

Pope John Paul II's
THEOLOGICAL JOURNEY
to the
PRAYER MEETING
OF RELIGIONS
IN ASSISI

Part I

From the Second Vatican Council
to the Papal Elections

Fr. Johannes Dörmann



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FOREWORD

In this first of a planned three-volume series, I have referred back to articles which I have published (*Theologisches* 6/1988 Col. 323ff., 7/1988 Col. 376 ff., 8/1988 Col. 453ff.), and have developed the work there begun. The criticisms appearing in the meantime gave me no cause to make corrections. The objections brought forth are in large part from texts which I have not yet analyzed, but which I intend to go into in the course of the discussion.

The planned second volume concerns itself with the major dogmatic encyclicals of John Paul II; the third volume with the pastoral visits of the Pope in Africa and Asia, insofar as these are intimately connected with the occurrence at Assisi, and with the official explanations immediately before and after the prayer meeting. Only due to the increasing profusion of material do the major traits of the theology and the pontificate of John Paul II come out clearly. And accurate interpretation of the Pope's thinking is our main concern. My publication *One Truth and Many Religions—Assisi: Beginning of a New Age* (Respondeo 8, Josef Kral, 8423 Abensberg 1988. Published by Johannes Bokmann), among others, also serves this purpose. There I have tried through a detailed analysis to describe the theological significance of the "Assisi Event." The effects of this "model" came to light in the subsequent meetings and similar gatherings. In the fund-raising drive for World Mission Sunday, 1989, sponsored by MISSIO Aachen and MISSIO Munich, in which every parish in West Germany participated, the following prayer was recommended for the "Community Mass for World Mission Sunday 1989":

“Be praised, O Lord,
God of Israel.
You lead through impassible lands.
You liberate from slavery and oppression.
You promise a new world.

Be praised, O Lord,
God of Mohammed.
You are great and exalted.
You are incomprehensible and unapproachable.
You are great in Your Prophets.

Be praised, O Lord,
God of Buddha.
You live in the depths of the world.
You live in every person.
you are the fullness of silence.

Be praised, O Lord,
God of Africa.
You are the life in the trees.
You are the fertility of father and mother.
You are the soul of the world.

Be praised, O Lord,
God of Jesus Christ.
You spend Yourself in Love.
You surrender yourself in goodness.
You triumph over death.”

by Anton Rotzetter

Strange though it was to many Catholics that this prayer should be permitted during the celebration of the Eucharist, one must not fail to recognize that it smacks distinctly of the spirit of Assisi.

CHAPTER I

THE ASSISI PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE IN THE LIGHT OF TRADITION AND VATICAN II

1. Pope versus Pope

The World Prayer meeting of Religions on October 27, 1986, in Assisi, with Pope John Paul II as host, was the high point of over a century of religio-historical development which had as its goal the fostering of peace and unity among the religions and peoples of the world.¹ It lay within the nature of this interreligious and ecumenical movement for unity and peace that religious tolerance be fostered as a major benefit, and that the Church's claim to be the sole possessor of the truth come under attack. Since the Catholic Church unflinchingly held fast to the binding character of the revelation made by the one and true personal God, she decidedly rejected any such movements for unity and peace up to the Second Vatican Council.² By the Church's acceptance of ecumen-

¹ Cf. my article in *Theologisches* 6 (1987) 29-40.

² The first draft of the Constitution on the Church of Christ from Vatican I, which on account of the discontinuance of the Council never came to a vote, took a position in the seventh chapter on the question of the relationship of the Church to other religions. The draft was an accurate rendering of the position of the Church at the time: "Furthermore, it is a dogma of the faith that no one can be saved outside the Church. Nevertheless, those who are invincibly ignorant of Christ and his Church are not to be judged worthy of eternal punishment because of this ignorance. For they are innocent in the eyes of the Lord of any fault in this matter. God wishes all

ism and interreligious dialogue, however, that movement, without modifying its position, found admission into the Catholic Church and achieved ultimately, under John Paul II in Assisi, its temporary peak.³ Fundamentally, the movement for unity and peace among all religions did not change, but the Church's position towards it did.

Only a few decades before Vatican II, Pope Pius XI expounded sound arguments, grounded in traditional teach-

men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth; and if one does what he can, God does not withhold the grace for him to obtain justification and eternal life. But no one obtains eternal life if he dies separated from the unity of faith or from communion with the Church through his own fault. If anyone is not in this ark while the flood rages, he will perish."

From this dogmatic standpoint follows the outlook on other religions. The draft goes on: "Therefore, we reject and detest that irreverent and irrational doctrine of religious indifferentism by which the children of this world, failing to distinguish between truth and error, say that the gate of eternal life is open to anyone, no matter what his religion. Or else they say that, with regard to religious truth, only opinion in varying degrees of probability is possible and certainty cannot be had. Likewise, We condemn the ungodliness of those who shut the door to the kingdom of heaven to their fellow men with the false pretense that to desert the religion in which one was born, or educated and brought up, even if that religion is false, is unbecoming; or that it is not at all necessary for salvation. They blame the Church for professing itself to be the only true religion and for condemning and proscribing all religions and sects separated from communion with it, as if justice could ever have anything in common with iniquity, or light associate with darkness, or Christ meet with Belial (*The Church Teaches* [Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books & Publishers, Inc., 1973], p.91). The position of the Church towards non-Christians was presented by the Popes above all in the so-called Mission Encyclicals of Leo XIII–John XXIII (cf. my article in *Theologisches* 5, 1987, 21-29); as for the ecumenical endeavors, cf. the Encyclical of Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* of June 29, 1896; Pius XI's *Mortalium Animos* of January 6, 1928, and the *Monitum* from the Holy Office of June 6, 1948, as well as the "Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement" of December 20, 1949 (cf. Johannes Boekmann, *Theologisches* 3, 1988, 128f.).

³ Cf. my article in *Theologisches* 7 (1987) 22-31.

ing, in support of the Catholic Church's position on the ecumenical and interreligious unification movement. He did this in his encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (January 6, 1928), *On the Fostering of True Religious Unity*. Since Pope Pius XI discusses our subject matter in this encyclical, it is fitting that we consider it in more detail. The position of Pius XI may be regarded as representative of that of the pre-conciliar popes regarding the unity and peace movement.⁴

Pius XI appreciated the world's longing for unity, which found its concrete expression in the modern "religious congresses." He describes the make-up of these "congresses" when he speaks of "a large number of listeners...present, at which all without distinction are invited to join in the discussion, both infidels of every kind, and Christians, even those who have unhappily fallen away from Christ or who with obstinacy and pertinacity deny His divine nature and mission."

Now the same can be said of those representatives of the "world religions" and "world organizations" invited to Assisi. Pius XI, however, judged that "such efforts can meet with no kind of approval amongst Catholics."⁵

Pius XI also spoke of the ideas and motives which give rise to the organization of "religious congresses": Since there are very seldom people without any sort of religious outlook, one believes, "a hope that all nations, although they differ among themselves in certain religious matters, will without much difficulty come to agree as brethren in professing certain doctrines, which form as it were a common basis of the spiritual life." The participants in such congresses base their views and their actions on the errone-

⁴ Cf. note 2 above.

⁵ English translation: *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939*, trans. and ed. Claudia Carlen, IHM (McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p.313.

ous opinion that "all religions are more or less good and praiseworthy, since they all in different ways manifest and signify that sense which is inborn in us all, and by which we are led to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule."

Such thoughts were likewise submitted as the justification for the prayer meeting at Assisi. Pius XI said regarding this: "Not only are those who hold this opinion in error and deceived, but also in distorting the idea of true religion they reject it, and little by little, turn aside to naturalism and atheism, as it is called; *from which it clearly follows that one who supports those who hold these theories and attempt to realize them, is altogether abandoning the divinely revealed religion.*"⁶

In the above text, Pius XI has "religious congresses" in mind, hence "dialogues," not interfaith services. The inter-religious liturgical practice of the Church since the Council, which has far surpassed "congresses," and, moreover, the fact that a pope himself has organized such prayer services, would have been inconceivable to Pius XI. It is indisputable that the position of the Church since the Council towards non-Christian religions constitutes a radical break with Tradition.

Pius XI saw, as does John Paul II, the interreligious yearning for unity in close connection with the ecumenical movement. The ideas which were supposed to promote, then as now, the unity of Christians are summarized by Pius XI in the following:

Is it not right, it is often repeated, indeed, even consonant with duty, that all who invoke the name of Christ should abstain from mutual reproaches and at long last be united in mutual charity? Who would dare to say that he loved Christ, unless he worked with all his might to carry

⁶ *Ibid.* My emphasis.

out the desires of Him, who asked His Father that His disciples might be "one." And did not the same Christ will that His disciples should be marked out and distinguished from others by this characteristic, namely that they loved one another? All Christians, they add, should be as "one": for then they would be much more powerful in driving out the pest of irreligion, which like a serpent daily creeps further and becomes more widely spread, and prepares to rob the Gospel of its strength. These things and others that class of men who are known as pan-Christians continually repeat and amplify; and these men, so far from being quite few and scattered, have increased to the dimensions of an entire class, and have grouped themselves into widely spread societies, most of which are directed by non-Catholics, although they are imbued with varying doctrines concerning the things of faith. This undertaking is so actively promoted as in many places to win for itself the adhesion of a number of citizens, and it even takes possession of the minds of very many Catholics and allures them with the hope of bringing about such a union as would be agreeable to the desires of Holy Mother Church, who has indeed nothing more at heart than to recall her erring sons and to lead them back to her bosom. But in reality beneath these enticing words and blandishments lies hidden a most grave error, *by which the foundations of the Catholic faith are completely destroyed.*⁷

Then, too, Pius XI concerned himself with the criticism of the Catholic Church and the papacy by the "pan-Christians"; he thereby called attention to the co-operation of individuals who give to the pope primacy of honor, and with the consent of the faithful concede a certain jurisdiction. It is of great import when he says, "Others, again, even go so far as to desire the Pontiff himself to preside over their mixed assemblies."⁸

In summary, Pius XI takes the following position: "This

⁷ *Ibid.* My emphasis.

⁸ *Ibid.*

being so, it is clear that the Apostolic See can by no means take part in these assemblies, nor is it in any way lawful for Catholics to give such enterprises their encouragement or support. If they did so, they would be giving countenance to a false Christianity quite alien to the one Church of Christ."⁹ Ecumenical services are, naturally, more theologically significant than discussions at ecumenical gatherings. Ecumenical services fell under Church law (CIC 1917) in the section "Communicatio in Sacris" and came under ecclesiastical penalties.¹⁰

Klaus Moersdorf, in his book *Kirchenrecht* (1961), presents the position taken by the Church until immediately before the Second Vatican Council in the following: "As a community of believers at worship presupposes a unity of belief, so naturally common worship with followers of one or more Christian denominations is forbidden."¹¹

The ecumenical practice of the Church since the Council and, moreover, the fact that the Pope himself organizes such ecumenical services, where Protestant bishops in public, such as Bishop Kruse in Augsburg, for example, can publicly expound, uncontested, anti-Catholic positions on ecclesiology, stands in sharp contrast to the pre-conciliar position and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Joint prayer services with members of non-Christian religions, Protestants, and Orthodox would have been un-

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ 1917 Code of Canon Law, c. 2314-2316. In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1365, it is said: *Reus vetitae communicationis in sacris iusta poena puniatur* (A person guilty of prohibited participation in sacred rites is to be punished with a just penalty). When the pope himself sets an example by presiding over common interreligious service, there can indeed be no talk of a "forbidden" common religious service on the part of a priest or a bishop. (*The Code of Canon Law*, eds. James Coriden, Thomas Green, Donald Heintschel [New York: Paulist Press, 1985], p.921).

¹¹ Vol. II, p.351.

imaginable for Pius XI. He sees the relation and the position of the Church towards non-Christians and non-Catholics as clearly defined by the Catholic Faith.

The doctrinal position which Pius XI takes in *Mortalium Animos*, may be outlined as follows: Since there is only one true religion, namely the revealed one, there is hence for non-Christians only one way to Truth and Life: the way of conversion to the religion and Church of Jesus Christ. Since there is only one true Church established by Jesus Christ, there is hence only one way for non-Catholics: the return to the Catholic Church. The unadulterated Catholic Faith, without qualifications or deletions, is the bond of unity; love alone cannot bring separated Christians together.¹² The break with the position and teaching of the Church, as explained in *Mortalium Animos*, could hardly be more brazenly demonstrated than at the prayer meeting of all religions at Assisi.

The believing Catholic, who has experienced an awakening of the senses in his respect for the office of Peter through this break, cannot be satisfied with the explanation of the "Assisi Event" as simply the product of an historico-religious development. For the Catholic, the fact that the Vatican itself, with the Pope at the center, strove for and prepared the interreligious prayer service at Assisi, is a significant Church event which shakes his belief in the One True Church. Pope stands against Pope, the pre-conciliar Church against the post-conciliar Church. Both Popes, Pius XI and John Paul II, are for him the highest teachers of the Church and appointed by Christ as guardians and guarantors of the Faith. For the Catholic who sees his faith as based on Holy Scripture and Tradition, the "Assisi Event" is an incident without precedent in either Scripture or in the entire Tradition of the Church, and, therefore,

¹² As in note 5.

finds no support therein. Assisi touches the substance of Biblical Revelation and the Catholic Faith.¹³

These problems for the Faith raised at Assisi cannot be lightly dismissed with the charge of "backwardness" or "conservative rigidity." Nor can they be simply discarded as the official Church uninterruptedly forges ahead on the path of interreligious dialogue and worship. Nor can they be dismissed by referring to "living" or "dynamic" concepts of Tradition. Neither can the believing Catholic be content with a vague reference to "Vatican II." Rather, he has the right and duty to ask the question: "What are the dogmatic grounds on which John Paul II claims to justify interreligious prayer gatherings such as Assisi?"

The three addresses of John Paul II on the World Day of Prayer annotate indeed the strongly symbolic closing ceremony of the event, but give no sufficient answer to the question. They are not dogmatic treatises, but take into account the day itself and reflect the consensus of all of those taking part.¹⁴ There thus remains in regards to Assisi the unanswered question: "What are the dogmatic grounds, derived from the same Deposit of Faith which the Pope is obliged to defend, on which the members of the 'World Religions' were invited to Assisi on the Pope's initiative, in order to achieve, as the Pope explained, true and lasting peace on the confident prayer of all religions, and therewith to usher in the 'beginning of a new age'?"¹⁵

The Catholic can only adequately comprehend a papally-organized ecumenical prayer meeting when he sees it through the eyes of the Pope; that is, when he considers it

¹³ Cf. my article in *Theologisches* 7 (1987) 22-31; 8 (1987) 45-54; 9 (1987) 24-31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Address of the Pope on October 27, 1986. *L'Osservatore Romano*, dated November 3, 1986, p.3 (references are to the English edition). Cf. my article in *Theologisches* 7 (1987) 22ff.

in the light of the Pope's theology. Next, he proceeds to the obvious assumption of the identity of the Faith of the Church with that of the Pope; in the same way, he does not question John Paul II's intentions. The personal initiative of John Paul II to organize the World Day of Prayer for different religions was no spontaneous decision, but rather the final result of an entire theological development. For an adequate appraisal of this development, one must retrace the path to Assisi with the Pope and hence the ascent of the "mystical mountain."¹⁶ We will therefore try to mark the doctrinal milestones along the Pope's journey to Assisi.

2. The Assisi Prayer Service for Peace: the Public Manifestation of the Intentions of Vatican II?

The theological heart of the "Assisi Event" comes from John Paul II: At the invitation of the Pope, the representatives of the "world religions," "out of deep loyalty to their respective religious traditions," or "in the diversity of religions," offer their "prayers" to the "Highest Power" or "God," whom they invoke for the "transcendent gift of peace." Yet despite the joint services of various beliefs, we are given to understand that there is no question of syncretism.¹⁷

The practical realization of the Prayer for Peace of the various religions took place in the following manner: One after the other, the Buddhists, Hindus, Jainas, Muslims, Shintoists, African tribalists, Parsees, Jews and Christians, "out of deep loyalty to their respective religious traditions," commended their way of salvation and offered their "peace prayers" before their divinity. The ways of salvation as taught by Siddhartha Gautama and the Shantiveda, the

¹⁶ Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, dated October 27, 1986, p.2.

¹⁷ Cf. note 13.

Shankara, Vardhamana Mahavira, Mohammed, Nanak Dev, the mythical Ancestors, Zarathustra, Moses and Jesus of Nazareth all stood in a line. One after the other and side by side, the following were presented before the eyes of the whole world as the "Highest Power" or a "God": Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, the divine Brahman, the Jina, Allah, the numinous Kami, Nam-Sat, the Great Thunder, Manitu, Ormazd, Yahweh, and the Triune God.¹⁸

For this interreligious service with the Pope in the center, the Catholic rightfully expects a satisfactory explanation from the Pope himself based on the magisterial teachings of the Church. The "Assisi Event" is no mere random occurrence, but it touches the very substance of divine revelation and worship as set down in Scripture, namely, the First Commandment. John Paul II himself supplies the key to his interpretation of the prayer meeting with the statement: "Look at Assisi in the light of the Council!"¹⁹ This invitation of the Pope indicates to us the starting point of his own ascent up the "mystical mountain." His journey to Assisi begins with Vatican II. The Council is thus more than a milestone along the way. For John Paul II, it is the theological basis.

John Paul II has himself emphatically set forth the relationship of Vatican II to Assisi. According to his words, the prayer meeting can be viewed as a "visible illustration, an exegesis of the events, a catechesis, intelligible to all, of what is presupposed and signified by the commitment to ecumenism and to the interreligious dialogue which was recommended and provided by the Second Vatican Council."²⁰ Consequently, the Council documents in their en-

¹⁸ Cf. my article in *Theologisches* 9 (1987) 24-31.

¹⁹ Papal Address in the General Audience of October 22, 1986.

²⁰ Christmas Address of the Pope to the Cardinals and members of the Roman Curia on December 22, 1986, *L'Osservatore Romano*, January 5, 1987, p.7.

tirety represent the crucial foundation for the interreligious Assisi prayer service and furnish the self-evident premises for the post-Conciliar development of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue from which, ultimately, the "Assisi Event" resulted.

Should the Council Fathers who are still alive today, who certainly never envisioned this event at the Council, really view the interreligious service at Assisi as "a public manifestation" of what they then promulgated? Is the connection between the "public manifestation" and the alleged intentions of Vatican II really so apparent? The polyphonic echo of the prayer meeting does not tell in favor of "a catechism intelligible for all," originating in the teaching of the Council. The reactions to the event were too widely divergent. Many were speechless and perplexed. A few saw in the prayer meeting of all religions the "public manifestation" of heresy, syncretism, apostasy, and the betrayal of the Christian Faith. Others praised Assisi as an expression of theological broadness, religious tolerance, recognition long overdue of all religions as legitimate means of salvation and diverse ways of God's revelation, as a universal proclamation of the basic unity and similarity of religions, as a conclusive departure from an arrogantly usurped Christian exclusive claim to the truth, and as a final laying to rest of an outdated Christian mission to convert all nations.²¹ Even the Vatican felt obliged to attempt various explanations and vindications.

The members of the other "churches and Christian communities" could hardly have had an interest in illustrating the teaching of the Council to viewers from all over the world. The same may be assumed for the participants from the non-Christian religions. These were concerned merely with the recognition of their numina and means of salva-

²¹ Cf. Peter Beyerhaus, *Diakrisis*, April 12, 1986, pp.92-100.

tion. They would hardly have viewed themselves as "anonymous Christians." But no one expected that of them. Neither conversion nor syncretism, but legitimate pluralism is the motto of the Pope, namely, that all religions should offer their prayers for peace "out of deep loyalty to their respective religious traditions."²²

The various confessions and religions came along many roads to Assisi in order to pray to many different gods. The "world of today," liberal and tolerant to the core, celebrated at Assisi the official laying of the cornerstone for general religious harmony through the Pope, the representative of ecumenism and the "world religions." The Pope's thesis that Assisi is the realization of the exhortations and decisions of the Second Vatican Council is of historical significance for the Church. With this thesis, the Pope himself makes the interreligious service of Assisi the test case for the credibility of the Council!

If the thesis is correct, then the Council stands or falls with Assisi. Then the Council Fathers must answer the question on what doctrinal grounds did they base their wishes and decrees, namely in favor of a common worship in the "diversity of religions," a decision condoned by the vast majority. In that case, the Council must produce evidence to support their claim that this interreligious service, which is unique in the history of the Church, is substantially confirmed by Revelation and Church doctrine.

Is Assisi thus the "public manifestation" of a radical break with Revelation and Church teaching, a break sanctioned by the Council? If so, one must then speak of a pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Church in the sense of two Churches which are incompatible, for the identity of the Catholic Faith is one and the same with the identity of the Catholic Church. If the Pope's thesis does not hold true,

²² Address of the Pope, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Nov. 9, 1987, p.9.

that is to say, if the Council documents furnish, in their totality and in their interpretation of Tradition, no sound basis for the interreligious prayer service at Assisi, then the Pope appeals in vain to the Council. Thus he relies on his own "understanding of the Council" and on a post-conciliar development which is unauthorized by the Council.

For John Paul II, these alternatives do not exist. He has no doctrinal objections to the Assisi prayer service or its consequences.²³ On the contrary, he is fully convinced that the Holy Spirit Himself has spoken through the Council to the Church of today on the questions of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.²⁴ Thus, to justify his journey to Assisi, he appeals to the "highest court." Consequently the Pope regards the Second Vatican Council as the theological basis for the World Day of Prayer of the various religions.

Of course, John Paul II's appeal to the "highest court" does not exclude his further appeal to Holy Scripture and the entire two-thousand-year Tradition of the Church in favor of the prayer meeting. He claims to solve this doctrinal incompatibility in the following manner: He stresses, on the one hand, the unbroken continuity of the Council and Assisi with Scripture and Tradition, yet without any firm basis in Holy Scripture or Church doctrine. On the other hand, he underscores the obviously singular novelty of the prayer meeting in the history of the Church.²⁵ He understands the novelty in no way as a break with Scripture and Tradition, but as a "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" and a "complete, universal self-under-

²³ Cf. the addresses and comments before and after Assisi. The official representative of the Church was Cardinal Arinze at the follow-up meeting on Mount Hiei (Kyoto, Japan) on August 3rd and 4th, 1987.

²⁴ Inaugural Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, (March 4, 1979), 7. *The Papal Teachings 1958-1981*, trans. and ed. Claudia Carlen, IHM (McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), p.252.

²⁵ Address of the Pope on December 12, 1986; cf. note 20.

standing of the Church," which was allotted to Christendom through the Council.²⁶

Herewith we have outlined the Pope's theological position regarding the interreligious prayer service of Assisi. We must examine this position in the doctrinal context of genuine Tradition, which may be paraphrased as follows: It is a time-honored, established teaching of the Church, expressly confirmed by Vatican II, that public revelation ended with Christ and the Apostles.²⁷ Catholic theology recognizes, however, a certain "accidental development of dogma," thus a deeper penetration into revealed truth on account of the depths of the Truth of the Faith and the perfectibility of human reason.²⁸ The decisive question is thus: How does John Paul II base the new "more perfect knowledge of the mystery of Christ" and a "complete, universal self-understanding of the Church" on Divine Revelation and the Tradition of the Church? Thus far so much is certain: the Pope himself has no doctrinal objections against interfaith prayer services. On the contrary, he considers Assisi a gift of grace from the Holy Spirit, which, before the beginning of the third millennium, will be bestowed upon Christianity and all mankind through the Council. One could say that John Paul II embodies this interpretation of the Council; which is, as it were, the soul of his pontificate.²⁹

On the question of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, it is the positively new impulses of the Council which find a unique expression in the theology, spirituality, and administration of Archbishop Karol Wojtyła and future Pope. In this sense, John Paul II is a modern, progres-

²⁶ *Redemptor Hominis*, op.cit., p.252.

²⁷ Denzinger-Bannwart, *Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum*, 4.

²⁸ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1954), p.7f.

²⁹ Cf. address of the Pope on December 22, 1986.

sive theologian who represents the *aggiornamento* of the Council in person: he is a man of Vatican II.

3. The Program for Conciliar Renewal of the Church from the Perspective of Council Father Karol Wojtyła

As a man of Vatican II, John Paul II sees in the Council the theological groundwork for the dynamic process of conciliar renewal within the Church, from which the "Assisi Event" ultimately resulted. Karol Wojtyła was not only a prominent Council Father, for whom the Council represented the beginning of a steady renewal of the Church; but he was also a Professor and Bishop who oriented his educational work and led his diocese according to the spirit of the Council. Few of the Council Fathers could have reflected so intensively as he on the realization of the Council in theology and in the Church. In a treatise appearing shortly after the Council entitled *The Second Vatican Council and the Work of Theologians*, from his practical experience and expert competence the Council Father and Professor Karol Wojtyła outlines the program for a post-conciliar theology. Here we come across a procedure which was already a guiding principle in the theology of the author. He writes: "In the course of theological study of the Council documents, one must bear in mind the general picture and thereby refer constantly to certain ideas or even guiding principles, such as *accommodata renovatio*, ecumenism, or dialogue."³⁰

This procedure signals the danger that the manifold statements found in the extensive Council documents "as a whole" become subordinate to those particular "guiding principles," so that the post-conciliar "work of theologians" is reduced to and concentrated on these "certain ideas." In

³⁰ Karol Wojtyła-Johannes Paul II, *Von der Koenigsuerde des Menschen* (Stuttgart: 1980), p.153.

this way, Vatican II becomes "as a whole" a Council of *accommodata renovatio*, ecumenism, and dialogue. The most fundamental of the guiding ideas mentioned above is the *accommodata renovatio*. It embraces ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue as well as the post-conciliar "work of theologians" and bishops.

What exactly does *accommodata renovatio* mean? Archbishop Wojtyla tells us himself in the chapter "Introduction to Vatican II: Attempt at a Classification" (1968) as follows:

It means a renewal, which in the terminology of the Council is always used with the adjective *accommodata: renovatio accommodata*. This adjective stands for "adapted to." The program of renewal must be adapted to the state of consciousness of the Church, that stage which the Church has reached through the Council. That would be the adaptation *ad intra*. The notion of adaptation (accommodation) includes, however, both aspects of conciliar thought. The adaptation *ad intra* is also brought about by way of the adaptation *ad extra* and is dependent upon it. These two aspects, as already emphasized, do not separate the field of conciliar thought and practical experience, whose most important object is the Church, but they unite, they integrate. The adaptation *ad intra* as the "coming unto one's own essence," succeeds in the Church to the degree in which the adaptation *ad extra* is accomplished.³¹

The distinction of Church activity *ad intra* and *ad extra* first appeared in the radio address of John XXIII to the world on September 11, 1962. It reduces the idea of *aggiornamento* to a simple formula. Cardinal Wojtyla takes up the distinction and portrays with its help the conciliar principles of Church renewal:

Accommodata renovatio is the entire program of conciliar

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.166.

renewal of the Church. By that are meant four things: (1) The word "program" already implies a planned, organized transformation of the consciousness of the entire Church. (2) This "transformation according to plan" is a dynamic process, which has its roots in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and marks the entire post-conciliar era. The Council should thus be understood as the starting point of a well-planned process of renewal. (3) At the same time, there arises a special interest in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue as a "guiding principle." A further guiding principle would be to preach the opening of the Church to the problems of the "world of today" in the sense of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. (4) The systematic transformation of the consciousness of the entire Church is a process of adaptation under the aspects of *ad intra* and *ad extra* which nevertheless remains a single integral process and as such should help the Church come into her own essence.

Point four of the Cardinal's explanation appears somewhat abstract. What is the exact import of the statement? The basis of the entire renewal process *ad intra* and *ad extra* is that "stage of consciousness which the Church has reached through the Council." This "stage of consciousness" is represented by the "mind of the Council." It gazes simultaneously in two directions: *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

The aspect *ad intra* concerns the relation of the conciliar to the pre-conciliar Church. *Accommodata renovatio* under this aspect means that the pre-conciliar (backward) Church arrives at the "stage of consciousness" of the conciliar Church. Thus the "mind of the Council" becomes, as it were, the transformer which accomplishes transition from the pre-conciliar to the conciliar "consciousness of the Church." "Such, then, is the adaptation *ad intra*."

The aspect *ad extra* means an altered relationship between the conciliar Church and the "world of today," naturally in the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*

(ecumenism), *Dignitatis Humanae* (religious liberty), and *Nostra Aetate* (religions). *Accommodata renovatio* implies under these aspects the renewal of the Church and her "consciousness" through "adaptation" to the "world of today." The basis of this dynamic process of adaptation is in turn that "stage of consciousness which the Church has reached through the Council." The "mind of the Council" is the motor or transformer. The "opening to the world" already belongs to the "stage of consciousness" of the conciliar Church. The *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae* through "adaptation," however, goes much farther. It brings about the opening of the Church to the world through a dynamic process of transformation and adaptation. Such, then, is the adaptation *ad extra*.

The dynamic process of adaptation of the consciousness of the entire Church *ad intra* and *ad extra* is a unified process, because both aspects originate in the "stage of consciousness" of the conciliar Church and because the "mind of the Council" unites and encompasses both aspects.

The entire program of *accommodata renovatio ad intra* and *ad extra* can be boiled down to the simple formula: Adaptation of the pre-conciliar Church to the conciliar Church and the conciliar Church to the "modern world." Or, since Cardinal Wojtyla understands *accommodata renovatio* as an ecclesial "expansion of consciousness": Adaptation of the pre-conciliar to the conciliar consciousness of the Church and of the conciliar consciousness to that of the "modern world." The striking emphasis of "consciousness" in the "mind of the Council" is significant for the influence of existentialism on the thought and theology of Karol Wojtyla.

The visionary paraphrase of the expected result of *accommodata renovatio* is of great interest. Broadly expressed: The success of the pre-conciliar Church's adaptation to the post-conciliar Church, which thus comes unto her own essence,

is in direct proportion to the success of the Church's adaptation to the "modern world" (primarily, of course, through her adherence to the "guiding principles of ecumenism" and interreligious "dialogue" on the basis of religious liberty). Is that really the way to attain the essence of the Church of Christ? Can this statement of purpose be reconciled with the thesis of the identity of the conciliar Church with the Catholic Church before the Council?

The program of *accommodata renovatio* encompasses all spheres of Church life, especially ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, which are explicitly stressed as guiding principles. The *accommodata renovatio* is especially important for our subject, namely, the dialogue of the Church with non-Christian religions, which culminated in the "Assisi Event." It supplies, therefore, the highlights for our discussion. We have to examine which "stage of consciousness" the Council has attained in the eyes of the Pope, regarding the question of interreligious dialogue; and how the *accommodata renovatio ad intra* and *ad extra* works out in practice. We are not so much concerned with the clarification of such vague concepts as the "mind of the Council" or the "stage of consciousness of the Church" as we are with the doctrinal basis of such notions in the theology of Karol Wojtyła as Archbishop and Pope.

CHAPTER II

VATICAN II: BASIS OR INSTRUMENT OF THE “*ACCOMMODATA RENOVATIO*”?

1. The Second Vatican Council in Light of Assisi

It is the profound conviction of John Paul II that the Holy Spirit speaks to the Church today through the Council and that the Church has paved the way to Assisi by means of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.¹ The Pope's challenge to the people of God runs: “Look at Assisi in the light of the Council!”² If the Holy Spirit has led the Church through the Council to Assisi, then the “Spirit of the Council” is identical with the “Spirit of Assisi,” then the problem of interreligious prayer services has been decided in the “highest court” and the theological case is closed, then the Church must follow the Pope, even to venture with the Prayer for Peace of All Religions, the “Beginning of a New Age.”³

But are the premises correct? It is quite evident and therefore needs no explanation that a singular event in the history of the Church such as the prayer service at Assisi neither has nor can have any solid doctrinal foundation in Holy Scripture or Tradition. A joint interreligious prayer service of the Pope with representatives of the “world religions” goes far beyond what one could have imagined in the

1 Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 6; 7; 11 and p.16ff. above.

2 Address on October 22, 1986, *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 27, 1986, p.2.

3 *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1986, p.2.

scope of Biblical revelation and of Church doctrine up to the last Council. Up to this date, the official declarations of the Church had strictly condemned interfaith worship. A papal encyclical such as *Mortalium Animos* (1928) of Pius XI, or the former canon law, are diametrically opposed to the "Assisi Event."⁴ The sole theological basis of the Prayer Meeting of Religions is then Vatican II, which represents undeniably a "turning point in the history of the Church."⁵

Further, it stands to reason that a mere appeal to the last Council is no adequate vindication of religious events which most blatantly contradict Holy Scripture and Church Tradition as a whole. Such a singular incident requires for its justification an equally singular theological foundation: It is contained in the thesis of the Pope, namely, that the Holy Spirit Himself led the Church through the Council to Assisi.⁶ The appeal to this "highest court" is manifestly warranted in the light of historical and dogmatic circumstances. The appeal to the Second Vatican Council as the voice of the Holy Spirit in no way dispenses from the need for theological explanation. Though one might accept the official allegation that the documents approved by the Council are in full conformity with Scripture and Tradition, the Council documents could not possibly supply the doctrinal basis for an incident such as Assisi, which once again is in most blatant contradiction with the whole of Biblical revelation and Church Tradition. Hence follows a necessary dilemma: If the Council documents be the theological basis for Assisi, then they stand in contradiction to Scripture and Tradition. If, however, they be in

4 Cf. above, Chap. I, pp. 2ff.

5 Such is the assessment of the Council by Hubert Jedin, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Freiburg-Basel-Vienna: 1962-1979), VII, p.147.

6 Cf. note 1.

harmony with Scripture and Tradition, then they cannot be the dogmatic basis for Assisi. This dilemma is not solved even by the most urgent appeal to the voice of the Holy Spirit. In solving the dilemma, nothing less than the identity of the Catholic Faith and Church is at stake!

It is furthermore an established fact that dialogue with the non-Christian religions, never an interreligious prayer service, was discussed at the Council. The latter could thus never have occurred to the Council Fathers, much less have been raised or even voted upon. An incident like that of Assisi went far beyond what the majority of the Fathers could have imagined and, therefore, did not fall within their mental horizon. If we accept the Church's official version, which vigorously stresses the continuity and identity of the Catholic Faith with the Council documents, then we reach the conclusion: Neither Scripture, Tradition, nor the Council documents can be claimed as the doctrinal foundation for the Assisi worship. To that extent, the invitation of the Pope: "Look at Assisi in the light of the Council!" is of little help for the theological basis of the Prayer Meeting of Religions. On the other hand, this motto reversed: "Look at the Council in the Light of Assisi!" leads to the heart of the matter.

The reversed motto reveals the theological standpoint of the Pope more plainly. In his own words, Assisi can be seen "as a public manifestation of, a teaching of facts, an all understanding catechesis to be reflected upon, what the ecumenical effort and dialogue amongst religions recommended and initiated by the Second Vatican Council presupposes and means."⁷ Does the statement mean that the Second Vatican Council in the light of Assisi actually furnishes the theological foundation for the interreligious prayer meeting? Then the consequences would be inevita-

⁷ Address of December 22, 1986, *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 22-29, 1986, p.1.

ble: The Council with Assisi would most blatantly contradict Holy Scripture and Church Tradition as a whole. Then, too, the Council would mean a break with Tradition and represent the unauthorized beginning of a wide-scale transformation of the entire Church and the Catholic Faith. Then the Council, in the "Spirit of Assisi," would have become the foundation for and instrument of a "total transformation of the Church in her Faith!"

