Lubac’s entire body of work as “evasive” because it effectively denies all of the first principles of philosophy. Pius XII also blamed the New Theology in September 1946, and would complain about the duplicity of the Jesuit of Lyons.7 For our short exposé, we can only give a glimpse of the main tenet which each musketeer brought into the Council’s teaching. De Lubac cuts at the essence of truth; Congar embraces a broad ecumenism, and Rahner attacks the papacy.

The Historicism of De Lubac

Historicism is the theory which affirms that truth of faith varies according to the age. Theology, to remain alive, must move with the times. It is a mitigated form of scepticism applied to the Faith. Here are some aspects in which de Lubac shows himself a historicist theologian: He rejects any imposition of the faith from without. “Nothing is more inadequate to truth than the extrinsic doctrines which maintain in the Church only a unity of constraint, unless it be an unity of indifference....They transform the obedience of faith into a faith of pure obedience.”

Truth is never adequately defined: “No more than we were yesterday in a ‘pre-theological’ state, we shall not be in possession of a perfect theology of the Church....Such a Utopia fits in with neither the nature of revealed truth nor that of the human intelligence....” In fact, truth consists in the power of inclusion, whichever it may be! “This spirit, which gives the tone and the orientation of his entire work, is that of plenitude, of totality, to the point that the power of inclusion becomes the primordial character of truth.”

The unity is obtained by means of tradition, which is utterly redefined. It is an entity “concrete and living...which becomes actual in conformity with the needs of each epoch as well as it preserve the revealed truth.”

The Ecumenism and the Broad Church of Congar

To Congar we owe much of the schema of Lumen Gentium. The identity between the Mystical Body and the visible and hierarchical Church is mentioned in a positive way, but this in no way implies the exclusive sense which was found in Fr. Tromp: this allows for the inclusion of the famous ‘subsistit...”
in’ of No. 8, modest but decisive discovery which constitutes the substance of *Lumen Gentium* 8.14 Congar, for one, claims that the separate Churches belong to the Church of Christ—pure heresy.

Where the traditional magisterium dealt with the nature of the Church, Congar spoke instead of the mystery and sacrament of the Church;16 where Pius XII defined the notion of membership in the Mystical Body of Christ, Congar inserted the vague Tyrrellian 17 notion of “communion of the People of God.” Why? because one is or is not a member of a body, but one can be more or less in communion.18 In other words, Congar reinterpreted the strict concept of “Church” to become a one-size-fits-all term that can be applied to any religious group. “The Church existed always as institution and thing made from above since Christ and the Apostles. It needed to be remade and for this to be reinvented as a people.”19 There is a need of reform to avoid the temptation of becoming ‘Synagogue’ because “The body of the Church has grown, but not its skin. Then, there could be a break. What are questionable are certain features of the temporal aspect which Christianism has received from another historical world.”20 Interestingly, Congar is using the very image used 40 years earlier by the English modernist Tyrrell. 21

From the broad Church of Christ to universal salvation, there is only one short step. “Today nobody can claim that any need to save souls from Hell is what accounts for the missions. God saves them without their knowing the Gospel. Otherwise we should all have to leave for China.”22

Rahner and Church Collegiality

Collegiality was another flagship of the modernists. This was an idea launched by Rahner, who had the support of the omnipotent Rhine coalition. This type of government, as understood by the liberals, would have made the pope the equal of the bishops—*primus inter pares*, according to a formally condemned thesis. Rahner had defined the collegiality as the uncrowning of papacy and the democratization of the Church. Incidentally, he was a member of the subcommission which curtly rejected the legitimate desiderata of the conservative Fathers. And, despite the *Nota Explicativa Praevia* which precluded the heretical interpretation, the liberals were jubilant. Congar declared that the Church had carried off her October Revolution! Indeed, it seems as if after Vatican II, the papacy has been the victim of multiple sclerosis, virtually at the mercy of superpowers and some episcopal conferences, which set the Roman agenda *Urbi et Orbi*.

Impact of the Three Theologians

There is little doubt that the three mentioned theologians have formulated the theological principles of the conciliar Church. John Paul II praised de Lubac by making him a cardinal for “the long and faithful service which this theologian gave, using the best of Catholic tradition in his meditation on Scripture, the Church, and the modern world [his *Gaudium et Spes*].”23

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22 “Catholicism is Christianized paganism or world-religion, and not the Christianized Judaism of the New Testament…[T]his is altogether a liberation and a spiritual gain—a change from tight clothes to elastic.” In *One Hundred Years of Modernism*, p 140-141.
Congar was also rewarded with the red hat. And one of the main surprises of *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* is that the author considers Rahner as the most influential and perhaps the decisive authority behind many of Vatican II's innovations. According to Congar himself, “The atmosphere became: ‘Rahner dixit, ergo verum est.’” Heaven help us to find a Christian way out of the present maze set by such powerful masterminds!

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In Roman Catholic tradition the basilica is built on the burial site of its namesake Saint Peter, who was one of the twelve apostles and the first bishop of Rome. Tradition and historical evidence hold that Saint Peter's tomb is directly below the altar of the basilica. For this reason, many Popes have been interred at St. Peter's since the Early Christian period. There has been a church on this site since the 4th century.
A History Never Written

by Fr. Albert, OP

Roberto de Mattei is far from being a man of one book: the list of his published works is, on the contrary, very impressive and includes a wide range of topics from erudite historical studies to more popular books on controversial questions (like *Turkey in Europe: Benefit or Catastrophe?* and *Evolution: The Sunset of an Hypothesis*) some of which have been translated into other languages, including English. His latest book, however, entitled *The Second Vatican Council: A History Never Written (Il Concilio Vaticano II: Una storia mai scritta, Lindau, 2011)* is certainly his most important work so far, a monument that is obviously the result of an immense labor and destined to take a place beside the few other irreplaceable books on the Council like *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* by Fr. Ralph Wiltgen and *The History of Vatican II* by Giuseppe Alberigo and his famous School of Bologna.

A Long-awaited Alternative Reading

For some time now already it has been clear that a response was needed to the hefty five volumes of Alberigo, which is as tendentious in its radical...
progresivism as it is intimidating in its scientific pretentions. Backed by the funding of the Mesnil Foundation in Houston, Texas, this work, written by a vast group of collaborators from all over the world and translated into six languages, threatened to impose by its mere weight and volume its “hermeneutic of rupture” as the only “scientific” interpretation of the Council. The book of De Mattei constitutes a long awaited alternative reading of the events that manages, by a tour de force that only a professional historian of international stature like De Mattei could accomplish, to equal and even surpass the scientific quality of Alberigo and company while showing that their interpretation of the events, far from being the only one possible, is not at all the correct one. The author peruses the same immense documentation used by the School of Bologna and even outdoes them in several cases, quoting several new unpublished sources (including several diaries of the various protagonists ignored by Alberigo, as well as documents of the so-called “minority” at the Council as, for example, the archives at Econe).

A Powerful Unity

Methodologically, De Mattei’s book has the great advantage of being written by a single author, which gives it a powerful unity that is sorely lacking in Alberigo’s cumbersome collection of articles penned by various authors that often overlap and leave the reader the task of trying to put it all together somehow himself. That one man could manage this is no mean feat, and the quality of his labor has been recognized by his being awarded the extremely prestigious Acqui Storia Award for history, presented by an institution that has the adhesion of the highest governmental officials and bodies in Italy, including the President of the Republic. De Mattei himself has held important governmental posts, being an Adviser for International Affairs for several years and also Vice-President of the National Research Council of Italy from 2004 until 2011. He has come under heavy fire from liberal critics for his “politically incorrect” positions, as, for example, the book mentioned above on evolution, which is composed of different conferences given by various experts in a congress he organized in his capacity of Vice-President of the National Research Council. Even the Acqui award was not without controversy: the president of the commission of historians in charge of making the award resigned in protest against the decision to present it to De Mattei, who is described by Il Giornale as “a Catholic of iron” and “already at the center of polemics because of his traditionalist and anti-Darwinist positions.”

His book on the Council has also caused a storm, provoking attacks in both the newspaper of the pope, L’Osservatore Romano, and that of the Italian Bishops, Avvenire, in which his book is accused of being “ideological,” “extremist,” and “a veritable Summa of anticonciliarist theses.” Obviously not a man who backs down before a fight, De Mattei responded to these articles with a long rebuttal where he writes: “I have been reproached with neglecting the documents of the Council or of interpreting them using as a key a discontinuity with the Tradition of the Church. Neither affirmation is true. The interpretation of the documents of the Council does not regard myself nor any
aspiring interpreter of the Council; it regards the magisterium of the Church, and I hold to it. What I narrate are the facts, what I reconstruct is the historical context in which these documents came into existence....

“I affirm that on the historical level the post-Conciliar era cannot be explained without the Council, just as the Council cannot be explained without the pre-Conciliar era because in history every effect has its cause, and what happens has its place in a process that is often even multi-secular and has to do not only with the field of ideas but that of mentalities and customs.

“I do not deny the supreme authority of the Council and the authenticity and validity of its acts. But that does not mean infallibility. The Church is certainly infallible, but all the expressions of its representatives, even the supreme ones, are not infallible, and a Council is not necessarily holy nor infallible; for if it is true that the Holy Ghost is never lacking in assisting it, it is also true that one must correspond to the grace of the Holy Ghost, that it does not automatically produce either sanctity or infallibility. If it is true that every Council can exercise, in union with the pope, an infallible magisterium, a Council can renounce the exercise of such a magisterium in order to place itself on a totally pastoral level and, on this level, commit errors as happened, in my opinion, when the Second Vatican Council omitted condemning Communism...

“The problem that concerns me, however, is not the discussion of the texts of the Council; I leave that exegesis to the theologians, and above all to the pope. The problem that interests me as a member of the Church is to understand the historical roots of the crisis we are going through. The remote roots, because the crisis we are going through is several centuries old, but also the recent roots, because the present crisis goes back to even before 1968, to the time of the Second Vatican Council that is not just the 16 documents that concluded it, but the words, the acts, the omissions during and after the Council, of the Conciliar Fathers and, on the other hand, of the parallel magisterium, especially of the media, that put itself along side the authentic magisterium of the pope and the bishops.”

No Intention of Laying Down Arms

It is interesting to note that Roberto De Mattei's name figures in the recent petition sent to the pope by a group of over 50 Italian intellectuals asking for an authoritative examination of the Council in order to interpret it in the light of Tradition. Along with the recent book of Msgr. Gherardini, Il Concilio Vaticano II: Un Discorso a Fare, and the already classic work of Romano Amerio, Iota Unum, the book of De Mattei on the Council is cited in the petition, in particular in its conclusion where the author makes this same request for what he terms “an in-depth examination of the Second Vatican Council... in order to verify its continuity with the twenty Councils that preceded it.”

De Mattei does not consider himself as a supporter of the Society of St. Pius X (in one of his conferences viewable on the Internet he clearly says: “Non sono di questi—I am not one of them”) and this is apparent from certain positions he takes, and particularly in his omission of any critical remarks...
For example, under fire yet again because of a book he wrote entitled *The Mystery of Evil: The Chastisements of God,* he tries to appeal to texts of these two last popes to protect himself when, in reality, both of them would certainly reject his traditional position on the question.

Regrettable also is the evident sympathy of the author for the suspect movement Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) whose founder, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, is often quoted in the work.

In spite of the uproar occasioned by his book, the author clearly has no intention of laying down his arms yet. In order to help “anyone who desires to study more deeply the problems that the lively debate provoked by his book,” he has just published a sequel to it entitled *Apology for Tradition: Postscriptum to “The Second Vatican Council: A History Never Written”.*
The History of the Preparatory Schemas

by Fr. Philippe Lovey, SSPX

The Second Vatican Council spanned four years with four sessions held from the fall of 1962 to the fall of 1965. Its history, however, would be incomplete if we did not include the preliminaries which were to set the agenda for the Council. For over two years, 150 Cardinals and religious superiors, including Archbishop Lefebvre, met to produce what was meant to be the blueprint of the Council texts. We wish to examine this history, however briefly, as to the content, the conflict, and finally the dismissal of these pre-conciliar texts.¹

In the mind of Archbishop Lefebvre, the schemas of the Theological Commission clearly presented Catholic doctrine. They give us an idea of what the Council might have been. The drafting of studies in preparation for the Council was entrusted to several commissions, but the leading role was naturally given to the Theological Commission. Practically all the other commissions had some areas that overlapped its purview, but the Theological Commission alone was entitled, by its very object, to rule on everything pertaining to the purity of Catholic doctrine. This was explained by Cardinal Ottaviani to Cardinal Bea during the debate on religious toleration: “First of all, I must quite confidently assert that I do not concede that the Theological Commission is required to discuss doctrinal matters with

the other Commissions. In this matter, the Commission is fully independent because doctrine is concerned, and not mixed matters...The Secretariat for relations with non-Catholics should have delivered its schema to the doctrinal Commission for review because it was not treating a sociological question only, but a doctrinal one. Now we note for the record that there is disagreement on certain points, and these are indeed points of doctrine."

Cardinal Ottaviani's remark is of capital importance because it exposes the radical incompatibility and the lack of competence of the non-theological commissions to interfere in a field outside their particular domain. A glance at the general outline adopted by the two commissions (the Theology Commission and the Commission for Christian Unity) reveals the encroachment on all key points: the nature of the Church, the episcopacy and the Holy Father, the role of the laity, ecumenism, religious tolerance, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and the relation between Tradition and Sacred Scripture. On each of these directly or tangentially doctrinal subjects, the two commissions prepared separate schemas. The goal of the Secretariat for Christian Unity was clear: to promote the ecumenical movement and to conserve it by the perpetuation of the Secretariat at the time of the Council. Thus there were two schemas on a single subject, revealing two mutually exclusive conceptions of Catholic doctrine. It was as if the Pope had made use of Hegelian dialectics in order to arrive at a satisfying result.

The Theological Commission had prepared studies of admirable theological clarity. The influential minority group within the Central Preparatory Commission nevertheless managed to systematically bend the structure of the schemas. To give an example, we shall take a look at the attack orchestrated by the opponents of Cardinal Ottaviani on the nature of the Church. The following excerpt alone will suffice to make clear what was at stake in subsequent battles, which were essentially the same. Ottaviani described the Church before explaining the principles that dictated the Commission’s draft:

"There is only one true Church of Jesus Christ...which the Savior acquired on the Cross, which He united to Himself as the body to its head and the bride to her husband, and which, after the Resurrection, He confided to the government of St. Peter and his successors: the Church which alone bears the name of the Roman Catholic Church. The first principle [underlying the document] is that Jesus Christ willed that the salvation of every human being should be realized by union with the person of the God-Man, but He also willed that that union here below could only be realized in a social body, which He called His Church. The second principle is that there is no real distinction between the visible Roman Catholic Church and the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church....The visible Church and the Mystical Body of Christ are one and the same reality considered from different aspects...."

A Door Wide Open

Cardinal Bea showed that the Secretariat for Christian Unity was one of the groups imbedded in the preparatory commissions to prepare the way for ecumenism: “The Secretariat for Christian Unity has treated of these ques-
tions with a great deal of care, and on several occasions has requested that the Theological Commission institute a joint commission, which has always been rejected. That is why we have submitted this schema to him....The Catholic Church as means of salvation is not of ‘absolute necessity for salvation’ in the sense that God, in His loving-kindness and wisdom, has not willed to impose on men the unjust yoke of embracing in re, in order to be saved, an institution they have never heard of, and which the Catholic Church does not impose. The only thing required of men is the upright intention by which they would accept the Church if they knew of it and recognized it as the means of salvation.”

Cardinal Ottaviani, highly displeased by this intervention because it tended to broaden as far as possible the concept of membership in the Church, made this reply: “I understand [Cardinal Bea’s] zeal, since to him has been entrusted the Secretariat for Non-Catholics, and he will certainly do what he can so that the Council leaves a door wide open to them, but we mustn’t exaggerate! We must not say that as soon as someone is baptized he becomes a member of the Mystical Body even though he is not a member of the Church. Such an affirmation is dangerous...The Catholic Church and the Mystical Body are identical...Whereas the Commission has taken the greatest care to show that only Catholics are really members of the Church (the consequences of the opposite doctrine are truly dreadful and would cast doubt on the universality and infallibility of the Second Vatican Council), it has on the other hand worked to explain clearly that not all the ties between the sons of the Church and the separated brethren have been destroyed.”

These debates alone suffice to show that the modernist group was already preparing the way which would prevail later in the Church thanks to the adoption of the ambiguous terms they managed to foist upon the Church, a ‘spiritual’ Church encompassing in concentric circles all the children of men. But to do so it was necessary to get rid of the identity between the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. This they succeeded in doing by the introduction of the pernicious term subsistit in in the Constitution Lumen Gentium. The debate over the question of tolerance versus the religious freedom of false cults was highly contentious. Cardinal Bea succinctly summed up what was at stake: “The Secretariat [for Unity] was not interested in merely practical considerations, but addressed the theological principles. The two drafts concur on many points, but they totally differ on the fundamental question.” It could not be better said, since he granted to error, to false religions, a right that truth alone can claim.

A Conspiracy?

In hindsight, knowing that the results of Vatican II are so opposed to the majority of the original blueprints raises questions as to how such a change can have occurred. Romano Amerio considers the question whether “the unexpected change in its course was due to a concerted plan made before the council, and outside it, or whether it was an effect of the natural dynamism of the council itself.” Was there a tiny group of conspirators who took upon...
themselves the task of building the Temple of Solomon upon three words which have become famous (Aggiornamento, Pastoral, Ecumenism). Already in March 1962, Msgr. Suenens began besieging John XXIII. He complained of “an excessive number of schemas prepared with an eye to their being discussed in the Council.” Later, he wrote him a note suggesting that he curtail the Council and give it a genuinely pastoral direction, a note that entered fully into the outlook of John XXIII, who verbally approved it. A confidence of Msgr. Villot to Henri Denis on June 20 completes the idea of Cardinal Suenens’s plan, providing its purpose: “At the instigation of the Cardinals of Malines (Suenens) and of Munich (Döpfner), who spoke to the Pope recently about it, in the months preceding the Council there may be a fairly strong push for the reconsideration of the somewhat narrow-minded approach to issues. There again, the beginning of the Council stands a fair chance of being rather lively.”