If one takes a closer look, the matter becomes somewhat more complicated. The Pope says, upon closer examination, that the Council is the prerequisite and impulse for post-conciliar dialogue among religions; which, in turn, brought about the "Assisi Event." No one can deny that. But the Pope's formulation makes the overall post-conciliar state of affairs abundantly clear: The full meaning and intention of the Council could be grasped only in retrospect, in the process of post-conciliar development. Therefore, the "Spirit of Assisi" completely unveiled the "Spirit of the Council" hitherto concealed.

In our proposed contrast: "Look at Assisi in the light of the Council; look at the Council in the light of Assisi!" each of the opposing views figured in the dispute over the "correct interpretation of the Council," which marked and dominated the entire post-conciliar era.

The eminent Church historian Hubert Jedin (+1980) who, in 1979, could not have even suspected the "Assisi Event," commented on this theological dispute as follows:

A compromise between the two opposite views is not yet in sight. It can only be reached if one maintains that the Council, the highest authority in Faith and morals, has established binding norms, which one may neither ignore nor overstep. There is no turning back from the Council; nor by the same token is the Council an initial thrust towards a wide-scale transformation of the Church in Faith and morals and in her structure. Only by observing the Council itself can we reach equilibrium between

Tradition and progress, and preserve the identity of the Church in a changing world.⁸

The position of Jedin surely reflects that of many orthodox theologians of this entire period. Jedin observes, however, that theologians of another persuasion would view and exploit the Council as "an initial thrust towards a wide-scale transformation of the Church in Faith and morals, and in her structure." The very "identity of the Church" is at stake. But Jedin is a theologian faithful to the Council, which he considers "the highest authority in Faith and morals," which also "has established binding norms." He considers the Council in continuity with Tradition and as the guarantee for "the identity of the Church in a changing world."

As Assisi shows, John Paul II has not chosen the way of compromise presented by Jedin, but that of dynamic development in post-conciliar interreligious dialogue. Thus, Assisi is clearly the "beginning of a new age"; the aim in view is the "convergence" of all religions.⁹

If we view the Council as the starting point of this development, we may then state the following: the Second Vatican Council has unquestionably carried out the opening of the Church to ecumenism, dialogue with other religions, and to the world. It follows from the basic character of a "Pastoral Council" that the pastoral renewal of the Church can only be fully realized after the Council. The period after the Council becomes thus necessary for an era of post-conciliar pastoral reforms. The Council had also desired to produce the doctrinal prerequisites and foundations for this euphorically celebrated departure into an unknown future. The Council, which designed the Church of

⁸ Hubert Jedin, as above, p.148.

⁹ Convergence is mentioned in *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1986, p.2. Bishop Mejia speaks of "hidden convergence."

the future, may be understood as an "initial thrust." The question, however, is: (1) whether in the light of Assisi the doctrinal point of departure created by the Council in view of the forthcoming adventure was really formulated in complete continuity with the Traditional Faith and with the necessary clarity; and (2) whether the post-conciliar development occurred in complete harmony with the Council itself, Tradition, and Holy Scripture. The transition from the conciliar recommendation for dialogue to the interreligious worship at Assisi is indeed significant. Just how this transition is warranted by the Council documents themselves, let alone finds its authorization or basis in the sources of Biblical revelation and Church Tradition is not readily obvious for everyone.

2. The Council Documents: A Mix of Traditional Faith and Modern Theology

Even those, too, who are convinced of the dogmatic integrity and continuity of the Council documents would have to notice that certain expressions and formulations can be found in various texts which are capable of being interpreted and applied in the sense of interreligious dialogue as it was practiced after the Council, and which texts were repeatedly quoted, until finally their hidden intentions became clear for all to see at an event like that of Assisi. For example: The guiding principle of the declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1,1) regarding the role of the Church: "In her task of fostering unity and love among men, and even among nations, she gives primary consideration in this document to what human beings have in common and to what promotes fellowship among them." This concerns the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions!

It sounds like a prelude to Assisi.¹⁰ As a second example from *Gaudium et Spes* (78):

Peace on earth, which flows from love of one's neighbor, symbolizes and derives from the peace of Christ Who proceeds from God the Father. Christ, the Word made flesh, the Prince of Peace, reconciled all men to God by the Cross, and, restoring the unity of all in one people and one body, He abolished hatred in His own flesh, having been lifted up through His resurrection, He poured forth the Spirit of love into the hearts of men. Therefore, all Christians are earnestly to speak the truth in love (cf. Eph. 4:15) and join with all peace-loving men in pleading for peace and trying to bring it about. (Flannery, *Documents of Vatican II*, p.987).

Does "the unity of all in one people and one body" mean the unity of the Church and humanity? Have "peace-loving men" not united in Assisi "in pleading for peace and trying to bring it about?" There is no question that such "loaded" phrases in the Council documents, with no support in Scripture or Tradition, have determined the post-conciliar development. On the other hand, there is the assertion that the Council documents—as a whole and interpreted according to Holy Scripture and Tradition—stand in unbroken continuity with the Tradition of the Church and must, therefore, be considered the guiding principle for the post-conciliar renewal. This is quite unrealistic. The post-conciliar development could only come about thanks to such "loaded phrases" which were systematically built into the Council documents. In point of fact, the Council documents themselves are a mixture of Traditional Faith and progressive, new-sounding "loaded phrases" presented with a modern theological gist. The post-conciliar development

¹⁰ Cf. the analysis of the principle in my article, *Theologisches* 10 (1986) 7301 ff.

of the Church can be grasped only on the basis of this insight.

Were we, for the sake of statistics, to conduct an experiment and determine the import of the Council documents in the light of Assisi, we would ask: How many texts could be adduced for or against Assisi? The number of texts directly contradicting or excluding Assisi would far outweigh those in favor. Yet, the few texts in favor of Assisi have marked the Church's path and specifically through a selective interpretation of the Council documents, combined with a resolute practice of interreligious dialogue.

The dangers of selective interpretation of Council texts are manifest. Anyone, according to his own "understanding of the Council," can single out a few notions from the whole of the Council documents, which in turn are proclaimed as an expression of the "Spirit of the Council" and made the starting point of a far-reaching *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*, thereby creating the possibility to employ Vatican II as the instrument of the "total transformation of the Church."

If the last Council is to be understood merely as an initial thrust, then modern theology becomes a decisive factor for the post-conciliar development of the Church. This becomes clearly evident in the case of interreligious dialogue: Shortly before the Council, in theology a new way of looking at non-Christian religions made a major breakthrough, and this new outlook was at that time in contradiction to the official teaching of the Church.¹¹ With regard to this changing constellation, Joseph Ratzinger remarked critically in 1966, thus immediately after the Council:

¹¹ In Catholic theology, the lecture of Karl Rahner before *Abend-laudische Akademie* on April 28, 1961, represents the turning point.

In the meantime, a teaching had gained more and more acceptance, although it was previously regarded only as a marginal thesis, namely, that God wills and is able to save outside the Church, though, in the end, not without her. Thereby, an optimistic understanding of the world religions was recently brought forth, the consideration of which once again makes clear that not all of the favorite thoughts of modern theology are at the same time Biblically sound. For if anything may be called foreign, yes, even opposed to Sacred Scripture, then it is the current optimism with regard to the world religions which, in fact, conceives these religions as means of salvation, a view which can hardly be reconciled with their standing in Biblical perspective.¹²

One may indeed say: the Council itself has set up the provision, and modern theology has paved the way for the Church to Assisi by its appeal to the "Spirit of the Council."

Faced with the evident contradiction between Revelation and Tradition on the one side, and the position of the Second Vatican Council in the light of Assisi on the other, everything rests on the question: How did the last Council, in the context of modern theology, lead up to the revolutionary change publicly manifested as Assisi?

3. The "Pastoral Council" and its "Pastoral Language"

The Council as a "new Pentecost," such was the eager expectation felt by certain Council Fathers and theologians at the beginning. The slogan "new Pentecost" was repeatedly mentioned after the Council, i.e., an appeal to the Spirit of the Council, in order to get the main reforms adopted.¹³ A categorical statement of this kind, however,

¹² *Die letzte Sitzungsperiode des Konzils* (Cologne, 1966), p.60.

¹³ For example, it is in the accompanying text to "Celebration of the Eucharist in Indigenous Form" (Bangalore, 1980), p.5, regarding the Second Vatican Council: "A New Pentecost in the Church. The

claiming for the Council such a theologically crucial role in the history of salvation, implies an overall evaluation of the Council's role in history, an evaluation hardly in keeping with the status of the Council documents themselves, containing as they do such varying statements whose theological weight is frequently by no means obvious.

Vatican II understood itself as a "pastoral Council" and wished to be thus understood. As John XXIII personally admitted, the convocation was "inspired from on high."¹⁴ The idea of a "pastoral Council" came from the Pope himself. It was a novelty in the history of the Church, and was, however, readily approved by the majority of the Fathers. It was welcomed by many in order that, under "pastoral" pretenses, and with dogmatic restrictions out of the way, a practical evolution according to their designs might take its course. What precisely was meant by a "pastoral Council" can hardly be determined according to Karl Rahner, because at the Council, "there was no room for a theologically more involved consideration of the essence of a pastoral Council as such."¹⁵ But the Pope indeed prevailed in bringing the Council Fathers around to the characteristics of his idea which so faithfully reflected his person and his brief pontificate.

A remark of Patriarch Roncalli before the conclave eloquently summarizes his future program as Pope: "The Church is young; in the course of her history, she is always able to adapt."¹⁶ As a historian, he was well aware of the historical adaptability of the Church; as a theologian, he

Second Vatican Council under the guidance of the Spirit ushers in a unique period of renewal in the Church."

14 Opening address to the Council, October 11, 1962. The talk of a "new Pentecost" seems to have its datum point here.

15 *Allgemeine Einguehrung* to the *Kleines Konzilskompendium*, Karl Rahner, Herbert Vorgrimler (Freiburg-Basel-Vienna: 1966), p.27.

16 Cf. Hubert Jedin, as above, p.119f.

recognized her immutability in the Faith. His idea of a pastoral Council may be outlined as follows: The adaptability of the Church *ad intra* means inner renewal; *ad extra* means due consideration of the situation and demands of the day. Both, however, on the basis of the unchanging Traditional Faith, true to the sacred principles on which she (the Church) is founded, and to the immutable teaching which the Divine Founder had entrusted to her.¹⁷ This is precisely the meaning of the well-known slogan *aggiornamento*. The reason for it was to bring the people closer to "the sacred patrimony of Tradition more efficaciously, considering the new living conditions and social structures."¹⁸ For this purpose, John XXIII convoked the Council (Jedin). A special desire of the Pope was an ecumenical agreement. Yet, even here the truth of the Faith was the norm. What counted was "to come closer to the unity in truth willed by Christ."¹⁹

By this pastoral objective, the Pope had assigned to the Council a highly practical mission, but without clearly defined boundaries. The difficulties first crystallized in the course of the debates.²⁰ The Pope conceived a living, up-to-date, and relevant Church on the basis of "immutable teaching"; he never dreamed of founding "another Church."

The notion of a pastoral Council gave rise to the idea that the Church's external structures could be readily adapted to the modern world, while leaving her "immutable teaching" intact. But it is a well-known fact that major changes in practice are the end result of novel thinking;

¹⁷ John XXIII in the first session of the *Commissio antepreparatoria* on May 17th, 1959. Cf. for the complete text: Hubert Jedin, as above, pp.103ff.

¹⁸ John XXIII's Opening Address to the Council, October 11, 1962.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, cf. Hubert Jedin, as above, p.110.

²⁰ Cf. Hubert Jedin, as above, p.119f.

and on the other hand, that the introduction of a novel practice modifies thinking. That goes, *mutatis mutandis*, especially for the Church and her conciliar reforms. Every major novelty in the life of the Church is the end result of a new theological outlook; and, likewise, the introduction of a novel practice must gradually alter the Traditional Faith.

Thus, the belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist found its adequate expression in the Church's rite of worship. If one does away with this form of expression, the faith in the Real Presence likewise erodes by degrees.²¹ Accordingly, the pre-conciliar Church's outlook towards the Protestant denominations and non-Christian religions flowed from the traditional Christology and ecclesiology.²² The post-conciliar outlook, which was demonstrated in Assisi for all to see, is the expression of a new theology. This novel practice likewise stirs up considerable repercussions for the faith of the entire people of God.

Given the close connection between external structures and the "immutable essence" of the Church, the self-acclaimed "pastoral Council" inevitably had to deal with the dogmatic foundation of *aggiornamento*. The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* covered the dogmatic aspect, while the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* covered the pastoral aspect. The idea of a "pastoral Council" was unrealistic. The "pastoral Council" became automatically a dogmatic one. Considering the delicate state of disarray among theologians at the time, the assumption that Catholic teaching would go unchallenged in the course of a purely pastoral Council was a pious illusion.

The wish of John XXIII, which was also fulfilled, namely a Council which would condemn no errors and define no dogmas should be viewed in this light.²³ This is the first

²¹ See the impressive, brief commentary of Walter Hoeres in *Theologisches* 6 (1988) 346f.

²² Cf. above, pp.9-15.

time in the history of the Church that an Ecumenical Council was known to have waived the complete deposit of its magisterial authority. We should keep that in mind in connection with the above stated position of Jedin. The Pope's wish arose from his conception of a "pastoral Council," but this conception was not feasible under the circumstances, as the point of controversy was still fundamentally dogmatic. Bishops and theologians gladly and abundantly made use of the purported academic freedom of "theological opinions" in "pastoral" matters.

To the idea of a "pastoral Council" and the abstaining from dogmatic decisions was joined a third novelty in the history of the Church: the Fathers' choice of a "pastoral language of the Council." A "pastoral language of the Council" appears fitting for a "pastoral Council," indeed, to be the adequate expression of a pastoral objective. It seems appropriate in order to reach the goals of *aggiornamento* more easily. Since there was no room in Vatican II for a "theologically more involved consideration" of the essence of a "pastoral Council," we may then conclude the following. By the term "pastoral language of the Council," was meant primarily nothing less than a universally understandable and relevant language.²⁴ A Council which wanted to place the true face of the Church before the eyes of the whole world (*Lumen Gentium*, 1, 1) should also speak in a language which the whole world understands. The Church's novel interest in the modern world also required a novel language which was predisposed towards the ideas and thinking of the modern world.

Many Council Fathers were well acquainted with the problem of a "pastoral language of the Council," as they in

²³ Cf. Hubert Jedin, *loc.cit.*, p.109.

²⁴ Cf. Karl Rahner, *loc.cit.*, pp.31-33. The subject of Latin as the language of the Council was more ample matter for discussion (see Card. Bacci, *L'Osservatore Romano* of July 3, 1960).

their pastoral function needed to bring rather abstract concepts down to earth in a language commonly understood. Everywhere one could hear the phrase, "To express old truths with new words!"; naturally, with words which are familiar to the people of the twentieth century.

It is a bold venture to summarize the role which the Council played in the unprecedented theological-dogmatic revolution inside the Church. We must limit ourselves to the pastoral overall conception of the Council: 1) The idea of a "pastoral Council," although finally the dogmatic foundation was at stake; 2) The abandonment of the full weight of magisterial authority, although resolute clarity in questions of Faith was imperative; 3) The "pastoral language of the Council," although the presentation of revealed truths demanded extreme conceptual precision. In this pastoral trilogy of the conception of the Council, which in the light of the Council's actual outcome seems pure fantasy, the "pastoral language" plays a "major role" in the formulation of the Council documents."

4. "Pastoral Language" and the Secular Problem of "Understanding"

To understand the problem of a "pastoral Council," one must examine the problem of a "pastoral language of the Council." John Paul II, as a man of the Council, speaks a "pastoral language of the Council," naturally in his own style and with a particular force of expression. Thus, to understand the documents of the Council and the Pope's commentary on them, one must first examine their common language.

The language dilemma awaited the Fathers unpretentiously at the entrance to the Council. Here they could display *ad limina* their status as relevant and up-to-date. They stood before the alternative: Should the Council speak in the traditional, technical language of theology—and that was naturally the classical language of scholasti-

cism—or in a new language which is more generally understandable? The Fathers promptly discarded the “academic, scholastic terminology,” notwithstanding its pre-eminent usage in magisterial documents for centuries, and preferred the “pastoral language of the Council.”

Of course, it is possible to express the time-honored Faith of the Church in a “pastoral language” and thus to bring it closer to “modern man.” By adopting such pastoral language for an Ecumenical Council, however, Vatican II itself would have to take—and pass—a test, a truly historical precedent. Whether Vatican II passed the test fully or not is an open question. An objective study of the Council documents will show that it succeeded remotely—and only remotely—in clothing the old truths unpretentiously in a new “dynamic, historically-based, Biblical language” and in producing valuable results of theological workmanship. The language experiment, however, could only succeed because the vast majority of Council Fathers stood on the firm ground of a well-defined traditional theology and hence were capable of keeping the “pastoral language” under control. For the same reason, the more accurate interpretation of the Council documents, as the majority of the Fathers intended, can be ascertained even today only on the basis of traditional doctrine and Church teaching.

One cannot deny, however, that the pastoral language is frequently used at the expense of dogmatic precision and clarity, that by a pastoral language the continuity with Tradition can be easily blurred and that, in the final analysis, one can only determine the exact meaning of the statements with the help of traditional notions. Further, one must admit that the incorporation of a theological notion in the “Catholic system” (John Henry Cardinal Newman), which was established by the painstaking efforts of theologians over the centuries and expounded through numerous magisterial decisions, becomes much more difficult. A theology and Church faithful to Tradition cannot do without

the stability and continuity of clearly expressed ideas, much less an Ecumenical Council. Due to its teaching authority, it provides in its documents a theological foundation for the entire Church. One might then ask whether the Council documents, written in a "pastoral language," which as such deviates from the "Catholic system" of Church teaching, and whose continuity with Tradition requires vindication by means of laborious and subtle distinctions, does not already sow the seeds of a break with Tradition.

Furthermore, one must agree that the scope of the accessibility and relevance of the pastoral language of the Council was confined to the Western hemisphere and that the intercultural aspect of the language problem was thus overlooked. The teaching of the Church and hence the Council documents must be understood in all languages and cultures. It is well-known that precisely the language and conceptual clarity of St. Thomas is particularly well understood in the Far East and India as opposed to the modern jargon.²⁵ It may be asked whether the abandonment of the traditional language of the Church and theology, which had a universal character, did not pave the way for a pluralism of cultural theologies.

Ultimately, we may raise the question: Why did an Ecumenical Council, which wanted to lay down the theological basis for a Church comprising then 700 million faithful, absolutely have to compose its extensive documents—which, moreover, for the most would only be studied by theologians—in a down-to-earth and relevant language, and thereby would leave the Church faced with the problem of whether to integrate the Council texts into their dogmatic tradition or to abandon it completely. The latter would be a new beginning on unsteady ground.

²⁵ The most impressive example for the capability of receiving and further developing occidental science and philosophy is Japan, which first opened itself to the West in 1868.

The "pastoral language" of the Council was regarded as merely a "pastoral" question. In reality, it involved a completely different problem in a completely different dimension, namely, the secular problem of "understanding" in the framework of the modern view of history and outlook on life which has occupied our Western mentality as a whole and which has repeatedly plagued Catholic theology since the nineteenth century; this modern view, which the Church rejected in the form of "modernism," urgently distresses today's theologians as a "hermeneutical problem." The clarification of this single, unsolved problem of the century would have warranted a Council. A "pastoral Council," however, would make light of such a problem.

Through the abandonment by the Council Fathers of the "scholastic language," the floodgates were practically, quasi-officially opened, virtually by tacit agreement, for a *New Theology* and that at a point in time when the "language problem" affected the whole of Catholic theology.

The leading theologians naturally saw that the language would affect the nature, indeed, the very substance of theology and the Faith. For scholastic terminology was inseparable from scholastic philosophy and theology, and thus intimately bound up with the dogmatic Tradition of the Church. The abandonment by the Council Fathers of the scholastic language entailed in reality the discarding of scholastic theology, and, hence, a divorce between the *philosophia perennis* and the Faith after centuries of being united. That was exactly the aim of the leading theologians of the Council, although they themselves must have realized that the *philosophia perennis* meant the entire tradition of Western-Christian philosophy. The Fathers' abandonment of the "scholastic language" was for them the *conditio sine qua non* for the establishment of a break with the former dogmatic theology, in order to introduce the New Theology after the dissolution and final surrender of the "old."

The men of the New Theology were, for example, convinced that along with the completely outdated "physics" of the Ancients, their "metaphysics" must be likewise outdated. Further, they maintained that modern theology wedded to ancient metaphysics is no longer based on reality and, moreover, has lost all relevance in face of the modern view of history and outlook on life.

Theology professors who as students had easily understood the creeds of the old Church and the traditional dogmatic theology found everything suddenly unintelligible.²⁶ The extremity of the break with Tradition is made

²⁶ A paradigm of this mentality is the lecture of Freiburg Professor Bernhard Welte at the Salzburg University seminar (July 23 - August 6, 1972) on "The Crisis of Dogmatic Statements on Christ." Welte began by saying that the definitive dogmatic statements on Jesus Christ, His divine and human nature, His substantial unity with the Father, as they were defined in the first four Councils of late antiquity and handed down for more than a thousand years with the same words as before, today have fallen into a serious crisis. Welte named two reasons: Through modern historical-critical Biblical science, exegesis, the fundamental discrepancy between Biblical and late ancient-hellenistic thinking is made clear. Add to this, that the modern mental framework can no longer grasp the main ideas of former times, such as essence and nature. These concepts have today lost their original sense. The very language of the ancient statements on Christ is no longer understood today. The concept of essence is in fact the overall main idea by which in the form of Jesus the relation of the Son to the Father is expressed as an abstract formula. We had to recognize, however, the relative character of such formulas, which depend on circumstances. They are products of Alexandrian philosophy of the second and third centuries after Christ and conform to a formerly prevailing direction of inquiry. The concept of "event" can be viewed as the leading concept of the Biblical understanding of Jesus, which likewise reflects the modern mental framework.... We are witnessing a historically decisive transformation which happened in late antiquity and seems to be happening again in our day. On the question of whether in such cases the link with Tradition be broken, Welte answered: "In the form of expression, yes; in the essentials of the Faith, no." (*Der katholische Gedanke*, Regensburg, 28th year of issue [vol. 28], 1972, p.136).

clear by the dictum of a highly reputable professor of dogmatic theology who from his chair counselled his students to burn their "obsolete" pre-conciliar manuals in good conscience. In this unprecedented "semantic revolution," and "historically decisive transformation," the entire traditional dogmatic theology was easily swept away. After "clearing the foundation," the structure of a new theology could be continued uninterrupted at the wayside of the "pastoral language of the Council."

For the promoters of the New Theology, the watchword *aggiornamento* meant the definitive opening of the Church to modern thought in order to construct a completely different theology, from which the birth of a novel, relevant Church was to follow.²⁷ Never before in the history of the Church has an Ecumenical Council taken a stand on a question which concerned the foundation of the entire dogmatic tradition of the Church as Vatican II has done.

Never before was a papal encyclical allowed, after a mere fifteen years, to be so rapidly and so completely disavowed by the very people whom it condemned as *Humani Generis* (1950), in which Pius XII defended the *philosophia perennis*, demanded adherence to the dogmatic language of the Church, and warned against the surrender of the Catholic Faith to the philosophical notions marked by the spirit of the times. With great clarity, Pius XII analyzed the intellectual situation before the Council and pointed out the dangers of a New Theology:

While they despise this philosophy, they extol others, whether ancient or modern, whether of the peoples of the Orient or of the Occident, so that they seem to insinuate that any philosophy or belief with certain additions, if need be, as corrections or supplements, can be reconciled with Catholic dogma. No Catholic can doubt that this is

²⁷ How such a new church "from below" from the "Christian-Marxist spirit" looks in the end, see L. Boff, *Eclesiogenese* (Petropolis, 1977).

quite false, especially since it involves those fictions which they call "immanence," or "idealism," or "materialism," whether historic or dialectic, or even "existentialism," whether professing atheism, or at least rejecting the value of metaphysical reasoning.²⁸

Exponents of the New Theology were made Cardinals. A public rehabilitation!

The outward appearance of the New Theology is multifaceted, but basically quite simple, so one can summarize the various forms under the same name. The rejection of traditional theology is common to all the forms. That means the dismissal of the "Catholic system" (John Henry Cardinal Newman), which is promptly replaced by the most varied new attempts of the individual theologians. Thereby arose the modern pluralism of "theologies" in the Catholic Church. The general guiding principle of the New Theology is the attractively simple idea: A New Theology in the domain of the scientific method and the modern view of history and outlook on life.

The New Theology means an entirely new beginning for the Catholic Church, a "historically decisive transformation" (B. Welte). That idea was, however, by no means new. It only picked up on what scholastic theology and the Magisterium in its struggle against modernism had successfully hindered, but which had for a long time already proved to be a character trait of Protestant theology: Revelation and Faith were adapted to the philosophical-intellectual movements of the times, that is, practically abandoned. One could not create the "modern view of history and outlook on life." It was already there. One only had to adopt it. It comprised broadly the very systems which Pius XII had rejected as untenable in *Humani Generis*: imma-

²⁸ Denzinger 2323, translation: Roy Deferrari, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis, 1957), p.644.

mentism, existentialism, idealism, and historical and dialectic materialism.

From the choice of that kind of system resulted, on a wider scale, the attack of the New Theology on the traditional theology of the Church decried as "dismembered," with its supposedly unrealistic "dualism." Its own position was thus an open or hidden monism in which the supernatural order became fused with the natural, resulting in a sublime unity no longer to be cut asunder.

Existential idealism denied objective metaphysics and incorporated each real object, including the objective truth of revelation, into the vast universe of its subjectivity and historical relevance.²⁹

In the wake of the "Frankfurt Neo-Marxist School," such a "political theology" was able to evolve in favor of the following subversive tenets: There is only one reality, namely, the historical. The "radical distinctions" in traditional theology of "transcendence and immanence, nature and grace, Church and world, salvation history and world history, the present life and the life to come, time and eternity, creation and redemption, profane and sacred, natural and supernatural revelation" are dismissed as "inadmissible dualism" and "hallucinations." The Faith of the Church dissolves into pure history.³⁰

The result of the new theological principle is the pluralism of countless "theologies," which, through "inculturated theologies" of every culture and religion, are constantly multiplying. The Encyclical *Humani Generis* is forgotten or ignored. Nothing demonstrates the complete abandon-

²⁹ Cf. Joseph Siri, *Gethsemani*, (Aschaffenburg, 1982). An outstanding overview of the theological currents in our day. Likewise, the in-depth analysis of Bernhard Lakebrink, *Die Wahrheit in Bedraengnis* (Stein am Rhein, 1986).

³⁰ Ludwig Ruttig, *Zur Theologie der Mission* (Munich-Mainz, 1972), pp.12, 185, 215.

ment of the "Catholic system" (John Henry Cardinal Newman) more clearly than the complicated pluralism in current theology. A significant product of this development is the series of publications of a Missionary Society entitled: *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. It sounds like a theological echo of Assisi when it says: "A new Christian theology of religions is taking shape, moving beyond the traditional models of exclusivism (that says Christianity is the only true religion) and inclusivism (Christianity is the "best" religion) and toward a new pluralistic view that recognizes the possibility of many religious paths, all of them valid. A widely divergent group of Christian theologians—Protestant and Catholic, female and male, East and West, First and Third World—explore genuinely new attitudes toward other religious believers and traditions."³¹

The Second Vatican Council should be viewed in the context of this development in theology and in the Church. In this context, the problem of a "pastoral Council" becomes apparent; likewise, the problem of abandoning defined articles of Faith for the sake of "pastoral language." In this context, we may restate the question critically: Did the Council really succeed in presenting intact and with unmistakable clarity the "immutable teaching of the Church" in "pastoral language," or could the New Theology have infiltrated the Council documents?

³¹ Orbis Books, Maryknoll, announced for February, 1988. It is obvious that on the basis of such a pluralistic theory of religions, a new attitude towards believers and traditions of other religions follows. A frontal attack on Christianity's exclusive claim to the truth is presented now in the book published by Koesel Verlag by Paul F. Knitter, *Ein Gott, Viele religionen* (Munich, 1988).

5. Assisi: The "Shibboleth"† for the "Correct" Understanding of the Council

The New Theology was certainly not capable of modifying the Council documents in their entirety according to their "modern standards." But when, for example, Joseph Ratzinger characterizes the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (in connection with the texts about religious liberty and the world religions) as a sort of "counter-Syllabus," that means that the New Theology has exercised considerable influence on the dogmatic elements of various Council documents.³² If the Pope of the Council himself, Paul VI, must observe to his horror that the "smoke of Satan has penetrated the Temple of God through some opening,"³³ then one may ask if this "opening" is not to be sought in certain characteristics of the Council itself.

Through the eye of the needle of "pastoral language" the "anti-spirit of the Council" could force its way into the documents unnoticed, at least by way of loopholes and later interpretations. Through the abandonment of the *philosophia perennis* and "scholastic terminology," the texts were open to many different interpretations. Through a "pastoral language of the Council," the entire foundation was "porous." Unintended, alien ideas can penetrate not only through a large opening, but also through smaller passages.

The promoters of the New Theology realized that in a "pastoral Council," only a New Theology could produce a "New Church"; it was only a question of development.

³² "The Worldwide Service of the Church," in the international Catholic journal *Communio* (vol. 4, 1975) pp.439-454.

³³ Address, June 29, 1972.

† *Translator's footnote.* A saying distinctive of a particular group. Cf. Judges 12:5f. Shibboleth (ear of corn) was the password of the Galaadites, by the pronunciation of which they could recognize the Ephraimites.

Therefore, they were satisfied with the "abandonment" of the language of Tradition. They needed only to build into the texts certain "loaded phrases" which would summarize the Council's message and get it across to modern man as the beginning of a "theological development" and "renewal of the Church."³⁴

The reasons for the turbulent post-conciliar developments in the Church and theology can also be sought in a certain cryptic, ambivalent character of the Council's thinking. From the obscure mingling of contrary endeavors and aims of the Council, namely of the traditional and the "new" theology, a tension which would remain unresolved, since the Council rejected anathemas and dogmatic definitions, a vehement theological controversy had to break out immediately, which left its mark on the entire post-conciliar era, and brought the Assisi worship to a head in the fermentation process of *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.

The case for the "Renewal of the Church" was supported by appealing to the "Spirit of the Council." The vehemence of this controversy is an indication of the depth of this unprecedented upheaval which touches not only "pastoral" matters, but also the very substance of the Faith of the Church:

Conservatives and progressives alike appeal in letter and spirit to the same Council. The conservatives affirm the continuity of the Council and its teaching with Tradition, while the progressives emphasize the Council's absolute novelties and confirm their break with Tradition.³⁵ The

³⁴ Karl Rahner, loc.cit., p.28: "The Council is thus the Council at the beginning of a new age and thus the beginning of a beginning which must be continued by the post-conciliar Church, and thus the Council is a challenge for today's Christian." The exchange of letters between Rahner and Vorgrimler, published in *Orientierung*, is informative.

³⁵ The analysis of the law professor Boekenfoerde and the theologian Prof. Utz is interesting: "The Council's *Decree on Religious Liberty* in

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith took part in the controversy and tried to clarify: In his view, nothing less than the identity of the Catholic Church was at stake! He rejected the distinction between a pre- and post-conciliar Church, although not a few contemporaries perceive the depth of the changes in that light. The Prefect defended the dogmatic integrity of the Council and its continuity with Tradition. With his "diagnosis of the Council," he felt obliged, however, to differentiate between the "true Council" and the "anti-spirit of the Council." The "true Council" is identical with the approved Council documents.³⁶ If this be true, the worldwide spread of the anti-spirit of the Council cannot be traced back to the Council documents themselves. But the "anti-spirit of the Council" has arguments, too. It can likewise produce Council texts in support of its "understanding of the Council."

One interpretation of the Council stands against the other. In former times, one carried out the "discernment of spirits" in light of the Councils. Today, we must carry out the "discernment of spirits of the Council"! Faced with the practical realization of conciliar renewal, not a few among the faithful find themselves for the first time in history in a crucial situation: feeling obliged to test the "spirits of an Ecumenical Council," if they are "of God" or not (1 Jn. 4:1 ff.). That test was conducted most recently in face of the interreligious prayer service at Assisi.

Never before in the history of the Church has a quarrel about what an Ecumenical Council really said and willed so upset the life of the Church as after Vatican II. The

the *Deutsche Tagespost* of April 18, 1987, p.21ff. Boekenfoerde establishes the break with Tradition; Utz tries to demonstrate the continuity.

³⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985) pp.27-44.

controversy over the correct “understanding of the Council” became the striking characteristic of the post-conciliar era. In this unprecedented controversy, Pope John Paul II makes not Holy Scripture, but rather Assisi, the shibboleth for the correct “understanding of the Council.”

CHAPTER III

A SIGN OF CONTRADICTION: A MEDITATION ON CHRIST

Important milestones on the theological journey of John Paul II to Assisi are the retreat conferences which Karol Wojtyla, in 1976, preached to Pope Paul VI and a few of his most intimate colleagues in the Vatican. They were published under the title of the original Italian work: *Segno di contraddizione, Meditazioni* (Milan, 1977). The English translation: *Sign of Contradiction* appeared in 1979 from the Seaburg Press,[†] thus after the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope. The recommendation for the book makes an accurate observation: "Here one gets to know [the new Pope] most intimately." Theology and spirituality are so mutually related that they make up a unified body.

The retreat conferences are no mere pious exhortations, but an extensive theological and spiritual meditation which opens with the very essence of religion, the encounter between God and man, and then strives to realize this encounter or, as the Cardinal puts it: "to get as close as possible to God and to be penetrated by his Spirit."

The professor and Archbishop of Krakow thus proved himself a man of Vatican II in those retreat conferences. The starting point and basis of his entire theology is Vatican II. The main sources for the *Reflection on Christ* are the Council documents. From these he constructs a doctrinal system on salvation and redemption, which constitutes especially the doctrinal foundation of his "Theology of Relig-

† Karol Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: The Seaburg Press, 1979), p.2.

ions." The mention of a "Theology of Religions" should nevertheless be taken with a grain of salt. Cardinal Wojtyła had constructed neither a systematic presentation of his theology nor a particular "Theology of Religions." Rather, he has expounded a theological position from the Council documents, which developed in the course of time with increasing clarity and was finally presented before the world at the World Day of Prayer of Religions.

1. The Journey of the Human Spirit to God

In the Introduction to the retreat, in imitation of St. Augustine, the Cardinal describes the "nature and meaning of the retreat": *Noverim me* (i.e., May I know myself) in connection with the *noverim te* (i.e., May I know Thee). The connection: God and man, the center of the Christian religion, appears at once as the encounter between God and humanity on a universal horizon. He says: "Humanity has a part to play by virtue of the principle of exchange, a wonderful exchange that is possible only between man and God, because an exchange of God for man did once take place: *Admirabile commercium*" (*Liturgy of the Hours*, Ant. 1.i).

From this view, the Cardinal opens the retreat with an interreligious meditation, with a form of *theologia naturalis religionum* by which he prefaces his *theologia revelata*.¹ A reflection on the God of all men, the "God of Infinite Majesty," precedes the reflection on the "God of the Covenant" and on Christ.

¹ The traditional terms of *theologia naturalis* and *theologia revelata* are only used in the sense of a short, analytical distinction in the matter. Cardinal Wojtyła himself did not use these terms.

1.1 A *Theologia Naturalis Religionum in Nuce* (i.e., Natural Theology of Religions in a Nutshell)

With a few strokes, Cardinal Wojtyła sketched an outline of the struggle of the human spirit with the problem of God in the course of history and situated his own philosophical standpoint in the present discussion, which is introduced with the heading: "Existence and the Person." Finally, in the section with the significant heading "The Language of Silence," he outlines the journey by which, in his view, "man goes beyond himself by reaching out towards God." We quote this important section entirely, which contains the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis religionum in nuce*. The annotations should only serve to give a better understanding of the text quoted:

The *itinerarium mentis in Deum* (journey of the human spirit to God) emerges from the depths of created things and from a man's inmost being. The modern mentality as it makes its way finds its support in human experience, and in affirmation of the transcendence of the human person. Man goes beyond himself, man must go beyond himself. The tragedy of atheistic humanism—so brilliantly analyzed by Fr. de Lubac (*Atheisme et sens de l'homme*, Paris, 1969) is that it strips man of his transcendental character, destroying his ultimate significance as a person. Man goes beyond himself by reaching out towards God, and thus progresses beyond the limits imposed on him by created things, by space and time, by his own contingency. The transcendence of the person is closely bound up with responsiveness to the one who himself is the touchstone for all our judgments concerning being, goodness, truth and beauty. It is bound up with responsiveness to the one who is nevertheless totally Other, because He is infinite.

The concept of infinity is not unknown to man. He makes use of it in his scientific work, in mathematics, for instance. So there certainly is room in him, in his intellectual understanding, for Him Who is infinite, the God of boundless majesty, the one to Whom Holy Scripture and

the Church bear witness saying: "Holy, holy, holy, God of the universe, heaven and earth are full of your glory." This God is professed in His silence by the Trappist or the Camaldolite. It is to him that the desert Bedouin turns at his hour for prayer. And perhaps the Buddhist, too, rapt in contemplation as he purifies his thought, preparing the way to Nirvana. God in His absolute transcendence, God who transcends absolutely the whole of creation, all that is visible and comprehensible.

This *theologia naturalis religionum in nuce* makes three fundamental assertions about the journey of the human spirit to God: Firstly, man's journey to God emerges "from a man's inmost being." This point of departure finds support in modern existentialism. Secondly, in striving after God, man surpasses himself. Thereby, he surmounts all obstacles established for him by creatures, by space and time, and even by his own contingency. This transcendence of the human person is in turn related to the "Infinite," which is "the touchstone of all of our judgments about being, the good, the true, and the beautiful." It is hence a question of "inward transcendence"; of the way to the transcendental in the sense of existentialist idealism. Thirdly, the Infinite becomes rooted in the mind of man which is apt to receive the Infinite God. But that means that the unlimited inner space of the human mind is the appropriate place for the encounter of the human soul with the "God of infinite majesty."

These statements on the natural condition of the human spirit culminate in a *theologia naturalis religionum* in which they are applied to persons of different religions. There we find the spiritual basis of the Assisi Event: The "God of infinite majesty" is the God which the Trappist "in his silence" indeed professes as the triune God whom the Muslim invokes as Allah, and who for the Buddhist prepares the way of self-redemption towards Nirvana. The fundamental differences of these religions are no obstacle. These

differences are ignored because they obviously play no major role in the transcendental encounter between God and man. For the "God of infinite majesty" is a God who "in His absolute transcendence" also "transcends absolutely the whole of creation, all that is visible and comprehensible." These remarks of the Cardinal express clearly his positive assessment of non-Christian religions as ways to salvation.

On this account, we may restate such a central position more specifically. All historical religions are, of course, included in the realm of "everything visible and comprehensible": Judaism, Christianity, Islam or Buddhism, with their historically tangible and mutually exclusive representations of God and ways of salvation. The members of the various religions, in spite of their differences, turn, allegedly with success, to the "God of infinite majesty in His absolute transcendence" who in the end surpasses all differences. They may use different names for the transcendent Absolute and take different roads to salvation, but all that remains in the sphere of the visible and comprehensible. Finally, the worship of all religions is directed to the "God of infinite majesty" who in His absolute transcendence surpasses all historical religions.²

This God over and above all religions corresponds to the *homo religiosus* in the midst of all concrete-historical religions. A member of any religion is capable, as man, in the innermost depths of his existence and on account of his personal transcendence, of receiving the God of infinite majesty in the endless inner space of his mind. Such an encounter between the transcendent God and the transcendent human person likewise takes place in the sphere of transcendence, that is, in the sphere outside of "space and time," outside of "the whole of creation, of all that is visible and comprehensible," and hence beyond all concrete-his-

² Cf. on the visible manifestation of this notion at Assisi, my article in *Theologisches* 6-9 (1987).

torical religions. The encounter between God and man is thus one which surpasses ordinary consciousness and rational knowledge, an experience which comes to pass in the innermost depths of the human spirit on the transcendental basis of all reality. In a word, it is a mystical experience, that is, *Unio Mystica*.

This understanding of the Cardinal's remarks is already indicated by the title of the entire section, "The Language of Silence." The language of silence is the language of mysticism.³ The above explanation is, moreover, directly confirmed by the following statements:

During its first session, the Synod of Bishops considered among other things the problem of atheism. The monks of the contemplative orders had sent to the Synod a most characteristic letter expressing their understanding of the attitude of present day atheists when they considered it in the light of their own experience, that is to say as men of faith, prayer and total dedication to God but who, despite all that, are not exempt from darkness of the spirit and the senses. One of the paradoxes of the God of infinite majesty, the transcendent God!

St. John of the Cross has left us a beautiful testimony to such an experience:

To attain to this which you know not
 you must pass through that which you know not.
 To attain to this which you possess not
 you must pass through that which you possess not.
 To attain to this which you are not
 you must pass through that which you are not.

³ The Greek verb *muerein* means to close, to shut, for example, the mouth, the lips, the eyes. One speaks directly of a "*silentium mysticum*." On the silence in Zen Buddhism, see also H. M. Enomyia-Lasalle, *Zen: Weg zur Erleuchtung*, 1960; further: *Zen: Unterweisung*, (Munich, 1987).

The Cardinal makes a connection here between the position of the atheists, one might say the dark night of atheism, and the mystical experience of "the dark night of the senses" and of "the spirit" described by John of the Cross. The aim in view is perhaps to reinforce the last Council's position that atheists could attain salvation (*Lumen Gentium*, no.16). Moreover, the attempt to equate atheists and contemplatives is of prime importance: If the encounter between God and man in the extreme case of the atheists is shown as a possible transcendent experience, then all the more so for the *homo religiosus* pure and simple, in any religion.

The mystical tenets of St. John of the Cross constitute the bridge to the Cardinal's comments on the Church which conclude the chapter on the "God of infinite majesty":

The Church of the living God gathers together all men who in one way or another share this marvelous transcendence of the human spirit. And all of them know that nobody except the God of infinite majesty can satisfy their deepest longings (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, no.41).

This transcendence of the human person manifests itself in the prayer of faith, but from time to time in profound silence too. This silence, which sometimes seems to separate man from God, is nonetheless a special manifestation of the vital bond linking God and the human spirit.

The Church of our day has become particularly conscious of this truth; and it was in the light of this truth that the Church succeeded, during the Second Vatican Council, in redefining her own nature (p.17).

Since all men ontologically participate in the "marvelous transcendence of the human spirit," the "Church of the living God" gathers together all humanity. The "Church of the living God" and all humanity coincide radically in the innermost depths of the transcendent experience of God.

The "Church of our day" has become deeply "conscious" of this "truth" and has "in its light," based on Vatican II, newly defined "her own nature." The new self-understanding of the "Church of our day" has reached its visible manifestation before all eyes in the interreligious prayer service at Assisi. The *theologia naturalis religionum* already contains the philosophical basis for such an event. However, Assisi is more fully understood in light of the Cardinal's *theologia revelata*, namely, his theological defense from the standpoint of Christian revelation. Before we go into this in detail, a few critical remarks about the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis religionum* are in order.

1.2 Critical Remarks

The focal point of the *theologia naturalis* of Cardinal Wojtyla is the "encounter between man and God," its characteristic the mystical-existentialist view of the *homo religiosus* and the "God of infinite majesty." Limited time and space do not permit a critical analysis of the philosophical expressions in the above-quoted text of the retreat conferences regarding the ontological constitution of man in the encounter with the God of infinite majesty.⁴ However, the point of departure of the subjective experience of existence coincides in the end with the mystical. That alone certainly means: God can be radically "experienced" by all men.

The confusion of philosophy with mysticism has important precedents not only in the Eastern but also in the Western spiritual world. One need only think of the *Enneads* of Plotinus (203-269 A.D.) and neo-Platonism with its ramifications. For a deeper understanding of the

⁴ That could only be conducted in a more complete study of the writings on philosophical ethics by Karol Wojtyla, for example: *The Lublin Lectures, Love and Responsibility, Primacy of the Spirit, The Acting Person*. Characteristic of all of these essays is the lack of true ontology.

learned professor Karol Wojtyła, the influences of phenomenologist Max Scheler and mystic John of the Cross are informative.⁵

We can sketch the first basic principle of the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis* as follows: On the basis of his existence, of his personal transcendence and of his mind's immanent endless capacity, man as man is capable of receiving the infinite God.⁶ Contrary to this is the Church's teaching that grace (*quoad substantiam!*) is a necessary prerequisite for the reception of God. The problem emerging here clearly at the outset of the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis* is only apparently solved by his thesis of universal salvation. Granted, the thesis of the equivalence of nature and grace, the problem of the absolute gratuity of grace would still remain; likewise, its necessity in order to free man from original sin and to save his soul (*Denzinger-Bannwart* 811-813). The existentialist point of departure from "being as existence" (p.13) from "within," and "from the inmost depths of man" (p.13) evidently locks up the subject within himself, while excluding any ontological foundation for a *theologia naturalis* in a transsubjective object[†] (cf. St. Paul in Rom. 1:19ff., and the five ways of St. Thomas; naturally, both are aware of proofs of God's existence from the inner voice of conscience).

The Cardinal's second basic principle can be summarized as follows: The God whom man encounters is the "God of infinite majesty," "whom the Holy Scriptures and the

⁵ His first dissertation discusses St. John of the Cross; the inaugural dissertation the foundation of Scheler's Ethics.

⁶ John Paul II says in the Apostolic Brief *Euntes in Mundum*, e.g. "Every man, by the very fact of being a man, is called to share in the fruits of Christ's Redemption and in his very life." (*L'Osservatore Romano* of March 28, 1988, p.7, I, 2). "To be called" by nature also means "to be capable" by nature.

[†] *Translator's footnote.* i.e., independent of our minds and imposing itself on our minds.

Church" recognize as thrice holy. However, a glance at the book of the prophet Isaiah (6:1ff.) suffices to expose this error. The thrice-holy God is no "Super-God" to whom every man turns in like manner, whether Jew, Christian, Muslim or Buddhist. He is no *Deus maior Deo* as a prototype for all religions, but the exact opposite. In Isaiah 6, Yahweh is precisely the God of the people of the Covenant, Who revealed Himself in history as the one and true, therefore "jealous" God. In the zeal of Yahweh for his unrivalled supremacy "the most personal revelation of His essence was brought to light."⁷ The God of Biblical revelation is not inclined "to divide his...[unique claim to]...respect and love with any divine power."⁸ His "jealous holiness" is bitterly intolerant.⁹

One can hardly claim, for the purposes of a *theologia naturalis*, to acknowledge the God "Whom the Holy Scripture and the Church" profess on more tenuous grounds, nor can one misrepresent the God of historical revelation more grossly than has been attempted here by simply ignoring religious history such as it is. Instead of the God of historical revelation, a philosophical abstraction emerges and this, as such, is common to all men and religions.

The total abstraction from history in the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis* can be accomplished only through the constant recourse to inwardness: to the subjectivity[†] and to mysticism. Thus, everything rests on the superempirical[‡] point in the transcendental encounter or mystical union of man with God. The question as to whether one's religion leads to God on its own merits, therefore, becomes secon-

⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Munich, 1966) I, p.220f.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.216.

† *Translator's footnote:* i.e., realm of personal thoughts and ideas.

‡ *Translator's footnote:* i.e., beyond all sense experience.

dary, albeit implicitly answered in the affirmative, since Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists all attain the God of infinite majesty by the same token.

The transcendental encounter, which comes to pass in the personal transcendence of man and the absolute transcendence of an abstract God, and hence by definition beyond "the whole of creation, space, and time" and beyond all things "visible and comprehensible," escapes logically every philosophical judgment. Such an encounter between each individual and his God, hence the question whether a person is in the state of grace, is a matter of which God alone is judge. Vatican II has explicitly stated that God can lead even non-Christians who know not the true God, along the way, which He alone knows, to faith.¹⁰ Therefore, he is impertinent who would penetrate that which is reserved to God alone: the inner sphere of His grace.[†]

The mystical way can be broadly summarized as follows: In modern theology, the religious feeling or the mystical "experience of God" is considered the primary basis of all religions.¹¹ The high point of such an experience is the mystical experience of union or the *Unio Mystica*. The experience of union is an undisputed psychological reality and a religio-historically universal phenomenon. It can be "realized" not only in any Zen meditation, but also in purely secular training sessions.¹² That means that the mys-

¹⁰ *Ad Gentes*, 7.

¹¹ Carl Martin Edsman, "Mysticism, Historical and Contemporary," in *Mysticism* (Stockholm: Sven Hartman and Carl Martin Edsman, 1970). Page 7: "An evident experience of God's prescience is the basis for all religion." Cf. on the entire problem, my "*Theologie der Religionen*," in *Christliches ABC: Heute und Morgen* (Bad Homburg, 1987), Gruppe 4, pp.131-169.

¹² Arthur J. Deikman, "Experimental Meditation," in *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, vol. 136, 1963, pp.329-343.

† *Translator's footnote*: i.e., one's neighbor's standing before God.

tical experience of union amounts to a realization of the potential of the human psyche, but even then nothing certain can be said about the actual union of the human soul with the true God. Thus, in the Christian mystical tradition, the differences between true and false mysticism were always sharply defined.¹³ The criteria for the authenticity of mystical experiences, which even the holy mystics were bound to observe, were the Catholic Faith and the heroic striving for virtue. Even if these criteria hold true for non-Christian mysticism to a minor extent, our evaluation in that domain should be all the more cautious.

Cardinal Wojtyła associates the dark night of the atheists with the "Dark Night of the Spirit" and "the senses" according to St. John of the Cross. Yet, he neglects an essential difference: In the dark night of the holy mystic, his faith has to overcome, as it were, its trial by fire,¹⁴ whereas faith is wanting in the atheist. The foundation of Christian existence is the Faith, which is also the root of Christian mysticism. The thesis that the divine transcendence or the mystical experience of union can so easily account for the "living union between God and the spirit of man," is simply unfounded.

The Cardinal's thesis: "The Church of the living God gathers together all men who in one way or another share in this marvelous transcendence of the human spirit," leads immediately to the *theologia revelata* to the Cardinal's theology strictly speaking. Since transcendence is an ontological determination of the human person, it follows that all men, the whole of humanity belong to the "Church of the living God." "The Church of our day has become particularly conscious of this truth."

¹³ Especially John of the Cross, who emphatically stressed the necessity of a critical attitude towards the mystical experience.

¹⁴ Like Thérèse of Lisieux shortly before her death.

The Cardinal's following statement is dramatic: In light of this newly discovered "truth"—surely not revelation!—the Church has "redefined her own nature" at the Second Vatican Council. The redefinition of the Church's nature is an act of fundamental dogmatic importance. It must be asked: Is the redefinition of the Church's essence compatible with that preceding the Council? Is the "Church of our day," which has visibly manifested her new essence in Assisi before everyone, still essentially the same as the Church of all time?

The *theologia naturalis religionum* coincides radically with the *theologia revelata*: There exists a mysterious unity of all men in the "Church of the Living God" and the "Church of our day," whose essence Vatican II has newly defined. If that be the case, then the Council's much quoted statement that the Church is the "universal sacrament of salvation" acquires a very special meaning: The Church becomes the visible sign of universal salvation. Then the Church's mission would be simply to acquaint humanity with the mystery of its hidden Christian existence and to make man fully "conscious" of his existential grandeur. "Consciousness," then, would be the deciding factor. Faith, Baptism, and the Church would have no major importance in salvation.

2. The Thesis of Universal Salvation: Axiom of Karol Wojtyła's Theology?

Cardinal Wojtyła begins the meditation "The Bridegroom Is With You!" with a key text of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no.10), in order firstly to outline from this text the Council's teaching on the Redemption (see under 2.1), which he then develops in metaphorical language, in relation to Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, of man, and of all humanity, and this he does in an especially graphic and intimate manner (see under 2.2). We follow the structure of the meditation.

2.1 The Council's Teaching on Salvation in the Cardinal's Understanding

The Council text from *Gaudium et Spes* (no. 10) runs as follows:

(a)The Church believes that Christ, Who died and was raised up for all, can show man the way and strengthen him through the Spirit in order to be worthy of his destiny; nor is there any other name under heaven given among men by which they can be saved. The Church likewise believes that the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master. She also maintains that beneath all that changes there is much that is unchanging, much that has its ultimate foundation in Christ, Who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever (p.91).

Cardinal Wojtyla comments on this text:

(b)Thus the birth of the Church at the time of the messianic and redemptive death of Christ coincided with the birth of "the new man"—whether or not man was aware of such a rebirth and whether or not he accepted it. At that moment, man's existence acquired a new dimension, very simply expressed by St. Paul as "in Christ" (cf. Rom. 6:23; 8:39; 12:5; 15:17; 16:7 and other letters).

Man exists "in Christ," and he had so existed from the beginning in God's eternal plan; but it is by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection that this "existence in Christ" became historical fact, with roots in time and space (p.91f.).

Both texts, that of the Council and that of the Cardinal, are written in the style of "pastoral language." We are therefore obliged in each case to render the theological statements with the help of precise notions of the Church's traditional teaching and dogmatic theology. An unpleasant

yet revealing task, bearing in mind that certain dogmatic principles are involved which, in the "Catholic system," are completely clear and can be plainly expressed in a few sentences.

On a) the Council text, the following statements are of immediate importance for our present discussion: With pastoral brevity the Council proclaims the time-honored faith of the Church in a sole Redeemer, the universality of the divine will for salvation, the Redemptive Sacrifice of Christ, and the grace of salvation. These truths can be rendered in the traditional language of the Church as follows: God desires the eternal salvation of all men. Therefore, He grants sufficient grace for salvation to everyone, not only all just men, but even all men who are unbelievers through no fault of their own. Since there is only One Redeemer and One Redemptive Sacrifice, this grace of salvation is always the *gratia Christi*.¹⁵ All of these dogmatic statements of the Church on the salvation of humanity refer to the objective universality of the divine work of redemption. On the subjective aspect of redemption, however, which in dogma is discussed under the heading "The Justification of the Sinner," the Council, upon closer examination, makes no pronouncement.[†]

Since our present discussion on the Church's teaching involves a distinction of capital importance which, how-

¹⁵ *Denzinger*, pp.318f., 827, 1096, 1294f., 1376f.

† *Translator's footnote*: Redemption objectively considered involves the question: *What* are the means of salvation? Subjectively considered, the question becomes more concrete: *Who*, then, is saved? *To whom* are the means of salvation applied? In the paragraphs to follow, one must constantly bear the above distinction in mind. For example, if a doctor discovers the cure for a mortal disease and makes it available to all those infected, then one can say that all the infected are *objectively* cured, but they are not *subjectively* cured until they take the remedy, i.e., until the cure is applied to each individual.

ever, today is by no means familiar to all, we present a brief summary of the dogmatic underlying principles.

The God-Man Jesus Christ has, through His vicarious satisfaction and the merits of His Redemption, accomplished the reconciliation of humanity with God. This objective universal redemption must, however, be received by and applied to each individual before subjective redemption comes to pass. The act of applying the fruits of the Redemption to each man individually is called justification (*dikaioosis, justificatio*) or sanctification (*hagiasmos, sanctificatio*), the fruit of Redemption being the grace of Christ.

The author of subjective redemption is the Triune God. As a work of divine love, the communication of grace is attributed to the Holy Ghost, although it is effected by all three Persons together. The subjective redemption, however, is not only God's work but requires from men, who are endowed with intelligence and freedom, their free and voluntary co-operation (*Denzinger-Bannwart, 799*). In the co-operation between divine grace and human freedom lies the unfathomable mystery of the teaching on grace.

Along the way to subjective redemption God comes to man's aid not merely through an inner principle, the power of grace, but also through an outer principle, the efficacy of the Church in her teaching, governing, and sanctifying, by her dispensing the grace of Christ in the sacraments. The end of subjective redemption is the eternal consummation in the beatific vision.¹⁶

On b) the cardinal's commentary. In the above quoted words of the Pastoral Constitution, Cardinal Wojtyla construes the Faith of the Church as follows:

In the moment of the "redemptive death of Christ," the "birth of the Church" takes place and hence the "birth of man." But from the association "redemptive death of

¹⁶ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p.184f.

Christ—birth of the Church—birth of Man” it follows that the birth of man includes the supernatural event of “being born again” as well as the communion in the realm of “existence in Christ.” The “new dimension” of human existence means precisely this supernatural reality. The meaning is unmistakable. According to Cardinal Wojtyła, the birth of the Church and the supernatural birth of man become one and the same. One can then no longer speak of being “born again.”

One can hardly interpret the Cardinal’s statements merely in the sense of the objective universality of the redemption. Yet we ask specifically: Does the assertion of the simultaneous birth of the Church and of man mean that every man comes into existence as subjectively redeemed, as a child of God and joint heir with the Son of God? It would seem so, for the birth of man, in which he receives “existence in Christ,” occurs “whether or not man was aware of such a rebirth and whether or not he accepted it.”

The Cardinal, by arranging his thoughts in major perspective, finally bases his thesis on God’s universal plan of salvation. Thereby he distinguishes between an eternal and a temporal aspect: According to the eternal plan of God man exists “from the beginning,” thus from eternity, “in Christ.” This eternal plan of salvation is realized in time, thus in history, through the work of redemption accomplished by Christ. For “by virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, this existence in Christ became historical fact, with roots in time and space.” Therefore the supernatural birth of man would be like the saving death of Christ and the birth of the Church, a “historical fact” regardless of whether man “knows this or not; whether he accepts this or not.” Everything speaks in favor of the fact that the Cardinal teaches the objective and subjective universality of the Redemption.

It is a time-honored Catholic belief that the saving death of Christ was the moment of birth for the Church. It is, however, a novel belief that the "birth of the Church" was simultaneous with the (supernatural) "birth of man," of every man, regardless of whether he knows it or not; whether he accepts it or not. It is a traditional Catholic belief that all the just, *ab origine mundi* through the grace of God, belong somehow to the Church of Christ, the Savior of the World. It is, however, a modern belief that the "birth of the Church" automatically implies the (supernatural) "birth of humanity."

The theory of universal salvation means the "Copernican Revolution" in modern theology which was given standard form by Karl Rahner: If through the death and resurrection of Christ all men, aware or unaware voluntarily or involuntarily, receive "existence in Christ," then one may consider the non-Christians also as "anonymous Christians" and non-Christian humanity as "anonymous Christianity."

Since we are here discussing a thesis which places the whole theology of the Church on a new foundation, we must ask ourselves if we have perhaps misunderstood the Cardinal due to his "pastoral language of the Council." Thus the question: In his retreat conferences, does Cardinal Wojtyla formulate the thesis of the objective and subjective universality of salvation in a dogmatic, fully unmistakable terminology, which excludes all ambiguity? For example, can we find a dogmatic, unequivocal assertion to the effect that all men through the cross of Christ are not only (objectively) redeemed, but also (subjectively) justified?

The answer is given in a passage from the retreat conferences which also discusses the realization of the plan of salvation in history:

This is the point of history when all men are, so to speak, "conceived" afresh and follow a new course within God's plan—the plan prepared by the Father in the truth

of the Word and in the gift of Love. It is the point at which the history of mankind makes a fresh start, no longer dependent on human conditioning—if one may put it like that. This fresh starting point belongs in the divine order of things, in the divine perspective on man and the world. The finite, human categories of time and space are almost completely secondary. All men, from the beginning of the world until its end, have been redeemed and justified (*giustificati*) by Christ and His cross.

Therefore, Cardinal Wojtyla defends the thesis that every man “exists in Christ” or possesses “existence in Christ” “and indeed according to God’s eternal plan of salvation from the beginning,” so that “all men from the beginning of the world until its end have been redeemed and justified by Christ and His cross.” Thus all of humanity, from the beginning of the world to its end, would be in possession of the grace of salvation, thus has been effectively saved.¹⁷

Characteristic of this thesis is the striking fact that the subjective moments[†] of salvation, such as justification by faith or sanctification as the traditional teaching of the

¹⁷ On the unity of all mankind in Christ, John Paul II expresses himself in the encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: “At that point, awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ—‘children in the Son’—and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit, will bring to our vision of the world a new criterion for interpreting it.” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, February 29, 1988). The salient point of the Cardinal’s view of the history of salvation is that God’s eternal plan of salvation and redemption, which encompasses all men, is already historical reality in a mysterious way.

[†] *Translator’s footnote*: Signification of the expression “subjective moments of salvation”: In order to be saved, one must freely accept the means of grace which God offers. That means in practice sincerely regretting one’s sins, believing the truths revealed by God through His Church, keeping God’s commandments, receiving the sacraments of the Church worthily, in order to strive for holiness and perfection which befits a child of God. Cf. I Cor. 6:11: ...“but you are washed,...sanctified...and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God.”

Church explains it, are generally ignored. Rather, they are played down if not flatly denied. Thus the salvation of man is accomplished regardless of "whether the man knows this or not; whether he accepts it or not." Or: "The human categories of time and space are almost completely secondary." What becomes then of the severe gravity of one's responsibility before God, of the alternatives of eternal salvation or damnation which our moral conduct will decide, of genuine religious history as it is attested in the Gospels and in the history of the Church![†]

We may then draw the conclusion: Cardinal Wojtyla defends the thesis of the objective and subjective universality of salvation, thus of universal salvation.

The thesis of universal salvation coincides with the *theologia naturalis religionum* of Cardinal Wojtyla: The "wonderful transcendence of the human spirit" comes out in his *theologia revelata* as a hidden "existence in Christ," which all men possess. This "Meditation on Christ" is a milestone on the theological journey of John Paul II to Assisi. Besides the philosophical, it also contains the theological foundation for the common worship of all religions: the thesis of universal salvation! In support of this thesis, which was never the teaching of the Church, Cardinal Wojtyla appeals to an official document of the Council. Is he authorized in doing so?

The comparison of the Council text with the Cardinal's commentary serves as a classic example of the ambiguity of the "pastoral language of the Council" and the hermeneutics of Karol Wojtyla.

Not a word about the "birth of the Church" or "of man" was even mentioned in the Council text. The Cardinal's commentary obviously goes beyond the wording of the Council text. The commentary even emphasizes the universality of subjective redemption, which, again, is not

† *Translator's footnote.* E.g., the martyrs who preferred to suffer the most cruel tortures rather than to renounce the one true Faith.

mentioned in the Council text. Though the "pastoral language" of the Council texts be open to loose interpretations, the commentary oversteps the borders drawn by the doctrine of the Church. The thesis of universal salvation has no substantial basis in the Council text as it stands.

But the Archbishop of Krakow himself collaborated as a Council Father in drafting the Pastoral Constitution, and was completely familiar with the intentions of the authors. Thus the question remains, whether his interpretation perhaps brings to light the hidden meaning behind the Council text. That only serves to illustrate the confusion frequently caused by the "pastoral language of the Council," which prevents a coherent interpretation of Council documents.

2.2 Salvation Expressed by the Relations of Head and Body, Bride and Bridegroom According to Karol Wojtyła.

After Cardinal Wojtyła finishes expounding his understanding of salvation based on the Council text *Gaudium et Spes* (no.10), he goes on to express it in terms of Head and Body, then in terms of Bride and Bridegroom (p.91). Indeed, the entire eleventh chapter is entitled "The Bridegroom Is with You!" (p.91-100). He makes use of this Biblical and traditionally rich, graphic means of presentation in the context of the history of salvation in order to preach a meditation on the death and resurrection of Christ, and on Pentecost, which he then associates with reflections on the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Matrimony. We will concentrate on the main point of the meditation, on the relationship of the Bridegroom and Bride.

In the center of his remarks stands the bridal relationship of Christ to His Church, "the Church as Body and Bride" of Christ (p.96ff.). Moreover, "Christ is the Head of the

Church, which is His Body; Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church, which is His Bride" (p.97).

This traditional statement is theologically elaborated, then applied to salvation. Salvation is like a "marriage bond," which Christ has effected with the Church by His own Death and Resurrection" (p.93). Consequently, the "birth of the Church" at the moment of the redemptive death of Christ (p.92) was simultaneous with "her marriage to the divine Bridegroom" (p.92). Or, expressed differently: "The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is an act of supreme love, *amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui* (i.e., *the love of God carried as far as contempt of self*). It is in character with the love both of the Redeemer and of the Bridegroom" (p.94).

The relation between the sacrifice of redemption and the spiritual nuptials is still more precisely defined: "So the love of Christ-the-Bridegroom stems directly from the cross and the sacrifice. The Redeemer is the Bridegroom by virtue of being the Redeemer! He is able to bring His gift to the Church precisely because He has already given Himself in the sacrifice of His blood" (p.98).

Therefore, there is no essential difference between the love of the Redeemer and the love of the Bridegroom. Rather, they are correlative and essentially identical: Christ as Redeemer is also the Bridegroom. All of the above concerns, as such, the relationship of Christ, Redeemer and Bridegroom, to His redeemed Bride, the Church. So far, the texts are completely in line with Scripture and Tradition.

The bridal relationship of Christ to the Church is indeed a singular relationship. Yet, one notices a constant attempt to include all men in this intimate sphere. Thus Cardinal Wojtyła—without the necessary theological distinctions—announces to the Church and to every man by the same token, i.e., to all mankind: "Behold, the Bridegroom is with you!" And the Church heard it and understood: "Christ is with us, the Bridegroom is with us! He is with

the Church, he is with every man, woman and child, he is with the entire human family" (p.93).

Or: "Really there does seem to be a need to recall and repeat to the men of our day: The Bridegroom is with you! His love for you is so great that he gave himself fully and irrevocably. Jesus wished us to inherit from him nothing less than love of every single human being" (p.99-100).

Or, more to the point, in the first sentence of the following chapter: "As I said at the end of the last meditation, the love of Christ who 'loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her' (Eph. 5:25, Gal. 2:20), the love of the Bridegroom, goes out to every human being" (p.101).

Our questions runs: Does the mystical image of the bridal relationship of Christ to His Bride, the Church, equally hold true for the relationship of Christ to every man and to all of humanity? If that be the case, then the remarks on the relationship of Bride and Bridegroom are a metaphorical expression of the thesis of universal salvation.

Let us take a closer look at the last part of the above quoted text. The sentence summarizes the foregoing remarks and brings them to a head. In that way, the hidden meaning comes to light. It is clearly said that it is the love of Christ, i.e., of the Bridegroom to His Church, which "goes out" to every man. Consequently, the same bridal relationship which exists between Christ and His Church also exists between Christ and all of humanity. This conclusion is the only logical consequence of the Cardinal's thesis, namely, that the redemptive death of Christ was not only the moment of birth for the Church, but also the moment of supernatural birth for each and every man, "regardless of whether he knows it or not; whether he accepts it or not" (p.91).

This interpretation is confirmed by numerous utterances of the Cardinal on the subject of Christ's relationship to every man. This relationship is described, for instance, as an "insoluble bond" with the "living God," which, through

the death and resurrection of Jesus, "is with every man and all of humanity" (p.93). The relationship of Christ to "every human being" is also portrayed as a "complete, definitive surrender" and a "union with every man" (p.101).

We may draw at least a tentative conclusion: Since Cardinal Wojtyła applies the image of the love of Christ, the love of a Bridegroom for His Bride the Church, to the relationship of Christ to all of humanity, the image becomes the metaphorical expression of the thesis of universal salvation. Although our interpretation seems obvious, nevertheless we ask: Can the Cardinal's remarks not also be understood differently, namely, in the sense of Holy Scripture and Tradition?

2.3 Salvation Expressed by the Relations of Head and Body, Bride and Bridegroom in Scripture and Tradition

Scripture, the Fathers, and classical theology have repeatedly presented the mystery of the Redemption by Christ through the images of Head and Body, of Bride and Bridegroom. A recent theological study, substantiated by Tradition, can be found in the scholarly works of Matthias Joseph Scheeben.¹⁸ Though in his meditation Karol Wojtyła first discusses bridal mysticism, and only later the image of Head and Body, we propose now to render both aspects according to Scheeben's comprehensive presentation.¹⁹ Let it suffice to stress only the crucial points.

According to Scheeben, the God Incarnate is the Head of all creation, particularly of mankind. Such is the posi-

¹⁸ *Gesammelte Schriften*. Josef Hofer, ed. vol. II, *Mysterien des Christentums* (Herder, Freiburg, 1951), pp.295-356; vol. VI1, *Erloesungslehre*, pp.406-426; vol. VI2, pp.196-226. In English: Matthias Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1947), pp.313-404.

¹⁹ Here, according to *The Mysteries of Christianity*, pp.313-404.

tion of Christ in relation to the universe and towards mankind: the designation "Head" expresses the prominence of the God Incarnate in the realm of creation, to which He Himself belongs. Mankind already is a united body on the basis of common descent from Adam. Christ, the second Adam, infinitely surpasses the first as God Incarnate. By His entrance into the human race, the God-Man has not only taken on His own human nature, but He has also adopted the entire human race, made it His own, united and associated Himself with it. The phrase, Christ is the Head of the human race, means, therefore, that the human race is—solely on the basis of the Incarnation—entirely assumed by the Person of the Word. It is called His "Body" and, in a broader sense, even the "Mystical Body of Christ."²⁰ The Incarnation of the Word as such means also the elevation and exaltation of the entire race: "As Head, the Incarnate God raises the entire race to an immeasurable, incomprehensible height of dignity, of life, and activity."²¹

The union of Christ with the entire human race on the basis of the Incarnation alone, thus as "Head" of the "Mystical Body of Christ" in the broad sense must not be confused with the union of Christ with the Church, thus as "Head" of the "Mystical Body of Christ" in the strict sense, i.e., on the basis of the redemptive sacrifice. The "simple union" of the Head with every man and with all of humanity, which alone is accomplished through the Incarnation, is, however, a "lifeless union" from the point of view of subjective redemption, of justification. It is only the "material" laying of the foundation, the alignment, and the prerequisite for the "living union" in the "Mystical Body of Christ," the Church, through faith and Baptism.²²

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.304-307.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.312.

²² *Ibid.*, p.310-312.

The Church Fathers also presented the mystery of Redemption in terms of nuptials. They portrayed the assumption of human nature by the Word as a wedding, and, indeed, understood it as a marriage not only with His own nature, but also with every human nature. Accordingly, Christ appears as the Bridegroom of the whole of mankind, and mankind appears as the Bride of the Son of God. Solely on the basis of the Incarnation, they have "become united in one flesh."²³

There is, however, a distinction between this wedding in the "broader sense" which comes about through the Incarnation alone, and the wedding, in the "strict sense," of Christ as Bridegroom with His Bride the Church. The wedding of the Son of God with the whole of mankind is only a "virtual wedding," which makes sense only in relation to the "formal wedding" of Christ the Bridegroom with His Bride the Church. As Scheeben puts it, the union with mankind "is, as it were, a virtual wedding by which the Son of God could immediately shed His blood for human nature as for a Bride already truly belonging to Him, in order to make her pure and unstained, to make her capable of the holy bond with Him, and then also nourish her with His own flesh and blood."²⁴ The "virtual wedding" which follows solely on the basis of the Incarnation and without man's co-operation, however, by no means implies that man already partakes of the divine life, it means only the invitation of all mankind to the "formal wedding" of Christ the Bridegroom with His Bride the Church. Only in the "formal wedding," which takes place through man's free co-operation by faith and the reception of Baptism, does man receive the application of the fruits of the redemption, participation in the divine life, and incorporation into the Church.²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*, p.310.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.311.