Different Goals

Two weeks before its opening, Cardinal Bea declared: “We must help the Holy Father achieve his goals for the Council, the ones he expresses in his radio messages and in his exhortations. These are not the same as those of the schemas, either because the Theological Commission, which directs them, is closed to the world and to ideas of peace, justice, and unity, or because of the division of the work and a lack of co-ordination. They’ve made room for everything except the Holy Spirit.”

The maneuvering that resulted in a break in the legal framework of Vatican II, as noted by Professor Amerio, had been anticipated by the French Consul at Treves, M. Marcel Schublin. On July 26 of that year, he observed that “beginning in the first general congregation, an outstanding man will have to step forward to launch and to compel the debates everyone is awaiting. It is surely more than a matter of protocol that in this solemn hour, all eyes are on the Church of France.”

“During the first general congregation,” Fr. Henri Denis reported, “Cardinal Liénart of Lille took the microphone, dismissed the order of the day, and moved that the Council Fathers establish their own lists of candidates for the commissions. He was seconded by Cardinal Frings. It was the moment of an inevitable crystallization: Two thousand bishops could not have been put to such trouble merely to ratify antiquated and unpastoral texts and to recall the preparatory commissions after they had been dismissed.”

Paradoxical Outcome

Romano Amerio summed up the situation perfectly: “A distinctive feature of Vatican II is its paradoxical outcome, by which all the preparatory work that usually directs the debates, marks the outlook and foreshadows the results of a council, was nullified and rejected from the first session onward…” This departure from the original plan happened “by an act breaking the council's
legal framework.” This act was repeated at the time of the rejection of the schema on the sources of Revelation without the required majority vote. A papal decision overrode the regulations governing the conciliar assembly.12

Conclusion

The conclusion is inescapable: Vatican II, from October 13, 1962, onward, was already “revolutionary”? To get back to the “spirit” of the Council, then, would mean giving up the consequences of the revolution in order to return to the origin of the revolution. No, the only solution to the current crisis is a return, not to Vatican II, but to what it “disintegrated”—to the spirit that especially inspired the preliminary doctrinal schemas, authentic guardians of the deposit of faith, witnesses of Tradition.

Lepanto: The Battle that Saved the West

Though not part of the Lepanto Lectures Series, Angelus Press is pleased to offer this great audio work. On October 7, 1571, the most important sea battle in history was fought near the mouth of what is today called the Gulf of Patras, then the Gulf of Lepanto. On one side were the war galleys of the Holy League and on the other, those of the Ottoman Turks, rowed by tens of thousands of Christian galley slaves. Although the battle decided the future of Europe, few Europeans, and even fewer European Americans, know the story, much less how close Western Europe came to suffering an Islamic conquest. On October 7, 1911, English poet and theologian G.K. Chesterton honored the battle with what is perhaps the greatest ballad of the 20th century. He wrote this extraordinary poem while the postman impatiently waited for the copy. It was instantly popular and remained so for years. The ballad is no less inspiring today and is more timely than ever, as the West faces the growing threat of Islam. In the brand new CD Set Lepanto: The Battle That Saved the West, Christopher Check tells the exhilarating story of Lepanto, first in his own words and then through the poem of G.K. Chesterton.
Let us see first in what this mediation consists exactly and then whether it can be proved by Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterium.

What is meant by the mediation of Mary?

We can start by just quoting the response of St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*¹ to the question: “Is it proper to Christ (that is, does it belong to Christ alone) to be the mediator between God and man?” Yes, answers St. Thomas, quoting the verse of St. Paul in his first epistle to Timothy: “There is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5-6). And he explains: It belongs properly to the office of mediator to join together those between whom he is the mediator, for extremes are united by the medium between them. Now to unite men to God belongs perfectively to Christ, through whom men are reconciled to God, according to II Cor. 5: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” And therefore only Christ is the perfect mediator between God and man, in so far as by His death He reconciled the human race to God. Thus, after the Apostle says

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¹ III, q. 26, a. 1.
“mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” he adds: “who gave Himself up as a redemption for all.” It is clear, then: there is only one mediator between God and man in the sense of a perfect mediator. But then St. Thomas adds, to conclude: Nothing, however, stops there being some others who are called mediators between God and man in a certain sense, that is, in so far as they cooperate in the uniting of men with God in a dispositive and ministerial manner.

Following this teaching, one of the most well-known Catholic theologians, Fr. Merkelbach, formulates the doctrine of Mary’s mediation in the following terms: The Blessed Virgin, as the New Eve, is rightly said and truly is the perpetual mediatrix between God and man: not, of course, as a principal and absolutely necessary mediatrix, but as one that is secondary and subordinated to Christ, in such a way that she cooperated in the whole work of Redemption and that without her influence no grace, after original sin, is given to us. He explains: She is not a principal or perfective mediator because Christ alone can reconcile us to God and merit for us in strict justice (condigno); nor is she an absolutely necessary mediatrix, for the mediation of Christ suffices superabundantly: The mediation of Mary is required only because it was positively decreed that it be so by the free will of God.

In 1896, French Jesuit priest René-Marie de la Brosse published a proposal that the Pope should make a dogmatic definition about the role of Mary in the distribution of all graces. Eight years later, Belgian Redemptorist priest François Xavier Godts wrote a book proposing precisely that it be defined that Mary is the mediatrix of all graces. Désiré-Joseph Mercier, Cardinal Archbishop of Mechelen, Belgium, championed this cause.
Our Lady’s mediation, then, is not at all opposed to that of Christ, for it is not at all on the same level: it is a simple cooperation in it that is completely dependent on it, just as the prophets and saints of the Old Testament prepared for Christ’s redemption by announcing it and praying for it, and the apostles and their successors applied it by preaching and administering the sacraments. Although Our Lady’s mediation doesn’t differ specifically from this mediation of other saints, it does transcend it, says Fr. Merkelbach, in three ways:

1. because she cooperated not only in the preparation of the Redemption, like the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, and in the application of the fruits of the redemption, like the blessed in heaven, but she cooperated in the redemption itself already from its beginning and right up until its completion on the cross;
2. because with Christ she merited in a certain way for all men and all the graces that Christ merited;
3. because her intercession is very powerful and universal, in such a way that it can obtain for us all the means of salvation.

This, then, is what is meant by the mediation of all graces of Our Lady. Let us now look for the proofs of this doctrine in Scripture, in Tradition, and in the magisterium of the Church.

Proofs of the Mediation of Our Lady

1. Scripture
   - Genesis 3:15. “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.” Pius IX applied this text to Our Lady in his encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus*, in which he defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.
   - The Annunciation (Lk 1: 26-38). Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Octobri mense*, September 22, 1891, uses this text as the basis of Our Lady’s mediation of all graces.
   - Mary assists at the foot of the cross at the death of Jesus and is declared mother of St. John (Jn 19: 25-27). St. Pius X, on the basis of this text, declares Mary “Reparatrix and Dispensatrix of the world”.
   - Mary prays with the Apostles as they wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (Ac 1:14). About this Pope Pius XII writes: “It was (Our Lady) who obtained by her very powerful prayers that the Spirit of the Divine Redeemer.”

2. Tradition
   The mediation of Mary first appears in Tradition in the form of a parallel between her role in man’s salvation and the role of Eve in our ruin. The Fathers speak already in the second century of Mary in this way as “the New Eve.” About this Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange writes: “The doctrine of Mary as the second Eve was universally accepted in the second century. The Fathers who
taught it then did not regard it as the fruit of personal speculation but as the traditional doctrine of the Church supported by the words of St. Paul which describe Jesus as the second Adam and oppose Him to the first as the Author of salvation to the author of the fall....It is necessary therefore to regard the doctrine of Mary as the second Eve, associated with the redemptive work of her Son, as a divino-apostolic tradition.

As time went on, the doctrine of Mary’s mediation became more and more explicit. Already St. Ephrem in the fourth century prays to Our Lady: “Hail, most excellent mediatrix of God and men, hail most efficacious reconciler of the whole world.”

And St. Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth century prays: “No one is ever set free from evil, but by thee, O Immaculate above all; no one is ever granted any gift, except through thee, O most chaste; no grace of mercy is ever shown to anyone, but through thee, O most worthy of all veneration.”

These few quotes give an idea of the Tradition on this subject that simply became more and more explicit and universal. The evidence from Tradition for this doctrine is stronger, says Merkelbach, than that for the Assumption, which was defined a dogma, nevertheless, solely on the basis of Tradition. Thus, he says, to deny it is “at least temerarious.”

3. Magisterium

Finally, after seeing the evidence from Scripture and Tradition for this doctrine, we can hear what the magisterium of the Church, basing itself on this evidence, teaches us. Leo XIII in Jucunda Semper (September 8, 1894) makes his own a text of St. Bernadine of Siena affirming the universal mediation of Mary: “That we seek Mary’s help by prayer, he says, rests, as upon its foundation, on that office she unceasingly exercises before God for us of obtaining us divine grace...by that law of reconciliation and prayer expressed by St. Bernadine: ‘Every grace that is communicated to this world has a three-fold course. For by an excellent order, it is dispensed from God to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, from the Virgin to us.’”

Pius XI continues this same teaching in his encyclical Miserentissimus Redemptor: “Since she gave birth to the Redeemer and offered Him as a victim on the cross, by a mysterious union with Christ and by an entirely singular grace on His part, she also was and piously is called Redemptrix. We confide in her prayers before Christ who, although He is the one ‘mediator of God and men,’ willed to accept His Mother as the advocate of sinners before Himself and the minister and the mediatrix of grace.”

The same pope calls Our Lady “the treasurer (sequestra) of all graces with God” and writes: “God alone gives the grace (needed for sanctity), but if the grace is from God, it is nevertheless given through Mary, who is our advocate and Mediatrix. God grants the graces, Mary obtains them and distributes them.” Pius XII is equally clear. In his radio message to Fatima on May 13, 1946, he says: “Having been associated, as Mother and Minister, with the King of martyrs in the ineffable work of human redemption, she is always associated, with a practically measureless power, in the distribution of the graces that derive from the Redemption.”

Let us then have recourse to our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces!
The entire interior of St. Peter’s is lavishly decorated with marble, reliefs, architectural sculpture and gilding. The basilica contains a large number of tombs of popes and other notable people, many of which are considered outstanding artworks.
On November 22, 1903, only a couple of months after his election to the Supreme Pontificate, St. Pius X wrote a relatively short Motu Proprio on Sacred Music titled *Tra le Sollecitudini*. Among the many points in this instruction, one sentence in particular has become famous: “Filled as We are with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, We deem it necessary to provide before anything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable font, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.”

**Saint Pius X – Holiness of the Sacred Liturgy**

In this statement we have the key to understanding the program of St. Pius X’s pontificate. We can consider it as a sort of commentary on his motto, “*Omnia instaurare in Christo*—to re-establish all things in Christ.” The aim of his pontificate is stated in a few words: “We...desire to see the true
Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful.”

St. Pius X’s first and foremost intention was to lead the flock of Christ to its Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and to educate it so that it may resemble Him.

Then St. Pius X explains how he intends to reach this supra-human aim of his: “We deem it necessary to provide before anything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple.” He means much more than the sacredness of the physical buildings. The end of the sentence shows that what the Pope has in mind is the holiness of the Sacred Liturgy in general: the sanctity and dignity of our churches must be always provided for, because of what is taking place within them, the molding of our souls to Christ’s likeness (“in which (temples) the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable font”). And so, by “the sanctity and dignity of the churches” must be understood not only the local buildings themselves, but also and foremost what happens inside these sacred walls and which is the vehicle of the grace of Christ, in other words the holy ceremonies of our Sacred Liturgy (“(the) foremost and indispensable font (of the Christian spirit), which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church”), and in particular the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (“the most holy mysteries”).

The Very Priority of Saint Pius X

The Sacred Liturgy was thus the priority of St. Pius X, the very pope who had to deal with the assault of the modern world against the Church. Let us remember his main liturgical reforms, which had a tremendous effect on the life of the Church:

1. The reform of Sacred Music, on the one hand banning worldly and cheap music, and on the other hand insisting so much on Gregorian Chant as the normal and proper chant of the Church.¹
2. The decision to admit little children to Holy Communion.² On this occasion, the great Pope uttered the famous words: “There will be saints amongst children.”
3. In this same decree, St. Pius X also insisted on frequent Communion. Let us remember how rarely a saint like Saint Therese of the Child Jesus was allowed to receive Holy Communion.
4. St. Pius X’s reform of the Breviary³ in 1911, which aimed at restoring the universal usage of reciting the 150 psalms every week.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre – Spirit of the Society

In 1969, the Good Lord inspired Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to found our Priestly Society of Saint Pius X as a little army to defend the Church. What was the idea of the Archbishop in creating this Society? What was its spirit? The answer to this question shows very clearly how much Archbishop Lefebvre understood the teachings of St. Pius X, the last pope to be canonized and thus to be proposed to us as a model. >

¹ Motu Proprio Tra le Sollecitudini, November 22, 1903. It is important to notice that having been elected on August 4, 1903, Saint Pius X wrote this Motu Proprio only three months after having sat on Saint Peter’s throne! This is indeed a sign of how important the holy Pope deemed the Sacred Liturgy in the life of all Catholics.
² Decree Quam Singulari, August 8, 1910
³ Bull Divino Afflatu, November 1, 1911.
In Cor Unum, the internal bulletin of the Society for its priests, Archbishop Lefebvre stated his mind very clearly about this. The following extensive excerpts will show how much the Archbishop and St. Pius X were close in their very understanding, first of the Mystery of the Church, and consequently of the place of the sacred liturgy in this very Mystery.4

“The spirit of the Society, being above all that of the Church, will see to it that the members of the Society...will ever increase in their knowledge of the Mystery of Christ....5 We will penetrate the depths of the great mystery of our faith, the Holy Mass, and so have a limitless devotion for this mystery, making it the center of our thoughts, our hearts and our interior life....All the life of the Church is turned towards the altar of sacrifice....

“These are also the fundamental convictions of the Society....The spirit of the Church focuses upon the divine and the sacred. One of the characteristics of the Society will be that of showing respect towards baptized souls, of treating sacred things with respect, especially concerning the sacred action par excellence, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.”6

“...Whence come the splendours of the liturgy, that sings of the crucified and risen Christ. The Church knows how to present and make us live these mysteries in a truly divine manner, in a way that our hearts are captivated and our souls uplifted. All has been thought out with the love of a faithful spouse and a merciful mother. We find edification in the holy places, the ceremonies, the chant, the choice of prayers from the Missal, the Breviary, the Pontifical and the Ritual....

“The consequences of this attachment to the liturgy will be seen in the care and attention given to the beauty and cleanliness of holy places, the sacred linens and the objects used in worship. It will also manifest itself in beautiful ceremonies, chant and the regularity and edifying recitation of the Divine Office....If the Liturgy is, above all, the praise of the Holy Trinity, offering and sacrifice, a source of divine life, then it is also the most vibrant and effective means of catechizing....”7

“...We have seen that the spirit of the Society is essentially a priestly spirit, enlightened by the radiance of our Redeemer’s Sacrifice on Calvary and in the Mass, “the Mystery of Faith.” This great mystery, the sun of our faith, is brought to us by the Church’s Liturgy, where, like a mother, she unfolds to us the infinite riches of this mystery, by the actions, words, chants and liturgical vestments, all of which differ according to the remarkable liturgical cycle. The Society...zealously seeks to understand the Liturgy and to bring it forth in all its beauty and splendour...The spirit of the Society is a liturgical spirit.”8

Fundamental Principles of This Teaching

The primacy of the Liturgy in the life of the Church, and thus in the life of all Catholics, is founded on the primacy of the Sacrifice of our Most Blessed Lord. As a true Bride, the Church has always striven to embellish the celebration of this Sacrifice with many ceremonies which altogether form the...
The Catholic liturgy uses signs and symbols whose significance has been fully revealed in the person and life of Christ. Some of these signs and symbols come from the world of creation (light, water, fire, bread...), others from life in society (washing, breaking bread...), others from Old Testament sacred history (the Passover rite, sacrifices...).
**Faith and Morals**

Liturgy. For indeed, even the ceremonies which do not seem immediately connected to the Mass, like the other sacraments, the Divine Office, and the many blessings of the Ritual—all actually prepare or complete the Sacrifice of the Mass! In the case of the sacraments in particular, St. Thomas explains that all sacraments are connected somehow to the Holy Eucharist, because “all the other sacraments are ordained to this sacrament as to their end.” And the same could be said of all the other ceremonies of the Liturgy, which should be considered as a backdrop or a jewel case enshrining the Most Holy Eucharist. All have their place in the Liturgy, even the most insignificant ceremony.

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The average American’s understanding of Mexican history is incomplete. American Catholics, however, should know Mexican history, because unlike our own history, much of Mexican history is Catholic history. In the early part of the 20th century, Masonic, Marxist revolutionaries, who were nothing less than the enemies of Jesus Christ, seized control of the government of Mexico and attempted to destroy the Church. They very nearly succeeded. In the midst of the terror, courageous priests clandestinely made their way through the countryside dispensing the sacraments and ministering to the Mexican faithful. Many received the crown of martyrdom; the most famous is Blessed Miguel Pro. As these holy priests fulfilled the duties of their divine vocations, an army of laymen rose up and challenged the godless government. They were the Cristeros, their battle cry was “Viva Cristo Rey,” and theirs is one of the greatest Catholic war stories of all time. Also featured in our 2011 Conference Audio: The Kingship of Christ.