In light of the foregoing, the graphic presentation of the mystery of the Redemption by Cardinal Wojtyla poses a serious problem of interpretation. The Cardinal neglects theological distinctions which are indispensable, even if one relies on images. By this means, he presents certain teachings as Catholic doctrine which, in fact, are not. So we are obliged once more to subject the Cardinal's statements to a critical examination in the light of Church doctrine.

2.4 Critical Remarks

Even if classical theology teaches the mystery of Redemption through the images of the first and second Adam, of Head and Body, of Bride and Bridegroom, it still does not neglect the necessary fundamental distinctions between objective and subjective redemption. The theological terminology is consistent with these graphic descriptions, but still allows for distinctions.

Even if the Incarnation is characterized as a wedding of the Word with every human nature and the whole of mankind solely on the basis of the Incarnation, characterized as the "Bride of Christ," nevertheless the meaning remains clear: It is a question of a "virtual" wedding, and a "Bride of Christ" in absolute need of redemption, and which is therefore still "sinful," since burdened by nature with original sin. The "virtual" wedding is ordered to the "formal" wedding, the "Bride as sinner" is ordered to the "Bride of Christ" actually redeemed.

Only the latter is the Church. Washed in the Blood of the Lamb, she is "formally" wed to her divine Redeemer and Bridegroom. Decked out in the full bridal gown of her Redeemer's grace, she is also the chosen Bride at the wedding feast of the Lamb. It is only in this bridal relationship

that Christ directs His love as Savior and Bridegroom to His "formally" wedded Bride, namely, the Church. The Cardinal himself describes this unique marital relationship of Christ to the Church (p.93), but then he emphasizes that this bridal love of Christ for His Bride, the Church, is given to every man (p.101). In this way, he radically extends the supernatural bridal relationship, as it exists between Christ and His Church, to every man and thereby to all of humanity. He does not distinguish between the love of the Redeemer and Bridegroom of humanity and the love of the Redeemer and Bridegroom of the Church. On the contrary, he emphasizes their equivalence and the "gift" is thus made to every man, thus to all of humanity. Humanity and the Church are apparently put on the same footing: the *Sponsa Christi*. The Cardinal's statement, namely, that the redemptive love of Christ as the Bridegroom of His Church is "given" to every man, implies, then, in a round-about way the thesis of universal salvation.

In the entire presentation of the mystery of Redemption through the images of Head and Body, Bride and Bridegroom by Cardinal Wojtyła, one searches in vain for any theological distinction which would have clarified the various meanings of these images, and avoided confusion between the dogma of the objective universality of salvation and the subjective gift of the fruits of the Redemption to the individual in the process of justification, as constantly expressed in classical theology. The complete neglect of essential distinctions can only mean their tacit denial. This also holds for the use of the images of Head and Body, of Bride and Bridegroom, with no distinction between the "strict" and the "broad sense." We therefore interpret correctly the "exclamation": "The Bridegroom is with you!" and the affirmation "He is with the Church, He is with every man, woman, and child and with the entire human family" (p.93), if we understand them in the "strict" sense: As the expression of the thesis of universal salvation

through the image of the mystical garment of Bride and Bridegroom. One might still be in doubt as to what the Cardinal really means since he, through the images of Head and Body, Bride and Bridegroom, and without further distinctions, takes up a mode of expression which is hardly compatible with traditional theology. We can dispel these doubts by merely following the inner logic of his own treatise:

Cardinal Wojtyla begins his meditation: "The Bridegroom is with you!" with the thesis: the redemptive death of Christ was not only the "birth of the Church," but also the supernatural "birth of man," every man, "regardless of whether the man knows this or not, whether he accepts it or not." He then specifies: "At that moment man acquired a new dimension, very simply expressed by St. Paul as 'in Christ' (cf. Rom. 6:23; 8:39; 12:5; 15:17; 16:7; and other letters)" (p.91). That means that every man is objectively redeemed and subjectively justified. Thus humanity, as well as the Church, is the Bride of Christ. Thus Christ, as the Bridegroom of the Church, is also the Bridegroom of all mankind. Thus, the statement that the love of Christ as the Savior and Bridegroom of the Church goes out to every man, expresses the thesis of universal salvation metaphorically.

Doubtless, the New Testament and the entire Tradition of the Church teach that the Redeemer of the human race shed His blood for all and that His redemptive love goes out to all mankind. But can one jump to the conclusion—without mentioning the necessity of faith and Baptism for salvation—that the Savior of Mankind extends His bridal love, which He shows to His Bride the Church, to every man (without distinction) as a "gift"; whereas the doctrine of the Church requires faith and Baptism for the communication of the "gift" of the fruits of Redemption to the individual man in the process of justification?

Doubtless, the love of the Redeemer, Who "gave Himself fully and irrevocably" even to the death on the cross, goes out to all mankind. For all mankind is in a fallen state through original sin and is radically in need of redemption (Rom. 3:9-20). But the universal redemptive love of Christ does not exempt anyone from obligations regarding the Faith and the reception of Baptism (cf. Jn. 3:16-21); in fact, both are required. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus requires faith for His healings and miracles. The universal redemptive love places man before a decision which is expressed unequivocally in the Risen Lord's missionary mandate: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe, however, will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). Whoever disregards the gravity of the external issues involved in Christ's universal redemptive love does not acknowledge His Maker, into Whose hands he is one day to fall. Further, he forgets that the Redemption and God's economy of salvation depend on man's use of his freedom, for God's love is a gift which man can either accept or reject.²⁶ Even Mary had to speak her *fiat* before she became the Mother of the Lord.

The acknowledgment that Christ is the Lord of all creation as well as the central figure in the entire history of mankind is by no means a new discovery of Vatican II and modern theology, which speaks of a "Cosmic Christ" and under this title propagates its theories of universal salvation.²⁷ The Church acknowledged this truth from the beginning: "All things have been created through Him and

²⁶ The Cardinal says as much in the meditation on the mystery of "The Annunciation" on p.37: "In one sense—a very real sense—he waits to be chosen himself. Because freedom is an essential prerequisite for loving God and giving oneself to God." Nevertheless, this reflection does not seem to concern the act of faith necessary for salvation.

²⁷ For development in Lutheran and Catholic theology, see *Theologie der Religionen*, in: *Christliches ABC: Heute und Morgen*. (Bad Homburg v.d.H.: Verlag H. Schaefer, 1987) 1, Gr.4, p.142-152.

for Him, and He is before all creatures, and in Him all things hold together." Again: "He is the head of His body, the Church, He Who is from the beginning, the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:16ff.). The Church has always taught the dependence of all creation on the Logos, the drawing by Christ of all men to Himself, and the objective universality of redemption. These dogmas were the objective foundation and basis of her universal mission, and, in turn, presupposed a further Biblical truth of revelation; namely, the equally universal fallen state of man, every individual man and all mankind (Rom. 3:9-20). Therefore our Lord entrusted His Church specifically with a divine mission, namely, to teach, govern, and sanctify all nations in His name, thus to communicate the fruits of Redemption to every man and to all nations. In a word, the Church's sublime mission is "the salvation of souls"!

Cardinal Wojtyla is completely in line with the Church's mission and with the Gospel insofar as he highlights Christ's dominion over all creation, His prominent role in the entire history of the world, the all-embracing character of God's love. The Cardinal preaches this message solemnly to the entire Church and to all mankind, and rightly so.

But the failure to preach the entire truth is tantamount to the abandonment of the Church's divine mission. And a major part of the Gospel's teaching is precisely the universal slavery of sin, original and personal, into which the whole human race has fallen, hence the necessity of conversion, faith, and Baptism in order to be freed from the bondage of sin. The proclamation of a "Cosmic Christ" in the same sense of universal salvation makes subjective salvation superfluous, i.e., the application of the fruits of Redemption to each individual by the process of justification; hence, it becomes pointless to emphasize the realities of Baptism, the Faith, and the Church as absolutely necessary for salvation.

But the subjective side of salvation, each and every man's "existence in Christ," will once more be discussed by the Cardinal in the chapter entitled "Christ Fully Reveals Man to Himself." Our question is this: Does this self-understanding of man also imply universal salvation?

3. From the Axiom of Universal Salvation to the Anthropocentric Understanding of Revelation

3.1 Revelation According to a Council Text and the Commentary of Cardinal Wojtyła

Cardinal Wojtyła begins the meditation "Christ fully reveals man to man himself" after a short introduction, again with a key text from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22) on which he then comments. On the importance of this Council text for the question of "how others are saved," Joseph Ratzinger expressed the following view: "When one deals with the position of Vatican II on the question of how others are saved, one should henceforth preferably consult the text of *Gaudium et Spes* rather than the Constitution on the Church, whose somewhat unfortunate approach to the question has been slightly improved."²⁸ This is exactly what Cardinal Wojtyła does. Number 22 of *Gaudium et Spes* is meant to support as the central message of the Council his thesis of the gift of Christ's bridal love to His Bride, the Church, and thereby to every man. We propose, then, to quote in full the Cardinal's short introduction (a), the Conciliar text from *Gaudium et Spes* (b), and the adjoining commentary of Cardinal Wojtyła (c), with abbreviations of minor importance.

²⁸ In his commentary on *Gaudium et Spes*, Article 22, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (LThK)*, vol. 14, p.353f.

(a) **The Cardinal's Introduction:**

As I said at the end of the last meditation, the love of Christ who "loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her," the love of the Bridegroom, goes out to every human being. This truth is central to the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in Our Day*. One particular text that we must always take into account has provoked widespread comment and given rise to a great deal of very profound thought, both theological and pastoral. It is section 22 of the Constitution, at the end of the first chapter entitled "The Dignity of the Human Person." Let us read a passage from it:

(b) **The Conciliar Text from *Gaudium et Spes*:**

The fact is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word is light shed on the mystery of man. Adam, the first man, pre-figured the man to come (Rom. 5:14), Christ the Lord. Christ, Who is the new Adam, by revealing the mystery of the Father and His love, also fully reveals man to man himself and makes his exalted vocation known to him. It is, therefore, no wonder that all the truths set out above flow from Christ and reach their highest form of expression in Him. He is the image of the unseen God (Col. 1:15). He is the perfect man, Who has restored to the children of Adam the likeness to God which was distorted at the very beginning by sin. Because He assumed human nature without in any way destroying it, human nature in us too has by that very fact been raised to a dignity that is sublime. By the Incarnation, the Son of God united Himself in some way with every man. He worked with human hands. He thought with a human mind....By being born of the Virgin Mary, He made Himself truly one of us, like us in all things but sin (no.22).

(c) **The Commentary of Cardinal Wojtyla on This Conciliar Text:**

As the meaning of that text is very clear, there is no need to examine every word of it; but let us try to pick out what seems new and inspiring in it:

First: The concept of the mystery of man, taken in conjunction with the fact of man's being "revealed" to man himself, clearly has something to say to two current schools of thought...[mention of rationalism and empiricism].

Second: By applying the category of mystery to man, the Conciliar text makes clear the anthropological, even anthropocentric character of the revelation offered to mankind in Christ. This revelation is centered on man: Christ "fully reveals man to man himself." But He does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love (cf. Jn. 17:6).

Third: This revelation is not theory or ideology. It consists in a fact—the fact that by His Incarnation, the Son of God united Himself with every man, became man Himself, one of us: "like us in all things but sin" (Heb. 4:15)....

Fourth: Finally, the Incarnation of the Son of God emphasizes the great dignity of human nature; and the mystery of redemption not only reveals the value of every human being, but also indicates the lengths to which the battle to save man's dignity must go.

There we have the essentials of the Council's teaching—which is, therefore, the Church's teaching—on man and the mystery of man, a mystery which can be finally and fully explained in Christ alone.

3.2 Critical Remarks

On (a) the Cardinal's introduction: In his short introduction, Cardinal Wojtyła says that the Conciliar text to follow from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no. 22), supports his thesis that the love of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church goes out to all men. Vatican II has made this truth the focal point of the Pastoral Constitution. Hence, universal salvation is a central message of the Council.

We must observe, however, that not a word about the love of a Bridegroom is mentioned in the Conciliar text. The Cardinal himself in his own commentary on this text does not return to this theme of Bridegroom-Bride (cf. c).

Perhaps he is trying to prove or verify the thesis of universal salvation, which constitutes the theological core of the mystical image of Bride and Bridegroom in his meditation by means of the Council text. That is not the case either. Universal salvation is not proved at all, but is merely assumed. Thus, in his commentary on the Council text, the Cardinal says no more about that part which is supposed to contain and prove his thesis. A travesty of interpretation which, however, is no isolated instance.²⁹

On (b) the Conciliar text from *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22): Cardinal Wojtyla deems the written Council text *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22) itself "very clear" (cf. (c) his commentary). Perhaps "very clear" for the Cardinal, but not so clear from the standpoint of classical theology. For instance, what does the Conciliar text mean by the sentence: "He is the image of the unseen God (Col. 1:15), He is the perfect man, who has restored to the children of Adam the likeness to God (*similitudinem*) which was distorted (*deformatam*) at the very beginning by sin"?

According to Biblical and theological language, the expression "sons of Adam" means simply all mankind. Therefore Christ, according to the text, restored all men to the likeness of God. Since the *similitudo divina* means the supernatural likeness of God (*gratia gratum faciens*, i.e., *sancifying grace*) which Christ restored to the "sons of Adam," the statement of the Council could easily be understood in the sense of universal salvation, the supernatural likeness of God is allotted to all men.[†]

²⁹ Cf. p.102.

[†] *Translator's footnote.* In the forthcoming pages one should bear in mind the Biblical passage referring to man's creation in the "image and likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26). In theology, *image* regards man's *natural* resemblance to God, i.e., in virtue of his spiritual soul, endowed with intelligence and free will. On the other hand, "likeness" regards man's *supernatural* resemblance to God, i.e. by the free gift of divine grace, by which we are made children of God. (Cf. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:7)

On the other hand, the same sentence of the Council could be understood merely in the sense of the objective universality of salvation. That is surely how the overwhelming majority of Council Fathers understood it. The sentence could only be said to refer to universal salvation if the Council had thereby intended to teach not only the objective universality of the work of redemption, but also the subjective universality of the realization of redemption in every individual man; namely, the application of the fruits of the Redemption to all men. Various interpretations are possible.

In addition to the confusion mentioned above, the Council text contains a distressing "inaccuracy" (cf. Ratzinger) which immediately becomes apparent when we examine it in the light of classical teaching:

In the wake of St. Irenaeus, the Scholastics developed the teaching on man's likeness to God as a classic paradigm[†] for the teaching on grace, which, by using definite notions, presents the "union of man with God" as the fruit of redemption.

According to Catholic teaching, the "union of man with God" means "partaking of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). By that is meant a physical communion of man with God. Expressed in scholastic terms: "This consists in an accidental unification which is accomplished by a created gift of God; this assimilates the soul to God, and unifies it with Him in a manner transcending all created powers. Man, who is by nature, as to his body, an incorporation of a divine idea, a *vestigium Dei*, and as to his spirit, an image of the divine spirit, an *imago Dei*, becomes by sanctifying grace, *similitudo Dei*, that is, becomes elevated to a higher supernatural grade of assimilation to God."³⁰

³⁰ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p.255.

[†] *Translator's footnote*: Greek word for example, model, pattern.

According to Catholic teaching, the sons of Adam, i.e., all men, lost the *similitudo Dei* through original sin and the *imago Dei* became wounded. By the application of the fruit of the Redemption which is accomplished through justification, the *similitudo Dei* (*gratia sanctificans*) which man lost is then restored to him, and the wounded *imago Dei* is healed by its powers (*gratia medicinalis*).[†]

On the other hand, the Council text says that Christ has restored the "likeness to God" (*similitudo*) "which was distorted by the first sin" (*deformata*), to all of the sons of Adam. In that case, the likeness of God was not lost due to the "first sin" but only "distorted" by it.

Joseph Ratzinger is quick to point out this lack of precision in his commentary on our Council text (1968). There we read the following:

The fact that the concept *similitudo* is used here to mean the restoration of the likeness of God in sinful man could well be a reminder of Irenaeus who, by his distinction of *imago and similitudo*, anticipated the later distinction of the "natural" and "supernatural" resemblance to God. And yet it seems peculiar that one portrays the *similitudo* only as *deformata*, whereas according to classical teaching the *similitudo* is lost and the *imago* only wounded. Such an expression, which in scholastic language one must here characterize as inexact, once again goes to show how little the Council wanted to enter into these technical details of the Scholastics and how much it desired to express more basic views which everyone held in common.³¹

³¹ *LThK*, vol. 14, p.350.

† *Translator's footnote*: Man's nature is wounded through original sin. His mind is darkened, his will weakened, his passions enkindled to revolt against God's Law. (Cf. Rom. 7:15-24.) This wounded state of man's nature is also designated by the all-embracing term "concupiscence," which remains in the soul even after Baptism. In practice, that means our fallen human nature which we have to struggle against every day with the help of God's grace, obtained by prayer, good works, and the sacraments.

On this Ratzinger commentary, we must, however, remark that the confusion between *imago and similitudo Dei* is not simply an inaccuracy which disregards "scholastic language," but rather an all-out attack on a fundamental dogma of the Church, which forms the basis of the entire Catholic teaching on salvation, namely, man's Biblically attested absolute need of divine grace for his salvation, since man is stained by original sin, a dogma which the Council of Trent clearly defined with all its implications.³² The alleged inaccuracy by scholastic standards is in reality an error against Catholic dogma—and the floodgate for all kinds of theories of universal salvation.

Unlike Joseph Ratzinger, Cardinal Wojtyla finds the same Council text "very clear" and passes over the problem of *similitudo deformata* in his commentary. That is surprising, since man in the image and likeness of God holds a central position in the theology of Cardinal Wojtyla.

A moment ago, we distinguished the various forms of man's resemblance to God from classic theology, showing how these forms serve as a paradigm for the Church's teaching on grace. A clear definition of the likeness of God in man from Cardinal Wojtyla would suffice to resolve the question of his thesis of universal salvation and thus clarify the mysterious center of his theology once and for all. Hence our question: Can one find in the numerous places in which Cardinal Wojtyla speaks of the likeness of God in man in "pastoral Council language" a definition which is so unmistakable that it conclusively brings out the meaning of this central point of his theology beyond all shadow of doubt?

No such clarification is found in the Cardinal's retreat conferences to Pope Paul VI and the men of the Curia, nor

³² *Denzinger-Bannwart* 787-810, 811-843.

is it to be expected. Thus, we must look for a definitive answer to our question in other authoritative publications. In the first encyclical of John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (13), we find in a major section the twin concepts *imago-similitudo Dei* in a context which leaves no doubt as to the exact sense of the statement and expresses the thesis of universal salvation with crystal clarity in "scholastic language." Here it is:

Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude. We are not dealing with the "abstract" man, but the real, "concrete," "historical" man. We are dealing with "each" man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever. Every man comes into the world through being conceived in His mother's womb and being born of His mother, and precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption, is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church. Her solicitude is about the whole man and is focused on him in an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique, unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself.

The Council points out this very fact when, speaking of that likeness, it recalls that "man is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself." Man as "willed" by God, as "chosen" by Him from eternity and called, destined for grace and glory, this is "each man," "the most concrete" man, "the most real"; this is man in all the fullness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ, the mystery in which each one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother.³³

33 *The Papal Encyclicals 1958-1981*, trans. Claudia Carlen, IHM (McGrath Publishing Co., 1981), p.255.

One could interpret and understand the entire text in conformity with Church dogma until the sentence about the image, *imago*, and likeness, *similitudo*, of God, which are kept intact. This sentence, however, is the crux of the entire statement. One could easily say, from the standpoint of traditional teaching, that every "concrete, historical man" "is included in the mystery of the Redemption" and united to Christ "forever through this mystery"; that every man, "precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption, is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church." But one simply cannot say from this standpoint that "in the unique, unrepeatability of every "real, concrete, historical man" the image and likeness of God is kept intact. For the doctrine of original sin maintains with certainty the wounding of the *imago* and the loss of the *similitudo Dei* in the concrete, historical reality of every man. The Redemption presupposes the condition of original sin in every man, and is only removed through the justification of the sinner. The Council of Trent defined justification "as being a translation from that state in which man is born a child of the first Adam to the state of grace and of the 'adoption of the sons' (Rom. 8:15) of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Savior" (*Denzinger-Bannwart* 796).[†] It is evident that the crucial statement from the text of the first encyclical which runs: In the unique, unrepeatability of the individual man, the "image and likeness of God are kept intact," is incompatible with Catholic doctrine. It stands in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Council of Trent on justification by which man "is born a child of the first Adam and is translated to the state of grace and the 'adoption of the sons' of God through the second Adam."

† *Translators footnote*: Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy Deferrari (St. Louis: Herder Books Company, 1957), pp.249-250.

The formulation of the inaugural encyclical that in the "individual, unrepeatable reality" of every man "the image and likeness of God is kept intact" (*integra permanet*) goes far beyond the Council text which speaks of a *similitudo deformata*. But not only that. The statement that in every man from the first moment of his conception *integra permanet imago et similitudo Dei ipsius* even gives rise to associations with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception!

We can thus be safe in concluding: The statement that every man, from the first moment of his existence, "has intact the image and likeness of God" presents a clear definition of the thesis of universal salvation beyond all shadow of doubt.

From the standpoint of universal salvation, the entire traditional theological vocabulary undergoes a scarcely perceptible, yet profound change of meaning. Here is only one example from the above-quoted text of the encyclical. Every man, on account of the "mystery of the Redemption is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church." Such is the mind of the Church since the New Testament. For the Savior of the human race shed His blood for all. But from the objective universality of redemption follows the missionary mandate of the Church to "teach all nations," i.e., make them obedient to the Faith, and lead them to Baptism (Mt. 28:18-20). Her mission was and still is to apply the fruits of the Redemption, of the objectively accomplished universal Redemption, to all men individually and collectively.

If, however, "every individual, concrete, historical man" from the first moment of his existence is in supernatural communion with Christ forever and inseparably united to Him, regardless of whether he knows it or not, whether he accepts it or not, then he is "entrusted to the solicitude of the Church" in a completely different sense. The concept of the Church itself has then fundamentally changed: If the Son of God has through His Incarnation united Himself

with every man forever and inseparably, and if the religious "dimension" of every man is the "existence in Christ," then all humanity forms with and in Christ an organic unity, a natural-supernatural organism; then Church and humanity coincide "in the mystery of the Redemption" and "of man," then too the "dualism" of nature and grace, of Church and humanity is basically eliminated. The *Corpus Christi Mysticum* as the Church and the *Corpus Christi Mysticum* as humanity are no longer distinguished in principle through their deepest essence ("existence in Christ"), but only in degree through their mode of expression.[†] Cardinal Wojtyła thus holds in his own individual style and method the well-known theory of "anonymous Christians" and "anonymous Christendom."³⁴

Having ascertained that Cardinal Wojtyła holds the theory of universal salvation, we are also in a position to notice a change in meaning in the traditional theological vocabulary used in his statements. The thesis of universal salvation supplies the key to the correct understanding of what is really meant.

On (c) the commentary of Cardinal Wojtyła on the Conciliar text: The Cardinal in his commentary on the

³⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyła, Andrzej Szostek, Tadeusz Styczen, *The Struggle for Man* (Kevelaer, 1979). In the foreword to the book, Cardinal Hoeffner says: "The three essays are representative of the trend in the sphere of philosophical anthropology and ethics of Karol Wojtyła and his students" (p.5). In the essay of Tadeusz Styczen, "On the Question of the Independence of Ethics" (p.111f.), we read in note 6 (p.170): "The thesis, correct in itself, of the anonymous Christianity of non-Christians is sometimes used in a form which can serve as a vivid example, showing how a mere good intention does not suffice for a correct attitude towards dialogue." The thesis itself is thus affirmed, but certain forms of dialogue inferred from the thesis are judged with reserve.

[†] *Translator's footnote*: In other words, the Church and the world no longer differ by nature, but only by degree as regards their "existence in Christ." The practical question is then: Which must conform to which? We allow the reader to answer.

Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22) feels no need to go into an "involved explanation" of what he regards as a "very clear" Council text, nor does he furnish the promised arguments to prove that Vatican II viewed the bridal relationship of Christ to every man as the focal point of that Constitution. Instead, he suddenly pursues an entirely different objective. He is concerned about the concept of revelation in the Council text, which he believes must have an inner connection with the theme of the meditation "Christ 'Reveals Man to Man Himself.'" Moreover, he proposes only to pick out "special points" in the Council text which appear "new and inspiring." We will concentrate our interests on these new and inspiring points.

Cardinal Wojtyla's interpretation of the Council text is developed in four steps on which we briefly comment. The first point: No one will contradict the Cardinal's observation that the Vatican II position according to which "man is a mystery, which 'became revealed' in Christ," runs counter to rationalism or empiricism. But the Church has always held this "position," and not just since the last Council. Or does the expression "revealed" in inverted commas mean something new after all, something "new and inspiring" in the Council text?

Second point: The Council text should in the Cardinal's view make clear the "anthropological, or even the anthropocentric, character of revelation" in which he "applies the concept of mystery to man."

The words "anthropological or even anthropocentric" do not appear in the Council text. Cardinal Wojtyla speaks of an "anthropological or anthropocentric character of revelation" as though it were a theological, foregone conclusion. Joseph Ratzinger emphasizes on the other hand the Christocentric character of the same text.³⁵

35 In the commentary on Article 22 (*LThK*, vol. 14, p.350): "One is

Cardinal Wojtyła's reasons for the alleged "anthropocentric character of revelation," supposedly emphasized in the Council text are by no means obvious. For, as is well known, man is not the only subject which comes under the "concept of mystery," but all truths of the Christian Faith are rightly called mysteries. For instance, we speak of the mystery of the Triune God, the Incarnation, Original Sin and Redemption, the Church and the Sacraments, Justification and the Last Things. In that case, one must speak of a theocentric, Christocentric, hamartiocentric, soteriocentric, ecclesiocentric, dikaiocentric or an eschatocentric character of revelation.[†] The "mystery of man" evidently has an entirely exceptional significance in the theology of Cardinal Wojtyła.

Furthermore, the Cardinal's argumentation is by no means self-evident: To apply "the concept of mystery" to man is one thing, to infer thereby the "anthropocentric character of revelation" is quite another. The explanation: "This revelation is centered on man: Christ reveals man to man himself, but he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love (cf. Jn. 17:6)" is a sweeping statement which in no way flows from the Council text, yet which plainly manifests the Cardinal's understanding of the expression

indeed allowed to say that here, for the first time in a magisterial text, a new type for an entirely new Christocentric theology appears, which, in relation to Christ, ventures theology as anthropology, which thereby becomes for the first time radically theological, Christ as man in the talk of God, disclosing the deepest unity of theology." The nature of this approach is outlined by Ratzinger in the following manner: "The humanity of all men is one; since Christ took on one human nature, humanity is henceforth in each man Christocentrically defined" (p.350). These thoughts, however, have prevailed in Christocentric changes over to the anthropocentric through the thesis of universal salvation, as is the case with Cardinal Wojtyła.

† *Translator's footnote.* The reader can figure out the meanings of these high-sounding words if he knows the Greek roots: *hamartia*=sin, *soter*=savior, *ecclesia*=church, *dikaios*=just, *eschata*=last things.

"anthropocentric character of revelation." The next step of his commentary gives the final explanation.

The third point: The sentence "Revelation is not a theory or ideology" presents no problems. Classical theology defines revelation, strictly speaking, as *locutio Dei ad homines* (i.e., God's speaking to men [Heb. 1:1]).³⁶

The definition of Cardinal Wojtyla: Revelation consists in a fact, the fact that by His Incarnation, the Son of God united Himself with every man, became man Himself, one of us, "like us in all things but sin" (Heb. 4:15) is no faithful rendition of the Council text; which in fact qualifies the statement that the Son of God has united Himself "to a certain degree" with every man. The Council text can be understood, without need of further comment, in the sense of the Fathers, who present the Incarnation of the Son of God as a "union" or "wedding" with the whole human race. However, by that is meant only a "virtual wedding" to which the human race is invited by Christ; there is no question of the application of the fruits of the Redemption or the communication of supernatural grace. The latter occurs only at the "formal wedding" of Christ with his Bride, the Church, the communion of justified sinners. The Cardinal's definition cannot, however, be interpreted in the sense of the Fathers or of classical theology. We have pointed out that Cardinal Wojtyla understands the union of the Son of God with every man in the sense of universal salvation. Therefore, his definition when compared with Tradition says something really new. It furnishes the key to an adequate understanding of his concept of revelation (cf. above, Section 2.4).

Since the New Testament, God's revealing Himself to man through the Incarnation of His Son was theologically undisputed. Christ reveals God not only through His

³⁶ Cf. Denzinger, as above. *Index systematicus, Revelation*, p.7.

teaching and example, but He is *in persona* the Revelation of God per se: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). For that reason, one can speak of a Christocentric character of theocentric Biblical revelation.

Cardinal Wojtyla, however, says something else. His definition does not say: By revelation we mean that the Son of God became man, was born of the Virgin Mary, and revealed the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, and, thus, the glory of God. The Cardinal's definition of revelation is different; namely, that the Son of God through His Incarnation united Himself with every man (*si e unito ad ogni uomo*) and as man became one of us (*e diventato, como Uomo, uno di noi*). The clash with the Biblical Joannine definition is evident. In the Cardinal's concept of revelation, the inner fact of the hidden union of the Son of God with every man corresponds to the outer fact, that the Son of God as man became one of us and consequently as man also presents our true human existence or "declares who we are." This shift of emphasis indicates in a subtle way the anthropocentric turning-point. The union of the Son with every man through the Incarnation is the fundamental, primary object in the concept of revelation as well as the key to an understanding of that "anthropocentric character of revelation" emphasized by the Cardinal.

The primary object of revelation can be clearly defined. We have shown that Cardinal Wojtyla understands the union of the Son of God with every man on the basis of the Incarnation as a real, supernatural "formal wedding," understood as a communication of "existence in Christ." This union consequently produces an inner "supernatural" reality in every man, in whom indeed from the first moment of His existence "the image and likeness of God is kept intact." The Cardinal calls this fact revelation. Conse-

quently, he understands universal salvation as the main point of revelation.

If revelation consists in the union of God with every man, then the concept of revelation is itself reciprocal. That is, the revelation of the Son of God in man is also the revelation of man in the Son of God. The salient point is, therefore, that man's "existence in Christ" is identical with the fullness and depth of human existence. That is precisely the sense of the Cardinal's statement: "Christ reveals man to man himself."

One could understand man's "coming unto himself" in and through Christ, or the self-understanding of man in Christ as a purely interior, subjective process of revelation. That is how Cardinal Wojtyla understands it: "Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is that One, Who in a unique and unrepeatable way penetrated the mystery of man and entered into his 'heart.'"³⁷ And: "Christ works within human hearts"³⁸ as well as through the Holy Spirit working in all men.³⁹ But in his above-quoted commentary, he follows his main line of thought. There he says: "Christ fully reveals man to man himself. But he does this by revealing the Father and the Father's love."⁴⁰

The revelation of the Father and of His love means, of course, the historical development begun by the teaching and example of Jesus. Consequently, for Cardinal Wojtyla, one must distinguish between an inner revelation, on the basis of the Incarnation existing in every man, and an outer

³⁷ Cf. Inaugural Encyclical, as above, no.8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, and *Dives in Misericordia*, no.2.

³⁹ Inaugural Encyclical, as above, no.18.

⁴⁰ In the Latin Council text, it runs: "*in ipsa revelatione mysterii Patris*"...; in the Italian translation: "*proprio rivelando il mistero del Padre*"...; Cardinal Wojtyla: "*ma lo fa per mezzo della Rivelazione del Padre*"....

revelation, which was realized through the teaching and example of Jesus.

The outer revelation is described as a means by which Christ "enlightens" man about the "mystery of man," that is, about the ontic reality of "existence in Christ" present in every man, and, in addition, "reveals" or "makes him conscious" of the fullness and depth of human existence. An outer revelation, understood as a means of resolving questions about the purpose of life, has *per se* also an "anthropocentric character."

The believing Christian has no advantage over the non-Christian as regards "existence in Christ," which supposedly all men possess, but only as regards the knowledge revealed and established by Christ on the fullness and depth of human existence.

The fourth point: Cardinal Wojtyla's thesis of universal salvation and anthropocentric concept of revelation makes scarcely visible changes in the traditional vocabulary compared to that which he now uses. We have already shown this change of meaning many times. A further example comes from the fourth point of his commentary with the sentence: "The Incarnation of the Son of God emphasizes the great dignity of human nature; and the mystery of redemption not only reveals the value of every human being but also indicates the lengths to which the battle to save man's dignity must go."

At first glance, the sentence as it stands could have come from Matthias Joseph Scheeben. Upon second glance, the nominalistic way of expression strikes one as odd, and the clash with classical theology becomes apparent. The Cardinal says that the Incarnation of the Son of God "emphasizes the great dignity of human nature." Only "emphasizes"? This manner of expression reflects the thesis according to which the *similitudo Dei* is kept directly intact in every man. Further, according to the Cardinal: The "mystery of the Redemption reveals the value of every hu-

man being." Only "reveals"? This sentence reflects the Cardinal's thesis, according to which every man possesses "existence in Christ" as a fruit of the Redemption. The "mystery of the Redemption" signifies, however, something more and something deeper than only the "revelation of the value of every human being." The nominalistic change of meaning achieved by the thesis of universal salvation is evident.

Finally, Cardinal Wojtyla considers the four "main points" of his commentary on the Council text as a summary of the "teaching of the Council, and, therefore, the teaching of the Church about man and the mystery of man." The alleged central teaching of the Council "about man and the mystery of man" is also the central approach of the theology of Karol Wojtyla. This coincidence explains the Cardinal's firm conviction that his theology is a faithful rendition of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. The fact that he as Pope defends this same theology unaltered has a major significance for the Faith of the entire Catholic Church.

4. Henri de Lubac's Concept of Revelation in the Council Text and the Commentary of Karol Wojtyla

There exists an apparent similarity between the Christology and ecclesiology of Karol Wojtyla and Henri de Lubac. De Lubac also claims that Christ has united Himself with all mankind; all men have an organic bond with Christ; Church and mankind form an organic unity. Christians are for de Lubac only the "declared members" of the Body of Christ. They have the missionary duty to make the non-Christians more familiar with that which they know not, namely Christianity.⁴¹

⁴¹ Cf. the study by Herbert Vorgrimler, Henri de Lubac, in: *Bilanz der*

Our inquiry does not concern, however, the obvious similarities and possible differences in the theology of Karol Wojtyła and Henri de Lubac, but rather the concept of revelation. Our question is this: Are there, in the concept of revelation of Cardinal Wojtyła, agreements, similarities, or ties with Henri de Lubac?

In order to reach a correct answer, it is fitting to boil down Cardinal Wojtyła's concept of revelation to a plain, simple formula: In the commentary of Cardinal Wojtyła on the above-quoted Council text from *Gaudium et Spes* (no. 22), we hear: "By applying the category of mystery to man, the conciliar text makes clear the anthropological, even anthropocentric character of the revelation offered to mankind in Christ. This revelation is centered on man: Christ 'fully reveals man to himself.' But he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love" (cf. Jn. 17:6). The following relation is, therefore, presented to us: "The mystery of man" (= "existence in Christ")—Christ "reveals or manifests man to man himself"—and that happens "by means of the revelation of the Father" (or by which He reveals the Father).

This fundamental relation in Cardinal Wojtyła's concept of revelation coincides remarkably with the statements of Henri de Lubac. In Henri de Lubac's exegesis of Galatians 1:15f., he writes that St. Paul in this letter "(uttered) one of the newest and richest in meaning that has ever come out of a man, the day when, constrained to present his own apology to his beloved Galatians, to bring them back to the right path, he dictated these words: 'When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me...'" (Gal. 1:15-16). The extraordinariness of these words consists, according to

Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert, Bahnbrechende Theologen, Herbert Vorgrimler and Robert Vander Gucht, ed. (Friburg-Basel-Wien, 1970), pp. 199-214.

de Lubac, in that the Apostle says: "not only 'to reveal His Son to me,' to show or to call Him forth in some vision so that I understand Him objectively, but to reveal Him in me. While He reveals the Father and He is revealed through Him, Christ allows man to be completely revealed to himself. By taking possession and hold of man, by penetrating the very core of his nature through and through, He forces him to enter into himself, in order to discover previously unsuspected regions. Through Christ, the person stands in his maturity, man projects forth definitively from the universe."⁴²

Cardinal Siri rightly shows his astonishment at de Lubac's emphatic stress of Paul's "in me" and proceeds to unveil the statements of de Lubac: "Father de Lubac says that Christ, in revealing the Father and in being revealed by him, finishes by revealing man to himself. What can be the meaning of that statement? Either Christ is only man, or man is divine. The conclusions may not be expressed so clearly, they nevertheless always determine that notion of the supernatural in so far as implied in human nature itself, and from there, without one's consciously desiring it, the way of basic anthropocentrism opens."⁴³

It should now be clear that Cardinal Wojtyla also holds that human nature implies the supernatural.⁴⁴ He speaks freely and easily of the anthropocentric character of revelation and of the mission of the Church.⁴⁵ Down to the very words used, Henri de Lubac's concept of revelation coincides with that of Cardinal Wojtyla. We could scarcely go

⁴² *Catholicisme, les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris, 1947), p.295f. (According to Joseph Cardinal Siri, *Gethsemani: Reflections on the Contemporary Theological Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), p.57.

⁴³ Siri, as above, p.58.

⁴⁴ Cf. above, p.53

⁴⁵ Cf. above, p.51 on the "anthropocentric mission of the Church." See *Dives in Misericordia*, no. 1.

astray were we to suppose that the corresponding formulation in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* goes back ultimately to Henri de Lubac.

The concept of revelation is the objective principle by which we come to know theology. Can we therefore classify the systems of Cardinal Wojtyla and Henri de Lubac as a New Theology? This genus of theology was condemned by Pius XII in his Encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950). This verdict also affected Henri de Lubac as a prominent representative of the New Theology. John Paul II made him a Cardinal and thereby also officially rehabilitated the New Theology of Henri de Lubac.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ On the attempt to vindicate de Lubac, see Herbert Vorgrimler, as above, p.208f.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS THE "NEW THEOLOGY" OF CARDINAL WOJTYLA

A First Glance

The so-called New Theology originated before Vatican II. It means the break with the *philosophia perennis*, thus with the entire tradition of classical theology, and in addition the attempt to combine theology and modern philosophical thought.¹

The theology of Cardinal Wojtyla, former Professor of Philosophical Ethics at Lublin University, has its theological roots not in the system of traditional theology, but in the approaches of phenomenology and existentialism. The Cardinal even takes pains to reconcile Thomistic tradition with modern thought towards a more complete synthesis, in which he proceeds not from the ontological foundation of the *philosophia perennis*, but from the principles of modern philosophy, so that the classical philosophy and theology undergo existentialist transformation. We can thus state at the outset: the theology of Cardinal Wojtyla, based on its language and philosophy, belongs to the genus of New Theology. This New Theology should be understood and interpreted according to its own way of thought. The main sources for this are selected texts from Vatican II on

¹ In more detail, above, ch. 2, Section 4, pp.34f.

which the Cardinal elaborates according to his understanding of the Council.

The retreat conferences are by nature no theological tracts, but *Meditazioni*. It belongs neither to my theme, nor is it my intention to elicit from the meditations the entire theology of the author, which he himself has nowhere systematically presented. Here we only attempt, on the basis of what we have thus far been able to prove, to give a comprehensive, systematic overview point-by-point, in order to make known Cardinal Wojtyła's general conception of theology against the background of classical theology. We can thereby only bring out the main points which pertain to our theme, the main principles which will lead us to Assisi. We further propose to give examples of the occurrence of such principles with a few significant passages. Since we intend to form an accurate idea of the Cardinal's New Theology as such, its study is of paramount importance.

1. Before the Backdrop of Classical Theological Teaching on Human Knowledge

Christianity is a revealed religion which, until Vatican II, claimed to be the sole possessor of the truth. As a revealed religion, Christianity has its final objective foundation in God's own message to mankind who is both summoned and obliged submit to the Faith as the Word of God.²

Theology is, as the term itself implies, the science of God. The material object of theology is primarily God, and secondarily created things, insofar as they are related to God. In discussing the formal object, one must distinguish between natural and supernatural theology. *Theologia naturalis*, which was established by Plato and which forms the high point of philosophy, is the scientific exposition of the

² Denzinger 1789, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p.425.

truths about God insofar as they are known by the light of natural reason.[†] Supernatural theology (*theologia revelata*) is the scientific presentation of the truths about God insofar as they are known through the light of divine revelation. The formal object of *theologia naturalis* is God, as He can be known by natural reason from creation; the formal object of supernatural theology, hence theology properly speaking, is God as He is known through faith, through divine revelation.[‡] Classical theology is *per se* theocentric.

Correspondingly, Catholic theology as a science has its objective principle of knowledge in supernatural revelation (*fides quae creditur*) and its subjective principle of knowledge in supernatural faith (*fides qua creditur*).[‡] Its classical expression is found in the "Catholic system" (John Henry Cardinal Newman). In this spiritual cosmos of traditional teaching, every truth of the Faith has its fixed place and exact meaning. Compared with the modern empirical sciences, theology is a science of faith *sui generis*.[‡]

³ Ludwig Ott, as above, p.1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13f. For a splendid presentation of theological teaching on knowledge, we are indebted to Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Gesammelte Schriften*, as above, vol. III.

† *Translator's footnote*: The reader should not be too discouraged by these technical terms, which when explained are basically quite simple. The *material* object is what a science treats broadly speaking; the *formal* object is the particular aspect or point of view from which the science proceeds. For example, medicine, psychology, and ethics all have the same *material* object (i.e., man), but the *formal* object is different in each case (i.e., the health of man's body, the operations of his soul, the morality of his actions, respectively).

‡ *Translator's footnote*: "Principle of knowledge" means either *objectively* what I know—e.g., a table,—or *subjectively* that by which I know—e.g., by means of light. Thus the distinction between the *content* of faith—i.e., the truths divinely revealed—and the *act* of faith—i.e., the supernatural light by which I believe these truths.

The break with the classical understanding of theology occurred with the arrival of the so-called New Theology. The results of the break can be seen presently in the wide spectrum of pluralism in the modern "prolific theologies."⁵ We have briefly drawn a sketch of classical theology, mainly in order to have a frame of reference for the presentation of the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyla. Before the backdrop of traditional theology, the particulars of the Cardinal's theology shine forth more clearly. We will begin with an exposition of the most basic tenets of the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis* and *revelata*, followed by a treatment of the principles of knowledge in his theology, which, as in classical theology, are revelation and faith, but with a thoroughly different meaning.

2. The Way of All Flesh to the One God of All Religions

With the help of Church Tradition and classical theology, we have duly described the statements of Cardinal Wojtyla on the "journey of the human spirit to God" as *theologia naturalis*,[†] yet with certain reservations. The traditional *theologia naturalis* takes for granted the distinctions of natural and supernatural revelation as well as natural (reason) and supernatural knowledge of God (faith). However, from the very beginning, any and every current of the New Theology sought precisely to eliminate such "antiquated scholastic dualism."⁶ That holds true as well for the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyla. Our designation *theologia naturalis* should, therefore, only be understood as a conceptual label for the Cardinal's statements on "the journey of the spirit, but also the journey of all men to God." The discarding of scholastic distinctions signals not

⁵ Cf. my article: *Theologie der Religionen*, as above, p.16f.

⁶ In more detail, above, pp.34f.

[†] See above, pp.48f.

only the break with classical theology, but also means a grievous loss of scientific clarity in every current of the New Theology. The dogmatic consequences are considerable as we shall see. The traditional *theologia naturalis* draws its proof of legitimacy from the Bible.

According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, man is capable of knowing the existence of God from creation (Wis. 13:1-9; Rom. 1:20) and from the inner voice of conscience (Rom. 2:14f.). In the history of missions, this "natural" knowledge of God played a considerable role in the evaluation of non-Christian religions. Already the Apostle Paul in his discourse to Lystra and the Areopagites (Acts 14:14-16; 17:26-29) shows that God gives continual blessings to the heathen nations as well, that He is easy to find and is close to every one of us, "for in Him we live, we move, and we have our being" (17:28).⁷

The Church Fathers reinforce the texts of Holy Scripture. The expression *theologia naturalis* is already found in St. Augustine (in connection with Varro). The thinking man reflects on the question of God and tries to answer it in virtue of his natural reason and through creation. The Church has recognized a *theologia naturalis* as the apex of philosophical thought ever since Christian antiquity.

This tradition was furthered and deepened by scholasticism and classical theology until the basic tenets of the *theologia naturalis* were finally defined at Vatican I: "If anyone should have said that the One True God, our Creator and our Lord, cannot be known with certitude by the things which have been made, by the natural light of human reason, let him be anathema" (*Denzinger-Bannwart* 1806). It is clearly by this definition how basic the scholastic distinction of natural and supernatural knowledge of God really is. The *theologia naturalis* is often used today by

⁷ Cf. Ludwig Ott, as above, p.18f.

conservative theologians in their attempt to justify the Prayer Meeting of Religions in Assisi.

Cardinal Wojtyła chooses as the main point of departure of his *theologia naturalis*, not external creation, but rather “the depths of man,” i.e., relying on modern philosophical currents (phenomenology and existentialism). For an example of creation as the point of departure, let us consider the following text from *Gaudium et Spes* (no. 36), which the Cardinal quotes approvingly: “Moreover, all believers, no matter what religion they profess, have always understood him to speak and make himself evident in the discourse of creatures.” The text is reminiscent of the Apostle Paul, but with the following difference. In Romans 1:19 ff., the Apostle states his views on heathen idolatry: “Seeing that what may be known about God is manifest to them. For God has manifested it to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, His everlasting power also and divinity, being understood through the things that are made.” St. Paul is not naively optimistic about the possibility of the knowledge of God for the heathens, and therefore his view becomes a frightening pronouncement of guilt. The reality of the heathen religions, which he had daily witnessed, showed him how the heathens perverted the revelation which they received from God through creation. Thus he continues: “And so they (the heathens) are without excuse, seeing that although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks...for they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man....” Such critical statements about the heathen religions are not found in Cardinal Wojtyła. His judgment is strictly favorable: All are “believers, no matter what their religion,” and likewise all have “constantly recognized the voice of God in the language of creation.” Such vague, careless formulations from a few Council texts reflect the

naively optimistic judgment of non-Christian religions by modern theology.

As stated above, however, the main point of departure in the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis* is what he calls "man's inmost being." The encounter of the human spirit with God is essentially rooted in his nature: man as man is capable, on the basis of his personal transcendence, of receiving the "God of infinite majesty" in the endless inner space of his mind and also of experiencing him directly in the *Unio Mystica*.

Hence, the Cardinal's *theologia naturalis religionum* yields the following results: The members of the various religions—in context, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism—turn with success to the God of infinite majesty (p.16). The striking contrasts and contradictions among religions including their fundamentally different notions of God, are no obstacles for the journey of man to God. No one asks about the legitimacy of the various religions' claims to the truth. Given the absolute transcendence of the encounter with God, the question is pointless. For the God of infinite majesty, whom the Cardinal identifies with the God of Revelation in Isaiah 6, is conceived as a pure abstraction which "transcends absolutely the whole of creation, all that is visible and comprehensible"; hence, all concrete historical religions. In like manner, the encounter or the union with God is accomplished, on the part of man, in the trans-historical transcendence of the human person.

Although for Cardinal Wojtyła, the encounter between God and man takes place beyond all creation in trans-historical transcendence, the historical religions do not lose their importance. On the contrary, the transcendent encounter or *Unio Mystica* between God and man as a possibility open to all men is also the foundation at the very root of all religions. This view coincides with that of Rudolf Otto in his modern theology of religions.⁸ Religions are, then, historical expressions of the human experi-

ence of transcendence, and in turn a means of communicating that very encounter and union of man with the God of infinite majesty. They could be regarded altogether as various ways of salvation or channels of divine revelation, provided man is duly aware of his transcendence.

Since all men partake in "the wonderful transcendence of the human spirit in one way or another," all men are also united with the God of infinite majesty in a vast, mysterious community. Cardinal Wojtyła calls it the "Church of the living God." It encompasses all humanity. The confusion of nature and grace, Church and humanity, is evident. The discarding of "antiquated scholastic dualism" has shown its first fruits. The thesis of universal salvation can be traced back to the *theologia naturalis*.

The Cardinal's *theologia naturalis religionum* is already a sufficient basis for an event like the Prayer Meeting of Religions at Assisi in the year 1986.

3. The Thesis of Universal Salvation as an Axiom of the *Theologia Revelata*

The God of infinite majesty to Whom, in the end, the "believers" of all religions turn, is also the God of the Covenant (p.19). The first covenant, which was offered to mankind in the first Adam, found its "fulfillment" in the second covenant of the second Adam (p.19f.).⁹ As the members of all religions are on the way to the God of infinite majesty, so are the People of God on the way to the

⁸ Cf. my article: *Theologie der Religionen*, as above, p.133-136.

⁹ Cardinal Wojtyła admittedly speaks about this on p.25, where he says that the first covenant "made when man was created" was destroyed. That is, "That covenant, shattered once by original sin, is to be rebuilt by redemption, with foundations that go deeper still and even vaster dimensions." The destruction of the first covenant obviously does not mean that the descendants of Adam could no longer possess the *similitudo Dei*. A consequence of the thesis of universal salvation is nominalism.

God of the Covenant. It is a common pilgrimage of humanity and the People of God to the same goal, the same God, only under two different aspects. According to the thesis of universal salvation, the distinction between humanity and the People of God in their relationship to the God of all men is neither essential nor substantial, but arises only through differing degrees of consciousness.

Cardinal Wojtyła speaks of universal salvation in various terms. For example: The Son of God united Himself with every man through His Incarnation. Or: The redeeming death of Christ was the (supernatural) birth of man, regardless of whether the man knows it or accepts it or not: "At that moment, man's existence acquired a new dimension, very simply expressed by St. Paul as 'in Christ.'"

The supernatural union of every man with the Son of God is founded directly on Christ. The axiom of universal salvation implies *per se* a new Christology and soteriology. The thesis of universal salvation makes the Redeemer of Man and the mystery of Redemption appear even more universal than is the case in the Church's traditional teaching. In modern theology, the thesis of universal salvation has found its doctrinal expression in the vision of the "Cosmic Christ" with its scriptural basis in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:3-23; Col. 1:13-23), to name only these sources. In evident contrast to the text of Holy Scriptures, such a "dualism" as the clear distinction between Cosmos and Church is scorned by the vision of a "Cosmic Christ" which binds the universe and the human race, wholly and without distinction, to a cosmic unity in Christ.¹⁰ The work of such a cosmic savior accomplishes not only the objective, but also the subjective universality of redemption: thus, universal salvation.

¹⁰ Cf. my article: *Theologie der Religionen*, as above, pp.142-152.

In the *Meditazioni*, Cardinal Wojtyła traces universal salvation back to three acts which God accomplished for our salvation: the Incarnation of His Son, the death of Christ on the Cross, and His Resurrection; the three are seemingly mentioned promiscuously. One time it is the Incarnation, through which the Son of God united Himself with every man, another time it is the "redeeming death of Christ by which every man partakes of existence in Christ," and the "fullest and deepest community and solidarity with the entire human family" (p.86) is realized. A third time, it is the death and Resurrection of Christ, through which an "indissoluble link" of the living God is created "with every man, woman and child, He is with the entire human family" (p.93).

Although it is the teaching of the Church that every individual action of Christ possesses an infinite value for our salvation and that all Christ's actions make up the work of redemption; nevertheless, the work of redemption reached its high point in Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross, so that this is primarily the efficient cause of our salvation (*Denzinger-Bannwart* 938).¹¹ Supposing universal salvation, however, such distinctions become secondary, as merely so many attempts to explain the fact of justification which all men possess anyway.

Cardinal Wojtyła is himself thoroughly aware of the novelty of his "more universal" view of the "Redeemer of Man" and of the "mystery of Redemption." But he sees therein no break with the pre-conciliar teaching of the Church, but only a "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ," which has been granted to Christendom, "by the opening which was accomplished by Vatican II."¹² Hence a new, more universal consciousness has come into being, a new "Christ-consciousness."¹³

¹¹ Cf. Ludwigg Ott, as above, p.184.

¹² Inaugural Encyclical, no. 11, as above.

Likewise, a new, more universal ecclesiology follows directly from the Cardinal's axiom of universal salvation. The "Church" comprises now all men, who are effectively saved thanks to their transcendent depths. Pointing out the famous sentence in *Lumen Gentium* (no.1), that the Church "in Christ [is] a kind of sacrament or sign and instrument of unity with God and the unity of all mankind," the Cardinal says: "All men are embraced by this Sacrament of unity" (p.26). On the basis of universal salvation, humanity and the Church form one, (supernatural) sacramental unity! Christ, the Bridegroom, is not only with the Church, but "He is with every man, woman, and child, He is with the entire human family" (p.93). Here, too, the Cardinal is completely aware of the novelty of his theological view, and here, too, he sees no break with traditional teaching, but only an expansion of "consciousness" of which the Church partakes through Vatican II. There the "complete and universal consciousness of the Church" has been formed; it develops "in dialogue."¹⁴ On account of the conciliar broadening of horizons, the Church has also "re-defined her own nature" (p.17). Hence, a new, universal consciousness has come into being, "Church-consciousness."

The doctrinal difficulties which often come to light in the conflict between the new conciliar "Church-consciousness" and the historical reality of the Church instituted by Christ are simply explained away through recourse to the Holy Spirit working in the hidden depths of man. Thus we read this astonishing statement about the institution founded by Christ: "Jesus built His Church not so much upon Himself as upon the Holy Spirit. He, Jesus the

¹³ On the entire question, cf. the excellent work of Bernhard Lakebrink, *Die Wahrheit in Bedraengnis* (Stein am Rhein, 1986): for our subject pp. 26-29.

¹⁴ Thus in the Inaugural Encyclical, no. 11, as above.

Christ, is only a servant (cf. Mk. 10:45), the servant of Yahweh in the Old Testament (Is. 42:1), a servant of the covenant (cf. Cor. 3:6) who will fulfill His destiny in dependence on the Spirit who is gift!" (p.57-58).

But has the Church not called upon and prayed to Jesus Christ as *Kyrios* from the beginning?!

The Cardinal's Christology, ecclesiology, and anthropology have their theological center in the thesis of universal salvation.

With that, the circle of the *theologia naturalis religionum* and *theologia revelata* of Cardinal Wojtyla is closed: From the standpoint of natural theology, there is the encounter or union of man with the God of infinite majesty, which is accomplished in man's personal transcendence, which then emerges in the *theologia revelata* as a salutary event based on the axiom of universal salvation. The Cardinal's thesis of universal salvation is nothing less than a false approach begun in his *theologia naturalis* and strengthened by a false axiom of his *theologia revelata*. What is presented from the standpoint of natural theology as "the Church of the living God," which "unites all men," proves itself from the standpoint of his *theologia revelata* as essentially identical with the "Church of our day," which "has become particularly conscious of this truth" (p.17). This view of the universal reality of salvation is Karol Wojtyla's counterpart to Karl Rahner's thesis of "anonymous Christians" and "anonymous Christianity."

4. The Principles of Knowledge in the New Theology of Karol Wojtyla

Now that we have elicited from the *Meditazioni* the concept of revelation, we are in a position, regarding the theological principles of knowledge, to present the special characteristic of the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyla and to grasp it as a whole.

The principles of knowledge in the Cardinal's New Theology are, as in classical theology, revelation and faith. These, however, have undergone a drastic change in meaning.

4.1 The "Twofold Revelation"

Although Cardinal Wojtyla chooses Vatican II constantly as the starting point of his theological meditations, he does not base his concept of revelation on the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, in which the Council discusses revelation *ex professo*, but on a few specific passages from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22). The first fundamental definition of revelation reads: "This revelation is no theory or ideology. It consists in a fact, the fact that by his Incarnation the Son of God united himself with every man, became man himself, one of us, 'like us in all things but sin'" (p.102). Revelation does not mean here as in classical theology the *locutio Dei ad homines*, but primarily the inner reality of the union of the Son of God with every man. This union should be understood in the sense of universal salvation.

By describing the inner fact of universal salvation as revelation, the Cardinal confines revelation to the subjectivity of man. That means: that which in the classical theology was the objective principle of knowledge appears in the Cardinal's New Theology as an immanent, natural, and subjective reality which is known prior to experience (*a priori*).[†] We can thus define: The fact of universal salvation as revealed *a priori* in the subjectivity of every man is the first, transcendental principle of knowledge in the New Theology of Karol Wojtyla. Thus, like the fact of universal

[†] *Translator's footnote.* *A priori*: i.e., prior to experience, therefore interior, if not intuitive. *A posteriori*: i.e., based on experience, therefore exterior, empirical.

salvation, the *a priori* revelation is also universal. It is present in every man and in all religions.

Cardinal Wojtyla elicits the second fundamental definition of revelation from the same key text of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (no.22). This text, it is claimed, illuminates "the anthropological, even anthropocentric character of the revelation offered to mankind in Christ. This revelation is centered on man: Christ 'fully reveals man to man himself.' But He does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love" (cf. Jn. 17:6).

The "revelation, which in Christ is offered to men," is naturally the historical revelation based on the teaching and example of Jesus. There is consequently a "twofold revelation": the *a priori* revelation in the subjectivity of every man and the *a posteriori* historical revelation from the teaching and example of Jesus.¹⁵ The first concept of revelation corresponds with the second. After the union of the Son of God with each man has been accomplished (=revelation *a priori*), the "revelation which is offered to men in Christ" (= *a posteriori*), consists only in revealing to man the fact of his being redeemed. It is obvious: "This revelation is centered on man"!

The relation between *a priori* and *a posteriori* revelation is then still more precisely described and even concisely expressed: "Christ reveals man to man himself." That means: "The mystery of man," which is "enlightened" through the *a posteriori* revelation offered in Christ, amounts to the thesis that each man possesses his "existence in Christ" *a priori* from the first moment of his exist-

¹⁵ On the entire subject, c.f. Bernhard Lakebrink, as above, pp.75-107. Even if Lakebrink is mainly concerned with refuting Karl Rahner, his explanations are of such a fundamental nature, that they can apply to any form of existentialist philosophy. We have employed the terms *a priori* and *a posteriori*, which are not used by Cardinal Wojtyla, but which nonetheless touch and throw light on the subject at hand.

ence; and, indeed, as his own deepest human existence. The deepest existence of man and "existence in Christ" are thus for Cardinal Wojtyla one and the same.

In support of this thesis, the Cardinal appeals to the Apostle Paul. Is he authorized in doing so? Certainly one can say that, according to the Apostle Paul and the New Testament, the "mystery of man" is revealed through the "mystery of the Incarnate Word." But this "revelation" means essentially that the Word of God reveals to man his radical need for redemption on account of his sins, and the nature of his redemption as justification by faith and by the reception of Baptism. Certainly, the Apostle Paul teaches that being redeemed by Christ is identical with "existence in Christ." But nothing is more foreign to Paul than universal salvation and the identification of "existence in Christ" with the deepest existence of man, namely, that of his own human existence. Thus, Paul's understanding of "existence in Christ" has nothing in common with that of Cardinal Wojtyla.

When Paul and the Church speak of Christian existence as "existence in Christ" they mean the state of grace of the justified sinner through faith and Baptism. Moreover, faith is always the deciding factor in the relationship of man to Christ and to God for the redeemed and justified Christians, until that faith passes into the beatific vision. The justified Christian possesses "existence in Christ" in faith, a grace which surpasses his nature *quoad substantiam*. Every aspect of his Christian existence, rooted in faith and in grace, is and remains always Christocentric. Though the "existence in Christ" of justified sinners in classical theology is understood as a "formal union with Christ," in truth there is only an accidental union. Man retains his nature as man forever. His partaking in the trinitary life of God remains accidental and supernatural.

The Cardinal's thesis of universal salvation thus does not mean that the state of grace of redeemed Christians, as the

Church's traditional teaching presents it, would simply be communicated or extended to all men and be practically identical with the universal salvation of non-Christians. On the contrary, the thesis of universal salvation, which holds for all men, drastically changes the Church's former teaching on grace.

The least one can say about the Cardinal's thesis of the identity of "existence in Christ" with the deepest elements of essence and existence in man, is that according to this theory, "existence in Christ" belongs to man's nature, and the traditional "dualism" of nature and grace from a theological standpoint is thereby "eliminated."¹⁶ But one must still ask the Cardinal: Does the union of the Son of God with each man amount to an accidental or a substantial union? Is the "self-revelation of God" to man an accidental or substantial revelation? Such essential "scholastic distinctions" are widely lacking in the statements of Cardinal Wojtyła.¹⁷ Thus the question of Cardinal Siri to Henri de Lubac should also be addressed to Cardinal Wojtyła: "Is Christ only man, or is man divine?"

Our precise analysis of the phrase: "Christ reveals man to man himself" allows a clear definition of the Cardinal's thesis of universal salvation to come to light, as well as his *a priori* concept of revelation:

1. The union of the Son of God with each man should be conceived as an inner, ("supernatural") ontological, *a priori* reality in each man, which presents the deepest essential foundation of human existence of each man, in whom "the image and likeness of God is kept intact." This thesis is Karol Wojtyła's counterpart to Karl Rahner's "supernatural existential."

¹⁶ In detail, above, pp.54f.

¹⁷ Of course, they are found clearly stated in the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986).

2. Since universal salvation is characterized simultaneously as revelation, it thereby follows from the Cardinal's *a priori* concept of revelation: Not God, not Christ, but the human existence of man is the material object of revelation *a priori*. If the true human existence of man is the transcendental material object of revelation *a priori*, then revelation in general and thus also the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyła has an anthropocentric character. The diametrical opposition to classical theology, in which God is the material object of (theocentric) theology, should be obvious.

The anthropocentric character of revelation *a posteriori* is clearly expounded by the Cardinal himself in the proposition where he states: "Christ reveals man to man himself," but he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love."

Christ himself is assigned the role of the one who reveals the true human existence of man. The "revelation of the Father and the Father's love"—that is, the entire body of historical revelation in the teaching and example of Jesus—finally Christ Himself and also the Father—become the means of man's revelation. The *a priori* transcendental revelation latent in the dark caverns of man's subjectivity is interpreted by means of the historical, *a posteriori* revelation and thus fully comes out into the open. The empirical, historical revelation becomes the interpreter of human existence. That is what is meant by "existential interpretation": The entire body of revelation in the teaching and example of Jesus is nothing more than the man's "enlightenment" about his true human existence. That is, therefore, the meaning of the Cardinal's statement: "Revelation has an anthropocentric character."

If every man from the beginning to the end of the world is redeemed and justified (cf. p.87), then each man possesses "existence in Christ" as the basis of his own existence, and the process of justification, the necessity of faith and Baptism for salvation is null and void; then the history

of salvation also loses its genuinely historical, decisive character.¹⁸ The mysteries of our salvation in the life of Christ, such as His Incarnation, Sacrifice on the Cross, and His Resurrection, become mere interpreters of human existence. They "enlighten" man on his deepest human existence, and unveil "the mystery of man." Cardinal Wojtyła's varying interpretation of human existence through the Savior's various deeds for the redemption of man is then no contradiction, but only the exposition of various aspects. Since the fact of "existence in Christ" is present in every man, the interpretation of this fact is a mere question of "consciousness." With the anthropocentric revelation of Cardinal Wojtyła, the Church's preaching and missionary activity can thus only be concerned with man's "enlightenment" regarding his human existence, man's "coming unto himself," and his expansion of consciousness.

If salvation and justification are immediately realized in each man as the universal act of salvation of the Father's love, then the interpretation of this fact "by the revelation of the Father and the Father's love" also places the boundless love of the Father into the center of theology. There is still only one proper "theology of boundless love."¹⁹

¹⁸ For the question of how Cardinal Wojtyła conceives the relationship of universal salvation and God's economy of salvation, cf. above, pp.60f.

¹⁹ The revelation of "the Father and his love," as a means of enlightenment of man's hidden existence, leads directly into the depths of man and consequently to a "theology of love." On that point Cardinal Wojtyła says: "Love, an uncreated gift, is part of the inner mystery of God and is the very nucleus of theology" (p. 55). One could agree with that, if in the Cardinal's New Theology the principles of knowledge, namely revelation and faith, were left untouched. Here there is a shift of emphasis. It is not revealed truth in its inviolable objectivity, as formerly in classical theology, which is the "very nucleus" of theology, but the revelation offered in Christ "from the Father and his love" as the interpretation of the nature of man. Revealed truth in its inviolable objectivity and the equally objective faith are driven out through the existentialist anthropocen-

4.2 The "Twofold Faith"

In classical theology, supernatural faith (*fides qua creditur*) is the subjective principle of knowledge. Faith means the submissive reception of the truths put forward by the supernatural revelation of God. God in general is the material object, but the formal object of classical theology is the true God as He is known by the faith through revelation. As a science proceeding from faith, theology has, in addition, human reason as a special principle of knowledge, by which it permeates the contents and context of the organism of supernatural truth and, as far as possible, seeks to understand it (*fides quaerens intellectum*).²⁰

Faith corresponds to revelation. As the concept of revelation in classical theology undergoes a drastic change in the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyła, so too the classical concept of faith. The "twofold revelation" goes hand in hand with a "twofold faith."

The first premise of "faith" corresponds to the axiom of universal salvation as revelation *a priori*. Since it concerns the inner, hidden fact of "existence in Christ" as the innermost depths of man, the "mystery of man," which is enlightened through "revelation offered in Christ," this transcendental, *a priori* revelation as such can have no concrete,

tric reference to the depths of man in the name of a boundless love. The thesis of universal salvation is not based on revealed truth. Therefore it is derived from the love of God! Through universal salvation, the Faith has lost its decisive character for salvation. Love, which is really impossible without faith, suddenly becomes all-important, and a mere human love at that, which then relegates faith to the area of personal preference. Love as the guiding principle of theology opens the door to a new theology of inwardness, which simply disregards the Faith and paves the way for a theology of religions founded on the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit (love as an "uncreated gift" is the Holy Spirit) in the "depths of the human spirit."

²⁰ Ludwig Ott, as above, pp. 1-3.

empirical object of "faith," but is only the condition for the reception of a future empirical, historical, *a posteriori* revelation. As a pre-existing transcendental structure of human existence, however, this *a priori* revelation generally takes its course on the journey of the human spirit to God. Like the fact of *a priori* revelation, so too the *a priori* faith is universal among men.

In the *theologia naturalis*, the Cardinal defends the thesis that man is capable, on the basis of his personal transcendence, of receiving the God of infinite majesty in the endless inner space of his mind and to experience him mystically. From thence it follows, that all men, who on the basis of the "wonderful transcendence of the human spirit" are "united in the Church of the Living God" (p.17), can also in their respective religions attain genuine revelation, experience and knowledge of God. But also in the outside world, through creation, all men have access to God: For "all believers, no matter what religion they profess, have always understood him to speak and make himself evident in the discourse of creatures" (p.33). Members of all religions are thus "believers." Their "faith" is not dogmatically laid down, but is rather a faith in humanity common to all religions.²¹

In the Cardinal's *theologia revelata*, he defends the thesis of universal salvation, according to which each man possesses "existence in Christ" as the transcendental founda-

²¹ Cf. an expert in comparative religion, Friedrich Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion* (Stuttgart, 1961) in: *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, Christel Matthias Schroeder, ed. (Stuttgart, 1961), vol. I, p.17: "Due concern for spiritual matters constitutes faith in a certain respect, yet by no means faith in the sense of dogmas stemming from a particular theological school or religious denomination. The greatest researchers of religion...were men of faith, but men of a universal faith, a faith in humanity. They believed in God's revelation, but in his revelation in all religions of humanity."

tion of his humanity. Since Christ, Who enlightens every man (John 1:9), has penetrated the heart of each man in which he is active, it follows that the innermost depths of the human spirit can or must lie at the root of something *a priori* authentically Christian in the "faith" and consciousness of "anonymous Christians," so that even in non-Christian religions, authentically Christian values and truths are found. Does not Vatican II say as much in *Nostra Aetate* (no.2), where it points out the Fathers' teaching on the so-called *logoi spermatikoi*?[†]

At this point, various statements of Karl Rahner and Karol Wojtyla become clear: With Karl Rahner, the "coming unto oneself" of the anonymous Christian by which he then becomes a "reflex-conscious" Christian, is purely a transition of consciousness from the existentially given state to the categorically conscious state, in the sense of a thorough existentialist idealism. This is not present in Karol Wojtyla's system. He likewise finds a transition of consciousness necessary on the basis of his thesis of universal salvation, only he emphasizes the *a posteriori* revelation: It is Christ Who "reveals" to man his deepest human existence, "but he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love." Thus the *a posteriori* revelation performs the function of midwife in the process of "making conscious."

† *Translator's footnote:* i.e., seeds of the word, a Greek expression borrowed from Stoicism, principally by Clement of Alexandria and St. Justin Martyr in the second and third centuries after Christ, in order to designate certain elements of truth still present in heathen religions, these truths being either natural values of integrity (e.g., respect for parents and the aged), or simply traces of Biblical revelation (e.g., notion of sacrifice and expiation). In all fairness, however, we must observe that neither Clement nor Justin would ever have dreamed of viewing these *logoi spermatikoi* as means of salvation proper to these false religions. Indeed, the same Fathers do not fail to remark therein elements of the occult and the diabolical. Thus a naively optimistic view of these false religions, even though the individual members be sincere and honest people, is no accurate appraisal of these religions as seen in God's eyes. Sincerity is plainly not enough.

Here is shown the great proximity between Cardinal Wojtyla and Henri de Lubac.

With that we come to the second premise of "faith," which corresponds to the Cardinal's *a posteriori* conception of revelation. The *a priori* receives its empirical-historical object in the *a posteriori* revelation. Faith means therefore the acceptance of "the revelation, which in Christ is offered to men," but as a means of enlightening the true being of man's existence. After this, the Cardinal can use the entire traditional vocabulary of empirical, historical revelation, but it undergoes an anthropocentric, nominalistic transformation in the process. Just as the "revelation offered to man in Christ" has an "anthropocentric character," so also the faith corresponding to it.

Let us briefly recapitulate the content of this "twofold faith" in universal salvation. Man experiences that he is permanently united to the Son of God through the Incarnation, is saved and justified through Christ's death on the cross from the beginning to the end of the world, and possesses "existence in Christ" as the religious dimension of His own human existence, and owes everything to the love of "God the Father."

Since the work of redemption is basically accomplished in each man, in whom the image and likeness of God is also kept intact, the revelation offered in Christ can only serve to enlighten human existence, and thus the corresponding "faith" can only mean the enlightenment of human consciousness. Therefore, man must go into himself in order to discover himself in light of revelation faithfully received, which is offered to him in Christ, and thus finally experience that which he always was and is deep down. That is the meaning of the Cardinal's phrase: "The mystery of man is explained in the mystery of the Incarnate Word."