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For the faithful who have access to the *Summa* of Saint Thomas, there are many articles in the third part dealing with these ceremonies. With regard to Baptism and its ceremonies, cf. III, Q. 71; Confirmation, III, Q. 72, Art. 12; Eucharist, III, Q. 74, Q. 85; Penance, III, Q. 84, Art. 4, AD SUPPL. Q. 28; Extr. Unction, AD SUPPL. Q. 29, 32; Holy Orders, Q. 37, Q. 40.
The facade of the basilica, with a giant order of columns stretches across the end of the square and is approached by steps on which stand two 5.55 metres (18.2 ft.) statues of the first-century apostles to Rome, Saint Peter and Saint Paul.
A central theme of Christ’s preaching is the fact that “the Kingdom of God is at hand.” What this means is that Christ’s Kingship over the universe does not refer merely to the end times, His future judgment of the world, and His eternal reign in heaven. It means that the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity as the God-man Jesus Christ has shaken all of nature out of its wounded, sinful rut, beginning here and now—whether that “here and now” concerns the Roman Empire of the first century or the American Empire of the twenty-first. What, exactly, such “shaking up” entails in a broad socio-political sense is the subject dealt with by Catholic Social Doctrine.

Although this doctrine was a work in construction throughout Church History, the day of its systematic development really dawned only in the nineteenth century. This was because studies undertaken by nineteenth-century Catholic thinkers horrified by the consequences of the French Revolution of 1789 made them realize that the terrible assault on Christian order that it re-presented had far deeper roots. Modern anti-Christian errors, they understood, were the product of a rejection of the full significance of the Incarnation on the part of complacent Catholics, Protestants, Jansenists, and naturalist Enlightenment philosophers alike; a rejection reaching back into the latter Middle Ages. Rediscovering that full significance led them to probe the lessons of the Fathers of the Church, the medieval scholastics, and the mystical, devotional, and liturgical life of the Catholic community, and merge them together into a more effective guide to the practical correction and transformation of the wounded natural world. The centers of rediscovery—German,
French, Italian, and Belgian for the most part—were mixed lay-clerical circles, religious orders, university and seminary faculties, and the editorial offices of the journals and newspapers that seemed to spring up everywhere at the time. Eminently Catholic in spirit, this movement of ideas and action could not rest until it had gained the backing of the Papacy for its labors. This, it solidly obtained during the reign of Blessed Pius IX (1846-1878).

It obtained papal support, however, at a time when proponents of a kaleidoscope of political, economic, and social ideas—Right and Left, conservative and liberal, moderate and radical—were all trying to seduce Catholics into their ranks. Under these circumstances, a clarification of truly Catholic as opposed to dubious and non-Catholic principles underlying all socio-political issues was crucial. The end result of this process of clarification is to be found both in the “negative” condemnations of Blessed Pius IX’s Syllabus of Errors (1864) as well as in the “positive” work of the whole corpus of Social Encyclicals and related pronouncements of Leo XIII (1878-1903), St. Pius X (1903-1914), Benedict XV (1914-1922), Pius XI (1922-1939) and Pius XII (1939-1958). Here, one finds repeatedly reiterated, in varied forms and with respect to a myriad of practical matters, the three basic themes of Catholic Social Doctrine.

Faith and Grace

The first of these is the need to deal with all human actions with reference to man’s twofold character, both natural and supernatural. Catholics, the Social Doctrine teaches, cannot accomplish anything of temporal value without realizing that nature is the gracious gift of God, that natural Reason must therefore be cherished, and that the pursuit of natural well-being is a positive good. On the other hand, nature is terribly wounded through sin, and men find it difficult even to believe and act upon what their Reason tells them to be true. Faith and grace coming from the supernatural realm give them the courage to do what nature itself dictates. Faith also confirms the complementary relationship of the individual and authoritative community life, a truth that classical Greek and Roman wisdom grasped imperfectly, demonstrating that personal perfection can only take place in a social framework—both natural and supernatural, with participation in the society of Christ and His Church as the center, crown, and guarantor of it all. Through Faith and grace, nature’s strengths become stronger, its fallen misconceptions of its supposed “laws” are unmasked as delusions, and the temporal well-being that it pursues is shaped in a way that aids and does not serve as an obstacle to the perfection of virtue and the attainment of eternal life with God.

A second principle concerns the practical implementation of Catholic Social Doctrine. Here, the guiding rule became the “thesis-hypothesis” distinction. The thesis concerns the Catholic teaching in its full integrity, which clearly allows a great deal of scope to nature and natural Reason, and this with respect to the structures of government, economic order, and social institutions in general. The hypothesis refers to existing historical situations that may be less than optimal for attainment of the thesis and even downright contrary to its precepts. Catholics were told that prudence could compel them to accept the reality of an existing, unpalatable hypothesis—so long as this did not seduce them into considering it as a normative and therefore cause them to abandon their work for the Kingship of Christ.

Urgent Need for Lay Action

That brings us to the third principle: the urgent need for militant Catholic lay action. Opponents of the Kingship of Christ might argue that they were friends of nature, eager to prevent its distortion at the hands of a supernatural “invader.” But these modern naturalists could not even agree on what the nature they wanted to “save” was all about. Some of them insisted upon seeing in nature a mechanism with inexorable laws that reduced the individual human person to a machine part lacking all freedom of action. Others demanded that nature be viewed as a realm of pure freedom and diversity, lacking in all existential meaning and authoritative moral direction. Both groups >
created political, economic, and social institutions in line with their reductionist principles, and destroyed the individual and the natural social environment in consequence. Ultimately, willfulness was the guiding principle behind those who “chose” to rule the universe through mechanical “natural laws” and those who “chose” to open it to the chaos ensured by granting everyone and everything “natural rights.” The future was crystal clear: either Christ would be King of the universe, with existential meaning and individual freedom protected—or willful, strong men would be King, with tyranny and the eventual destruction of the oppressors along with their victims. The clergy were there to teach, guide, and offer sacramental grace. It was the laity’s task to fight for Christ on the natural level, and to rule over the political and social order. Treating Second Vatican Council as the “liberator” of the laity is to be one hundred years behind the times. Such liberation came with “integrist” popes and lay leaders.

Need to Build a Social Order

Ultimately, the guidance given by the Papacy in the development of Catholic Social Doctrine has been offered in very broad strokes. Hence, one can see in encyclicals of Leo XIII such as *Immortale Dei* (1885) and *Rerum Novarum* (1891) a firm insistence on the need to build a State and a social order that can indeed pursue communal and individual well-being, but only with a respect for both, together, and through moral actions that would save rather than damn political leaders, property owners, and workers alike. No government and no economic order is ever permitted to take “might makes right,” “power politics,” “Reason of State,” “national exceptionalism,” “laws of supply and demand,” “economic freedom,” or “inevitable class struggle” seriously. All these principles are equally condemnable by the Catholic thesis, and Catholic lay activists must be on guard against seduction by them in any hypothetical political compromises that they might be compelled to make with their proponents.

On the rational level, men can justly argue whether or not a monarchy, a constitutional system, or a democracy is best suited to a given country’s pursuit of temporal order, as well as its communal and individual well-being. They can rationally militate for a capitalist or a more socially organized corporate economic system. And arguments and militants of extremely diverse types filled the Catholic world, all through the latter part of the nineteenth and the whole of the twentieth century. Into the precise details of these arguments and the organizational work giving flesh to them, Catholic Social Doctrine, *qua* authoritative Church teaching, could not go.

On the other hand, the broad, supernatural, moral, and thesis-hypothesis guidelines forming that doctrine’s backbone nevertheless still packed an enormous wallop. They struck directly at anyone who insisted that his State and his economic principles could not be corrected and transformed through the teaching and Kingship of Christ. They identified him as a self-proclaimed enemy of God and nature. In fact, the Church rather quickly realized that political parties calling themselves “Catholic” and “Christian” had a tendency to go down this direction, baptizing anything they did as self-evidently orthodox. It was for that reason that,
special local problems aside, she favored the work of Catholic Action “lobbies” tied clearly to specific issues of obvious doctrinal and moral importance.

The postwar world has shown the wisdom of this approach, as Christian Democratic parties, using the Council and its spirit as a justification, have themselves presided over the dismantling of Catholic influence over States, economic systems, and individual behavior in general. While the Church often still today reaffirms the main lines of Catholic Social Doctrine in theory—as she does on other doctrinal matters—their teaching has been rendered basically meaningless on the practical level. The Zeitgeist and the spirit of a particular land rules Catholic Social Doctrine as it rules Catholic episcopacies and the laity. *Immortale Dei* and *Rerum Novarum* may continue to be praised, but it is Liberation Theology—both that of Marxists and of American Libertarians—Third World Theology and the demands of American exceptionalism that command doctrinal priority in the political and social sphere. If I might paraphrase the title of an article that I wrote for *The Remnant* some years ago, the scoreboard for Catholic Social Doctrine in any battle with contemporary socio-political “mystiques” would read the following: Zeitgeist—666; Catholic Social Doctrine—0.

**Bibliography for Further Study:**


A Schema from the First Vatican Council

This schema was drawn up by order of Pius IX to serve as starting-point for the deliberations of the Council. In itself, it has no doctrinal authority, but it represents the state of doctrine at that time. Several doctrinal points of the schema which could not be discussed in the Council were taken up by Leo XIII and Pius XII in some of their encyclicals.

The Schema comprises twelve sections and concludes with a list of Canons on the Church. A listing of the headings gives an idea of the scope of the document: (1) The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ; (2) The Christian religion can be practiced only in the Church and by the Church founded by Christ; (3) The Church is a true society, perfect, spiritual, and supernatural; (4) The Church is a visible society; (5) The visible unity of the Church; (6) The Church is a society which is absolutely necessary to attain salvation; (7) Outside the Church no man can be saved; (8) On the indefectibility of the Church; (9) On the infallibility of the Church; (10) On the power of the Church; (11) On the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff (12) On the temporal sovereignty of the Holy See.

The Schema with its twenty-one Canons on the Church was published as an Appendix to Papal Teachings: The Church, selected and arranged by the

Prologue

The apostolic charge of Supreme Pastor with which the ineffable Providence of Divine Mercy has invested Us, continually urges Us to neglect nothing that may open wide to all men the way that leads to life and to eternal salvation, so that all may come to the light and knowledge of truth, even those still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Since God Our Savior has confided to his Church as to a rich storehouse the ensemble of doctrinal truths and the treasury of the means of salvation so that she may be for all men a fountain of life,¹ it is important before all else to show those who are in error what the true Church is and to inspire in the faithful a greater esteem for her. By this means the latter will be strengthened to make progress in the way of salvation; the former will be brought to that way.

It is for this reason that We consider it a duty of Our charge to present the most important points of the true Catholic doctrine on the nature, the properties, and the power of the Church, and to respond to the errors opposed to this teaching, by the proclamation of the appropriate canons.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ

When that fullness of time which had been fixed by the eternal designs had been realized,² the Only-begotten Son of God, who enlightens every man coming into the world and who has never, at any time, refused His help to the wretched children of Adam, made Himself like to men³ and became visible by taking the form of our body, so that carnal and earthly men, putting on the new man who had been created according to God in justice and holiness of truth,⁴ might henceforth form a mystical body of which He Himself would be the head.

In order to realize the union of this mystical body, Christ Our Lord instituted the sacred bath of regeneration and renovation, thanks to which the children of men, divided among themselves on so many matters and above all corrupted by sin, would be purified from their sins, would become members of a single body. United to their divine Head by faith, hope, and charity, they would all be vivified by his unique Spirit and filled with the abundance of graces and blessings. This is the sublime image of the Church which can never be proposed with too much insistence, to the minds of the faithful, so that it may be deeply implanted there.

The head of the Church is Christ,⁵ and it is by Him that the whole body, coordinated and united by the bonds of the members, each one of whom works according to the measure of his activity, increases and grows perfect in charity.⁶ >

² St. Ambrose, De fide ad. B Hieron.
³ Philp. 2:7.
⁴ Ephes. 4:24.
⁵ Coloss. 1:18.
⁶ Ephes. 4:16.
Canons on the Church

Can. 1. If anyone say that the religion of Christ lacks stability and has no expression in any particular society founded by Christ, but that it can be authentically observed and practiced by each one after his own fashion, without taking into account whether there be a society which is the true Church of Christ, let him be anathema.

Can. 2. If anyone say that the Church has not received from Christ Our Lord any form of definite and immutable constitution, but that, equally with other human societies, she has been or may be subject, according to the period, to vicissitudes and transformations, let him be anathema.

Can. 3. If anyone say that the Church, the object of the divine promises, is not an exterior and visible society, but is an entirely interior and invisible one, let him be anathema.

Can. 4. If anyone say that the true Church is not a body one in itself, but that it is composed of societies, Christian in name, but distinct and separate from one another, and that (the Church) is diffused through all of them, or that the different societies separated among themselves by their professions of faith and without any bond of communion, constitute, after the fashion of members or parts, the Church of Christ which is one and universal, let him be anathema.

Can. 5. If anyone say that the Church of Christ is not a society absolutely necessary for eternal salvation, or that man can be saved by the practice of any religion no matter which, let him be anathema.

Can. 6. If anyone say that this intolerance, by which the Catholic Church proscribes and condemns all the religious sects separated from her communion, is not a prescription of the divine law, or that it is not possible to possess certitude and at the most only opinions are to be had about the truth of religion, and that, consequently, all religious sects should be tolerated by the Church, let him be anathema.

Can. 7. If anyone say that the Church of Christ can be hidden by darkness or corrupted by evil which would make her depart from the salutary truth of faith and morals, and deviate from her first institution, or finally fall into depravity and corruption, let him be anathema.

Can. 8. If anyone say that the present Church of Christ is not the final and definitive economy of salvation, but that another is to be expected, the result of a new and more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, let him be anathema.

Can. 9. If anyone say that the infallibility of the Church is restricted to revealed truth alone, and that it does not extend equally to other truths which are necessary to the integral safeguarding of the revealed deposit, let him be anathema.

Can. 10. If anyone say that the Church is not a perfect society, but that it is a simple association, or that it is included within civil society or the national State in such a way that it is subject to the secular power, let him be anathema.

Can. 11. If anyone say that by divine institution the Church is a society of equals, that the bishops possess, doubtless, an office and a ministry, but not a proper power to govern which belongs to them by divine right and is to be freely exercised by them, let him be anathema.

Can. 12. If anyone say that Christ Our Lord and Savior has conferred on the Church only the power of direction by counsels and suggestions, but not the power to prescribe by law, and to constrain and oblige the guilty and the contumacious by public judgments and salutary penalties, let him be anathema.

Can. 13. If anyone say that the true Church of Christ, outside of which no man can be saved, is other than the Church of Rome, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, let him be anathema.
Can. 14. If anyone say that the Blessed Apostle Peter was not constituted by the Christ Our Lord the Prince of all the Apostles and the visible Head of the entire Church militant, or that he did not receive a true and proper primacy of jurisdiction, but only one of honor, let him be anathema. [Cf. Denzinger 1823.]

Can. 15. If anyone say that it is not in virtue of the institution of Christ that the Blessed Peter ever has successors in the primacy over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of Peter in that same primacy, let him be anathema. [Cf. Dz. 1825.]

Can. 16. If anyone say that the Roman Pontiff has only an office of inspection or direction, but not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, or that this power is not immediate and ordinary with respect to each and every one of the Churches, let him be anathema.

Can. 17. If anyone say that the independent ecclesiastical power, which the Church claims as received from Christ, is incompatible with the full sovereignty of the civil power, or at the least compromises the rights of both, let him be anathema.

Can. 18. If anyone say that the power required for the government of civil society does not come from God, or that obedience is not due it in virtue of the law of God, or that this obedience is counter to the natural liberty of man, let him be anathema.

Can. 19. If anyone say that all the rights of man derive from the political society, or that there is not authority which is not granted by it, let him be anathema.

Can. 20. If anyone say that political law or public opinion is, with respect to public and social acts, the supreme norm of conscience, or that the judgment of the Church whereby she pronounces on licitness of these acts does not extend to this sphere, or again, that civil law can render licit what is illicit according to divine or ecclesiastical law, let him be anathema.

Can. 21. If anyone say that the laws of the Church can oblige only in the measure in which they have been confirmed by the sanction of civil authority, or that it belongs to this same civil power, in virtue of its sovereign authority, to pass judgment on and to decide in cases concerning religion, let him be anathema.
The Rhine Flows into the Tiber
by Ralph Wiltgen

When it comes to Vatican II, we need not indulge in the mystifying ‘spirit’ of the Council, nor even thumb through Sheed’s Is It the Same Church? To get the record straight there is nothing like the good old Rhine. A professional historian, journalist and eye-witness, Fr. Ralph M. Wiltgen presents the modern reader with a history of that council which is at once factual, authoritative, impartial, thorough, and totally interesting.

The Rhine describes how each of the 16 conciliar documents was painstakingly hammered out. And it brings to light how the Council’s activity was guided constantly by groups rather than by individuals. Yet key individuals were quite pivotal for writing the history of Vatican II. Cardinal Liénart, not five minutes into the first general meeting, asked to give more time to select the candidates for commissions of study, which led to a striking victory of the liberal alliance in re-directing the Council’s course.

Partisan spirit was gaining ground as things went on and it appeared as if St. Peter’s Basilica was turning into an immense pressure cooker. No one knew what stew would result from it except that things would never be the same after. After several altercations and speeches on a given topic, Cardinal Ottaviani rose to speak in the defense of old-time magisterium, but being blind and speaking extempore, he did not realize he had gone overtime, and the Cardinal Moderator lastly silenced his microphone. It took the old man some time before he realized it. The most powerful Cardinal of the Curia had been publicly humiliated under the applause of the greater part of the aula!