This brand of faith calls to mind the "gnosis," ancient or modern.†

We have thus also determined the special character of faith in the "revelation offered in Christ," namely, in an *a posteriori* revelation: Since, according to the Cardinal's words, revelation has an anthropocentric character and since the entire body of historical revelation in the teaching and example of Jesus constitutes the means by which man's innermost existence is "revealed" to him, the acceptance of the revelation offered in Christ is also a part of this faith, but as the interpreter of human existence and as the enlightenment of human consciousness as regards the innermost depths of his true human existence. Just as the *a posteriori* revelation has an anthropocentric character, so also the faith corresponding to it.

A comparison of the principles of knowledge in Cardinal Wojtyla's New Theology with those of classical theology makes the fundamental differences clearly come to light. In classical theology, God is the material and formal object of theology. In the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyla, the object is man. The diametrical opposition is manifest. Through the confusion of nature and grace in the axiom of universal salvation, the traditional "dualism" is entirely eliminated. The traditional distinctions of the natural and supernatural knowledge of God, of natural and supernatural revelation, of natural reason and supernatural faith, of natural and supernatural theology, no longer apply. The virtue of faith, which is constitutive for the process of justification, is no longer required for salvation since all men are *a priori* redeemed and justified.

† *Translator's footnote:* *Gnosis* is the Greek word for *knowledge*, and has come to mean a system where salvation consists, not in submitting the mind to fixed dogmas and obeying a moral code, but rather in the possession of a quasi-intuitive knowledge of the mysteries of the universe. This system was historically associated with pantheism, idealism, and religious syncretism. The reader will readily notice the tie-ins with modernism, the "Cosmic Christ," Assisi, and the New Age Movement. Among other things, it is the confusion of philosophy and mysticism.

We may thus maintain: The principles of knowledge of revelation and faith in Cardinal Wojtyła's New Theology have an existentialist, anthropocentric character, so that one can speak of an anthropocentric theology, of a transcendental anthropology and of a theology of man. It leads automatically to a "fundamental anthropocentrism" (cf. Siri).

The Cardinal's New Theology provides an extensive foundation for interreligious dialogue: The "Church of the living God" (p.17) unites all men. Universal salvation is the common basis. The concepts of revelation and faith are not proper to the Catholic religion. All religions contain genuine revelation. The faith encompasses all "believers" in all religions. Genuine faith is faith in humanity. But "revelation, which is offered to man in Christ," thus the Christian faith, is for Cardinal Wojtyła the faith in which the "mystery of man," "existence in Christ," is "enlightened" once and for all.²² This "offer" is thus by no means necessary for salvation, nor is it exclusive or binding. There is also revela-

²² *Mutatis mutandi*, one could perhaps describe this position of the Cardinal which follows from the thesis that all are redeemed, with the words of Karl Rahner, who presents his position with the following words: The non-Christians "are already anonymous Christians, and the Church is not the community of them who possess, as opposed to those who lack, God's grace, but the community of those who can profess explicitly what they and the others hope to be. It may seem presumptuous to the non-Christians that the Christian considers salvation and sanctification in every man as the fruit of the grace of his Christ and as anonymous Christianity, and regards the non-Christian as a Christian not yet 'come to himself' by reflex. But the Christian cannot abandon this 'presumption.' It is indeed an occasion, for himself and the Church, for the greatest humility. For it allows God to be, once again, greater than men and the Church. The Church will meet the non-Christian of tomorrow with the statement expressed by Paul—'What therefore you worship (and indeed worship!) in ignorance, I proclaim to you' (Acts 17:23). As a result, one can be tolerant, modest, and yet unbending towards all non-Christian religions" (*Schriften zur Theologie*, 1962, p. 158).

tion, faith and the experience of God in other religions. On the basis of religious liberty, interreligious dialogue as a brotherly exchange of religious experiences for the sake of mutual enrichment is the primrose path towards universal religious harmony.

The question remains to be answered: Is the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyła also the theology of Pope John Paul II, and if so, does it constitute the theological core of his papal encyclicals?

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IN ASSISI

Part II, Volume I

The "Trinitarian Trilogy":
Redemptor Hominis, Dives in Misericordia,
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FOREWORD

The Second Part appears in three sections: (1) *Redemptor Hominis* [= RH], (2) *Dives in Misericordia* [= DiM], (3) *Dominum et Vivificantem* [= DeV] [i.e., the three major dogmatic Encyclicals of John Paul II]. In the present work, which is the first section, we will analyze the Pope's inaugural Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. The main purpose of this comprehensive analysis is, as in the First Part, an accurate understanding of the Pope's thinking. But that means we must trace his line of thought from his own theological principles.

Part I has already given us the key to understanding the Pope's theology, and will serve as a basis for Part II, the "trinitarian trilogy."

The theme "Assisi" has not lost its relevance. The Pope himself vividly expressed the thought behind the world prayer meeting of October 27, 1986 in numerous speeches. In his message for World Peace Day on January 1, 1992 under the motto:

"Believers of all religions: A united effort for world peace!"

the Pope took up the theme once again. The secretariat of the German Episcopal Conference put out a pamphlet under the same title, with a foreword by Bishop Karl Lehmann of Mainz.* The alleged purpose of the publication is to help "the parish communities and all interested parties to put the Pope's intentions into practice." After the "model" of Assisi was reproduced on an international scale

* "*Glaubende aller Religionen: Vereint für den Aufbau des Friedens*," World Peace Day, January 1, 1992, Arbeitshilfe Nr. 92, Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Bonn.

in numerous subsequent prayer meetings, it should henceforth be incorporated into parish life. The time has arrived, because: "Even in our society we find a growing number of believers of non-Christian religions, travelers or residents who are foreign workers, refugees or students. Towards these, especially the Moslems, each has a responsibility, in his own way, to promote a peaceful coexistence among persons of different beliefs" (Lehmann). Faced with this situation it will daily become more urgent to clarify the papal "theology of Assisi."

INTRODUCTION

TO JOHN PAUL II'S "TRINITARIAN TRILOGY"

The First Part ends with the question: "Is the New Theology of Cardinal Wojtyla also the theology of Pope John Paul II?"¹

The answer is: The philosophical-theological principles of the professor and archbishop Karol Wojtyla have fully entered into the words and actions of Pope John Paul II. Through the diligent exercise of the office of Peter he developed them and finally presented their main element before the eyes of all mankind through the public manifestation of the world religions' prayer for peace at Assisi.² Therefore Part I forms also the basis for understanding and interpreting the Pope's theology. The most important milestones on John Paul II's theological journey to the prayer meeting at Assisi are the three dogmatic Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) and *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986), which the Pope himself has referred to as the "trinitarian trilogy."³

¹ Johannes Dörmann, *Pope John Paul II's Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religions in Assisi, Part I—From the Second Vatican Council to the Papal Elections* (Angelus Press, 1994), p. 123.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9; 21-46. See also my detailed presentation and analysis of the prayer meeting, "One Truth and Many Religions—Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," *Respondeo* 8 (Abensberg 1988).

³ John Paul II, at the announcement of *Dominum et Vivificantem* on Pentecost Sunday 1986 in the noon address at St. Peter's (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed. [= OR, Eng.], May 26, 1986, p. 1).

1. From learned professor to reigning Pontiff.

How many were familiar with the efforts of the scholar Karol Wojtyła towards a major synthesis of scholastic tradition, modern philosophy and theology, of mysticism and a conciliar world view? How many were familiar with the essays, mostly in Polish, written by the founder of the "Lublin-Krakow ethical school" or with the philosophical "struggle for man" which was carried out there?⁴

Through Cardinal Wojtyła's election to the Papacy, *the personal philosophy and theology of a professor and bishop attains the status of general relevance for the Church as a whole.*

Even as bishop, Karol Wojtyła continued to exercise his teaching career as a professor. While archbishop he remained professor, and as professor he was archbishop. This synthesis characterizes the personality of Karol Wojtyła. The philosophical-theological interest is not accidental in his case, but essential. Despite the exhausting and time-consuming exercise of his office as bishop, his philosophical-theological interests remained the intellectual and spiritual mainspring of his activity.

Through Cardinal Wojtyła's election to the Papacy, *the pontificate of John Paul II is formed by the philosophical-theological-spiritual nucleus of this powerful personality.*

As Bishop Karol Wojtyła so Pope John Paul II understands his office and duties in the light of the Council. The main source for his papal writings are the Council documents. Their interpretation depends on the understanding of the Council, as expressed already by the bishop of Krakow.⁵

⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyła, Andrzej Szostek, Tadeusz Styczén, *The Struggle for Man* (Kevelaer 1979).—Representative of the personalism of the "Wojtyła school."

⁵ E.g. *Von der Königswürde des Menschen [On the Kingly Dignity of Men]* (Stuttgart 1980).—Cf. Vol. I, pp. 9-19; 21-46.

Then, too, the pastoral efforts of John Paul II follow in the footsteps of Paul VI and are directed towards the implementation of the decisions of the Second Vatican Council, as the Pope himself strongly emphasizes (see below *Redemptor Hominis*).

Like Cardinal Wojtyla so Pope John Paul II is a man of Vatican II: He is a Pope of the Conciliar Church.

It makes a *big difference* whether a learned professor or the reigning Pontiff proclaims his personal philosophy and theology, whether a bishop or the successor of Peter makes his own understanding of the Council the norm of his apostolate, whether a bishop or the Vicar of Christ organizes an interfaith prayer meeting, whether a diocese or the universal Church takes part in the journey towards Assisi.

2. Assisi: John Paul II's grand vision of universal religious peace.

The interfaith worship of Assisi was no chance event in the pastoral order; it was *a major event of dogmatic significance*, emanating from the heart of the theology and personality of Karol Wojtyla, and presented before the entire world by Pope John Paul II as the visible expression of the intentions of Vatican II with the authority of the office of Peter. As a programmatic demonstration of the conciliar pan-ecumenism by the Pope himself, the "Assisi event" carries dogmatic weight, which marks the course of the Church into the third millennium.⁶

At the same time, the prayer meeting was *a major event of pastoral importance*: Assisi is the "model" which must be faithfully imitated, and according to which the pan-ecumenical objectives of Vatican II should be gradually real-

⁶ From the Vatican's standpoint: Assisi means "a breakthrough in the history of mankind," which "penetrates deep into man's consciousness" and which should "usher in the beginning of a new age" (*OR*, German ed. [= *OR*, dt.], Nov. 28, 1986, p. 2).

ized in the Church and in the world. The Pope wished and still wishes the prayer service for peace, as practiced there, to be understood as "an anticipation of what God would very much like to see realized through the historical development of mankind."⁷ Assisi was therefore not only the initial thrust, the "beginning of a new age," but also by the very fact the "anticipation" of the main objective: the "convergence of all religions."⁸ Assisi is *the starting point for a pastoral process, which if faithfully imitated should guide and transform the entire faith and practice of Christianity as well as the religious awareness of all mankind.* That is the pastoral dimension of the international series of prayer meetings in Kyoto (1987), Rome (1988), Warsaw (1989), Bari (1990), and Malta (1991), as well as numerous imitations on a lower scale. The pastoral success is remarkable: The "spirit of Assisi" has advanced since then to the tiniest country parishes.

In Assisi, the Pope presented before all mankind his grand vision of universal religious peace as the intention behind Vatican II.⁹

3. Public manifestation of the new religion under the auspices of the Pope.

To understand the "Assisi event" is to understand the "historical turning-point," officially introduced into the Church since the Council, and likewise to understand the reigning Pontiff. The reverse is also true.¹⁰ There is public talk of a "new religion,"¹¹ and not only of manifest innova-

⁷ John Paul II, Closing address in Assisi (*OR*, dt., Nov. 7, 1986, p. 10, 5).

⁸ See *OR*, dt., Nov. 28, 1986.

⁹ John Paul II, Christmas address to the Cardinals and members of the Roman Curia on Dec. 22, 1986 (*OR*, Eng., Jan. 5, 1987, p. 7.—See Part I, pp. 9-19).

¹⁰ Eugen Biser, *Die glaubensgeschichtliche Wende* (Graz 1986).

¹¹ Eugen Biser, *Glaubenswende [Conversion]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1987).

tions in theology and liturgy. This "historical turning-point" was in the making among theologians long before Vatican II, and was nowhere given more official status, as the "new religion" of the Conciliar Church, than in Assisi under the Pope's leadership. A primary task of present-day theology is to shed light on this dramatic incident of the "new religion" inaugurated by the Pope himself.

The pontificate of John Paul II plays a key role in the "new religion," but not as though the Pope's theology and administration present something entirely new. His theology is eclectic, only a special version in the broad spectrum of "new theologies"; and his administration, as he understands it, is merely a continuation of the path marked out by Pope Paul VI and Vatican II.¹² Since John Paul II is personally convinced of the *New Theology*, founded on the pan-ecumenical ideas of Vatican II, since he places himself as Pope at the head of the liberal-religious movements for unity, and leads them to the unforeseen summit of their endeavors, to the prayer meeting of religions in Assisi, he has in effect, with the authority of the office of Peter, aided and abetted the various ecumenical groups in the Church and the world towards a spectacular breakthrough.¹³ *Thus Assisi became the visible manifestation of the Conciliar Church's new religion under the auspices of the Pope.*

4. The "trinitarian trilogy"—heart of John Paul II's theology.

Considering the large quantity of papal writings and speeches, of more or less important addresses of the Holy See, drawn up by various collaborators on different occasions, all of which is by no means a homogeneous, coherent body, the question arises: Where and how, amidst the bulk of apostolic pronouncements, can we come to know

¹² John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 2; 3; 7.

¹³ For a more detailed analysis, see my essay in note 2, pp. 126ff.

the Pope's personal theology? Is it a theologically coherent body? If so, how can we pick it out from the heterogeneous bulk of material?

By the very nature of the matter, the Pope's theology does not appear in professorial essays, but in official pronouncements, dogmatic Encyclicals and pontifical acts. Consequently, it does not claim to be a rigid, scientific demonstration, but gradually comes more into focus in the course of exercise of the apostolic office.

Furthermore, the theology of John Paul II is not easy to recognize in its structure and entirety, because of the particularity of the language, the meditative character of the statements, the associative-circular mode of thought, the different purposes of the pronouncements, the heterogeneous bulk of material and subjects discussed, but especially on account of the use of traditional language and concepts, which, however, in the context of the *New Theology* undergoes a total change in meaning.

From the beginning of John Paul II's administration, we can clearly see that he is determined to dedicate his pontificate to a grand theological vision. It is equally clear that the Pope intended from the beginning to present his theology as a coherent body. This holds especially for the three major dogmatic Encyclicals, which he has referred to as the "trinitarian trilogy," and therefore which he understands as a *theological whole*. At the announcement of his Encyclical on the Holy Ghost *Dominum et Vivificantem* (May 30, 1986), John Paul II himself declared that it forms a kind of "trinitarian trilogy" along with the two other Encyclicals *Dives in Misericordia* (Nov. 30, 1980) and *Redemptor Hominis* (Mar. 4, 1979), which deal with the Father and the Son.¹⁴

This "trinitarian trilogy" should be considered therefore as a theological whole. It forms the very core of John Paul

¹⁴ See above, Note 3.

II's theology. From this core we can understand the Pope's entire pontificate.

Moreover, the promulgation of the "trinitarian trilogy" encompasses the entire period from the beginning of the pontificate (*Redemptor Hominis*, Mar. 4, 1979) down to the year of the prayer meeting at Assisi (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, May 30, 1986). The "trinitarian trilogy" presents *the theological basis for the dogmatic preparation and realization of that event.*

In Assisi, the first commandment is at stake: The one true God in three divine persons stands alongside the gods of various religions.¹⁵ The confrontation (or reconciliation of all the gods?) takes place in the midst of all religions, including the Christian faith and Catholic theology.

By associating the three Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dives in Misericordia* and *Dominum et Vivificantem* with the Son, the Father and the Holy Ghost, and by designating them as the "trinitarian trilogy," the Pope *connects these Encyclicals directly with the trinitarian controversy, which is the dogmatic crystallization point in the present theological upheaval.*

The "trinitarian trilogy" is, however, not a "trilogy of the Trinity," hence not a treatise on God's unity of nature and trinity of persons, but it is the main part of John Paul II's theology, which according to the Pope, has its ultimate foundation in the three divine persons. The Pope's teaching on the Trinity as such must be extracted specifically from the three Encyclicals, and can be fully grasped only after a complete analysis of them.

5. The "trinitarian trilogy" as the Pope's *New Theology* and the problem of its interpretation.

John Paul II considers the realization of Vatican II in the

¹⁵ Cf. Part I, pp. 15ff.—For more detail, see my essay in note 2, p. 126-181.

life of the Church as the main task of his pontificate. In this "new phase of the self-realization of the Church, in keeping with the epoch in which it has been our destiny to live" (*DiM* 15,3), and because of the importance of the office of Peter, the "trinitarian trilogy" takes on a crucial role as the Pope's personal theology. However, there lies a considerable problem, as we can show by a short sketch and summary of the Pope's theology:

– The "trinitarian trilogy" is a genuine fruit from the tree of the knowledge of Vatican II: *it belongs to the genus of "New Theology."*¹⁶

The Council's decision to discard traditional "scholastic terminology" in favor of a "pastoral Council language" was apparently rather harmless at first sight, but has visibly taken its toll:

This discarding of traditional terminology has meant the disappearance of the *philosophia perennis* and the silent rupture with the "Catholic system" of classical theology (John Henry Newman) and with the conceptual expression of Church dogmas.¹⁷

But the break with tradition was the first step necessary for the Council's theological innovations, *which marked the official birth of a pluralism of "new theologies," which from then on would be "legitimate."*¹⁸

Thus we are looking at an absolute novelty in the history of the Church's teaching: a special version of the "New Theology" has assumed its place on the Chair of Peter and characterizes the teaching and pontificate of John Paul II.

– The very idea of the "New Theology" means rejecting the "Catholic system" of the "outdated theology," while retaining its own novelties which have a particular individual structure and framework. It is *per se* pluralistic because

¹⁶ Cf. Part I, pp. 38-45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

of the wide variety of modern philosophies and ways of thinking. It attempts to re-define the Christian faith in the mental framework of modern thinking. All this implies two things for the accurate interpretation of the "New Theology": -1. The basic requirement for an adequate understanding of the truth is the intellectual renunciation of the "Catholic system." Since this new thinking does not spring from the "Catholic system," it cannot be understood by means of that system either. -2. Since each version of the *New Theology* has its special philosophical and theological principles, its particular emphasis, its own individual terminology and language, it must also be understood and interpreted based on the underlying principle of the respective author. Traditional notions, which have their fixed place and clear meaning in the "Catholic system," suddenly take on another meaning in the context of a new theology. Yet there is an additional factor: Karol Wojtyła was not only a scientist, philosopher and theologian, but also a writer and poet, which he remained even as pope. Thus, while reading the texts formulated by the Pope, we must take careful notice of his literary devices and expressive, poetic language.

Such then is the problem of interpreting papal documents by means of the personal theology and language of the author.

Obviously, the substance of the Catholic faith remains intact only if the content of the dogmatic notions as defined by the Church is also kept intact in the respective version of the *New Theology*.

- John Paul II's intention is to convey the message of Vatican II not only to the Church, but to all mankind. That was also the intention of Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1). To achieve this end effectively, the Pope summarizes the pastoral and theological content of the Council documents in the "trinitarian trilogy"; he formulates, in his version of the *New Theology*, the new insights of the conciliar message which will mark the Church's future course

of action. He traces the essential program in his inaugural Encyclical right at the beginning of his pontificate. That means:

*The theological message of Vatican II is substantially identical with the Pope's New Theology expressed in the Encyclicals. For John Paul II, Vatican II is quite simply the voice of the Holy Ghost.*¹⁹ By ascribing to the self-styled pastoral Council the highest conceivable teaching authority, which he directly links up to that of his apostolic office, the Pope accordingly raises his *New Theology*, which sets forth the doctrine of the Council, to an absolute status.

– The post-conciliar era is marked by the controversy over the “spirit of the Council” and the “correct understanding of the Council.”²⁰ Amidst this clash of opinions, the “trinitarian trilogy” is in a sense the official interpretation of what the Council really taught, desired, and of what it understood by the “*accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.” That means:

The “trinitarian trilogy” is an authentic interpretation of the Second Vatican Council by the Pope. It should put a stop to the theological dispute over the “spirit of the Council” and the “correct understanding of the Council”: With the authority of the Holy Ghost, the Council and the office of Peter, the Pope indicates the general orientation for theological thought and for the life of the Church into the third millennium. And this orientation leads to Assisi!

– In our day, the fruits of the post-conciliar pluralism of numerous “new theologies” are plain for all to see: The abandonment of the “Catholic system” and the unleashing of countless—even inculturated—new theologies have led to a breakdown in the unity of the Catholic faith handed down for centuries. In the era of pan-ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, the traditional ideas of heresy and paganism

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 3, and *op. cit.*

²⁰ Cf. Part I, p. 43-46.

were simply eliminated from theological vocabulary. The clear identity of the Catholic faith disappeared in the haze of a theological, ecumenical, multicultural and interfaith pluralism.

Rome and the episcopal conferences are concerned about "spreading the faith."²¹ The survival of the Church is in question. But how can the faith be handed down and remain stable, unless that faith be clearly defined?

Now if the Pope himself presents the substance of the last ecumenical Council in his version of the New Theology, and if in his Encyclicals he proposes to plot the course for the "Church of the future" at the threshold of the third millennium while at the same time claiming to uphold the entire deposit of faith, then the problem of theological pluralism and the transmission of the faith suddenly appears in a new light.

— The authors of the "new theology" were fully convinced that the traditional "Catholic system," by reason of its association with an antiquated metaphysics, with a static frame of mind, and with an entirely outdated view of the world and of history, was totally out of touch with reality and hence was incapable of getting through to 20th century man.²² The "full-scale reduction of all facets of reality to mere history" in modern thought requires similar modifications for theology.²³ The rise of the "new theology" represents an "unprecedented radical change."²⁴

Each major version of the "New Theology" comes across as a philosophical-theological new invention, which how-

²¹ E.g., the study session from Nov. 16-18, 1988 for members of the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics in Bonn, whose theme was: "The future of the faith in our country—on the situation and the transmission of the faith."

²² Cf. Part I, pp. 37ff.

²³ Cf. Walter Kasper, *Einführung in den Glauben [Introduction to the Faith]* (Mainz 1972), p. 134. A brief sketch of the problem of the "historicity of the faith" pp. 134-151.

²⁴ Cf. Bernhard Welte, Vol. I, p. 38 and note 26.

ever purports to maintain the entire Christian faith in the setting of modern thought. It fully replaces the traditional "Catholic system."²⁵ The scope of such an enterprise is reminiscent of St. Thomas Aquinas and would surely require the academic prowess of the Angel of the Schools in order to succeed.

The "trinitarian trilogy": Redemptor Hominis (1979), Dives in Misericordia (1980) and Dominum et Vivificantem (1986), can be considered as the core of a lively presentation of the Pope's "New Theology," which is based on Vatican II, and which gives a new explanation of the entire Christian faith for the Church and for all mankind at the threshold of the third millennium, thereby displacing the "Catholic system" of the pre-conciliar Church.

As we have just shown, the task of interpreting the Encyclicals is by no means easy. Therefore, we will first give the reader a condensed summary of the author's theological principles (6 & 7), which will serve as the key to an adequate understanding of his thought.

6. A new type of man-centered theology.

The key text for Karol Wojtyła's *New Theology* is one from which he draws his idea of revelation (see below 7.), namely the following passage from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (22,1-2):

In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully

²⁵ E.g. the monumental work compiled by Johannes Feiner, Magnus Löhrer and numerous collaborators: *Mysterium Salutis. Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik [Outline of Dogmatic Salvation History]* (Einsiedeln-Zürich-Cologne 1965ff.). The whole work is "built on the principal ideas of salvation history" (Vol. I, p. XIX).

reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling...

He who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col.1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.²⁶

Later on in the text, the Council Fathers present the work of the Redemption and the Paschal mystery, which God renews in the Christian believer. The text then concludes with the following observation (*Gaudium et Spes* 22,5):

All this holds true not for Christians only but also for all men of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. For since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.

In his commentary on Article 22 of *Gaudium et Spes* Joseph Ratzinger says: "One is indeed allowed to say that here, for the first time in a magisterial text, a new type of entirely Christocentric theology appears, which, in relation to Christ, ventures theology as anthropology, which thereby becomes for the first time radically theological, Christ as man in the talk of God, disclosing the deepest

²⁶ On this Council text cf. Cardinal Wojtyła's commentary in *Zeichen des Widerspruchs* [*Sign of Contradiction*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1979), pp. 119-121.

unity of theology."²⁷

The Council's assertion regarding the work of the Redemption and the Paschal mystery: "All this holds true not for Christians only, but also for all men of good will," insinuates that the universality of the work of the Redemption is extended automatically from the objective (i.e. Christ made salvation possible for all men) to the subjective sphere (i.e. all men go to heaven). But this is precisely the question which Joseph Ratzinger raises with regard to the Council's assertion cited above: If, according to the Vatican II Constitution on the Church and despite the Church's generally accepted teaching, the possibility of salvation need not be dependent upon the explicit recognition of God (*Lumen Gentium* 16), are we, then, still authorized in drawing a distinction between Christians and non-Christians in the question of salvation? Does not the division of mankind into the saved and the damned come across as an arrogant, inadmissible form of particularism?²⁸

But *Gaudium et Spes* 22 means nothing less for the Council Father Karol Wojtyła than it does for Joseph Ratzinger.²⁹ One might say that Karol Wojtyła's *New Theology* adequately expresses this "new type of entirely Christocentric theology,...which...ventures theology as anthropology." One might even say that the Council Father Karol Wojtyła takes up the Council's assertion: the work of the Redemption and the Paschal mystery hold true "not for Christians only, but also for all men of good will," and proceeds to

²⁷ *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (= *LThK*) (Freiburg i. Br. 1968), Vol. XIV, p. 350.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.—Another text from *Gaudium et Spes*, which points in the same direction, runs (78,3): "Christ, the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the Cross, and, restoring the unity of all in one people and one body, he abolished hatred in his own flesh, having been lifted up through his resurrection he poured forth the Spirit of love into the hearts of men."

²⁹ Cf. Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], pp. 119-121.

formulate his thesis of universal salvation, which in turn eliminates the "distinction between Christians and non-Christians in the question of salvation." But it was not long before this "new type of entirely Christocentric theology" would develop into a new type of entirely man-centered theology.

From the foregoing we may infer *the main principle for interpretation*, which gives us direct access towards the understanding of the "trinitarian trilogy." It is the maxim derived from *Gaudium et Spes* 22,5: What holds for the Christian holds also in principle for all men. That means: *The reader of the Encyclicals goes right to the heart of the matter, if he understands the text in reference to the thesis of universal salvation.*

7. The principles behind man-centered theology.

"As a revealed religion, Christianity has its final objective foundation in God's own message to mankind and in mankind's acceptance of that message."³⁰ Revelation and faith are the principles of knowledge also in classical theology.³¹ Of course it is only public, biblical revelation (i.e. as opposed to private revelations, whether approved by the Church or not) which we are discussing here.³²

Karol Wojtyla's *New Theology* has its final foundation in a new idea of revelation and faith which greatly differs from the traditional idea. As Cardinal, he derived this new

³⁰ Josef Neuner and Heinrich Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung* [*The Faith of the Church in the Dogmatic Pronouncements*] (Regensburg 1965, 7th Ed.), p. 29.

³¹ Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Theologische Erkenntnislehre. Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik III* [*Handbook of Catholic Dogma*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1948, 2nd Ed.).

³² *Ibid.*—Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie* [*Scientific Theory and Theology*] (Frankfurt a. M. 1973), founds theology on all religions as witnesses to the divine reality, therefore on comparative religions (pp. 315ff.).

idea (*Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 119-121) from the above quoted Council text (*Gaudium et Spes* 22,1-2); as Pope, he has preserved it intact in his "trinitarian trilogy."³³ A comprehensive study and analysis of this new idea of revelation and faith was presented in Part I (pp. 78-123). Hence a brief restatement of the conclusions will suffice here.

7.1 Universal salvation as revelation *a priori*.

There are mainly two definitions of revelation, which Cardinal Wojtyła derives from *Gaudium et Spes* 22,1-2, and then interprets. The first definition runs:

Revelation consists in a fact, the fact that by his Incarnation the Son of God united himself with every man, became man himself, one of us.³⁴

This definition is the focal point of that self-styled "entirely new Christocentric theology, which, in relation to Christ, ventures theology as anthropology." The success of the venture will depend largely on precisely how one understands the union of the Son of God with each person. Cardinal Wojtyła does not understand it the same way as the Church has traditionally exposed it, namely as a material union; he understands it in the context of his thesis of universal salvation, namely as a formal, supernatural union.³⁵ The same holds for the Pope's *New Theology*, thus also for his "trinitarian trilogy." Although the thesis of universal salvation easily goes unnoticed for the average reader of the Encyclicals, there are nonetheless prominent passages where clear and blatant assertions can be found. For instance, we hear in *Redemptor Hominis* (11,4) that each

³³ The thought behind *Sign of Contradiction* entered fully into the inaugural Encyclical.

³⁴ Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 121.

³⁵ For the proof that not only the material, but also the formal union is meant here, see Part I, Chapters III and IV.

human being has reached in Christ "the dignity of both the grace of divine adoption and the inner truth of humanity." With equal clarity the Encyclical says elsewhere (*RH* 13,3) that each human being, from the first moment of his existence, "keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself," and further, that "with each one Christ has united Himself forever."³⁶

But if the Son of God, through his Incarnation, has formally united Himself with each human being, then the Christ-centered perspective has become entirely man-centered, whereupon theology can only dissolve into transcendental anthropology.³⁷

Karol Wojtyla maintains that, fundamentally, the Redemption was already accomplished through the Incarnation. Such a thesis is by no means new, since it arose at the very outset of theological speculation, which endeavored to penetrate the mystery of the Redemption. St. Irenaeus of Lyons (+c. 202) is a well-known proponent of this teaching, with his so-called recapitulation theory or his mystic theory of Redemption, which for all that never became a Church doctrine:

Commenting on Eph 1:10 (*recapitulare*), St. Irenaeus asserts that "Christ as the second Adam saved and united with God the whole human race. In this view, salvation of man had already taken place in principle through the Incarnation of the Son of God. Side by side with this theory which gave to the Passion and Death of Christ a subordinate significance only, St. Irenaeus also expounds the Pauline teaching of the ransoming and reconciling through Christ's death on the Cross. Cf. *Adv. haer.* III 16,9; IV 5,4; V 1,1f; 14,2-5; 16,3; 17,1."³⁸

³⁶ Cf. Part I, pp. 80ff.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³⁸ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1954), p. 186.

The subjective reality of universal salvation through the Incarnation is referred to as *revelation*, and thus Cardinal Wojtyla shifts *revelation* to *the subjective consciousness of mankind*. In classical theology, public revelation (*stricte dicta revelatio seu locutio Dei ad homines*) is an objective fact and principle of knowledge. But in Karol Wojtyla's *New Theology*, revelation is also a subjective fact and principle of knowledge, more exactly an *internal, subjective, ontological, "supernatural" reality of human existence and of the person a priori* (i.e. prior to experience).

The fact of universal salvation as revelation *a priori* in the subjective consciousness of each person is the primary, transcendental principle of knowledge in Karol Wojtyla's theology. Like the fact of universal salvation, so also revelation *a priori* is universal. It is present in everyone and in all religions.

At first glance the thesis of universal salvation seems like a mere broadening of horizons with respect to the Church's traditional teaching, like a deliverance, so long overdue, from a narrow-minded particularism, or "division of mankind into the saved and the damned."³⁹ The work of Redemption accomplished by God appears more universal, more considerate, more worthy of God. This improvement upon the traditional teaching comes across as such a "slight modification": It eliminates the traditional distinction of subjective and objective Redemption. It isolates the Redemption from any subjective requirements on the part of mankind, and makes it consist merely in the work of divine grace, the work of the overflowing love and mercy of God, which is not limited even by man's response. In God's sight, the categories of time and space are almost entirely insignificant.⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. for this question, Joseph Ratzinger, Commentary on *Gaudium et Spes*, *LThK*, *op. cit.*, XIV, p. 351.

⁴⁰ Cardinal Wojtyla, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 103.

Since the substance of the faith (*fides quae creditur*) may not be touched, universal salvation becomes a pure question of interpretation and of consciousness. But does this thesis really preserve the substance of the faith? Just one example to show what we mean: One of the Pope's constantly recurring axioms runs thus: The truth about man "is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ" (*DiM* 1,2).⁴¹

Of course this Council statement is not wrong, but it can receive various interpretations, depending on whether it is seen in the light of the Church's traditional teaching or of the Pope's *New Theology*:

In the Church's traditional teaching, the "truth about man" is primarily his being universally subject to sin, as well as his absolute need of Redemption (Rom 3:9-31). The Church has always taught the objective, but not the subjective universality of the Redemption. The objectively universal Redemption came about through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross; the subjective Redemption takes place through the application of the fruits of the Redemption to each individual in the process whereby the sinner is justified under certain conditions required on his part, above all "by virtue of faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:22).

Justification presupposes man's condition as a sinner in absolute need of Redemption. Through justification, man is delivered from the state of original sin and raised to the dignity of a redeemed, adopted child of God (D 793-796). Justification therefore includes a real passage from death to life (D 795). Faith, baptism, and the Church are necessary for salvation (*necessitas medii*).

Besides the ordinary means, the Church has always acknowledged the extraordinary means of salvation, "which are known to God alone" (*Gaudium et Spes* 22,5), but she never based her theology on hidden and subjective factors

⁴¹ Cf. also below *Redemptor Hominis*, 2.

known only to God, but on what God has objectively revealed, namely on public revelation.

On the contrary, the Council Father Karol Wojtyła, through his thesis of universal salvation, founds his theology on the hidden subjective factors which are known to God alone. Therefore he would sooner base his theology on love and on the Holy Ghost than on Christ.⁴² With the help of the thesis which says that the Son of God, through his Incarnation, formally united himself with each human being, Karol Wojtyła brings to light what was hidden in the dark caverns of man's consciousness and known to God alone: the "anonymous Christian"! Thus universal salvation and revelation *a priori* become synonymous, and this equation serves as a first axiom of his *New Theology*.

Thus when we hear this principle in the Pope's theology: The truth about man "is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ," we must interpret it in the context of universal salvation. The "slight modification" of the Church's traditional teaching turns out to be a "serious modification" in the substance of the key doctrine of the Redemption.

7.2 Salvation history as revelation *a posteriori*.

For the second definition of revelation Cardinal Wojtyła appeals to the same Council text (*Gaudium et Spes* 22, 1-2). Accordingly the Council taught:

the anthropological, even anthropocentric character of the revelation offered to mankind in Christ. This revelation is centered on man: Christ "fully reveals man to man himself." But he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love (cf. John 17:6).⁴³

⁴² Cf. Part I, p. 117 and note 19.

⁴³ Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 120.—On the problem of "being in Christ" as the man's innermost nature, see Part I, p. 97.

The "revelation offered to mankind in Christ" is of course historical revelation as reflected in the life and teachings of Jesus. We may thus speak of a "double revelation" (Karl Rahner).⁴⁴

The relationship between revelation *a priori* and *a posteriori* is more clearly laid out and summarized: "Christ reveals man to himself." That means: the "mystery of man," made clear by revelation *a posteriori* offered in Christ, consists in the fact that every man, from the first moment of his existence, possesses *a priori* "being in Christ," which belongs to his innermost nature as man. Hence man's innermost nature and "being in Christ" are identical.