Wiltgen’s title suggests the prevailing of the group from the Rhine River countries. Said Yves Congar: “In short, the Rhine was in reality that broad current of vigorous Catholic theology and pastoral science which had got under way in the early 1950s.” What Congar celebrated indeed was what had been condemned only 15 years earlier by Humani Generis of Pius XII as the “new theology,” headed by French and German avant-garde crypto-modernists like Congar.

Those who revel in conspiracy and mystery novels will enjoy reading this 271p. volume which has the breadth of an open landscape and the sharpness of the finest details on persons and events. One feels like entering the maze of in-depth theological themes but having a sense of direction as such doctrines are incarnated in historical and personal lives. One comes across totally extravagant personages, subtle periti and full-fledged groups in battle alignment of conservatives vs. liberals, each vowing to die rather than surrender.

These pages were written by an outsider, simply gleaning information to feed his Council News Service, who could truly say: “What I saw and what I heard, and the facts that I ferreted out, I now pass on to you.” In light of the recent controversy around the papal hermeneutic—interpretation—of continuity between Vatican II and the previous Church magisterium, it is always good to return to a classic to get the right picture.

Father Dominique Bournraud, SSPX

This insightful and objective journal of the workings of the Second Vatican Council is available at www.angeluspress.org for only $17.95.
Many writers, during and after the Counter Reformation, took up the pen on behalf of God and His Catholic Church. But of them all, St. Francis de Sales was quickly recognized for his brilliance, charm, and holiness. He wrote in his classic book, *An Introduction to the Devout Life*, the following words on friendship: “If your bond of union be the pursuit of science, it is a commendable friendship; still more if it be prudence, discretion, decision, and justice. But if your bond of intercourse be charity, devotion, and Christian perfection, then indeed will your friendship be precious; precious because it has its origin in God, because it is maintained in God, and because it will endure for ever in Him. What a good thing it is to love on earth as we shall love in heaven, and to learn to cherish one another here as we shall do for ever there. I am not speaking of the mere love which charity excites towards all men, but of the spiritual friendship by which two or more souls participate in each other’s devotion and spiritual affections making them of one mind.”

What if all journalists wrote with that as their underlying theme? I wish to show in this article some highlights from the life of St. Francis and how it was that a simple bishop of Geneva, who is still read and loved 400 years later, was named patron of journalists.

Heart Drawn Elsewhere

Fifty years after the revolt unleashed by Luther, the hero of journalists was born in Swiss Savoy on August 21, 1567, at the Chateau de Sales and was named Francis Bonaventure. His father >
was an aristocrat and took the name of Boisy; his bride, an only child, brought as her dowry the Signory of Boisy and was only 15 when she gave birth to the eldest of her 13 children. His mother took great care for his instruction and formation in the faith. At the age of eight he received his First Holy Communion and Confirmation and only a year later tonsure. Here we see a pattern develop: he wanted to be a priest. His father wanted him to be a lawyer. At 14 he attended the University of Paris, still the most renowned in Europe. His father preferred that he attend the college attended by the sons of nobles; Francis chose instead to attend the Jesuit College of Clermont renowned for piety and scholarship.

Studies came easily for Francis, and while rhetoric was the key to a handsome future he found his love and passion in the pursuit of Sacred Scripture and theology. Nevertheless, to please his father he engaged in the activities requisite of a budding nobleman: horsemanship, dancing, and sword play. Needless to say, he cared little for them; his heart was drawn elsewhere: he took a vow of perpetual chastity, seeking the care and protection of his heavenly Mother.

“Will I be saved?”

Fatigued by his studies and perhaps wearied with the incessant debates on predestination, Francis suffered an interior trial that would influence his lifelong work of directing souls. His sensitive and intelligent nature was defenseless before the ultimate question: “Will I be saved?” Our Lord knew Francis needed more than a textbook answer, even if it were that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas! Was he not already imbued with the love of God? What would it be like to lose that certainty? Francis found out. He became obsessed with the fear that he had lost God’s favor. As God is wont to do with His most favored students, He made sure that day or night Francis could find no relief in anyone or anything else. The more he sought guidance from his director and friends, the more “sure” he was that he was lost. There seemed to be only one answer: trust God in spite of all “evidence” to the contrary. And so he did.

He cried out: “O Lord, if I am never to see Thee in Heaven, this at least grant me, that I may never curse or blaspheme Thy holy name. If I may not love Thee in the other world—for in hell none praise Thee—let me at least every instant of my brief existence here love Thee as much as I can.” All fear and despair suddenly left him as he knelt at his favorite Marian altar and picked up a prayer card with St. Bernard’s “Memorare.” This heart-wrenching experience prepared him for his work of guiding with the utmost tenderness and understanding the spiritual crises of others.

A Great Formation

At age 24, Francis received the Degree of Law from the University of Padua. The next year he made known to his father that he would neither marry the bride picked out for him nor accept the post of senator offered by the prince of Savoy. The bishop of Geneva now living in Annecy since his own diocese was in Calvinist hands, learned of Francis’s reputation of virtue and scholarship and exclaimed, “This young man will be a great personage some day! He will become a pillar of the Church and my successor in this see.” His father, saddened by Francis’s refusals, would not give his consent. Francis was then offered the post of the provost of the chapter of cathedral canons which he accepted. His father relented and because of his sterling formation, Francis received minor orders. Six months later, in 1593, at the age of 26 he was ordained. For his First Mass, Fr. Francis made a resolution that would characterize his life: to use every moment of the day as a preparation for tomorrow’s Mass. As provost of the chapter of Geneva, he became widely known for his simple preaching, his care for the poor, and his patience with the humble in confession.

Writing Pamphlets

The Chablais, a district just south of Lake Geneva, had been the target of Protestant agitation for over 60 years. Timid missionaries feared for their life, and when the bishop asked for a
volunteer, Canon Francis said, “Monseigneur, if you think I am capable, tell me to go. I am ready, and should rejoice to be chosen.” His father, not as excited as the bishop, would not give his blessing. Yet, the newly ordained Fr. Francis knew it was God speaking to him through the decision of the bishop, and with a holy alacrity, departed with his cousin, Canon Louis de Sales. Finding towns with only a handful of Catholics, the Canons would encourage them to practice their Catholic Faith. Facing the cold, wild animals, and Protestant fanatics, they had to make long walks day and night to return to the safety of the Duke of Savoy’s castle.

There seemed to be little reward and even less fruit for their immense efforts. Ever patient, Fr. Francis turned to writing brief pamphlets in longhand. Using a simple and clear language, the Catholic Faith showed brilliantly against the dark, despairing Calvinism. Both in word and writing, Canon Francis was soon touching the hearts of rough soldiers, timid and long-suffering Catholics, and petulant Protestants. Marking the beginning of Catholic journalism, these pamphlets, working their way through village and farm, were quietly effective. Soon streams of lapsed Catholics were asking for reconciliation. Four years later, the bishop found the Catholic faith restored, and the district predominantly Catholic.

Thousands of Letters

His bishop, ready to make Fr. Francis his successor and coadjutor, brought him to Rome. Pope Clement VIII gathered several Cardinals to question this young priest on 35 questions on theology. St. Francis answered simply and modestly; the pope was more than satisfied and embraced and confirmed his appointment as coadjutor. His reputation spread to the court of France, where he refused the King’s offers to stay and preach in his realm. Consecrated a bishop in 1602, Francis continued his preaching and hearing of confessions along with his taxing administrative work. Calling for the teaching of the Catechism throughout the diocese, his conferences in Annecy were remembered long after his death.

St. Francis’s care for souls continued through the thousands of letters directing his lambs to find their peace with the Good Shepherd. In 1610 he co-founded the Visitation Convent with St. Jane F. de Chantal to meet the needs of the widows and infirm who were called to the religious life. Returning from a trying trip to France, he stopped at Lyons and sought refuge in a cottage on the grounds of the Visitation Convent. After a month of preaching and teaching he received the Last Sacraments and on December 28, after expressing all confidence in God’s tender mercy, he breathed his last. He was 56 years old and in the twentieth year of his episcopacy. In his Treatise on the Love of God, he wrote, “The measure of love is to love without measure,” which he had lived to the very end. St. Francis was beatified by Alexander VII in 1661 and canonized by him in 1665 and proclaimed the doctor of the Church by Bl. Pius IX. His body lies at the Convent of Annecy and his heart in the church of the Visitation at Lyons.

“Go courageously to do whatever you are called to do. If you have any fears, say to your soul: ‘The Lord will provide for us.’ …Trust in him, depend on his providence; fear nothing”—St. Francis de Sales
Selections from

“Introduction to the Devout Life”

by St. Francis de Sales

The Grace of True Devotion

You aim at a devout life, dear child, because as a Christian you know that such devotion is most acceptable to God's Divine Majesty. But seeing that the small errors people are wont to commit in the beginning of any undertaking are apt to wax greater as they advance, and to become irreparable at last, it is most important that you should thoroughly understand wherein lies the grace of true devotion;—and that because while there undoubtedly is such a true devotion, there are also many spurious and idle semblances thereof; and unless you know which is real, you may mistake, and waste your energy in pursuing an empty, profitless shadow. Arelius was wont to paint all his pictures with the features and expression of the women he loved, and even so we all color devotion according to our own likings and dispositions. One man sets great value on fasting, and believes himself to be leading a very devout life, so long as he fasts rigorously, although the while his heart is full of bitterness;—and while he will not moisten his lips with wine, perhaps not even with water, in his great abstinence, he does not scruple to steep them in his neighbor's blood, through slander and detraction. Another man reckons himself as devout because he repeats many prayers daily, although at the same time he does not refrain from all manner of angry, irritating, conceited or insulting speeches among his family and neighbors. This man freely opens his purse in almsgiving, but closes his heart to all gentle and forgiving feelings towards those who are opposed to him; while that
one is ready enough to forgive his enemies, but will never pay his rightful debts save under pressure. Meanwhile all these people are conventionally called religious, but nevertheless they are in no true sense really devout. When Saul’s servants sought to take David, Michal induced them to suppose that the lifeless figure lying in his bed, and covered with his garments, was the man they sought; and in like manner many people dress up an exterior with the visible acts expressive of earnest devotion, and the world supposes them to be really devout and spiritual-minded, while all the time they are mere lay figures, mere phantasms of devotion.

True Love of God
Matters Above All

But, in fact, all true and living devotion presupposes the love of God;—and indeed it is neither more nor less than a very real love of God, though not always of the same kind; for that Love...while shining on the soul we call grace, which makes us acceptable to His Divine Majesty;—when it strengthens us to do well, it is called Charity;—but when it attains its fullest perfection, in which it not only leads us to do well, but to act carefully, diligently, and promptly, then it is called Devotion.

The ostrich never flies,—the hen rises with difficulty, and achieves but a brief and rare flight, but the eagle, the dove, and the swallow, are continually on the wing, and soar high;—even so sinners do not rise towards God, for all their movements are earthly and earthbound. Well-meaning people, who have not as yet attained a true devotion, attempt a manner of flight by means of their good actions, but rarely, slowly and heavily; while really devout men rise up to God frequently, and with a swift and soaring wing. In short, devotion is simply a spiritual activity and liveliness by means of which Divine Love works in us, and causes us to work briskly and lovingly; and just as charity leads us to a general practice of all God’s Commandments, so devotion leads us to practice them readily and diligently. And therefore we cannot call him who neglects to observe all God’s Commandments either good or devout, because in order to be good, a man must be filled with love, and to be devout, he must further be very ready and apt to perform the deeds of love. And
when it is fanned into a flame;—and what devotion adds to the fire of love is that flame which makes it eager, energetic and diligent, not merely in obeying God's Commandments, but in fulfilling His Divine Counsels and inspirations.

A Different Devotion
Is Required of Each

When God created the world He commanded each tree to bear fruit after its kind; and even so He bids Christians—the living trees of His Church—to bring forth fruits of devotion, each one according to his kind and vocation. A different exercise of devotion is required of each—the noble, the artisan, the servant, the prince, the maiden and the wife; and furthermore such practice must be modified according to the strength, the calling, and the duties of each individual.

I ask you, my child, would it be fitting that a Bishop should seek to lead the solitary life of a Carthusian? And if the father of a family were as regardless in making provision for the future as a Capuchin, if the artisan spent the day in church like a Religious, if the Religious involved himself in all manner of business on his neighbor's behalf as a Bishop is called upon to do, would not such a devotion be ridiculous, ill-regulated, and intolerable? Nevertheless such a mistake is often made, and the world, which cannot or will not discriminate between real devotion and the indiscretion of those who fancy themselves devout, grumbles and finds fault with devotion, which is really nowise concerned in these errors. No indeed, my child, the devotion which is true hinders nothing, but on the contrary it perfects everything; and that which runs counter to the rightful vocation of any one is, you may be sure, a spurious devotion.

Aristotle says that the bee sucks honey from flowers without damaging them, leaving them as whole and fresh as it found them;—but true devotion does better still, for it not only hinders no manner of vocation or duty, but, contrariwise, it adorns and beautifies all. Throw precious stones into honey, and each will grow more brilliant according to its several color:—and in like manner everybody fulfills his special calling better when subject to the influence of devotion:—family duties are lighter, married love truer, service to our King more faithful, every kind of occupation more acceptable and better performed where that is the guide.

Aim at the Perfect Life

It is an error, nay more, a very heresy, to seek to banish the devout life from the soldier's guardroom, the mechanic's workshop, the prince's court, or the domestic hearth. Of course a purely contemplative devotion, such as is specially proper to the religious and monastic life, cannot be practiced in these outer vocations, but there are various other kinds of devotion well-suited to lead those whose calling is secular along the paths of perfection. The Old Testament furnishes us examples in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David, Job, Tobias, Sarah, Rebecca and Judith; and in the New Testament we read of St. Joseph, Lydia and Crispus, who led a perfectly devout life in their trades. We have S. Anne, Martha, S. Monica, Aquila and Priscilla, as examples of household devotion; Cornelius, S. Sebastian, and S. Maurice among soldiers; Constantine, S. Helena, S. Louis, the Blessed Amadeus, S. Edward on the throne. And we even find instances of some who fell away in solitude—usually so helpful to perfection—some who had led a higher life in the world, which seems so antagonistic to it. S. Gregory dwells on how Lot, who had kept himself pure in the city, fell in his mountain solitude. Be sure that wheresoever our lot is cast we may and must aim at the perfect life.
Angelus Press is pleased to announce the fourth printing of the first totally re-typeset, 1962 Latin-English daily missal for the laity since the Second Vatican Council. Certainly the most complete missal ever produced in the English language, this beautiful edition includes everything in a missal that is important to you. The Roman Catholic Daily Missal will become your life-long liturgical companion.

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The Map Room illustrates stories of the saints and events charted on the wall maps. This magnificent hallway contains a series of painted topographical maps of Italy. The maps are based on drawings by friar and geographer Ignazio Danti. It took Danti three years (1580–1583) to complete the 40 panels.
Iron Will and Profound Faith

by Christopher Check

When Catholic Americans imagine the evangelization of the American West, it is Spanish Franciscans who first spring to mind. And well they should. With the very same spirit of risk taking that fired the hearts of Franciscans laboring for the conversion of Muslims during the Crusades, Spanish Franciscans courageously and tirelessly brought the Gospel to North America. The names of countless towns, villages, and cities in Arizona, Texas, California, and New Mexico bear witness to centuries of Spanish dominion, for so many of these places began as missions, presidios, and pueblos.

Spanish Influence Waned

Following the Thirty Years War, the Spanish Empire began her three-centuries-long decline, and the influence of the Spanish missions in North America waned. While the California missions founded by the Majorcan Blessed Junipero Serra and his successors endured for a time, others, such as the 18th-century San Antonio Missions, were fairly rapid failures, unable as they were, to withstand the depredations of the savage Apaches and Comanches. (Tourists to San Antonio today too often overlook these beautifully restored jewels just south of the city.) A century before the San Antonio Missions, the Pueblo Revolt forced Spanish missionaries and colonists to flee the city of Santa Fe for twelve years, delaying, as it would turn out, for another century and a half the establishment of Santa Fe as a diocese.

By the time Texas, California, and the Southwest were ceded to the United States with >
the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, there had not been any serious European presence in the High Southwest for perhaps 80 years. (The final few Franciscans withdrew in the 1830s.) Lacking the regular guidance of a strong shepherd (their bishop was in Durango, Mexico, 1000 miles to the south) the Mexicans and Indians of the New Mexico Territory descended into a mix of Catholicism, pagan superstition, disordered penitential rites, loose morals, and among their mestizo clergy, profligacy and disobedience.

A Bishop to Restore Order

In 1849 the American bishops sent recommendations to the Archbishop of Baltimore for candidates to assume episcopal authority of those new territories now under American political authority. The man chosen by Pope Pius IX to restore order to the troubled region of the American High Southwest and at last to solidify the Faith there was not a Spaniard, however. He was a Frenchman. Jean Baptiste Lamy had little idea growing up in the small town of Lampdes, where his parents were landowning peasants and his father the mayor, that he would one day be the first archbishop of Santa Fe. God knew, however, and when one looks at the heroic life of Lamy—the physical privations, the grave perils, the threats to life (including cholera, Indian attacks, shipwreck, and an assassination attempt) but also the patience, charity, perseverance, and foresight Lamy exercised in bringing the people of his diocese into the embrace of Holy Mother Church—the only explanation is the deliberate hand of Providence. The young Jean Baptiste grew up in a family suffused with Christian piety. One of his brothers became a priest, and his sister, who died in New Orleans, a nun. Another brother, who married, fathered two priests and a nun. Such an abundance of fervor is less surprising when we learn that Lampdes is in the Auvergne region of France, which gave the Church 22 canonized bishops and 5 canonized monks, to say nothing of Pope Urban II’s Council of Clermont that launched the First Crusade.

Lamy and his lifelong comrade, Joseph Machebeuf, who would become the first Bishop of Denver, were Sulpician-trained priests from the seminary in Clermont. In 1839 they answered the call of another Frenchman, Bishop Jean Baptise Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati, to serve as missionaries on the Ohio frontier. The freshly ordained priests, doubtless bearing in mind Luke 9:61-62, left their homes in May of 1839 without bidding farewell to their families, because Machebeuf’s father did not approve of his becoming a missionary in America. After the crossing, during which Lamy was perpetually seasick (yet studying day and night to learn English), they landed in New York, from where they traveled by canal barge to pay respects to Archbishop Eccleston in Baltimore. From there an overland journey took them across the Alleghenies to Pittsburgh where the winding Ohio River at last delivered them to Cincinnati.

Vicariate Apostolic for Santa Fe

For all Lamy and Machebeuf knew, they would serve out their priesthoods on the Ohio frontier. The outcome of the Mexican War, however, found Lamy invited by the Holy See to establish a Vicariate Apostolic in Santa Fe, New Mexico. On November 24, 1850, Lamy was consecrated a bishop by Bishop John Martin Spalding of Louisville, Kentucky. The day immediately following his consecration, he set off by riverboat for New Orleans, leaving word for Machebeuf, who had agreed to join him as his Vicar General, to catch up with him as soon as he had settled his affairs in Sandusky.

The journey to Santa Fe would count as the adventure of anyone’s lifetime, but it was one of many for Lamy. Lingering in New Orleans only long enough to arrange passage across the Gulf of Mexico, he boarded the Palmetto, bound for Indianola by way of Galveston. Unbeknownst to Lamy, the steamer had been condemned as not seaworthy. She ran aground and wrecked on a sandbar off the coast of Indianola. Salvaging only one of his trunks containing some vestments and books, Lamy was forced to borrow the funds necessary to get to San Antonio where in time
he was reunited with Machebeuf. They studied Spanish and waited until May of 1851 for a U.S. Army escort first to El Paso and then on to Santa Fe, where he arrived on Sunday, August 9, 1851. Nearly nine months had passed since his episcopal consecration the preceding year.

Rejected Authority

Lamy’s arrival in Santa Fe coincided with a drought-relieving downpour, and he was welcomed to Santa Fe with a grand parade, but the joy was not lasting. It was not long before the ranking clergyman, Monsignor Juan Felipe Ortiz, rejected his authority. So far as Ortiz was concerned, Santa Fe remained part of the Diocese of Durango, an arrangement that suited Ortiz immensely, for he almost never saw, much less answered to his ordinary. His rectory was lavishly outfitted, while the parish church of Saint Francis suffered a leaking roof, a dirt floor, and deteriorating wax statues left behind by the Franciscans. What was worse, he and his clergy had lost their religious fervor and had abandoned preaching. Most troublesome of these priests was the pastor of Taos, Fr. Antonio José Martínez, an intelligent and self-educated, but politically ambitious cleric, who immediately saw his secular fiefdom threatened by Lamy’s arrival. In the carefully chosen language of the best of Church bureaucrats, Martínez wrote to the Bishop of Durango predicting conflict.

Lamy also wrote to Bishop of Durango, José Antonio Laureano López de Zubíria y Escalante. When several months brought no response, the new Bishop of Santa Fe, whose authority was still not recognized by his own clergy, mounted his horse, left Machebeuf in charge of the Vicariate and began another journey, this one 1000 miles to the south, to Durango. Five weeks later, Lamy was on Zubíria’s doorstep, documents in hand explaining to the Bishop of Durango that his jurisdiction now stopped at the Rio Grande. Conversing in Latin, the two men came to see that Zubíria had never received word from Rome on the redrawing of diocesan boundaries. After expressing his frustration, however, Zubíria conceded. Lamy returned to Santa Fe in January of 1852 with written instruction from the Bishop of Durango to the clergy of Santa Fe to render obedience to Lamy.

Unpopular Bishop

The first order of business was a series of disciplines for what Lamy called his “incapable and unworthy clergy.” Lamy was unpopular with...
his clergy and no small number of their followers. They resisted the new bishop’s efforts at reform, restoration of orthodox liturgies, and enforcement of the precepts of the Church. Lamy persevered, however, and even as he was cleaning house, he was planting the seeds of what would be officially named the Diocese of Santa Fe in August 1853. He brought in nuns to run a girls’ school and established a boys’ school—where Latin instruction began at the age of 12—with an eye on vocations. He restored balance to parish tithes and redistributed the surplus among the poorer parishes.

Hostile historians have declared that Lamy’s enforcement of the tithe was burdensome to the local poor, but the charge bears little scrutiny. It is true that Lamy withheld sacraments from parishioners who refused to follow the precept to support the Church, but the tithes were hardly onerous and, as Lamy’s abundant correspondence makes clear, the evangelization of these new territories required the material support of the faithful. As it was, many of the funds Lamy needed to govern, educate, and sanctify the people of his diocese came from France and Rome.

Testimonies to Lamy’s Iron Will and Profound Faith

Today, rising high above the adobe houses, shops, and businesses of Santa Fe is Lamy’s magnificent Romanesque cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi, which was elevated to a basilica by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. The decidedly European church, along with the neo-Gothic Loretto Chapel, inspired by the Sainte-Chapelle and home to the famous spiral staircase of mysterious construction, are towering testimonies to Lamy’s iron will and profound faith.

Anyone looking for a more detailed grasp of Lamy’s, and indeed of the French’s, influence in 19th-century Catholic America must read Paul Horgan’s masterpiece of narrative and research, Lamy of Santa Fe, for which Horgan won the Pulitzer Prize in 1976. Horgan’s book is an example of a rare kind of Catholic biography that comprises a perfect synthesis of piety and scholarship.

Much Inspiration

There is much inspiration to draw from the story of the French bishop on the American frontier: courage in adversity, for example, and firmness and charity in dealing with disobedience. At the center of Lamy’s greatness and in the midst his magnificent achievements we can locate a humble model for everyday living. The fruit of Lamy’s prayer life and sacramental life was the peace of soul necessary to make sense of and control a bewildering myriad of responsibilities. Who among us does not feel beset, as Lamy must have, by an overwhelming list of duties and concerns? These anxieties are exacerbated by the pace of modern communication technology, which prods us to seek immediate resolution to our problems. Yet, with the perseverance and patience that are the fruits of a peaceful interior life, anyone, be he a bishop or a layman, can build something beautiful, be it an archdiocese, a marriage and a family, or a soul, for God.

Made of Sterner Stuff

For the next decade, Lamy fought a constant battle with his recalcitrant Mexican clergy. They tried every form of intrigue from agitating the people against Lamy to appealing to the local secular authority to confiscate the Church properties of which Lamy, as bishop, was owner. They even appealed to Pio Nono, making false accusations including one that Machebeuf had broken the seal of the confessional.

It must be said that without Machebeuf, Lamy would not have achieved so much good work. His faithful Vicar General made similar long journeys across the diocese, as well as to Kentucky and Ohio to recruit clergy and religious. Further, he was ever there to support Bishop Lamy with wise counsel and solid encouragement. In the person of Machebeuf we see another mark of Lamy’s greatness as bishop: the capacity to select the right clergy.
With the 1851 appointment of French-born Jean Baptiste Lamy as the Bishop of Santa Fe came changes to the cultural and built environment of Santa Fe. Bishop Lamy introduced European masons to the area who constructed the Romanesque-Revival Cathedral of Saint Francis and the Gothic-Revival Loretto Chapel. Landscape details such as wrought-iron fences with masonry piers and a gazebo that housed military band concerts in the middle of a then fenced plaza similarly suggested the influence of current Anglo-American cultural values.

When the Loretto Chapel was completed in 1878, there was no way to access the choir loft 22 feet above. Carpenters were called in to address the problem, but they all concluded access to the loft would have to be via ladder as a staircase would interfere with the interior space of the small chapel.

Legend says that to find a solution to the seating problem, the Sisters of the chapel made a novena to St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters. On the ninth and final day of prayer, a man appeared at the chapel with a donkey and a toolbox looking for work. Months later, the elegant circular staircase was completed, and the carpenter disappeared without pay or thanks. After searching for the man (an ad even ran in the local newspaper) and finding no trace of him, some concluded that he was St. Joseph himself, having come in answer to the Sisters’ prayers.

The stairway’s carpenter, whoever he was, built a magnificent structure. The design was innovative for the time and some of the design considerations still perplex experts today.

The staircase has two 360-degree turns and no visible means of support. Also, it is said that the staircase was built without nails—only wooden pegs. Questions also surround the number of stair risers relative to the height of the choir loft and about the types of wood and other materials used in the stairway’s construction.
In November of 1497, the French ambassador in the Holy See commissioned one of Michelangelo's most famous works, the “Pietà”, and the contract was agreed upon in August of the following year. The contemporary opinion about this work – “a revelation of all the potentialities and force of the art of sculpture” – was summarized by Vasari: “It is certainly a miracle that a formless block of stone could ever have been reduced to a perfection that nature is scarcely able to create in the flesh.”
There have been many good and saintly homes in this Catholic land of Brittany, where education has been given, a little rough sometimes, but a Christian education. The women of this area, especially on the coast, whose husbands went down to the sea in ships, remained at home with their children and taught them. In their faith, in their Christian families, they found a spiritual strength and courage to raise their children, sometimes all alone, at home and to give these children a Christian education.

Thousands and thousands of priests came from such homes, thousands of religious. A historian of this area told me that, from 1850 to 1900, there was an average of 35 priests ordained per year in every diocese! Thirty-five priests ordained every year in every diocese: this shows what Christian families could produce, not counting men and women who entered the religious life, their number is legion! There is no mistake about it. In the Holy Ghost Fathers alone, while I was Superior General, in 1962, there were listed in the directory for the Diocese of Vannes, 120 missionary Holy Fathers. One hundred and twenty missionaries in the Holy Ghost Fathers alone from the Diocese of Vannes! Not to mention the Diocese of Quimper and the Diocese of Brieuc, where we also had many missionaries. God has given innumerable missionaries and innumerable religious coming from Christian homes. This is what devotion to St. Anne has brought to this area: Christian homes, Christian education, innumerable vocations.

Even after the Revolution, when members of religious orders were persecuted and priests were
killed, there came a renewal. After that there was the law of separation, and more persecution of religious orders, the exile. Wonderful stories are told of whole families who prevented the police from going into monasteries and convents to drive out the monks and nuns. The persecution was so harsh and painful that many religious had to leave Brittany, and they took the Faith to South America and to North America and elsewhere. But this had the result of lessening, to certain extent, the number of vocations at the beginning of this century. Then, during the First World War, there was another upsurge of vocations, when the numbers in the seminaries and the numbers ordained were greater than in the preceding 50 years.

Insidious Persecution

And now we find ourselves face to face with a persecution much more insidious, much more serious. The public persecution by the enemies of the Church was better. It was better for the revolutionary mobs to destroy the convents, for the priests and religious to be martyred. It was better than the persecution that is taking place today. Today the priests and souls consecrated to God are not pouring out their blood, but they are being perverted. They are being perverted by ideas, for example, the idea of the state school, which is replacing the Catholic school everywhere, and by all the false modern ideas which have penetrated the seminaries, the convents, the Catholic schools, and, as you will have noticed, my dear friends, they have penetrated even truly Catholic homes. Thanks be to God that your homes are truly Christian, you who are here today, but how many others are still? How many are still Catholic? How many observe the laws of God? By all the standards which are given, by all the ways the devil gets into homes, families no longer have the Christian faith, so they have no more children, and there are no more priests, no more religious.

And even in the Catholic schools, what kind of education is given? The books that are forced on them nowadays! We read recently a fine letter from the Mother Superior of the St. Pius X School in St. Cloud (Sisters of Pontcalec), who refused the contract which the State wished to impose upon her, and explained her reasons. Well now! We must admit that something terrible is going on here. She explains very clearly that the books given them, which are required in schools under this contract of association with the State, these books undermine Christian morality. In natural history books these poor, helpless children are shown things that are truly pornographic. How do you think morality can survive this sort of thing, Catholic morality, the law of God? It is impossible! So our enemy the devil, rather than persecuting priests and religious and their families openly, and spilling their blood, prefers to corrupt minds and hearts in a more radical, far more serious manner.

Christian Homes

Well then, what can we do about it? We can fight against those who would corrupt our souls and hearts. We must have Christian homes, we must have large families, we must have families where the Faith is alive. It is a great joy to see, among those who are called “traditionalist,” who are nothing more or less than truly faithful Catholics, a great number of children. This is where vocations will come from again.

Where do our seminarians get their vocations, for the most part? From homes that are faithful, faithful to the Catholic Faith. It would be possible to find numerous vocations in other ages, but in any age it is absolutely necessary to keep the Faith, to keep the Catholic Faith and to keep the message which St. Anne came to bring to the world, and especially to Brittany.

Christian homes, Christian education, the sanctification of priests, and an increase in the number of priests. This is what we should learn at the hands of St. Anne. We shall pray for this, my dear friends, shall we not? We shall pray that there may be many Christian families, families which keep themselves from evil, which are not afraid to remove from their homes a television which brings things that children should not see, which corrupt the hearts of children, to keep out of their homes everything which may corrupt the hearts of their children, and make of their home truly a place >
where Christ dwells, where the children are uplifted by the statues and pictures all around them, by the words they hear, which support them and train them in the Catholic Faith.

Finally, you will see to it, I am sure, that there are Christian schools again. If we can no longer have confidence in the Catholic schools of today, we must have others, and this is what we shall try to do. No doubt we would need many more priests, many more Catholic teachers, but whatever it may be, we shall bend all our efforts, I am sure, and you will do the same, to refound Catholic schools, so that your children, after a careful upbringing at home, may not be corrupted in the schools and put you in a hopeless situation. How many parents tell us this, by letter and in person! Their children are fine until about the age of 10, or 12 or 15 and then, all of a sudden, they fall away from the straight and narrow path of faith and morals. Parents are grief-stricken at this terrible situation, the ruin of mind and heart.

Good Schools

So we must have good schools, and we are happy to say we have been able to open some. Do not hesitate to send your children, however far away it may be, to Catholic schools. Thank God there are now some orders of nuns at Pontcalec, the nuns of Fanjeaux and Brignoles, who are conducting schools where you can send your daughters. They also have schools for little boys.

On our side we are making efforts to open schools for boys. We hope to open a school near here, in the area of Nantes, and if we can, we shall not hesitate to do so. We are absolutely committed to helping you to raise your children in a Christian way. You know that we have opened a university in Paris, so that your older children may take several years of philosophy, to give them a solid foundation, a firm grounding, so that they may do some good in the world around them and be able to communicate this truth to others, to share this Catholic Faith with their children and all those they come in contact with, and upon whom they can have an influence.

This is the plan, a vast project, and certainly we are in a situation such as our ancestors perhaps never knew, because, once again, it would have been better if we have been persecuted by force of arms rather than by this infiltration of false ideas and corruption of morals, because this is deeper, and we will have more trouble in swimming against the tide. But with the grace of God, the protection of St. Anne, with the protection of the Most Holy Virgin, I am sure we shall succeed at least in saving those souls that wish to be saved. So let us be confident, let us not be unprepared, let us not be outflanked, let us be wise, vigilant, fighting against those who are trying to tear the faith out of our souls and morality out of our hearts, so that we may remain Catholics, remain united to the Blessed Virgin Mary, remain united to the Roman Catholic Church, remain faithful children of the Church.

So we beg you to join your prayers to ours; let us pray together for the graces we need from God. Without God we can do nothing, without the graces of Christ we can do nothing. He it is who saved us on the Cross and gives all graces possible to us...
The True and Only Wealth of Nations
Louis de Bonald (selected and translated by Christopher Blum)

This book gives a series of essays of Louis de Bonald, illustrious member of the landed nobility of central France, both writer and statesman. He forcefully defended the Christian social order during the post-revolutionary years and the Bourbon Restoration.

His essays are broad in spectrum. They deal with the family and divorce, money (usury) and pauperism, but also with political economy and the wealth of nations (rightly put forward as the book title). Although this selection does not offer the reader the complete panorama of social doctrine, it certainly gives us the main guiding principles of what the City had been and should still be. Placed as he was between the fall of the Old Regime and the upheavals of an absurd revolution, he could propose sane and wise principles to the recent monarchy to set things back on track. As a thinker, he is not afraid of finding food for good thought in such doubtful authors as Montesquieu and Malthus.

Do not omit reading the detailed introduction by Sorbonne professor of politics Claude Polin, whose gifted pen enlarges the frame of de Bonald’s essays. His synthesis reveals why man needs to be a social animal and tame his selfish instincts, which leads him to the need to be educated, which means that he needs a specific type of educator as he goes through life. This finally makes of him an adult man which de Bonald certainly defines as free and, because free, therefore responsible and dutiful. Polin does not omit the negative principle, often alluded to in the essays, of the “economic spirit” as being diametrically opposed to the spirit of the community.

All this wealth of social thought is embossed in a style at first sight reactionary, but filled with fresh and vital vistas, if exotic, which opens our mental world. Should we not add that the common sense of this nobleman of peasant stock pervading much of his thoughts is a balloon of oxygen to our much contaminated mental categories. By way of illustration of the insight and prophetic view of our modern times, here are some aphorisms and paradoxes which could equate him to a 19th-century French Chesterton: The individual is not only a destructor of society, he is also a sort of fake substance. The more machines there are to replace men, the more men there will be in society who are nothing but machines. A people that reads much requires few books. The guilds had, among other advantages, that of containing by the stern power of the masters the rudeness of a youth that had been sent abroad from the paternal power at a young age.

The toleration of usury is comparable to the toleration of divorce. If the profits of commerce rise above the revenue of the land, the land will be abandoned for the cash register, and money will no longer give life to agriculture. When money is a value and a good itself, we must beware lest the goods themselves become nothing other than a sign of the value of money. Morals and laws are the true and even the only wealth of societies, families, and nations. War, disease, and famine cannot destroy it, yet a book suffices to cause a revolution. Man should find his subsistence in the family that gives birth to him, and when he seeks it from the State—which neither labors nor spins—the government can only give him one by taking away from others.