If that be the case, then the "new type of entirely Christocentric theology ... , which, in relation to Christ, ventures theology as anthropology" becomes a new type of entirely man-centered theology. Then "double revelation" acquires a double man-centered character; then man or "the truth about man" becomes the actual object of double revelation. Then the assertion holds: "This revelation is centered on man"!—Therefore not on Christ, nor on God!

If man, from the first moment of his conception, keeps intact not only the *imago*, as *Redemptor Hominis* (13,3) asserts, but even the *similitudo Dei* (= revelation *a priori*), then the "revelation offered to mankind in Christ" (= revelation *a posteriori*) consists merely in "proclaiming" to all mankind their Redemption in Christ which is already accomplished, and hence their paramount dignity as participants of God's grace, as children of God. Revelation which comes to us through salvation history becomes the mirror of man's innermost nature. This kind of revelation is *per se* "man-centered."

Consequently, salvation history itself, in which revelation has occurred, loses its genuinely *historical* character; this holds for the historical work of salvation accomplished by

⁴⁴ Cf. Part I, pp. 112ff.

Jesus Christ, and equally for human actions on which salvation depends. If each person is radically saved and justified *a priori*, then the Redemption is ultimately not an event which was realized in history, but something which belongs to human nature as such; then, too, the gift of "being in Christ" is no longer a question of application and decision on the part of man in history, but merely a matter of human consciousness. The "offer" of self-awareness, which Christ makes to mankind "by revealing the Father and the Father's love," is directed towards an *exercise of consciousness* in order to bring to light man's innermost nature as well as the "truth about man and his dignity."

We may conclude: To the fact of universal salvation as revelation *a priori* corresponds the historical revelation *a posteriori* embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus, which "reveals" to man, or "makes him aware" of the dignity of his innermost nature. In the process of man's "self-awareness," consciousness plays the decisive role. Like revelation *a priori*, so also revelation *a posteriori* is essentially "man-centered."

To the "double revelation" corresponds the "double faith."⁴⁵

7.3 The "double revelation": Foundation for a covenant theology of salvation history.

The main thread of the Cardinal's theology, which we can extract from *Sign of Contradiction*, may be referred to as a *covenant theology of salvation history*. It is no theological novelty, but as such holds a place in the general spectrum of modern "dogmatic salvation history," and is reminiscent of the debates of the 16th century Reformers in that domain.⁴⁶ But what is particular about the theologian Karol

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 117ff.

⁴⁶ Cf. Paul Jacobs, Article Föderaltheologie in: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen 1957), I, col. 1518-1520.—As for Coccejus,

Wojtyla's covenant theology is the fact that his idea of salvation history is determined by the principle of "double revelation."

Karol Wojtyla's covenant theology of salvation history, in turn based on the principle of "double revelation," has its biblical foundation in Genesis 1-3. In order to understand the basic structure of the world and history (pp. 30-36),⁴⁷ one must "go back to the fundamental reality of the creation of the world and mankind, especially the first covenant, which is the basis for the final covenant" (p. 35).

The starting point is the covenant which God made with Adam, that is with all mankind (p. 29). From this Adam-covenant, or "original covenant," the whole history of salvation springs forth, which then gradually unfolds as covenant history. In this respect, Karol Wojtyla's *New Theology* attains a remarkable unity.

The Cardinal distinguishes in general between the "God of infinite majesty" (pp. 18-28) and the "God of the Covenant" (pp. 29-37).

The "God of infinite majesty" is the God of Isaias, who is three times Holy (Is. 6:3), the Creator of the world, the Absolute (p. 27; 30). Men of all religions turn to this God "in His absolute transcendence" (p. 27), to the God, "who transcends absolutely the whole of creation, all that is visible and comprehensible."⁴⁸ We could say: *For the Pope, the God of infinite majesty, the God and Creator of all mankind, is the God common to all religions.*⁴⁹

Because of the "transcendence of the human person," "the living union between God and the human soul" is

so also for Cardinal Wojtyla, the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is a symbol of human nature ([*Sign of Contradiction*], pp. 33f.).—Cf. on this whole paragraph, the Pope's Redemption doctrine contained in *Redemptor Hominis* (7-12) in this volume.

⁴⁷ All page references in the text are from [*Sign of Contradiction*].

⁴⁸ Cf. Part I, pp. 50ff.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

both possible and real. It is realized "especially in silence" (p. 28). Since all men participate somehow in this "marvelous transcendence of the human spirit," the "Church of the living God" (pp. 27ff) includes all humanity. This "Church" appeared for the first time in history on the occasion of the prayer meeting in Assisi for peace.⁵⁰

The deepest mystery of the "marvelous transcendence of the human spirit" and "the Church of the living God" is, however, not yet clearly expressed by all this, but only suggested: For we can only speak of the "Church" in relation to Christ. Thus the following maxim is discreetly hinted at: "The Church of the living God" is the Church of "anonymous Christianity." For the first time in history, *it was manifested in Assisi before the eyes of all mankind: the common worship of all religions to the God of all religions.*⁵¹

The thesis of universal salvation, of "anonymous Christianity" is clearly expressed in the special version of Cardinal Wojtyla's covenant theology as follows:

The "God of infinite majesty" is at the same time the "God of the Covenant." At the moment when man was created, God's covenant with Adam, that is, with all mankind, was made (p. 29; 36).

Creation and covenant are "the revelation of God the Father, who gives to creation its true meaning, by the covenant which is the purpose of the creation of man in the image of God" (p. 33). The creation of man and the making of the covenant with Adam take place in one and the same act.

Just as creation and covenant take place in one and the same act, so too "the motive for creation and the motive for the covenant" are one and the same: God's love (p. 30). "God the Creator becomes the God of the Covenant"—out

⁵⁰ Cf. my essay "Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," *Respondeo* 8, pp. 144-181.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

of divine love (p. 30).

That means: "Love is the motive for creation and consequently love is also the motive for the covenant. One could say that in this motive, the eternal plan for man's salvation as embodiment of God's love for man, and personal transcendence of man's rising above the rest of creation come together, both springing from the same root" (p. 31).

Concerning the "original covenant" of the Creator with Adam we learn in addition that it is "on God's side a gift of grace and on man's side ... a state of original justice (*stato della primitiva giustizia*) and happiness" (p. 34). Adam, the covenantor with God, was accordingly created as the "image and likeness of God" in a state of original justice (pp. 31ff; 34). Now does redeemed "being in Christ" also belong to this "original justice"? Obviously yes, because the Cardinal says: "Man exists 'in Christ,' according to God's eternal plan for man's salvation, from the very beginning" (p. 108). Now existing-in-Christ (in St. Paul's sense) means possessing "being in Christ" (p. 108), and so it means being redeemed and justified through Christ's saving deed. The Cardinal says it quite openly: "All men from the beginning to the end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through his Cross" (p. 103).

Accordingly Adam is in the very first moment of his creation an "anonymous Christian."

Because the God of infinite majesty is the God of the Covenant (p. 37); because the motive for man's creation and for the covenant with Adam is one and the same, namely God's love; because creation and covenanting take place in one and the same act; then both being in the image of God and being-in-Christ belong *to man's nature*.⁵²

The covenant with Adam as also the covenants with Abraham and Moses lie "on the level of man's being as man." They are pointed towards the "conclusive covenant

⁵² Cf. Part I, pp. 97f., 114.

with man, i.e. the covenant with mankind in the Son of God" (p. 36).

In this second covenant is revealed "the covenant's final dimension." It is revealed in Jesus Christ's having called God his *Father*. This is explained as follows: "In the full revelation of God's fatherhood is contained the full and conclusive confirmation of that covenant which has been made at the moment of man's creation. After this original covenant was destroyed by original sin, it had to be restored through the Redemption on a still deeper basis and in still fuller measure. 'O happy fault, which gained us so great a Redeemer'" (pp. 36ff).

In the redemption takes place the full revelation of the fatherhood of the covenanting God: the Father so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world. The Son became man through the Holy Ghost, was born of the Virgin Mary, and he performed the work of Redemption. In the same way the Father sent the Holy Ghost who carries on the Son's work and fulfills all holiness (p. 37).

In this way "the covenant's full and final dimension," already contained in the first basic covenant (p. 36), was fully revealed and confirmed in the second, conclusive covenant. What had already with man's creation and the simultaneous covenant with Adam been immersed in human history, found its full confirmation and revelation in the second covenant. In the idea of the Adam-covenant was embodied God's historical work of salvation from the creation of man to the end of the world.

However, the Cardinal also says that the first covenant "which was made at the moment of man's creation," "was also destroyed as a consequence of original sin" and accordingly "had to be restored through the Redemption on a still deeper basis and in still fuller measure" (p. 36).

So, after the nature of the first covenant is made clear, the question remains: what exactly is meant by the "de-

struction" of the first covenant and its restoration by the Redemption through the second covenant? Or, putting the question another way, within this covenant theology of salvation history, what is the relationship between the first and second covenant, given what was said about the first covenant?

Concerning the "second, final, conclusive covenant," the Cardinal says it is the "completion" (p. 30), the "perfection" (pp. 36ff) and the "full confirmation" (pp. 36ff), of the first, basic covenant.

The use of words is astonishing: one would expect that a destroyed covenant would require the making of a fresh covenant, since a destroyed covenant cannot be completed, perfected, or confirmed. Rather, the destroyed covenantal relation would have to be remade through a new covenant, and restored that way.

There is a fundamental truth of Christianity at stake here: the highly controversial doctrine of original sin.⁵³ According to Catholic doctrine, on account of Adam's sin, which is here original sin, he lost the supernatural *similitudo Dei*; the natural *imago Dei* was "wounded."⁵⁴ Moreover, the Church teaches that man, through the blood of Christ, was objectively redeemed from original sin, from his condition of fallen human nature, and raised to the dignity of a redeemed, adopted child of God through the process of justification (D 793-796). The Redemption is the new and eternal covenant in the blood of Christ, which he shed for us unto the forgiveness of sins, as the Church daily confesses and proclaims through the words of Our

⁵³ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-112.—Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *op. cit.*, VII, pp. 209ff.; 254ff.—Karl-Heinz Weger, *Theologie der Erbsünde. Quaestiones Disputatae* 44 (Freiburg i. Br. 1970).—Christoph Schönborn, Albert Görres, Robert Spaemann, *Zur kirchlichen Erbsündenlehre. Stellungnahme zu einer brennenden Frage* (Freiburg 1991).

⁵⁴ Cf. Part I, pp. 80-86.

Lord repeated at every Mass in the Consecration.

But the Cardinal says something quite different: He says that the original covenant "was destroyed as a result of original sin." *But this "destruction" of the first covenant does not mean that the "image and likeness of God" has been also destroyed.*⁵⁵ On the contrary, the Pope's thesis runs: Each human being, from the first moment of his existence, "keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself" (*Redemptor Hominis* 13,3). That means:

God's first basic covenant with mankind may be "destroyed" as a result of original sin, but in the process man has not lost his dignity as "image and likeness of God."

The Cardinal likewise makes clear that the second, final and conclusive covenant which God the Father made with mankind in the Son of God restored, completed, perfected and confirmed "in the Redemption on an even deeper basis" the first, basic, destroyed covenant. The completion, perfection and confirmation of the first by the second covenant consists clearly in the fact that Adam, as image and likeness of God, received in a completing, perfecting and confirming manner also "being in Christ," and that *a priori* in the moment of creation as a dowry attached to the destroyed first covenant.

The question remains: what version of salvation history do we have here?

Cardinal Wojtyła himself provides the answer in a sentence not easy to understand: "Man exists 'in Christ,' and does so according to God's eternal plan of salvation from the very beginning; however, through Christ's death and resurrection this 'being in Christ' has become a historical fact rooted in time and space" (pp. 108ff). That means in terms of salvation history: the covenantal gift of "being in Christ" imparted to mankind *a priori* in the Adam covenant becomes *a posteriori* a fact rooted in salvation history.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, cf. pp. 79-86.

Obviously we have here a special version not only of the original covenant between God and Adam, but also of the work of Redemption wrought by Christ. The principle of "double revelation" governs both: not only the covenant with Adam but also salvation history as wrought by Christ. Another distinction of the Cardinal shows the same principle: he distinguishes between "the eternal plan of salvation" or the "divine order, the divine view of man and the world" on the one hand, and on the other hand the historical order and view with its categories of time and space. As opposed to "the divine order, the categories of time and space are almost entirely insignificant" (p. 103;108). Upon this distinction the Cardinal bases his proposition that "all men from beginning to end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through his Cross" (p. 103). That means: according to God's order Adam is redeemed and justified in advance, Adam already exists "in Christ" and possesses "being in Christ," Adam is already an "anonymous Christian." In the order of salvation history, what was given *a priori* becomes *a posteriori* a fact in history, rooted in time and space. From this distinction too it emerges clearly that the principle of double revelation governs the character both of salvation history and of the original covenant. We can conclude:

The second, final and conclusive covenant of the Father with mankind in the Son is the historical backing up, confirmation and revelation of what God had out of love already imparted to his image, Adam, as a covenantal gift a priori. So to every man from beginning to end of the world has been imparted not only the dignity of image of God but also the dignity of supernatural sonship of God, in the Son, the Redeemer, as the true being of man as man (RH 11,4; 13,3). Every man is a priori an "anonymous Christian," from the very moment and in the very act of his creation. Through salvation history what is given in advance becomes in addition, a posteriori, a historical fact and revelation rooted in

time and space.

It may by now have become clear: "Double revelation" is the principle of the Pope's covenant theology of salvation history. Through it the thesis of universal salvation is anchored on the basis of covenantal theology, and through it the history of salvation and revelation receives its specific supra-historical character. The objective passage of biblical history becomes subjective existential "historicity."

7.4 A more broad-minded perspective of the faith.

Karol Wojtyła's covenant theology of salvation history, based on the principle of "double revelation," lays the logical foundation for a new, coherent, dogmatic perspective of the faith, for a *more broad-minded theology*:

The Pope's doctrine of a *more broad-minded God* proclaims the God of all religions: the God of Assisi.

This is for the Pope the "God of infinite majesty" and the "God of the Covenant." In the act of creation and of making a covenant, which is irrevocable and unbreakable, he has imparted to Adam the entire measure of his love as man's Creator and Redeemer. From the revelation of the New Testament, every Christian knows:

God the Creator the God of the Covenant is none other than the Holy Trinity: The Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit into the heart of each human being. So runs the "central truth of the faith": "All (human beings) are created by God the Creator, and all are saved by Christ, the Savior."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ John Paul II, Address to the clergy of Rome, second Roman synod after Vatican II (OR, dt., Mar. 8, 1991): "The Second Vatican Council stands as an extensive document, consisting of various single documents of different character, and is therefore a powerful magisterial and pastoral guideline for the Church of the future. I myself am deeply aware and convinced that it was a work of the Holy Spirit, who helped and directed us to follow through with this Council and thus to express our views in that hour....Our synod is

The "central truth of the faith," understood in the sense of universal salvation, contains all the elements of a new, more broad-minded dogmatic perspective of the faith. According to the *more broad-minded Christology* [= theology concerning Christ], "the Son of God, through his Incarnation, formally united himself with each human being."⁵⁷ The Incarnation means accordingly not only the union of the Son with human nature in Jesus Christ, but the formal union of the Son with each human being, with all mankind, from the beginning of creation until the end of the world. The axiom of universal salvation is therefore specifically rooted in the universality of the Incarnation.

The *more broad-minded soteriology* [= theology of Redemption] is already contained in the more broad-minded Christology: The work of the Savior is not only objectively but also subjectively universal: "All men from the beginning until the end of the world are saved and justified by Christ through his Cross."⁵⁸ The non-Christian world is "anonymous Christianity." The "distinction between Christians and non-Christians in the question of salvation" is eliminated. The traditional distinction between the ob-

different, it cannot be exactly like the first. It must be different because of the Second Vatican Council, which has given us a new outlook on the Church, an outlook more open for the universality of the people of God: the Catholic universality, which is realized in the Catholic Church, and also the human universality, which is realized in certain sense in all mankind, since all men have the same Creator and Savior. All are created by God the Creator and all are saved by Christ the Savior. Thus the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council finds the key for its interpretation ultimately in this central truth of the faith. All this poses for us many problems in the area of ecumenism, with regard to dialogue with other religions and spiritual traditions, with the various living conditions of mankind, with the entire present-day world in its different dimensions."

57 Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 121.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 103.—Cf. the Pope's Redemption doctrine in *Redemptor Hominis* (Ch. 2., 7-12), where still unanswered questions are addressed.

jective universality of the Redemption and subjective justification is therefore unauthorized.

The *more broad-minded pneumatology* [= theology of the Holy Ghost] is rooted in the more broad-minded Christology and soteriology: For "the full dimension of the mystery of the Redemption," in which Christ is "united with the Father and with each human being," consists in the fact that he constantly communicates the Holy Ghost to everyone.⁵⁹ The Holy Ghost is present and working in the hearts of all human beings.⁶⁰

The *more broad-minded anthropology and doctrine of grace* flows from the creation of man, with whom God made a covenant: Each human being keeps intact the "image and likeness of God," and maintains his imperishable dignity as a participant of God's grace, as a member of redeemed humanity.⁶¹ The original covenant overthrows the "dualism" of nature and grace once and for all. For "each man, *in virtue of his very human nature*, is called upon to partake of the fruits of the Redemption wrought by Christ and even to share in Christ's own life."⁶²

The *more broad-minded ecclesiology* [= theology of the Church] follows directly from the "central truth of the faith." "The Church of the living God unites all mankind." This awareness has caused the Conciliar Church (= "the Church of our time"), in the light of this truth, "to re-define her own essence at the Second Vatican Council."⁶³

Two essential distinctions constitute the new understanding of the Church: 1. All men belong to the Church of the living God: It is all cultures and religions which

⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 18,3-4.

⁶⁰ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (OR, dt., Feb. 26, 1988, p. 17, 40).

⁶¹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 11,4.

⁶² Thus John Paul II in the Apostolic Brief *Euntes in Mundum* (OR, dt., Mar. 25, 1988, p. 7, I, 2).

⁶³ Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 27.

make up the people of God, who are on pilgrimage towards the same transcendental goal, as was symbolically expressed at Assisi.⁶⁴ It is the mystical body of Christ in the wider sense, which in virtue of the Incarnation includes all mankind.⁶⁵ It is the Church of "anonymous Christianity," which has not yet become aware of its nature. 2. Alongside this comprehensive view, we should also acknowledge a more restricted understanding of the Church: To the Church in the narrower sense belong all Christians, who are conscious of their Christianity. Accordingly "all Christian believers belong to the people of God of the new covenant."⁶⁶ All Christians form "the body of Christ in the community of the people of God."⁶⁷ In a word: This Church, made up of all churches and church communities, is the "ecumenical Church." One of these is the Conciliar Church, which re-defined her own essence at Vatican II in the following terms: "The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men" (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1).

In the Pope's eyes, this novel idea is the key definition of the Conciliar Church, and of course in the following sense: The Church is called a "sign of unity among all men," hence: "All men are included in this sacrament of unity."⁶⁸ The Church is also called an "instrument for unity among all men," hence: It is the Church's mission to "proclaim" to all mankind, to "make them aware" of their hidden, "ontological" unity in Christ.

The Pope's *more broad-minded theology* establishes a "new

64 Cf. my essay "Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," *Respondeo* 8, pp. 158ff.

65 Cf. Part I, p. 67-72.

66 John Paul II, Wednesday audience Nov. 6, 1991 (*Deutsche Tagespost* Nov. 19, 1991, p. 5).

67 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 21,3.

68 Cardinal Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 37.

criterion" for interpreting the world: "The awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ—'children in the Son'—and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit will bring to our vision a new criterion for interpreting the world."⁶⁹

The express purpose of the pontificate, which is inspired by this theology, is Church unity, Christian unity, the unity of all religions, the unity of all mankind—in the God of Assisi.⁷⁰ For the Pope, the worship offered to this God is "an anticipation of what God would very much like to see realized through the historical development of mankind,"⁷¹ as well as "the foretaste of a more peaceful world."⁷²

The crucial problem for today's believing Catholic is: The Pope views this "new, more broad-minded perspective" of the truly "Catholic universality" of the faith, which Vatican II gave to the "Church of the future,"⁷³ merely as a deeper, more complete grasp of the old faith. A Catholic can choose either to view the new perspective as the Pope does, or to admit that a break with tradition has indeed occurred, and what is more, that a substantially new faith has indeed arisen. The question is whether he should disregard all doctrinal concerns, and simply accompany the Pope on his pilgrimage to the "mystical mountain" in Assisi,⁷⁴ or whether he should shudder at the thought of it.

⁶⁹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (OR, dt., Feb. 26, 1988, p. 17, 40).

⁷⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* 6,2.

⁷¹ John Paul II, Closing address in Assisi (OR, dt., Nov. 7, 1986, p. 10, 5).

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ See above, Note 58.

⁷⁴ Thus John Paul II in Assisi. Cf. my essay, "Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," *Respondeo* 8, pp. 172-181.

REDEMPTOR HOMINIS:
JOHN PAUL'S INAUGURAL
ENCYCLICAL ADDRESSED TO ALL
MANKIND AT THE THRESHOLD
OF THE THIRD MILLENIUM

1. Outline and arrangement.

The inaugural Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (Mar. 4, 1979) is quite literally John Paul II's *administration plan*. It contains not only the Pope's New Theology, but also the practical guidelines for the new pontificate.

Redemptor Hominis is the first and most important milestone on the Pope's theological journey to the prayer meeting of religions in Assisi. The Encyclical is not only a milestone, but also the theological foundation of the whole pontificate, which reaches its climax in the "Assisi event."¹

The inaugural Encyclical displays a harmonious unity. That does not mean that each point is systematically presented in all of its details. Rather, the author treats the subject matter in such a way that he reiterates the main themes respectively from chapter to chapter, then examines them from another angle in a more circular and meditative thinking pattern, and finally enriches them by means of associations. Thus the central dogmatic content only comes into focus step by step.

¹ Cf. Johannes Dörmann, "One Truth and Many Religions—Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," *Respondio* 8 (Abensberg 1988), pp. 126-181.

The elegance of the language, the style and the composition becomes apparent upon closer examination and despite first impressions, and is the fruit of the Encyclical's skillful arrangement. Frequently, one only grasps the exact sense of a theological statement through full appreciation of the organized unity of composition and language. An extensive stylistic analysis of the Encyclical would go beyond the confines of this essay, but we can give a few classic examples at the outset.²

The main purpose of this essay is the presentation of the Pope's theology in *Redemptor Hominis*. For isolated theological statements do not lead to Assisi, but the Pope's theology as a whole leads to the "mystical mountain" of St. Francis.

The Pope's theology is by no means clear. Rather, it must be carefully extracted from the texts. As "*New Theology*," by reason of its special philosophical-theological basis, it takes on a special pattern. Our interpretation will be based on the Pope's theological principles of knowledge, as they were presented in Part I and in the Introduction (see above, Art. 7, pp. 17-36). The conclusions therefrom will be presupposed as a safe working hypothesis, which must also hold good for the text of the Encyclical.

With close attention to the wording of the Encyclical, we will attempt to pick out the theological highlights, and likewise to show how the Pope's theology in *Redemptor Hominis* gradually comes into focus, on the basis of the man-centered "double revelation." Thus our essay will serve as a running commentary on the Encyclical.

The outline and arrangement of our essay will correspond to the outline and arrangement of the inaugural Encyclical :

After discussing the title, addressees, and salutation, there follows the text and analysis of the Encyclical, which is arranged in four chapters:

² See Chapter I, 1.3 Digression, p. 57.

- I. Outline of the New Pontificate (1-6).
- II. The Mystery of the Redemption (7-12).
- III. Redeemed Man and His Situation in the Modern World (13-17).
- IV. The Church's Mission and Man's Destiny (18-22).³

The Encyclical texts are quoted in full so that the reader may examine the theological statements in the Pope's own words, thoughts, and ideas. Classical theological language undergoes a change in meaning as a result of the Pope's particular idea of revelation, and we can only notice this subtle change of the entire traditional faith in light of the major texts. The Encyclical texts are also quoted in full to save the reader the trouble of looking them up.⁴

2. Title—addressees—salutation.

An Encyclical's title, addressees, and salutation normally require no special attention. But it is different in the case of an unusual Encyclical.

The *title* is: *Redemptor Hominis*. To whom is the Encyclical dedicated: the Savior or mankind?

The author himself gives conflicting answers as to the Encyclical's material object: One time he says that *Redemptor Hominis* is dedicated to the Son, and is the first Encyclical of his "trinitarian trilogy"⁵; another time, it is dedicated

³ The chapter and article headings correspond for the most part with those of the official English translation. We will specify any differences.

⁴ The English translation is no slavish rendition of the Latin original, but is meant to be easily grasped by the reader. We will quote the Latin original (AAS 71 [1979], pp. 257-324) only in those places where we deem it absolutely necessary. It is hard to understand why the Latin text's solemn form "we" (*nos*) is rendered in English by the first person singular.

⁵ John Paul II, at the announcement of *Dominum et Vivificantem* on Pentecost Sunday 1986 in the noon address at St. Peter's (*OR*, dt., May 30, 1986, p. 1).

to man, as he says at the very beginning of *Dives in Misericordia* (1980). We quote the whole passage from *Dives in Misericordia*, because it resolves the apparent contradiction (*DiM* 1,2):

Following the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and paying close attention to the special needs of our times, I devoted the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* to the truth about man, a truth that is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ. A no less important need in these critical and difficult times impels me to draw attention once again in Christ to the countenance of the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort." We read in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: "Christ the new Adam...fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his lofty calling," and does it "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love." The words that I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference—not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way—to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love.

The reference to *Gaudium et Spes* 22 resolves the "contradiction." This Council text, which recurs in all Encyclicals of the "trinitarian trilogy" in conspicuous passages, is the decisive key text, from which the Pope derives the principle of knowledge in his *New Theology*, namely his man-centered idea of revelation and the faith.

In the light of this idea of revelation, the apparent contradiction vanishes by itself. The main thesis of man-centered "double revelation" runs:

"Revelation consists in a fact, the fact that by his Incarnation the Son of God united himself with every man, became man himself, one of us."⁶ This "revelation *a priori*"

⁶ Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1979) p. 121.—Cf. for the concept of revelation: Introduction,

is the axiom of universal salvation. The Incarnation is accordingly not only the union of the Son with his human nature which he took from the Virgin Mary, but also the (formal) union with all men. The christological outlook is at the same time also anthropological. Thus the Encyclical is dedicated both to the Son and to man.

To revelation *a priori* corresponds revelation *a posteriori*, that is to say the historical revelation, through which Christ, by revealing the Father and his love, reveals to man the full dignity of his innermost nature. Therefore, by reason of the principle of man-centered "double revelation," the Encyclical's central reference point is *man, who has been redeemed and justified a priori*.⁷

Through this text from *Dives in Misericordia*, the Pope himself has given us the key to a clear understanding of the inaugural Encyclical and of its title:

The key to a clear understanding of the inaugural Encyclical is the Pope's idea of revelation. The title Redemptor Hominis summarizes most concisely the thesis of universal salvation and places it programmatically at the beginning of the inaugural Encyclical and the new pontificate.

Consequently, the Encyclical's addressees have a special significance: For the first time in the history of *dogmatic* Encyclicals, a Pope turns not only "to his venerable brothers in the episcopate, to the priests and religious families, to the sons and daughters of the Church," but also "to all men and women of good will." If the *Redemptor Hominis* is the Savior of man who is redeemed and justified *a priori*, then clearly all mankind belongs to the "hidden" Church.

In the list of addressees, the new Pontifex [= literally, a bridge-builder] is already constructing the bridge to all mankind, in order to proclaim to them the new, more broad-

above, Nr. 7, pp. 17-36.

7 Cf. Introduction, above, Nr. 7.1-2, pp. 18-24.

*minded view of the Conciliar Church.*⁸

The *Encyclical's salutation* runs: "Venerabiles Fratres ac dilecti Filii." Which of the addressees are the "Venerable Brothers and dear sons and daughters"? Of course the bishops and Catholics. But are the other addressees left out? In Assisi, the Pope addressed the representatives of the world religions also as "brothers and friends," exchanged fraternal greetings with them and sat at table with them.⁹

The *Encyclical's title, addressees, and salutation* are no mere humanitarian gesture embracing all mankind, but the expression of the new Pope's theology and conception of his duties: Through the Incarnation, the *Redemptor Hominis* has united himself inseparably with each man forever, and thus all mankind is "entrusted to the solicitude of the Church" (Cf. *RH* 13,3).

⁸ John Paul II, Address to the clergy of Rome, where the conciliar "new outlook of the Church" is stressed as "an outlook which is more open for the universality of the people of God" (*OR*, dt. Mar. 8, 1991).

⁹ See Footnote 1.

CHAPTER I

OUTLINE OF THE NEW PONTIFICATE*

1. Theme and main points of the Encyclical.**

The Encyclical's first two paragraphs (*RH* 1,1; 1,2) make a general statement of the theme and main points. Each paragraph can be considered as an organic whole.

1.1 General statement of the theme and main points.

As in any introduction to an extensive treatise, *Redemptor Hominis* begins the general statement of the theme and main points with some general indications.

The Encyclical begins as follows, give or take a few minor omissions (*RH* 1,1):

The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history. To Him go my thoughts and my heart in this solemn moment of the world that the Church and the whole family of present-day humanity are now living. In fact, this time, in which God in His hidden design has entrusted to me, after my beloved predecessor John Paul I, the universal service connected with the Chair of St. Peter in Rome, is already very close to the year 2000.

At this moment it is difficult to say what mark that year will leave on the face of human history...For the Church, the People of God spread...to the most distant limits of the earth, it will be the year of a great Jubilee. We

* Chapter heading in the English translation="Inheritance."

** Heading in the English translation="At the Close of the Second Millennium."

are already approaching that date, which...will recall and reawaken in us in a special way our awareness of the key truth of faith which St. John expressed at the beginning of his Gospel: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," (Jn. 1:14) and elsewhere: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

The *theme of the Encyclical* is: The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is "the center of the universe and of history." To Him the Pope wishes to turn his mind and his heart in this unique moment of history which the Church and humanity are living.

The *main points* are: Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man, and the present era. This general indication is specified as follows:

– The *Redeemer of man* is the center of the universe and of history: That glory is His through the Incarnation of the Logos. Thus the Encyclical's first main point is clearly defined: It is the "key truth of faith," the *Incarnation of the Son of God*. The author proclaims this truth—as climax and conclusion of the first paragraph—through the mouth of the Evangelist himself: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). Further, the author mentions the divine motive of the Incarnation immediately: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

– On the *uniqueness of our time*, a parallel statement is made: The year 2000 is near! This thought traverses John Paul II's entire pontificate. The Pope speaks again and again of the approaching year 2000 or beginning of the third millennium. He mentions it so frequently and so intensely, that the present era appears unique, not simply upon the reckoning of the secular calendar, but precisely because of its essentially religious, millennialist character. The Encyclical's own words: "*haec ipsa aetas anno bis mille-*

simo iam admodum appropinquat,” are instinctively reminiscent of Jesus’ call to penance, by which he proclaims the beginning of the messianic age of salvation: “The kingdom of God is at hand!” (*appropinquavit regnum Dei*, Mk. 1:15).

This quasi-religious connection between our era and the year 2000 becomes manifestly religious, inasmuch as the Pope establishes the character of this date as the “important memorial anniversary” of the Incarnation of the Word.

Thus both main points of the theme are clearly defined: The Incarnation of the Son and the uniqueness of our era in their relation to the year 2000, the memorial anniversary of the birth of Christ. St. John’s testimony on the Incarnation of the Son, whom the Father sent, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life, is a biblical teaching which in itself is far removed from the thesis of universal salvation. What is more, this passage requires faith for salvation, and thus refutes the thesis of universal salvation. But the Encyclical does not stop there. Rather, the Pope throws in another scriptural passage, this time from Hebrews, and states the main points of the Encyclical a second time, by which the final course of the Encyclical is then charted.

1.2 More specific and definitive statement of the theme and main points.

The second statement of the theme can also be considered as an organic whole. The unabridged text runs (*RH* 1,2):

We also are in a certain way in a season of a new Advent, a season of expectation: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son ...” (Heb. 1:1-2) by the Son, His Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary.

This act of redemption marked the high point of the

history of man within God's loving plan. God entered the history of humanity and, as a man, became an actor in that history, one of the thousands of millions of human beings but at the same time Unique! Through the Incarnation God gave human life the dimension that He intended man to have from his first beginning; he has granted that dimension definitively—in the way that is peculiar to Him alone, in keeping with His eternal love and mercy, with the full freedom of God—and He has granted it also with the bounty that enables us, in considering the original sin and the whole history of the sins of humanity, and in considering the errors of the human intellect, will and heart, to repeat with amazement the words of the sacred liturgy: "O happy fault...which gained us so great a Redeemer!"

In the first two sentences, the main points of the Encyclical are slightly modified, and appear as follows:

The Redeemer of man is the Word begotten eternally of the Father, given a human nature by the Virgin Mary—and the present era is a time of expectation, the time of a new Advent.

At first glance, there seems to be no essential difference with the first statement of the theme. A more exact consideration, however, brings out the new twist.

The first thing we notice: *In the second statement of the theme, St. John's requirement of the faith for salvation is missing.*

The reason for quoting Hebrews 1:1-2 is obvious: There is mention of the *Son*, through whom God "*in these last days ... has spoken to us.*" Thus the two starting-points towards the Encyclical's main points are clearly marked: a) the Incarnation of the Son, and b) the "last times," the new Advent.

a) The Incarnation of the Son.

The Encyclical makes the following statements on the *saving deed of the Incarnation*: The Son, through whom

God has spoken to us in these last times, is the "Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary." The Encyclical seems to proclaim the central christological dogma of the Incarnation of the Word. But afterwards it says: In this saving deed, according to God's plan for salvation through His love, the history of mankind has reached its high point. For God Himself entered into the history of mankind. He became an actor in that history as a man, one of thousands of millions of human beings but at the same time Unique. Through the Incarnation, God gave human life that dimension which He wished it to have from the beginning. This He has done definitively, in a way peculiar to Him alone. The praise of this saving deed, which is in keeping with His eternal love and mercy, culminates in the *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil.

On the foregoing, the reader will allow some questions and remarks:

According to the divine plan for salvation, of which surely the *Redemption* is an essential part, does the history of mankind already reach its high point with the Incarnation of the Son? Is it not rather with the redemptive sacrifice of the Cross, together with the Resurrection and the Ascension?—Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is the efficient cause of our Redemption and the "high point" of the glorification of God, which is continued perpetually through the risen Lord, who is the Lamb present "as though slain" before the throne of God; this is the supreme height of the heavenly liturgy (Apoc. 5,1ff.). The crib and the Cross cannot be divorced to the extent of proclaiming the Redemption a result of the Incarnation alone. If the latter were the case, then and only then could we say with the Encyclical, without reserve, that the Incarnation "marked the high point of the history of man." But is the Encyclical trying to say that the redemption and justification of all men is already accomplished through the Incarnation?

Of course we do not deny that the sole fact of the Incar-

nation gave human history a completely new dimension.¹ But the Encyclical claims that it is this dimension which God intended man to have from his first beginning, and further, *which God has granted definitively* (!)—“in the way that is peculiar to Him alone, in keeping with His eternal love and mercy.” Does the Encyclical also claim that the effects of original and personal sin in human history cannot change the definitive character of this saving deed worked by God (= that all men are saved regardless of how they lead their lives)?

The wording of the Encyclical hardly allows any other interpretation than that already presented by Cardinal Wojtyła in *Sign of Contradiction* and constantly repeated by John Paul II in *Redemptor Hominis*²: The dimension which God not only intended for human life from the beginning, but also has given (!) through the Incarnation in a definitive manner proper to Him alone, is the formal union of the Son of God with each man, with all humanity.³ The Encyclical re-affirms the same thesis: the thesis of universal salvation—only with different words.