Father Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

Dr. Blum’s masterful selection of essays by Louis de Bonald is a welcome addition for anyone interested in the workings of a sane social order. Published by Sapientia Press. Call Angelus Press for details.
Are human-animal hybrids a possibility?

Materialism pushes modern scientists to 'prove' that man has no immortal soul. The most effective way to do this would be to establish that the only difference between man and the animals is a genetic one, by creating a hybrid which is part man and part animal. On July 25, www.LifeSiteNews.com published an article quoting the Daily Mail, that 155 “admixed” embryos containing both human and animal genetic material had been created by scientists harvesting genetic material from embryos in the United Kingdom, and that this had been done secretly, but legally with licenses, under the 2008 Human Fertilisation Embryology Act. This secret research was revealed by a report prepared by a committee of scientists and tabled in the British Parliament. These embryos included such things as attempts to give monkeys human attributes by...
injecting human stem cells into their brains.

Would it really be possible, then, to create a living being which is partly human and partly animal, and if so are they really animal or human?

A similar question arose over the question of test tube babies, in which the human egg is artificially fertilized in the laboratory and then implanted in the mother, thus bypassing the sacred marriage act, ordained by God to be the means by which the matter for new life is prepared. At the time, some said that such individuals could not have souls, since this process of fertilization was so perverse. The evidence is for all to see, since this is now common place. This incredibly immoral and revolutionary method of in vitro fertilization, in which man plays God, clearly produces human beings who have a soul. God infuses the soul when the scientist disposes the matter by fertilizing the ovum. The Church has repeatedly condemned this process, but the individuals thus produced are fully human beings and have a soul, and ought to be baptized and raised as Catholics.

Then came cloning, in which an attempt is made to reproduce a new individual with the exact same genetic make-up as the one from which it is cloned. This has succeeded with animals, but is fraught with multiple technical problems, so that the animals thus created suffer from many genetic defects. To the best of my knowledge this has not been done for a human being, even illegally and surreptitiously. However, if it were done, this individual would certainly have a soul and be a true human being, with a soul, for he would have all the genetic material and the organization of a human being, even if he had serious genetic defects. The soul, principle of life, is infused at such time as the material elements are given the organization needed to support human life, that is when the genetic material is incorporated into the cell to make one living being.

However, the same does not apply for hybrids. If a human-animal hybrid embryo could be grown to term, it would have to be either one or the other. Either it would be principally an animal, with some human characteristics, and hence no soul, or it would be principally human, with some animal characteristics, and hence would have a soul. A creature that would be equally both, half and half, would not only be physiologically impossible, but also metaphysically so. The reason for this is that the principle of life, the soul, has to be either the immortal soul of the human who has the spiritual faculties of intellect and will, or in the case of an animal, it has to be the immaterial principle of a being that has no spiritual faculties, but only those that depend upon bodily existence, which includes the passions and feelings, but not free will.

One frightening possibility is genetic manipulation to produce an animal that can act and react in some ways like a man. Such an animal might even look like a man, but it would have no intellect, no free will, no judgment, but would act purely and simply out of instinct or emotion, which is in either case a purely physical response. The other, and more frightening possibility, is to produce a man who is so defective and animalistic in his reactions that he is incapable of using free will. He would be like those with serious neurological or genetic diseases who never attain the use of reason, but who may receive baptism and be Catholic.

May God forbid that the foolhardy pride of man go to such extremes in his striving to be as God, denying that which is most precious about human nature, his spiritual faculties of intellect and will.

The above-mentioned article quotes Lord David Alton, who publicly opposed the creation of such hybrids as ethically unacceptable: “Of the 80 treatments and cures which have come about from stems cells, all have come from adult stem cells, not embryonic ones. On moral and ethical grounds this fails; and on scientific and medical ones too.” Our society will have a terrifying punishment if this abuse of innocent human beings, embryos, for destruction and genetic manipulation continues. It is a sin crying out for vengeance.
What is the origin of the expression “Mysterium fidei” found in the consecration of the Precious Blood at the traditional Mass?

The interest of this question lies in the fact that this sacred expression cannot be found in the four texts that describe the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, found in the three synoptic Gospels and in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, nor is it to be found in the words of consecration of the sacred liturgies in the Eastern rites.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains the absence of this expression from these four accounts by pointing out that none of these sacred authors intended to write down the form of the sacraments, which were kept hidden in the early Church (III, Q. 78, Art. 3, ad 9), which is supported by the fact that none of these sources contains the complete form for the consecration of the Holy Eucharist as found in the traditional Mass. He goes on further to explain that these words—“the mystery of faith”—are of divine Tradition, being passed on to the Church through the Apostles.

However, this being said, it is clear that these words are not necessary for the validity of the consecration of the chalice. For in the first centuries of the Church, they were not said by the consecrating priest, but were rather an exclamation made by the assistant deacon to bring the attention of the faithful to the transubstantiation, the greatest of all mysteries and the summary of our Faith. This is confirmed by the fact that, although most ancient, they exist only in the Roman rite.

It does not follow, however, that they are optional, or that the most ancient Tradition of the Church can be abandoned and these words eliminated. They are, in fact, a recognition of the most sublime reality, the highest and most sacred action of which man can be the instrument, the acknowledgment that God alone can perform this miracle upon which our eternal salvation depends. This is how Father Gihr, in The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (p. 641) describes these words: “The exclamatory phrase in the middle—the mystery of faith—indicates the unsearchable depth and obscurity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. That the God-Man did shed His blood for us on the Cross, and that He again sheds it for us in a mystical manner on the altar—is an adorable divine achievement which includes in itself the sum of the most unheard-of wonders, all of which can be acknowledged and believed as true only in the light and the power of faith. Christ's sacrificial blood in the chalice is a mystery of faith in the fullest sense of the term.”

It is consequently greatly to be regretted that the Novus Ordo Mass has eliminated this expression of Faith, as so much that pertains to the divine action in the propitiatory sacrifice of the altar. It is yet another way in which it undermines the living and profession of the true Catholic Faith.
Reflections on the Presence of Atheists in Assisi

**DICI** – In the October 31, 2011 issue of *Correspondance européenne* (European Correspondence) (No. 242), the Italian historian Roberto de Mattei, who, on January 11, 2011, had signed a petition asking Benedict XVI to “flee from the spirit of Assisi” (see DICI, No. 228, Jan. 22, 2011), expressed his anxiety about the presence of atheists at the interreligious meeting in Assisi on October 27: “There is, of course, the possibility that the non-believers are on a search for or a ‘pilgrimage’ to Truth. This is what can happen when respect for the Second Commandment (love of neighbor) grows progressively and seeks its foundation in the First Commandment (love of God). This is the position of the so-called devout atheists such as Marcello Pera and Giuliano Ferrara, who—as was rightly pointed out by Francesco Agnoli in his article: “Io cattolico pacelliano, dico al card. Ravasi che ha ad Assisi sbagliato atei” (I, a Pacellian Catholic, say to Cardinal Ravasi that at Assisi he was wrong about the atheists) in *Il Foglio*, October 29, 2011)—have had their way with believers, and the way they continue to do so is by making their arguments work.” In regard to certain precepts of the Decalogue, these last today show themselves to be more confident and observant than many Catholics. But the atheists summoned to Assisi are anything but ‘devout’: they belong to that category of non-believers who despise not only the first three commandments, but the entire Decalogue.

“It is a position the philosopher and psycho-analyst Julia Kristeva has taken up again in the daily paper *Corriere della Sera* of October 28, 2011—which published in extenso her remarks at Assisi, in an article titled “Un nuovo umanesimo dieci principi” (Ten Principles of a New Humanism). In contrast to other lay specialists, Kristeva asserted a line of thought which starts from the Renaissance and ends up at the Enlightenment of Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau, including the Marquis de Sade, Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud, that is to say this itinerary, as demonstrated by leading atheist experts—Father Cornelio Fabro (*Introduzione all’ateismo moderno*, Rome: Studium, 1969), and the philosopher Augusto Del Noce (*Il problema dell’ateismo*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010)—carries precisely the nihilism that the French psycho-analyst, without denying her own atheistic vision and permissive society, would like to counter in the name of a collaborative ‘complicity’ between Christian humanism and secular humanism. The outcome of this peaceful coexistence between the atheist principle of immanence and a vague reminder of the Christian religiosity can only be pantheism, dear to all the modernists, past and present.

“The point upon which Assisi III risks standing is a dangerous furtherance of the confusion that currently grips the Church, that which all the media has largely emphasized, namely, the extension of the invitation to Assisi to atheists and agnostics selected among the most distant from Christian metaphysics, in addition to those addressed to representatives of different religions around the world. We wonder what dialogue can be possible with these ‘unbelievers’ who contradict the source of natural law.

“The distinction between atheist ‘combatants’ and atheist ‘partners’ risks ignoring the aggressive power contained in implicit atheism, which is not conveyed in a militant way, but which is actually more dangerous. Atheists of the UAAR (Union of Rationalist Atheists and Agnostics) at least have something to teach Catholics: in defense of their truths they profess their errors with a militant spirit from which Catholics have totally abdicated…” (Source: CORRESPONDANCE EUROPÉENE/DICI, No. 244 of Nov. 11, 2011)
Brazil: The Supreme Court Has Authorized the First Civil Homosexual Marriage

DICI – The Catholic Church in Brazil expressed its concern at the decision of the Superior Tribunal of Justice (STJ)—the Supreme Court—that has, for the first time in the history of the country, authorized the civil marriage of two women.

Four of the five judges pronounced themselves in favor of the authorization of this “marriage” between two women of the State of Rio Grande, who have been living together for five years. The only judge who opposed it has pointed out that such a decision could be overturned by the Federal Supreme Court (STF), which treats fundamental judicial questions.

The case was handed over to the Superior Tribunal of Justice after an inferior court had forbidden the union. Such judgments made by the State tribunals are not rare, but the Church fears that this first authorization of the Supreme Appeals Court could set a legal precedent in Brazil, where, unlike Argentina, “homosexual marriage” is not legal.

This judgment is not unrelated to the Supreme Court’s decision on May 5, to recognize the civil union of stable homosexual couples. The decision was unanimously adopted by the ten judges, announced the Court’s President, Cezar Pelluzzo, in spite of the Catholic Church’s fierce opposition. “In the absence of a law regulating the marriage of homosexuals, the recognition of civil union by the Supreme Court was the best we could hope for,” Judge Maria Berenice Dias had declared to the AFP. The request for recognition of civil union for homosexuals came from the governor of Rio de Janeiro, Sergio Cabral, who wished to give the same rights to all his officers, and from the Prosecutor General of the Republic, Roberto Gurgel.

(Sources: apic/kna/AFP – DICI, No. 244, Nov. 11, 2011)

Issues U.S. Bishops Proposed

Baltimore, Md., Nov. 16, 2011 / 02:58 pm (CNA/EWTN News) – Religious liberty and evangelizing in the increasingly secular American culture topped the list of issues that the U.S. bishops proposed as new priorities for their 2013-2016 strategic planning cycle. A discussion on conference priorities took place on Nov. 15, the second day of the bishops’ three-day fall General Assembly in Baltimore. Bishop George V. Murry, S.J., of Youngstown, Ohio, who serves as the chairman of the conference’s Committee on Priorities and Plans, facilitated the discussion.

Bishop Murry explained that the conference’s long-term priorities are worked out through the 16 standing programmatic committees, which include the committees on Doctrine, International Justice and Peace, Pro-Life Activities and Catholic Education. In addition, the conference designates short-term priorities, specific conference-wide initiatives that the bishops choose to focus on during given periods of time. From 2009 to 2011, the five priorities chosen by the bishops were faith formation and sacramental practice, strengthening marriage, human life and dignity, priestly and religious vocations and cultural diversity in the Church. Bishop Murry highlighted achievements that the bishops have made in these areas, including catechetical preparation for the third edition
of the Roman Missal, which is set to go into effect this Advent, as well as launching websites to promote marriage and religious vocations.

“The past three years have been a time of gestation and birth for many projects and resources that have now become mainstream bishop responsibilities,” he said. The bishops took time during their meeting to debate which issues were pressing enough to be considered priorities in the 2013-2016 strategic planning cycle. They gathered in regional groups to formulate and submit ideas for new priorities. After receiving the suggestions, Bishop Murry announced that the Committee on Priorities and Plans would need time to reflect on them and decide how to integrate them into the bishops’ strategic plan. The two issues that received “overwhelming support” from the regional groups were religious liberty and the New Evangelization, he said. The bishops had also shown a “clear desire” to continue their work on the current priorities, he added. Other suggestions for issues to add as new priorities included communication, leadership, the economy and immigration.

In the coming months, the Committee on Priorities and Plans will consider the bishops’ ideas and work to create a framework that will incorporate the two new priorities into the current initiatives. The committee will give a presentation on its progress to the Administrative Committee in March and then to the entire body of bishops in June.

Egypt: Cardinal Naguib Denounces the Rise of the Islamists

DICI – The Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria, born in Minya (Upper Egypt) on March 7, 1935, was invited to speak at the Fifth National Day of Awareness and Prayer for Christians victim to discrimination and persecutions, organized at Saint Nicolas Cathedral in Fribourg (Switzerland) by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) on October 29 and 30, 2011. On this occasion, Canon Nicolas Betticher, Vicar General of the diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, recalled that Sunday, October 30, was the 51st anniversary of the cardinal’s priestly ordination.

The Coptic Catholic patriarch declared that during the Bishops’ Synod for the Middle-East, in October 2010 at Rome, the synodal Fathers never once used the word “persecution” when speaking of the situation of Christians in this region of the world. “But that does not mean that all is well or that there are no problems…”

Out of the 88 million inhabitants of present-day Egypt, almost 9 million are Christian, mostly Orthodox Coptics. The country’s seven Catholic churches count about 250,000 faithful, essentially Coptic Catholics. The Christians of Egypt, if they are not persecuted properly speaking, have to face many interdictions imposed by the Koran and the Sharia, the Islamic jurisprudence. Cardinal Naguib also mentioned other painful problems for Christians: school and university manuals that offend or openly attack Christians and the Christian faith. The State media offers no Christian religious programs except Christmas and Easter Mass, while Muslim religious programs are broadcasted day and night.

During the first period of the revolution that deposed President Hosni Mubarak, “the marvelous phenomenon was that it did not touch reli-
gion…on the contrary, it reinforced the bonds between Muslims and Christians,” claimed the patriarch Antonios Naguib. “In the churches and in the mosques everyone was praying for the return of peace and order. Many Christians and Muslims lived together in a spirit of cooperation and friendship. We hoped for a new era of brotherhood. Unfortunately, this lovely dream did not last long!” Now, he regrets, Islamic fundamentalists have come out of the woods and attacks against the Christians are repeated, for example those against the Church of the Martyrs, in Sôl, in the south of Cairo, on March 8, or St. Menas Church in Embaba, Cairo, on May 7, and on September 30, St. George’s Church in Marinab. Then there were the Christian protests in Cairo which ended in the death of 30 persons and left 329 wounded, while “all the clues show that the attack was planned. Television reporters urged the attack against peacefully protesting Christians, while the authorities incriminated the Copticis!”

On being questioned by the press agency Apic, Cardinal Antonios Naguib answered that he nonetheless has confidence in the friendship between Muslims and Christians in Egyptian society. Christians have shown a new face “full of energy, of daring and of perseverance,” and Muslim writers ask in the press for the establishment of a State of democratic rights, guaranteeing equality for all. “This is a great chance for dialogue that we must grasp.” “Among the Muslim Brothers in Egypt we meet honest and moderate persons, but this is neither the majority nor is it a reflection of the official doctrine…”

The cardinal recalled that before the new Constitution that President Anwar Sadat drew up in 1971, Sharia was only one source of legislation. And if this President made peace with Israel, we have to admit that this peace was also beneficial for Egypt. But, he added in this interview, another aspect is forgotten: he freed the Muslim Brothers from prison, closed his eyes to their activities…

Fr. Henri Boulad, former superior of the Jesuits in Alexandria, now living in Cairo, also voiced his worries to the ACN, on October 19. “I think that the army is infiltrated by Islamists. We are at a worrisome turning point. The revolution has really been taken over by the fundamentalists,” he claimed. The Egyptian Jesuit denounced the media’s manipulation of opinion. “The rebels are unanimously presented as liberals who want democracy. But rather than democracies, it is Islamist regimes that are going to take over. I think that the intervention of the West in the scenarios of the Arab countries is dictated by economic and financial interests. There is a total lack of objectivity. Does the West realize that in establishing all these regimes in the Arab world, it is preparing for itself a bitter future? No one understands the true measure of the power, organization and determination of these Islamists.”

And he declares without beating around the bush: “I am surprised to see to what point the Church and the Western people have let themselves be taken in by the politically correct concerning Islam. Islam should be able to auto-criticize itself. In Egypt, all moderate voices are silenced under the pretext that they are not faithful to the right tradition: Wahhabism.” (Sources: apic/aed – DICI, No. 244, Nov. 11, 2011)
Michelangelo was considered the greatest living artist in his lifetime, and ever since then he has been held to be one of the greatest artists of all time. A number of his works in painting, sculpture, and architecture rank among the most famous in existence.
The Pilgrim’s Guide to Rome’s Principal Churches

A guided tour of fifty-one of the most important churches in Rome. Includes a history of each church, descriptions of the interior and exterior, a numbered floor plan, photographs, and details of the church’s spiritual, architectural, and artistic treasures. Whether you plan on visiting Rome and using this as a guide or reading it to learn about the “Eternal City,” this book offers the modern pilgrim essential information on the fifty-one most significant churches in the city. Special treatment is given to St. Peter’s Basilica, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, St. Paul Outside-the-Walls, and St. Lawrence Outside-the-Walls.

Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J., has spent a good part of his professional life in Rome. He earned a doctorate in theology from Rome’s Gregorian University in 1964 and taught at the same university from 1970 to 1973, while doing editorial work at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. He was appointed to Rome again in 1985 as a member of the Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus.
Dignitatis Humanae
and the Hermeneutic of Reform

by Abbé Jean-Michel Gleize

The Swiss review Nova et Vetera published in its October-December 2010 issue a study by Fr. Martin Rhonheimer on “The Hermeneutic of Reform and Religious Freedom.”

Fr. Rhonheimer’s Thesis

A Return to the Actual Thinking of Benedict XVI

To a hermeneutic of discontinuity, Benedict XVI does not oppose a hermeneutic of continuity. Rather, he speaks of a “hermeneutic of reform” by which he means “an ensemble of continuity and discontinuity at various levels.” Consequently, the real key to a reading of the Council “in the light of Tradition” consists in distinguishing continuity and discontinuity, discerning the different levels at which each is situated. Taking the example of religious freedom: Benedict XVI shows where continuity of Church teaching is to be found, beyond the perceived discontinuity. Continuity exists because the Decree Dignitatis Humanae on Religious Freedom merely reconnects with the Church’s deepest patrimony.

Let’s see how Fr. Rhonheimer justifies Benedict XVI’s thinking. His demonstration is elaborated in two points. Firstly, Dignitatis Humanae is the adequate expression of revealed truth (Sec. 1.2). Secondly, beyond an apparent break with the teaching of Pius IX, there is continuity between what Vatican II teaches on religious freedom and the dogmatic patrimony of the Church (1.3).

The Example of Religious Freedom

According to Fr. Rhonheimer, the Church’s teaching on the subject of religious freedom is summed up in a principle: the rejection of a State religion and the necessary separation of the Church from all forms of political power. This principle is the basis of the social doctrine of the Church, and it is to be found in the Gospel. On the other hand, the doctrine of the social kingship of Christ, in which the State is the auxiliary of the Church and protects the public exercise of the true religion by limiting freedom of expression is completely absent from Sacred Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. The idea of a Catholic State which would serve as the secular arm of the Church is not rooted in the deposit of faith, but corresponds rather to the concrete decisions of the post-Constantinian era of Christianity. These decisions eventually became fixed in canonical traditions and in their corresponding theological interpretations, thanks to which the Church has tried to defend its freedom against the incessant attacks of temporal powers. Subsequently and in the tradition of modern sovereign confessional States, they served to justify the typical idea of the Catholic State in
in which throne and altar existed in close symbiosis and in which representatives of the Catholic State zealously defended the rights of the Church. This symbiosis and unilateral vision culminating in clericalism did not fail to darken the face of the Church.

Victims of this theologico-canonical inheritance, Gregory XVI and Pius IX, like Pius VI beforehand (who had condemned the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in his 1791 Brief), identified the principle of religious freedom as a negation of the true religion. In effect, religious liberty consists in acknowledging the fundamental right of every individual not to be prevented by the State from publicly proclaiming the religion he in conscience holds, even a false religion. In the minds of these popes, such a right was the equivalent of placing all the religions on an equal footing (by according them the same civil rights). It amounted to a public denial of the true religion by the State’s profession of indifferentism in practice. For them, the abandonment of the principle according to which the State of a Catholic country must favor Catholic truth and deny the right to public exercise of every other religious confession, or at most tolerate it within certain reasonable limits, amounted to an admission ipso facto that there is not one true religion nor one true Church, but that all the religions are equal. That is why Mirari Vos and Quanta Cura condemned the principle of religious freedom as necessarily being the expression of religious indifferentism and of naturalism in practice. But the presuppositions of this condemnation imply a conception of the State which, far from reposing on the principles of Catholic faith and morals, flows rather from ecclesiastical traditions and practices originating in the Middle Ages, as do its theological justifications. Undoubtedly, one must acknowledge and salute the greatness of these popes who, starting from the theological positions of their times—of which they were unable to discern the historical character—thought they were acting in a spirit of heroic fidelity to their faith. In reality, the exclusive truth of the Christian religion and the uniqueness [unicity] of the Church of Jesus Christ as the way of eternal salvation remain compatible with a situation in which the State does not intervene to prevent the citizens from publicly professing other religions than Catholicism. One need only become aware of this in order to get past the condemnations of the last two centuries and to reconsider the issue of the relations between the Church and political authorities. This is what Vatican II accomplished by getting back to the Church’s earliest patrimony prior to the theologico-canonical inheritance of the post-Constantinian era.

The fundamental principle rediscovered by Dignitatis Humanae is twofold: on the one hand, individuals and society have the duty of offering to God the genuine worship of the true religion.2 On the other hand, no political authority may intervene to prevent individuals from acting according to their conscience in matters religious.3 These two axioms combine in a single principle: in order to fulfill their duty to God, individuals must be able to act, individually and socially, without constraint by any external authority.

As Fr. Rhonheimer rightly observes at the conclusion of his study, this social doctrine was confirmed in the “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life,” published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2002: “Living and acting in conformity with one’s own conscience on questions of politics is not slavish acceptance of positions alien to politics or some kind of confessionalism, but rather the way in which Christians offer their concrete contribution so that, through political life, society will become more just and more consistent with the dignity of the human person” (§6). Evangelization consists in the penetration of the structures of society by the Christian spirit, thereby favoring the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ. The spreading of the Gospel does not begin by a public profession of the true religion, but by the annunciation of the Church which takes place within the hearts of individuals, such that by the apostolic action of ordinary Catholics the Gospel spreads throughout human society and into all its institutions and the intercourse of daily life.

**Continuity of the Magisterium**

According to Rhonheimer’s study, Dignitatis Humanae did not depart from the teaching of the Magisterium. Undoubtedly, a discontinuity has been observed between the teaching of Pius IX and Vatican II, but it is only apparent. It is situated at the level of the concrete application of positive ecclesiastical law, not at the level of the principles of divine law. The infallible and irreversible teaching of the Church authoritatively indicates the natural moral law without any consideration of the consequences that may result from it in particular historical circumstances. That the Church may sometimes speak about this application is inevitable and may prove useful. But these statements cannot be taken as infallible and definitive interpretations of the natural law. They are rather changeable decisions: at the time they are taken, they may be compulsory for the Catholic faithful and require their obedience; but they may be recused by other subsequent magisterial decisions. [Pope Benedict XVI’s] 22 December 2005 Speech made a similar distinction between the principles which express the durable aspect and the concrete forms that depend upon historical circumstances. From Pius IX to Vatican II, there is continuity on the level of principles since the Church has not ceased to affirm, with the ontological dignity of the human person, the principle of the natural law, which justifies the right to profess one’s religion freely and without constraint. But there is no necessary link between this principle and the idea of the State held by Pius IX. It does not pertain to...
the truths logically or historically related to this dogma, and which it would be necessary to uphold in order to conserve and correctly interpret the deposit of faith. It pertains rather to the concrete applications of the natural law and can legitimately be changed. In effect, the right to profess the true religion freely and without constraint no longer requires the State’s intervention to prevent the public exercise of false religions. The discontinuity therefore is situated at the level of interpretation. Pius IX identified indifferentism with a specific form of socio-political organization in which the State does not recognize a duty to repress by legal penalties violators of Catholic law except insofar as public order requires. Vatican II condemns the indifferentism of all times, independently of all contingent forms of socio-political organization, which have nothing to do, whether positively or negatively, with the Gospel. The first Christians, moreover, rejected the very principle of a State religion. Dignitatis Humanae therefore freed the Church from secular historical ballast, the origins of which do not go back to the apostolic tradition and the deposit of faith, but rather to concrete decisions of the post-Constantinian era of Christianity.

Critical Analysis

Father Rhonheimer’s analysis relies upon a slightly updated variant of the historical method. This leads straight to a blatant contradiction. The premise of this analysis is unacceptable of itself, and thus Dignitatis Humanae contradicts the principles of positive and natural divine law.

Resurgent Historicism

The chief argument advanced by Fr. Rhonheimer is not new. It is the historicism of the new theology in vogue prior to the last council.

A Faulty Method

The argument rests entirely on the erroneous modernist method by which the statements of the magisterium, the Fathers of the Church, and of theologians are interpreted as if they were purely historical documents to be judged by the light of human reason. Its proponents deploy an erudition buttressed with copious quotations and footnotes, but this erudition is empty because it stays on the surface of the letter without reaching a profound understanding of these witnesses of Tradition.

Cardinal Billot made a decisive refutation of this flawed method. Its partisans approach Tradition as a mere historical fact, as a work of men who have transmitted their ideas to us. Therefore the interpretation of these ideas must rely solely upon the natural light of human reason and on simple scientific erudition. “They leave aside completely,” said Billot, “the criteria of a superior order which would, however, be necessary in order to judge legitimately the meaning intended by the Fathers of the Church in numerous passages which are obscure and which, absolutely speaking, leave the door open to a variety of interpretations. These critical theologians, victims of an itching that impels them to subject everything to their own judgment, will always select their texts among these difficult passages, taking those that may offer a heterodox meaning. This is how they manage to prove the conclusion they want: the sentiment that the primitive Church was different from the one that prevailed subsequently.” But for that, they postulate that Tradition is a human work. If such is the case, it may well be admitted that the great doctors of the fourth and fifth centuries were deluding themselves when they asserted so positively that in all their teachings they held true to the “sentiment” of the ancients. But the postulate is false because Tradition exceeds merely human capacities. “The conclusion that is established as conjectural or probable in the eyes of historical-critical analysis,” Billot says, “no longer is such if it is contrasted with a truth the evidence for which has been solidly established by another method. That conclusion is then a heresy or simply an error, and it is no longer legitimate to defend it if it contradicts the truths the faith teaches us or that theology demonstrates. Under the pretext of getting away from higher rules, one may propose to study the texts of Sacred Scripture or Tradition by availing oneself of the freedom and independence that are acceptable in profane subjects. But then not only will one not avoid heresy, one will become guilty of falsification.”

A similar falsification lies at the heart of Fr. Rhonheimer’s purported demonstration. His thesis postulates that “the idea of a Catholic State which would serve as the secular arm of the Church is not rooted in the deposit of faith, but rather corresponds to concrete decisions of the post-Constantinian era of Christianity.” The only way to uphold this postulate is to adopt the historistic viewpoint denounced by Cardinal Billot and to falsify from one end to the other the plain meaning of authoritatively taught Tradition.

The Foundation of the New Theology

This faulty method is inscribed in the argumentation of Fr. Congar, which resembles in every point that of Fr. Rhonheimer. For Congar, the genuine doctrine of the Gospel, rediscovered thanks to Vatican II, is that of religious freedom (Dignitatis Humanae) and of the strictly lay State (Gaudium et Spes). According to Congar, before A.D. 314, no explicit doctrine on this point is to be found in papal teachings, and there was separation of Church and State in conformity with the letter of the Gospel. After 314 and during the Middle Ages, the popes set about elaborating a teaching under the force of circumstances. That would be the theory of direct power which found its perfect elaboration with St. Gregory VII and Boniface VIII. Then starting in the modern age, with Protestantism in the 16th century >
and the Freemasonic Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, it would take the form of the theory of the indirect power, which was explained by the Popes of the 19th and of the first half of the 20th century. The term of this evolution would have been reached at Vatican II with Dignitatis Humanae.

These historicist presuppositions found their full expression in Jakque Maritain’s profane “new Christendom,”10 taken up by Charles Journet.7 While during the first period of his study of this question, Jacques Maritain followed rather faithfully the teaching of the Church’s supreme teaching authority and traditional theology,8 he eventually separated completely the temporal (natural) domain from the spiritual (supernatural) domain under the pretext of reuniting them in a symbiosis more profound than had hitherto existed. According to him, these two domains ought to be united in a new Christendom, but this union results from the pure juxtaposition (and no longer from the subordination) of two autonomous and parallel finalities, the temporal common good of the State and the spiritual common good of the Church. The mission of the Church in relation to the State is to foster the natural temporal values in their own order, for these values define the context of which a person stands in need to order his own spiritual welfare.9 The new Christendom of the new Church will have to be more pure, but also more hidden, like the leaven in the dough. “This can only happen by means of the cross; I do not say the cross as an external insignia and symbol placed on the crown of Christian kings or pinned on honorable lapels; I mean the cross of the heart, the taking up of the redemptive sufferings inseparable from existence.”10 Maritain’s idea surfaces in the conclusion of Fr. Rhonheimer citing the Doctrinal Note of 2002: the kingship of Christ does not begin with the cross and the popes were to preach this state of affairs as proceeding from principles.

A False Presupposition

But beyond the faulty method used, the starting point itself remains unacceptable. Contrary to what Fr. Rhonheimer’s exegesis claims, the exclusive truth of the Christian religion and the unicity of the Church of Jesus Christ as the way of eternal salvation are not compatible with a situation in which the State does not intervene to prevent the citizens from publicly professing other religions.
was totally preoccupied with the passengers’ enjoying the voyage without being concerned to learn whether the ship was going to reach port or hit an iceberg.

**Total Discontinuity**

If the presupposition is false and condemned by Pius IX as contrary to divine law, the discontinuity is real and not merely apparent, for it is not situated at the level of the changeable decisions of positive ecclesiastical law. Pius IX affirms a conception of the State which must flow necessarily from the principles of divine law. These principles are to be found, on the one hand, in natural law, which informs us of the social nature of man and, on the other hand, in revealed divine law, which informs us of the supernatural destiny of man. Man lives in society in order to fulfill his true dignity by acting toward the attainment of his supernatural end. Accordingly, the society in which he lives, and therefore the political order which helps him live, ought to be concerned with helping him to attain this end. If this consequence is refused, it is because the principles from which it flows are rejected. It is just such a refusal that is inscribed in Father Rhonheimer’s analysis. The refusal in principle of a religion of the State postulates a different conception of the dignity of man, a dignity no longer based on behavior (operative dignity), but on existence (ontological dignity), according to which a man’s fundamental worth resides in the mere fact of his uncoerced action.

The crux of the matter lies there: To ask whether from Pius IX to Vatican II there is continuity is to ask whether, from Pius IX to Vatican II, the Church has always affirmed together with the ontological dignity of the human person a principle of natural law that would justify the right to not be prevented from freely propagating one’s [false] religion. Fr. Rhonheimer responds affirmatively and concludes logically that the religious liberty based on this principle of natural law constitutes a natural right as well as a positive civil right.18

In order to address this question, certain distinctions must be kept in mind. The Church has always recognized the spiritual nature of man, endowed with intellect and free-will, which is the foundation of his ontological dignity, and has taught that it is not lawful to violate this nature by compelling the acceptance of truth or good through positive coercion. But the Church has always said that the intellect and the free-will of man are made for their object, and that a man loses his moral dignity when he turns away from what is true and good. It is thus necessary and legitimate to prevent the public expression of error and of evil in order to preserve man’s moral dignity. This is all the more so because moral dignity is dignity fully attained, whereas ontological dignity is but an inchoate dignity that calls for moral dignity as its complement and indispensable achievement. The two are inseparable. A human being’s dignity cannot be restricted merely to his having a rational nature irrespective of his conduct. For if rational nature already gives a hu-
man person his ontological dignity, it is his good behavior in conformity with the divine law that gives him his full moral dignity. A person is worthy in the full meaning of the term because he or she possesses and exercises virtue, which is a principle of operation in conformity with the rule of reason, and indeed of revelation. If this aspect of dignity were denied and dignity was restricted to the standpoint of being only, abstracting from action, then it could be maintained that the fallen angels are as worthy as the good angels or that sinners are as worthy as saints. Now such a conclusion is patently false. Leo XIII teaches this clearly: “If the mind assents to false opinions, and the will chooses and follows after what is wrong, neither can attain its native fullness, but both must fall from their native dignity into an abyss of corruption.”19 Personal dignity thus depends upon an individual’s behavior and not only his existence. “Whatever, therefore,” the pope adds, “is opposed to virtue and truth, may not rightly be brought temptingly before the eye of man, much less sanctioned by the favour and protection of the law.”20

The principle introduced by Vatican II, which is supposed to justify freedom from constraint in the public exercise of religion, is an absolutely false principle, and the Church had never taught it previously. The divergence between Pius IX and Dignitatis Humanae is radical; it is situated on the level of principles and not on their prudential application. More precisely, Pius IX drew the necessary inference from a necessary principle: if the dignity of man consists in professing the true religion, the duty of the State is to preserve this dignity by preventing the public profession of false religions. Vatican II drew the necessary consequences from a diametrically opposite, and thus false, principle: if the dignity of man is first and foremost in his being endowed with free-will and a right to unrestrained action, then the State must not prevent the public exercise of false religions.

The principles reiterated by Pius VI, Gregory XVI, and Pius IX are necessary. The consequences that flow necessarily from them cannot change. To say, as did Benedict XVI, that the principles only express “the lasting aspect” is insufficient because that does not signify that these principles express necessary truths. That which lasts (even eternally) is not therefore necessary:21 and that which lasts can always not last. Whatever may be the specific forms of social life natural to man, it remains necessary that life in society should preserve him as much as possible from the obstacles which could prevent his attaining his supernatural end.22 Even if one does not reject out of hand the hypothesis that the organization of society in the modern era has changed, and granting (with a great deal of goodwill) that the traditional structure of the State has become less and less distinct in the context of international society and globalization, it remains no less true that individuals do not live in isolation, but assemble in groups and must always strive to attain the unique supernatural end willed by God. Therefore, even if the political organizations familiar to Pius IX and St. Pius X are no longer those of our own era, the social kingship of Christ must still prevail, today as yesterday. This kingship is not just a contingent fact inscribed in history. It is necessary, and it is obligatory for all the societies of the earth, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The Pascal liturgy expresses this: Ipsius sunt tempora. Ipsa gloria et imperium per universa aeternitas aeterna. The Popes before Vatican II taught this royalty and condemned religious freedom in a context different from our own, but basing it upon necessary principles which still hold true in our circumstances. And that is why the hermeneutic of reform as it is given in the example of the interpretation of Dignitatis Humanae, far from representing the convergence of “the dynamic and fidelity,” implicitly repudiates the previous magisterial teaching.23

Conclusion

Because the Church is a divine institution, at every period of its history it must exercise its authority to teach. The task of its supreme teaching authority is to propound, to explain, and to clarify the invariable meaning of the deposit of faith. Therefore the Catholic Church in principle could never be defined as “the Church of seven or of the first twenty Ecumenical Councils.” On the other hand, it is indubitable that the authority of this living magisterium must be exercised in every period of history to transmit without alteration the deposit of faith definitively revealed, and from this point of view, the Catholic Church may be defined as “the Church of all time,” in the sense that Catholic doctrine remains substantially immutable in its meaning through every conceptual and verbal elaboration by means of which the magisterium expresses with increasing precision the same truth.

More precisely, as Pius XII taught in Humani Generis, the magisterium works “in order to state the truths of the faith ever more accurately,” and not for a clarification of its own teachings. The magisterium interprets and clarifies divinely revealed truths, but it does not need to interpret its own teaching. It is Sacred Scripture that needs to be interpreted because quite often the expressions that occur there are in a metaphorical language that can be understood in various ways.25 On the other hand, the Church’s interpretation that clarifies the meaning of Scripture (or of the liturgy or of the writings of the Fathers of the Church) is always clear itself and does not require an “interpretation of the interpretation,” lest the series of interpretations approach infinity and culminate in absurdity. As a general rule, the task of the present-day teaching authority [magisterium] is limited to interpreting points of doctrine which the previous magisterium has not yet clarified. For example, the teachings of the first Council of Nicea are quite clear concerning...
the doctrine of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The second Council of Nicea did not clarify the first Council; it simply took up a different point of the doctrine not addressed by the first, concerning the Third Divine Person. Magisterial teachings progress by succession, in that they are elaborated humano modo, by examining and clarifying different points of doctrine one after the other, in a distinct manner. For the human intellect cannot explicitly know in act different objects at one and the same time. The only comprehensive or global knowledge possible for man is implicit knowledge; explicit knowledge can only be partial and successive. Thus the activity of the magisterium progressively clarifies and interprets the deposit of Revelation, but each of its clarifications is definitive and does not call for any new interpretation.

The post-conciliar magisterium seeks to give a good interpretation to Vatican II by eliminating the bad. This is indeed proof that, far from clarifying doctrine, this Council at the very least obscured it, and thus its property magisterial character may be suspected. That is why it is futile to take Vatican II as a criterion, since the clear teachings of the antecedent magisterium cannot be undertood and explained by relying upon equivocal teaching.

The example of religious freedom perfectly illustrates this point. The social doctrine of the Church was clearly and definitively expounded in its principles by the pontifical magisterium, from Gregory XVI to Pius XII: all of these popes condemned the civil right not to be prevented from publicly professing an objectively false religion, specifying that their condemnation bore upon the right as such, whether limited or not. Dignitatis Humanae affirms this right within “due limits,” which are those of public order, a purely profane and natural criterion. [For further discussion, see below, n. 23.] As long as it rests upon such foundations, the Vatican Council II cannot represent a legitimate starting point for any hermeneutic. More exactly, going beyond the particular example of religious freedom, the presupposition of Benedict XVI’s 22 December 2005 Speech necessarily leads to the adoption of an interpretive approach of the historicist type. This supposes that historical contingency substantially affects all thought, and that doctrinal truths contain nothing necessary, if not some “lasting aspects.” But such historicism has always been condemned by the Church. This supposes that historical contingency substantially affects all thought, and that doctrinal truths contain nothing necessary, if not some “lasting aspects.” But such historicism has always been condemned by the Church. This


Notes
1 The article appears on pp. 346-63. It is a French translation of an original German essay published initially in Die Tagespog ot September 26, 2009. The review Nova et Vetera, founded by Cardinal Charles Journet, is currently directed by Cardinal Georges Cottier, O.P., former Vatican house theologian during the pontificate of John Paul II. Serving on its editorial board is Fr. Charles Moreord, O.P., currently rector of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas at Rome.
2 Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2105.
3 Dignitatis Humanae, §2.
4 Cardinal Louis Bilstil, Tradition et modernisme (Courrier de Rome, 2007), pp. 109-112 (second part of Ch. 3 in the treatise De l’immuable tradition contre la nouvelle hérésie de l’évolutionisme).
5 Catholicisme, s.v. “Église et État.”
6 First in Religion et Culture (1938) and Du régime temporel et de la liberté (1933); then in Les droits de l’homme et la loi naturelle (1942) and Christianisme et démocratie (1943).
7 In L’Église du Verbe Incarné (1955), Vol. 1, Ch. 6.
9 “Christianity must inform, or rather transpenetrate the world, not in as much as this is its principal purpose (it constitutes, rather, an indispensable secondary goal), and not so that the world may immediately become the kingdom of God, but so that the refraction of the world of grace may be felt there more and more, and so that man may live better here his temporal life.” Jacques Maritain, Humanisme intégral in Œuvres complètes, VI, 420.
10 Maritain, ibid., 377.
11 “The multilateral diplomacy of the Holy See, for the most part, strives to reaffirm the great fundamental principles of international life, since the Church’s specific contribution consists in helping ‘to form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly’ (Deus Caritas Est, 28). On the other hand, the direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful—and in the context of international life this includes Christian diplomats and members of Non-governmental Organizations—who ‘are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity’ and ‘to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competences and fulfilling their own responsibility’ (ibid., 29).” Benedict XVI, Address to Representatives of the Holy See to International
Organizations and to Participants in the Forum of Catholic-inspired Non-governmental Organizations, December 1, 2007. (Text online at vatican.va.)

12 “Humanity today is rightly concerned about the ecological balance of tomorrow. It is important for assessments in this regard to be carried out prudently, in dialogue with experts and people of wisdom, uninhibited by ideological pressure to draw hasty conclusions, and above all with the aim of reaching agreement on a model of sustainable development capable of ensuring the well-being of all while respecting environmental balances.”


14 Rev. Dominique Palmieri, De Romano Pontifice, Thesis 21, p. 473. This author remarks that one may liken this to the subordination of philosophy to theology.

15 Fr. Palmieri is right when he emphasizes: “Pope Boniface did not introduce a new law, but contented himself with declaring authoritatively the already ancient divine law, that is why the very Christian king had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome after the publication of the Bull Unam Sanctam no more nor less than he did before” (ibid., p. 473).

16 This point was explained in detail in the columns of this newspaper in the article entitled “Etat de Necessite,” Courrier de Rome, July-August 2008.

17 Denzinger 873.


20 Ibid., [p. 234].

21 The famous question of the world’s eternal duration is there as evidence. In the eyes of St. Thomas (ST I, Q. 40, Art. 1), it is possible to maintain without contradiction that the universe is created (hence contingent and not necessary) and that it is “lasting,” having always existed and having never to cease existing. St. Thomas’s brilliant idea was to distinguish between duration and necessity, and thus to escape from the too narrow confines of Aristotelian philosophy, from whom the eternity of the universe excludes the idea of its contingence and hence of its creation.

22 The true liberty of human society does not consist in every man doing what he pleases, for this would simply end in turmoil and confusion, and bring on the overthrow of the State; but rather in this, that through the injections of the civil law all may more easily conform to the prescriptions of the eternal law.” (Libertas, §4)

23 In passing, let us simply note that Fr. Rhoenheimer passes over in silence an essential point of the doctrine of Vatican II. Dignitatis Humanae mentions the limits of the right to religious freedom at least three times. In §2: “… in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be reduced from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others within due limits.” In §3: “Injury, therefore, is done to the human person and to the very order established by God for human life, if the free exercise of religious is denied in society when the just requirements of public order do not require.” In §7, where it is stated that government’s action “is to be controlled by juridical norms which are in conformity with the Objective moral order.” This may give the impression that there is not a contradiction between Quanta Curae and the Vatican II decree. This would be the case if the religious freedom condemned by Pius IX and claimed as a civil right in Dignitatis Humanae were the same, but this does not seem to be the case. It may appear that Pius IX condemns an unlimited freedom whereas Vatican II claims a limited freedom; however, the freedom is indeed the same, unlimited in both cases, i.e., to say without restriction on the level of religion itself. The limits of which Vatican II speaks do not concern the freedom of religion as such, because the limits pertain to the public order of profane society; they do not aim at restricting the specifically religious domain of freedom. The properly religious domain of the right recognized by Dignitatis Humanae is without intrinsic limits because the right belongs to all religions, true or false. At the most there may be extrinsic limits when the circumstances in which religious freedom is to be exercised are taken into account, circumstances pertaining to the profane order, which is indeed an objective order, but one that is purely natural.

24 Pius XII carefully distinguishes between the teaching of the magisterium and the deposit of faith: “[The teaching office of the Church… has been instituted by Christ, Our Lord, to preserve and interpret divine revelation” (§17). “This sacred Office of Teacher in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded and interpreted” (§18). “For, together with the sources of positive theology God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith Our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church.”

25 According to St. Vincent of Lerins’ classic expression of the problem: “But here some one perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church’s interpretation? For this reason—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another, so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters.” Commonitorium, §5.

26 The Fathers explained Scripture more precisely, but it is not always an easy matter to determine their unanimity.

27 Benedict XVI said this in the Speech to the Curia of December 22, 2005: “Why has the implementation of the Council, in large parts of the Church, thus far been so difficult?” Well, it all depends on the correct interpretation of the Council or—as we would say today—on its proper hermeneutics, the correct key to its interpretation and application. The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face to face and quarreled with each other.

28 “The council’s lack of precision is admitted even by those theologians most faithful to the Roman See, who attempt to acquit the council of blame in the matter. But it is obvious that the need to defend the universal meaning of the council is itself an indication of its equalitarian character.” Romano Amerio, Ista Unum (Sarto House, 1996), p. 102, n. 8.

29 For example, by St. Pius X with the condemned proposition No. 22 of the Decree Lamentabili of 1907: “The dogmas the Church holds out as revealed are not truths which have fallen from heaven. They are an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has arrived at by laborious effort.” (DS 3422).

30 In Paul VI’s sermon during the last general session of the Council, he said, “the teaching authority of the Church, even though not wishing to issue extraordinary dogmatic pronouncements, has made thoroughly known its authoritative teaching.” (Rheinheimer, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1965/docu
cments/hf_pvi_spe_19650707_epilogo-concilio_en.html.) In Paul VI’s general audience of 12 January 1966, he explained that the Council “avoided any extraordinary statements of dogmas endowed with the note of infallibility” (Michael Davies, Pope Paul’s Council, p. 218). Fr. Joseph Crehan, S.J., points out that the Council accepted the fact that it had “put forth its teaching without infallible definitions,” by concluding the decree on the Church: “with the words decursorius ac statuimus [We decree and establish] and not with the word definitus.” The same formula is used for the 16 documents promulgated by the Council (A Catholic Dictionary of Theology [London, 1971], III, 257).

31 Rhoenheimer, op. cit., p. 360.
Dear Angelus Press,

Why did you decide to go to a bi-monthly? Won’t this make it harder to report the news? As subscribers, will we be missing out?

A Subscriber
St. Marys, KS

Due to continually increasing printing and shipping costs, we decided to give you fresh content every two months instead of monthly. You will not be missing out; in fact, we’re confident that you’ll find the new format more accessible and the themes more timely. Even with a monthly, news was relatively impossible; we live in a world that is increasingly too fast-paced for print. Instead, and more importantly, we’ll be providing the analysis and commentary that you can’t find anywhere else. We are confident you won’t be upset!

Angelus Press

Dear Angelus Press,

Can you explain the new format? On the one hand, I see that each issue will have a unique theme. On the other hand, I saw reference to regular columns or sections. How will you be able to do both?

Received via e-mail

The answer is indeed both! If you look even at this issue, you’ll notice that the theme incorporates several short articles at the beginning of the magazine. This theme will change from issue to issue and will cover different doctrinal and cultural questions. On the other hand, the rest (and majority) of the magazine comprises unique perspectives, labeled according to their topic. The idea was to appeal to all of our readers somehow: the priests and religious, parents, young adults, those interested in Tradition, and so on. We may alter something here or there, but the main layout will remain similar to what you’re holding now. Let us know what you think!

Angelus Press
The Vatican Museums contain masterpieces of painting, sculpture and other works of art collected by the popes through the centuries. The Museums include several monumental works of art, such as the Sistine Chapel, the Chapel of Beato Angelico, the Raphael Rooms and Loggia and the Borgia Apartment.
An old Roman proverb said: “Variatio delectat!” Change is delightful! Promoting the two neighboring districts of the United States and Canada into a team is a progress. For several months already both districts are working hard together on various projects and we are very proud to present the first fruit our bundled forces: the new Angelus magazine! We hope that The Angelus will open the way to a more universal, a more catholic way of spreading the faith.

The completely updated Angelus will be distributed also in Canada, and the Canadian district commits to participate in the work. Convictions magazine will continue as the newsletter of the Society in Canada gathering the news of our priories and chapels.

A renowned European branding firm developed a corporate style for the Society which is supposed to be used not only for The Angelus but for all kinds of publications, for correspondence as well as for the also renewed website. I’m very happy being closely involved in this work and honored writing these lines. Our aspiration was to create the new Angelus for our constantly rejuvenating group of faithful. The style is new and fresh, appealing to old and young. The main target was a professionally-designed style which stands out from other magazines by its clarity and readability, so that even the larger amount of pages and the greater number of articles will keep nobody from reading. Quite the reverse: we want to make it a pleasure for you to read!

A second big change in The Angelus is the way pictures will be presented. You will find a number of selected pictures introducing you to the richness and beauty of the faith. By themselves they are a source of instruction and a cradle of meditation. Contemplating the beauty of the images will deepen your joy and generate your admiration. Spread throughout the magazine they will give you a moment of rest. The pictures will even attract your children’s attention. They will look at them and ask you questions. And you will take the time for the explanation. Later on they will start to read by themselves. So The Angelus wants to become the magazine of whole the family.

A third characteristic of the new style is its positivity. Bare of any aggressive and imposing element it commits us to a positive way of writing. For sure, we will have to denounce outrage wherever it occurs, but mainly we want to stand out by positive reporting, by well-written, sound articles. The Angelus wants to be attractive by promoting the splendors of Tradition, the beauty of the faith.

With this first issue of The Angelus you receive a means of apostolate. You hold in your hands a unique Catholic magazine: by its content and presentation it will be able to convince those who are still in doubts and win those who are far from the faith.

With my best wishes for the year 2012,
Fr. Jürgen Wegner
The design of St. Peter’s Basilica, and in particular its dome, has greatly influenced church architecture in Western Christendom. Christopher Wren’s dome at St. Paul’s Cathedral, the domes of Karlskirche in Vienna, St. Nicholas Church, Prague, and the Pantheon, Paris, all pay homage to St. Peter’s. The 19th- and early 20th-century architectural revivals brought about the building of a great number of churches that imitate elements of St. Peter’s to a greater or lesser degree, including St. Mary of the Angels in Chicago, St. Josaphat’s Basilica in Milwaukee, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Pittsburgh and Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral in Montreal, which replicates many aspects of St. Peter’s on a smaller scale.
2012 Daily Liturgical Calendar

The 2012 Catholic Liturgical Calendar from Angelus Press highlights each of the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary using the beautiful mosaics found in the famous rosary basilica in Lourdes, France. A welcome addition to every Catholic home, this year’s Catholic liturgical calendar combines the ebb and flow of the Church’s liturgical year with Christendom’s most popular devotion, the Holy Rosary.
2011 Conference Audio

On the weekend of October 7 - 9, Angelus Press hosted its second annual conference on the theme of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ. With over 400 attendees from around the country (and some international visitors), some of the greatest minds and speakers convened to examine this doctrine from a variety of angles. The result was an amazing success as those in attendance learned about Christ’s Kingship and were spurred on to Catholic Action.

To help make this conference an aid for years to come, and also to assist those unable to attend, these talks have been professional re-mastered and are now available at an affordable, introductory price of only $59.95.

Slideshow DVD

For over 40 years, the Society of St. Pius X has stood firmly for the purity of the Faith and the glory of Catholic Tradition. In honor of the 40th anniversary of the Society’s founding, Angelus Press produced a beautiful DVD history of this great work of God.

See and hear the story from the humble beginning of the Society, through the turbulent years that followed, and finally into the worldwide presence of the Society that we know today. This DVD is a must-have for any Catholic interested in the history of the Church during our troubled age. This beautiful work will be a treasure in your home for years to come.

Henry VIII and the Anglican Schism

Despite Henry’s cruel treatment of his wife, Catharine of Aragon, even today, Anglican apologists argue that the king’s motives, while perhaps not admirable, were merely political: the stability of the Tudor line and of the whole realm demanded a male heir. This lecture, as told by Christopher Check, exposes that dishonest defense, lays bare Henry’s true motives in divorcing Catherine, identifies the sinister operators behind the scenes, unwinds the convoluted legal arguments Henry attempted to justify his actions, and names the painful and widespread effects of the divorce we feel today. Henry VIII’s divorce is among mankind’s most consequential tragedies. An incredible history and a thought-provoking lecture. A must-have for those wishing to deepen their knowledge of the great Anglican schism.
The Society of St. Pius X is an international priestly society of common life without vows, whose purpose is the priesthood and that which pertains to it.

The main goal of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X is to preserve the Catholic faith in its fullness and purity, to teach its truths, and to diffuse its virtues. Authentic spiritual life, the sacraments, and the traditional liturgy are its primary means of bringing this life of grace to souls.

The Angelus aims at forming the whole man; we aspire to help deepen your spiritual life, nourish your studies, understand the history of Christendom, and restore Christian culture in every aspect.