This interpretation is corroborated by what the text omits, and should have included: There is no mention of the Cross, of the sacrifice in reparation for sin, of the necessity of applying the fruits of the Redemption to each individual, or of the subjective dispositions necessary to receive those fruits, namely penance, faith, and baptism. Therefore the liturgical praise of the Savior from the *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil, which forms the conclusion and climax of the paragraph, is made in reference to the Incar-

¹ Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums* (Freiburg i. Br. 1951) [In English: *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), p. 421]; *Gesammelte Schriften* [Complete Works], Vol. II, pp. 295-369. — See also Part I, pp. 67-78.

² E.g. *Redemptor Hominis*, 8,2; 13,1; 14,3; 16,1; 18,1.

³ Cf. Part I, pp. 106ff.

nation of the Savior on Christmas.

We may conclude: As for Cardinal Wojtyla so also for Pope John Paul II, the Incarnation means not only the assumption of a human nature from the Virgin Mary by the Word begotten eternally of the Father, but also the formal union of the Son of God with all humanity—in the sense of a “more broad-minded Christology.”⁴ The Encyclical’s seeming purely “Christ-centered” perspective becomes thereby purely man-centered, stemming from *the man-centered revelation a priori of the Pope’s New Theology.*—*The Encyclical’s first main principle is the axiom of universal salvation.*

b) The new Advent.

The “new Advent” is the second main principle of the Encyclical’s theme. Years before, Pope Paul VI had already called our era a time of Advent.⁵ Cardinal Wojtyla adopted this characterization of our era in *Sign of Contradiction*.⁶ As Pope he makes the “new Advent” the all-embracing *category of his inaugural Encyclical in regard to salvation history.*

What does the Encyclical mean by a “*new Advent*”? Certainly not the first coming of Our Lord in His Incarnation!

The expression appears in the beginning (*RH 1,2*) and at the end (*RH 22,6*) of the Encyclical. Thus the “new Advent” forms almost the *central point of the Encyclical in regard to salvation history.* Moreover, the same expression comes up again in two other prominent passages (*RH 7,1; 20,6*).

The first mention is made with the initial sketch of the theme (*RH 1,2*):

We also are in a certain way in a season of a new

4 Cf. Introduction, 7.4, pp. 32-36.

5 In *Populorum Progressio*.

6 Page 234.

Advent, a season of expectation: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son ..." (Heb. 1:1-2), by the Son, His Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary.

This expression from Hebrews reflects the New Testament's understanding of time: In that understanding, the first Advent of the Son introduces the "last times," in which Christians are living. They themselves are witnesses to the coming of that great event of the transformation and transition of the present world unto its perfection (Heb. 9:26; I Pet. 1:20; I Cor. 10:11). Since the Ascension, the Church lives in expectation of the Lord's Parousia, the Lord's second Advent (Acts 1:11). "Behold, I come quickly," is the word of the Lord. "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Apoc. 22:20), is the petition and *longing of early Christianity*, but not just early Christianity. "*This word remains the yearning cry of the Church for all times.*"⁷

Early Christianity placed salvation history in the context of world history as a time of expectation from the beginning to the Lord's first Advent, and from the Incarnation of Christ until the His second Advent, which comprises the Last Judgment at the end of history. This point of view on salvation history prevailed uncontested in the Church's theology and liturgy—before Vatican II.

The Encyclical's "*new Advent*," however, presents a different view of salvation history, as becomes plain from other relevant passages of the Encyclical. In the second passage it is said (RH 7,1):

While the ways on which the Council of this century has set the Church going, ways indicated by the late Pope Paul VI in his first Encyclical, will continue to be for a long time the ways that all of us must follow, we can at

⁷ Konstantin Rösch, *Das Neue Testament [The New Testament]* (Paderborn 1953), p. 534, Footnote.

the same time rightly ask at this new stage: How, in what manner should we continue? What should we do, in order that this new advent of the Church connected with the approaching end of the second millennium may bring us closer to Him whom Sacred Scripture calls "Everlasting Father," *Pater futuri saeculi?* (Is. 9:6)

The third passage in the pastoral part of the Encyclical on the Eucharist and Penance runs (20,6): It is certain:

...that the Church of the new advent, the Church that is continually preparing for the new coming of the Lord, must be the Church of the Eucharist and of Penance. Only when viewed in this spiritual aspect of her life and activity is she seen to be the Church of the divine mission, the Church *in statu missionis*, as the Second Vatican Council has shown her to be.

The fourth passage is a "humble invitation to prayer," whereby the Encyclical reaches its final peak. It is said (*RH* 22,6):

We feel not only the need but even a categorical imperative for great, intense and growing prayer by all the Church. Only prayer can prevent all these great succeeding tasks and difficulties from becoming a source of crisis and make them instead the occasion and, as it were, the foundation for ever more mature achievements of the People of God's march towards the Promised Land in this stage of history approaching the end of the second millennium. Accordingly, as I end this meditation with a warm and humble call to prayer, together with Mary the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1:14), as the apostles and disciples of the Lord did in the Upper Room in Jerusalem after His ascension (Acts 1:13). Above all, I implore Mary, the heavenly Mother of the Church, to be so good as to devote herself to this prayer of humanity's new advent, together with us who make up the Church, that is to say the Mystical Body of her only Son. I hope that through this prayer we shall be able to receive the Holy Spirit coming upon us (Acts 1:8), and thus become Christ's witnesses "to the end

of the earth" (*Ibid.*), like those who went forth from the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. With the apostolic blessing!

The Encyclical's most important statements on the new Advent are the following:

The new Advent is a characterization of the uniqueness of our present era. In that case, the traditional perspective of salvation history as expectation of the second Coming is automatically reduced to the present era, which begins with Vatican II and is "connected with the approaching end of the second millennium" (*RH* 7,1). *The new Advent includes thus a definite period of time, namely from Vatican II to the year 2000.*

The *nature of the expectation* in these last times is likewise specified: It is "a new stage of the journey," which should bring the People of God closer to the "*Pater futuri saeculi*" (*RH* 7,1). In the Vulgate this bible passage (Is. 9:6) announces the coming of the Messiah with His kingdom of peace. The Encyclical says as much: May the people of God make "ever more mature achievements" in its "march towards the Promised Land in this stage of history approaching the end of the second millennium" (*RH* 22,6). The promised land is thus localized in our history. *Therefore the new Advent is the expectation of an essentially temporal objective, which the People of God are approaching.*

The "new Advent of the Church" suddenly becomes "the Church of the new Advent," which "must be the Church of the Eucharist and of Penance," which is "continually preparing for the new coming of the Lord" (20,6). "Only when viewed in this spiritual profile" is it "seen to be the Church of the divine mission" (*RH* 20,6):

Thus the "Church of the new Advent" includes also the expectation of a "new coming of the Lord"?

The "new coming of the Lord" has of course nothing to do with the traditional expectation of Our Lord's second coming, which comprises the Last Judgment at the end of

history. But then what does it mean? The Encyclical says no more, except to affirm that the Church should be in constant—and sacramental—preparation for the “new coming of the Lord” (*RH* 20,6). This “new coming of the Lord” can only mean the establishment of the kingdom of world peace through the Messiah in the third millennium. The context leaves room for no other interpretation.

The “Church of the new Advent” is a Church, *whose essence is determined by the expectations, nature and objectives of that new Advent*. But these are precisely in the context of the new perspective of salvation history, which is reduced to the present-day Church beginning with Vatican II and culminating with the year 2000, in other words the expectation of the “new coming of the Lord” and the promised messianic kingdom of peace in history. The Church, together with her sacraments and mission, changes course and sets out for this new Advent. The “Church of the new Advent” is a new Church: “Through the Second Vatican Council, she succeeded in re-defining her own essence.”⁸

The “new Advent of the Church” is also the “new Advent of humanity” (*RH* 22,6). Both the Church and humanity share the same expectation with the same goals and purposes. In *Sign of Contradiction*, Cardinal Wojtyła already taught a “more broad-minded” idea of the Church, which includes all mankind.⁹

John Paul II likewise celebrates the Second Vatican Council as a “second” or “new Pentecost.”¹⁰ By that he means not only a pastoral, spiritual awakening, whereby Christianity entered a “new spring,”¹¹ but the “new Pentecost” also means, in the fullest sense, the rebirth of the

⁸ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

¹⁰ Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 22,6.—In Santa Maria Maggiore, Dec. 8, 1990 (*OR*, dt., Dec. 14, 1990, p. 1) [*OR*, Eng. Dec. 10, 1990, p. 7].

¹¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 2,2.

Church, therefore the Conciliar Church. *The "new Advent of the Church and humanity" and the "new coming of the Lord" also include the birth of the new "Church of the new Advent" with its new message and new mission* (cf. *RH* 20,6; 22,6).

The Encyclical closes with the grand vision of the Pope, in which he makes a connection between the "Church of the new Advent" and the early Christian community, between the "new Pentecost" and the first Pentecost (*RH* 22,6):

The present era as "the time of a new Advent of the Church and of humanity" is the subject of a "categorical imperative" for intense prayer. Prayer is the foundation upon which the Church should overcome all obstacles and make ever more mature achievements towards attaining "the Promised Land in this stage of history approaching the end of the second millennium." Then the Pope compares the present "new Advent of humanity" to early Christianity and extends the parallel to the early Christian community in Jerusalem, to the Ascension, to the Upper Room, and finally to Pentecost:

As Mary and the Apostles devoted themselves to prayer in the Upper Room after the Ascension to prepare for the "coming of the Holy Spirit from on high" at Pentecost, so also today should the Church pray with Mary for the coming of the Holy Ghost in the "new Advent of humanity."

Just as Mary and the Apostles, after receiving the Holy Ghost, "went forth from the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost," so also should we who make up the Mystical Body of Christ—that is the "Church of the new Advent"—"become Christ's witnesses 'to the end of the earth' (Acts 1:8)," after the reception of the Holy Ghost for which we have prayed. The new message of the witnesses of the "Church of the new Pentecost" is of course the same as the message of the "Church of the new Advent" in the "new Advent of humanity." To this cause the Pope gives his

“apostolic blessing”!

It is obvious that the Pope’s vision of the present era as the “time of a new Advent” has nothing in common with the New Testament’s understanding of the expectation of Our Lord’s second coming:

Up to Vatican II, the Incarnation of Christ, the first Advent of the Lord, and the manifestation of the Lord at the Last Judgment, the second Advent of the Lord, were accepted as fixed, immovable points in both world history and salvation history. After the Ascension, the Church, born on Pentecost and faithful to her mission, carried the message of expectation of the eschatological manifestation of the Lord “to the end of the earth.” Both world history and salvation history were clearly understood as a sequence of objective, actual events, which took place at definite points in time. To speak of a “second Pentecost” or of a “new Advent of the Lord” as embodied in salvation history is simply not biblical.

Against the biblical view stands a new perspective of salvation history in the Encyclical: The “time of the new Advent” begins with the Second Vatican Council and ends with the year 2000, therefore with the anniversary of the Incarnation of the Son, with the “new coming of the Lord,” with the establishment of the promised messianic kingdom of peace “in our history.” The witness of the new message of the expectation of humanity is the “Church of the new Advent,” which came into being and received a new “divine mission” through the Second Vatican Council, which was a “new Pentecost.” She has been likewise sent to proclaim the “new coming of the Lord” and the message of the “new Advent,” “to the end of the earth.”

The traditional view of salvation history is not denied, but simply replaced by a new perspective. The question remains: How are we to understand the Pope’s new perspective? Answer: As the fruit of existentialist hermeneutics.

According to this philosophy, the "historicity" of individuals and of our era is the basic structure of our understanding of history in general and of salvation history in particular. That means in our case: The sequence of objective, actual events, which took place at definite points in time, beginning with the "brute" historical event of the Incarnation and ending with the equally objective historical event of the second coming, in other words the "old" Advent of the Church, is absorbed into the "historicity" of the modern way of viewing history, is re-interpreted in light of its "relevance" for "today" as "something accomplished," and is finally re-oriented towards the "arrival of good things to come."¹² The basis for the existentialist hermeneutics in the Encyclical is therefore our present era, understood and presented as the "time of a new Advent," from which will emerge a new interpretation and understanding of revelation and salvation history.¹³

In this way the deposit of faith will be unhinged from its inviolable objectivity and cast afloat on the basis of existentialist "historicity," open to any "new interpretation," and all this on the pretext of the "spirit of the Council." From a "new awareness" of the Church, new "existentialist dogmas" can be processed at will. The Encyclical's new interpretation of the Advent of the Lord is an impressive exam-

¹² Cf. Adolf Darlapp, Art. "Geschichtlichkeit," *LThK* IV, 780-783.—By the same author: *Fundamentale Theologie der Heilsgeschichte* [Fundamental Theology of Salvation History], *Mysterium Salutis*, I, 17-153.

¹³ Here are some characteristics of existentialist hermeneutics, which is based on the structure of historicity: The denial of the objective value of history, the absorption of the supernatural mysteries of Christianity into the realm of experience, the incorporation of the past into the present, the adapting of "what has been" to "what is to come," and the transformation of objective being into subjective consciousness. Cf. the lengthy dispute with existentialism from the standpoint of the *philosophia perennis*: Bernhard Lakebrink, *Die Wahrheit in Bedrängnis* [The Truth in Distress] (Stein a. Rhein 1986).

ple of the subtle, scarcely perceptible transformation and change in meaning of revelation and salvation history as a whole.

We may conclude: The final version of the Encyclical's two main points in the second statement of the theme runs: *The Incarnation of the Son in the sense of universal salvation and the uniqueness of our era as the "time of a new Advent."* Or to put it another way: Universal salvation in the new perspective of salvation history in general, and of the new Advent of humanity in particular.

1.3 Digression: Skillful arrangement and composition of the Encyclical.

Karol Wojtyła was a writer and poet. These he remained even as Pope. For an adequate understanding of the inaugural Encyclical, it is important to consider its skillful arrangement and composition. In order to grasp each sentence, one must consider the text as a whole. But we cannot show the skillful arrangement of each paragraph in detail here. Therefore let us show this aspect of the Encyclical in a specific instance, namely the paragraph we just quoted (*RH* 1,2).

In the Encyclical's second and final statement of the theme and main points, the quotation from Hebrews (*RH* 1,2) forms the starting point, the center and the reference point for the final version of its two main points. In order to grasp the full significance of the introduction to Hebrews in the Encyclical, we must have the entire text before us. The inspired text of Hebrews 1:1-4 runs as follows:

God, who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, "sitteth on

the right hand" (Ps. 109) of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they (Hebr. 1:1-4).

Traditional exegesis and dogmatic theology valued this weighty introduction to Hebrews as the classical passage in support of the Church's teaching on the inner relations in the Trinity.¹⁴ In the first sentence, the superiority of the New Testament's revelation over that of the Old Testament is emphasized, and the unique eminence of the Son, the mediator of the New Covenant, is clearly presented: In the messianic last times, revelation was proclaimed in its fulfillment through the Son (cf. Jn. 1:17). The divine dignity and unique position of the Son is then set forth in three relative clauses:

The Son is the Heir of the universe, because he is the Son (Galatians). He is the Creator of the world. Two descriptions are given for illustration: "Brightness of His glory" and "Figure of His substance." These express the nature of the Son and his relationship to the Father. "As the shining of the sunbeam to the sun, so the Son is related to His Father: Both are equal, belong necessarily together for eternity, and in such a way, that the nature of the Father is not altered by the going forth of the Son. Just as the copy produced through a seal is an exact duplicate of the original, so the Son is the perfect image of the Father; He is generated by the Father, but entirely equal to Him. Both descriptions express the Son's equality in nature with the Father, while maintaining the distinction of persons. He preserves and governs the world; He is the Savior of mankind, who sits at the right hand of the Father and has a share in the divine power."¹⁵

¹⁴ Joseph Reuss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer [The Letter to the Hebrews]* (*Das Neue Testament [The New Testament]*), Echter Bibel, Würzburg 1952), pp. 39ff.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

In accordance with the Church Fathers, this commentary on Hebrews 1:1-4 proceeds from the letter of the scriptural passage, and concludes with the Church's teaching on the "inner relations in the Trinity," namely the dogmatic statements on the nature of the Son and His relationship to the Father within the Trinity.

We find a totally different approach to the scriptural passage in the text of the Encyclical, which we quote again in full for the sake of comparison. Although *Redemptor Hominis* is supposed to be that part of the "trinitarian trilogy" which is "dedicated to the Son," the quotation from Hebrews is not the starting point for the Pope's teaching on the Trinity, but rather for his Redemption doctrine:

We also are in a certain way in a season of a new Advent, a season of expectation: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son ..." (Heb. 1:1-2), by the Son, His Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary (*RH* 1,2).

We cannot overlook the elegance of the style and the composition: The scriptural passage from Hebrews is encompassed by two statements: one on the present era as a "time of a new Advent" and the other on the Incarnation of the "Word, who was eternally begotten of the Father." The quotation from Hebrews (1:1-2) forms the nucleus of the two main points of the Encyclical, so that both have their common foundation in the same passage of Holy Scripture, from which they proceed. One and the same scriptural passage is therefore the theological starting point for the Encyclical's theme with its two main points, which through the quoted biblical passage are thus placed in direct relationship to each other. The fundamentally new version of the Encyclical's theme appears as a skillfully organized whole.

The Pope's subsequent remarks are an impressive devel-

opment of the fundamental statement on the Incarnation of the Word, who was eternally begotten of the Father, a statement which finally reaches its climax with the words from the *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil. What does this stylistic brilliance mean for the theological substance?

The comparison of the biblical text with that of the Encyclical clearly shows that the Pope does not faithfully reproduce the first sentence of the quoted text from Hebrews (...), but rather cuts it off before the important relative clauses involving the Son, "whom He (= the Father) hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world," despite the fact that these clauses would be best suited as a starting point for a trinitarian or Christ-centered exposition.

Instead the Encyclical supplements the interrupted biblical text by adding a personal reflection on the Son through the relative clause: "by the Son, His Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary." The fact is, however, that not one of the numerous expressions on the Son in Hebrews (1:1-4) refers to His Incarnation. Why make an addition to the biblical text, so as to give the line of thought another twist? The obvious reason is the literary composition: By stating the Encyclical's theme, the Pope intends to delineate its main points in the process. And these are: the "new Advent" and the "Incarnation of the Word." Through the addition to the biblical text, the Encyclical's theme takes on its final shape.

For a correct understanding of the Encyclical's basic thrust, we must observe the remarks which directly follow, and which exclusively refer to the addition to the scriptural passage, that is to the "saving deed of the Incarnation of the Word" (see above 1.2 a, pp. 46-49). They are merely *an explanation of the addition, not of the scriptural passage itself*. And this explanation leads to the thesis on the Incarnation as a supernatural union of the God the Son with each human being, thus the axiom of universal salvation.

What, therefore, does this literary brilliance mean for the theological substance? By quoting Hebrews, the Encyclical skillfully makes a connection between its own main points and the Bible, and announces its theme at the outset with biblical impact. But neither of the two main points of the inaugural Encyclical is theologically warranted by the scriptural passage; nor has either principle anything to do with the genuine biblical sense. Nevertheless, the scriptural passage bears an outer resemblance to the Encyclical's main points.

The same holds for the literary arrangement of the entire paragraph, which culminates in the liturgical *Exsultet* of the Easter Vigil, but in praise of Christmas.

The understanding of the Encyclical results not only from its basic structure of existentialist historicity. We must likewise consider the skillful display and impeccable choice of texts, even those of Holy Scripture and the Liturgy. The latter are employed as mere instruments of composition in support of the writer's personal theological views, namely his *New Theology*. The literary brilliance of the presentation is acquired at the expense of theological precision and conceptual clarity.

2. Theological orientation of the new pontificate.*

After the statement of the theme and main points (*RH* 1), there follows the theological orientation of the new pontificate (*RH* 2).

2.1 In service of the first fundamental truth of the Incarnation.

John Paul II describes the theological orientation of his pontificate in the form of a personal testimony (*RH* 2,1):

* Heading in the English translation="The First Words of the New Pontificate."

It was to Christ the Redeemer that my feelings and my thoughts were directed on October 16 of last year, when, after the canonical election, I was asked: "Do you accept?" I then replied: "With obedience in faith to Christ, my Lord, and with trust in the Mother of Christ and of the Church, in spite of the great difficulties, I accept." Today I wish to make that reply known publicly to all without exception, thus showing that there is a link between the first fundamental truth of the Incarnation, already mentioned, and the ministry that, with my acceptance of my election as Bishop of Rome and Successor of the Apostle Peter, has become my specific duty in his See.

The Pope is telling us that, at the conclave, he directed his "feelings and thoughts to Christ the Redeemer" and that he accepted his election to the papacy "with obedience in faith to Christ." In the public declaration, he makes sudden reference to "the first fundamental truth of the Incarnation, already mentioned (thus in the answer given at the conclave)." *But this truth of the Incarnation is nowhere mentioned at the conclave!*

There is really something novel about the solemn declaration of a statement which was never made at the conclave: The (new Pope's) "obedience in faith to Christ" is not the same as the service which is linked to the "first fundamental truth of the Incarnation."

One could easily pass over this kind of personal testimony as unimportant, were it not a question of such a significant fact as *the solemn declaration, by the Pope himself, of the fundamental theological orientation of the new pontificate*. We could paraphrase this orientation—without reference to the conclave—as the Pope's "personal testimony" in the following words:

I would like to proclaim to everyone publicly and hereby attest, that the service of the first fundamental truth of the Incarnation is the purpose of my entire activity on the Chair of Peter.

We may conclude: In the line of successors to the Apostle Peter in the Roman See, John Paul II considers it his prime responsibility to serve the "first fundamental truth of the Incarnation." But, for the Pope, the Incarnation means not just the union of a human nature with the Word, who was eternally begotten of the Father and born of the Virgin Mary, but rather the supernatural union of the Son with all humanity, in the sense of a "more broad-minded Christology," therefore the thesis of universal salvation.

The fundamental theological orientation of the new pontificate is therefore identical with the first main principle of the Encyclical's theme.

2.2 Recognition of the inheritance left by the Council Popes; attachment to the Tradition of the Roman See.

A further statement of the theological orientation of the new pontificate is contained in the Pope's likewise personal explanation of his choosing the double name John Paul II (RH 2,2):

Through these two names and two pontificates I am linked with the whole tradition of the Apostolic See and with all my predecessors in the expanse of the twentieth century and of the preceding centuries.

I am connected, through one after another of the various ages back to the most remote, with the line of the mission and ministry that confers on Peter's See an altogether special place in the Church. John XXIII and Paul VI are a stage to which I wish to refer directly as a threshold from which I intend to continue, in a certain sense together with John Paul I, into the future, letting myself be guided by unlimited trust in and obedience to the Spirit that Christ promised and sent to His Church.

There follows a series of scriptural passages on the Holy Ghost from the Gospel of St. John (16:7; 15:26; 16:13), which forms the stylistically effective climax and conclu-

sion of the whole paragraph of the Encyclical (*RH 2*).

With two statements the Pope outlines the orientation of his pontificate:

a) Through both names and both pontificates, namely of John XXIII and Paul VI, he is linked to the entire tradition of the Roman See, all the way back to St. Peter.

To manifest this solidarity, John Paul II deems it sufficient to refer to the "two names and two pontificates" of the Council Popes. Period! End of discussion! The Encyclical practically ignores two thousand years of Church Tradition. And yet the reference to both Popes and both pontificates pretends to include the Church's entire tradition from St. Peter up to and including Vatican II.

b) In the same breath, the Pope himself gives the reason for what is in fact the divorce of his pontificate from the Church's entire tradition:

John XXIII and Paul VI represented a historic era, which for him is the immediate threshold, from which he is called upon to forge ahead into the future. The historic central point of his pontificate includes therefore precisely the "new stage" of the Church's course, which begins with Vatican II and approaches the end of the second millennium: It is "the time of the new Advent of the Church."

Coming from a Polish Pope with a distinct historical awareness, the reduction of two thousand years of tradition of the Roman See to the conciliar era is simply astonishing—and very suggestive!

John Paul II clearly intends to align his pontificate on the unique inheritance of the Council Popes, in order to preserve it and to develop it further. The new Pontiff understands himself decidedly and unconditionally as a Pope of the Conciliar Church. He considers Vatican II as a "new Pentecost" and sees the post-conciliar era as the time of a special outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

This article of the Encyclical, which clearly sets the theological orientation of the new pontificate (*RH 2*), culmi-

nates with stylistic effectiveness in three scriptural passages on the Holy Ghost from the Gospel of St. John. The last of them seems like a prophecy spoken especially for our time (Jn. 16:13): "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."—What is "all the truth" and "the things that are to come" in the perspective of the "new Advent of the Church"?

We may conclude: The theological and pastoral orientation of John Paul II's new pontificate can be summed up in one sentence: The foundation is the unique inheritance of the Council Popes, which at the same time is the threshold, from which the Pope intends to forge ahead into the future, in order to "develop it further." *The Encyclical's temporal perspective of the new pontificate is the "new Advent of the Church," the second main principle of the Encyclical.*

3. The inheritance left by the Council Popes and the "present-day consciousness of the Church."*

In the Encyclical, the recognition of the person and work of the Council Popes, the description of the "present-day consciousness of the Church," and the judgment of the current situation in the Church are several points which are intertwined (RH 3; 4). Each point, however, will be treated here individually.

3.1 Recognition of the Council Popes.

On the list of his predecessors in the office of Peter, John Paul II only acknowledges the inheritance of the Council Popes, but the person and achievements of Paul VI receive more special treatment. That is understandable, since John XXIII convened the Council, but died soon after on Pente-

* Heading in the English translation—"Trust in the Spirit of Truth and of Love."

cost 1963, and since John Paul I reigned for little more than a month.

Paul VI is judged exclusively on his merits for bringing the Council to a successful close and for implementing the Council's decisions in the life of the Church. He is praised for his wisdom, his courage, his constancy and his patience in the implementation of the Council's decisions (*RH* 3,1). Special emphasis is given to Paul VI's respect for "every particle of truth contained in the various human opinions" (*RH* 4,2).

John Paul II attaches great importance to Paul VI's first Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, to which he refers and on which he aligns his own Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. The particular reference points are Paul VI's remarks on the "dialogue of salvation" and the "present-day consciousness of the Church" (*RH* 3,2; 4,1).

3.2 The "present-day consciousness of the Church."

In an idealist existentialism, *time and consciousness* are in a sense Siamese twins. The influence of existentialism on Karol Wojtyła's thinking is suggested by his frequent reference not only to time (see above 1.2 b, pp. 49-57), but also to "consciousness." By the mere fact that John Paul II defines the inheritance of the Council Popes *with respect to the "consciousness of the Church,"* he betrays his existentialist thinking.

After John Paul II has clearly stated that the inheritance of the Council Popes is the foundation of his pontificate and at the same time represents the threshold, from which he intends to continue the implementation of Vatican II, *he shows the extent to which this inheritance has taken root in the consciousness of the Church* (*RH* 3,1):

Entrusting myself fully to the Spirit of truth, therefore, I am entering into the rich inheritance of the recent pontificates. This inheritance has struck deep roots in the

awareness of the Church in an utterly new way, quite unknown previously, thanks to the Second Vatican Council, which John XXIII convened and opened and which was later successfully concluded and perseveringly put into effect by Paul VI, whose activity I was myself able to watch from close at hand. I was constantly amazed at his profound wisdom and his courage and also by his constancy and patience in the difficult post-conciliar period of his pontificate. As helmsman of the Church, the bark of Peter, he knew how to preserve a providential tranquility and balance even in the most critical moments, when the Church seemed to be shaken from within, and he always maintained unhesitating hope in the Church's solidity. What the Spirit said to the Church through the Council of our time, what the Spirit says in this Church to all the Churches (cf. Apoc. 2:7) cannot lead to anything else—in spite of momentary uneasiness—but still more mature solidity of the whole People of God, aware of their salvific mission.

The paragraph goes on to say (RH 3,2):

Paul VI selected this present-day consciousness of the Church as the first theme in his fundamental Encyclical beginning with the words *Ecclesiam Suam*. Let me refer first of all to this Encyclical and link myself with it in this first document that, so to speak, inaugurates the present pontificate. The Church's consciousness, enlightened and supported by the Holy Spirit and fathoming more and more deeply both her divine mystery and her human mission, and even her human weaknesses—this consciousness is and must remain the first source of the Church's love, as love in turn helps to strengthen and deepen her consciousness. Paul VI left us a witness of such an extremely acute consciousness of the Church. Through the many things, often causing suffering, that went to make up his pontificate he taught us intrepid love for the Church, which is, as the Council states, a "sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind" (*Lumen Gentium* 1).

Within 33 lines of the quoted text, the "consciousness of

the Church" or of the "People of God" is mentioned no less than six times! This is characteristic of the important role which "consciousness" plays in the Pope's theology.

The most important statements on the "consciousness of the Church" give us the following general picture:

– Thanks to Vatican II and its realization in the life of the Church, the inheritance of the Council Popes has "struck deep roots in the awareness of the Church" in a completely new way, which was previously unknown. This is an admission to the sheer revolutionary effect of the conciliar inheritance on the consciousness of the Church.

– As the Holy Ghost spoke through the Council, so today he continues to speak to the Church, the people of God, who are "aware of their salvific mission," and he gives them "still more mature solidity,"—"in spite of momentary uneasiness." The Pope is here saying three things:

– Firstly, the Council is acclaimed as the voice of the Holy Ghost. This acclaim raises a self-professed pastoral Council, twenty years after the fact, to the highest conceivable theological status. It is declared a "super dogma," which it by no means is (cf. Ratzinger).

– Secondly, what holds for the Council still holds for us "today," thus for the post-conciliar era. Hence the implementation of the Council in the post-conciliar period is sanctioned with the same divine authority.

– Thirdly, the message of the Holy Ghost, spoken at the Council, gives more firm solidity to the People of God, who are "aware of their salvific mission."

Is that really the case? It was before Vatican II that the Catholic Church enjoyed a unique status of firm stability, both in her ecumenical conversations and in her missionary activity, thanks to the clear and unyielding position of the Roman authorities, who were "aware of their salvific mission."¹⁶ Does the post-conciliar practice of pluralism, ecu-

¹⁶ Cf. my essay, "Das II. Vatikanum: Radikale Zäsur in der Missions-

menism and interfaith dialogue really indicate a “still more mature solidity,” when coupled with the timid qualification “in spite of momentary uneasiness”? But the “momentary uneasiness” means nothing less than the revolutionary impact of the Council on the entire faith and practice of the Church!

We can now attempt—by way of intermediate summary—a basic, general definition of the nature and extent of the new “consciousness of the Church”: It is and includes, across the board, what the Holy Ghost has spoken, and still speaks today, to the Church through the Council. Thus the “new consciousness” is the “conciliar consciousness of the Church.” Because of its divine origin, it assumes a pretentious air. But nothing concrete has been said yet about its exact nature.

The new conciliar consciousness, of course, differs from the old pre-conciliar consciousness of the Church. But the latter must, “in spite of momentary uneasiness,” be brought up to date with the new conciliar consciousness according to the principle of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.¹⁷

— The new conciliar consciousness is simply referred to as the “present-day consciousness of the Church,” which Pope Paul VI “selected ... as the first theme in his fundamental Encyclical ... *Ecclesiam Suam*.”

“Present-day” consciousness? How can an Encyclical from the year 1964 speak of the “present-day consciousness of the Church” which *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) mentions, when the latter was promulgated fifteen years after the former? The wording of the Latin original bridges the gap: The “present-day” consciousness (*hac aetate!*) really

geschichte?,” in: *Die eine Wahrheit und die vielen Religionen* [One Truth and Many Religions] (Abensberg 1988), *Respondeo* 8, 111-128.

¹⁷ Cf. 4,2, pp. 81-87: Evaluation of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.

means the consciousness "of these times," "of this era." The present-day consciousness is therefore an *epoch-making consciousness*.

Nevertheless: How could Paul VI claim to expound on the "epoch-making, conciliar consciousness of the Church" in *Ecclesiam Suam*, since the Encyclical was promulgated (Aug. 6, 1964) before he even saw either the final text of *Lumen Gentium* (Nov. 21, 1964), or of *Gaudium et Spes* (Dec. 7, 1965), or of *Nostra Aetate* (Oct. 28, 1965), or of *Dignitatis Humanae* (Dec. 7, 1965), or before he even experienced the revolutionary consequences of the Council for the stability of the faith and of missionary activity in the Church up to the inaugural Encyclical of John Paul II in the year 1979? How could Paul VI give an adequate treatment of the "conciliar consciousness" in *Ecclesiam Suam*, before the Council even promulgated the final draft of its major documents?

Therefore the question remains: What can possibly be meant by the "present-day conciliar consciousness of the Church"?

There can be no question of an actual, historically verifiable "present-day consciousness" of the universal Church, nor for that matter of a "conciliar consciousness of the Church" in light of Council documents already promulgated. The "present-day conciliar consciousness of the Church" must therefore be *a buzzword behind which lurks an updated understanding of the Church, which will soon begin to take shape, like the famous slogan "spirit of the Council,"* and which everyone can interpret as he pleases. What specifically does the Pope mean by the "present-day conciliar consciousness of the Church"?

— John Paul II declares *Ecclesiam Suam* as the basis of his own Encyclical, in which he further develops the idea of the "present-day consciousness of the Church."

There he gives us further characteristics of this consciousness: It is "enlightened and supported by the Holy

Spirit." By these words, the Pope invests the present-day consciousness of the Church *with an absolute and unquestionable status*.

– This "conciliar present-day consciousness of the Church," which is "enlightened and supported by the Holy Spirit," is also claimed to be "fathoming more and more deeply both her divine mystery and her human mission." *The buzzword: "Present-day consciousness of the Church," develops a spiritual momentum by which it becomes personified* (cf. "Sapientia" in the book of Wisdom).

– If we now ask what is the function and purpose of the conciliar "present-day consciousness of the Church" in the faith and practice of the People of God, we receive the following answer: It "is and must remain the first source of the Church's love"—and this love, from which the "present-day consciousness of the Church" springs (!), "helps to strengthen and deepen" that consciousness.

Hence the "present-day consciousness of the Church," which is produced, enlightened, and supported by the Holy Ghost, is also *the principle ("source") and the abiding norm ("is and must remain") of love for the Church*. Because of its divine origin, it has an *absolute, normative character*.

What kind of Catholic regards the "present-day consciousness of the Church" as the first and abiding source of his love for the Church? The first and abiding source of his love for the Church should be no vague "present-day consciousness of the Church," but simply his faith in Christ and in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church founded by Christ. His love for the Church does not spring from a "conciliar consciousness," but rather from his faith in an objectively revealed reality, namely the Church, which exists quite independently of our consciousness. Now the Pope is calling upon Catholics to acknowledge the conciliar "present-day consciousness of the Church" as the first, abiding source and norm of their love for the Church.

– Finally it is said: Paul VI “left us a witness of such an extremely acute (!) consciousness of the Church.” Whether John Paul II understood his predecessor correctly is an open question.

Are we ever going to find out specifically what *dogmatic importance* this present-day consciousness of the Church has, which is said to be extremely acute, was produced, enlightened, and supported by the Holy Ghost, and took up roots in the inheritance of the Council Popes in an entirely new way, never known before? This question is answered in the last sentence: The Church has come to realize—through the Council—that she is the “sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind” (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1).

For the Pope, it is through this “realization” at the Council that the “present-day consciousness of the Church” has found its doctrinally adequate expression. Or conversely: In the context of the Encyclical, the “present-day consciousness of the Church” is the adequate expression of that dogmatic realization at the Council.

As a matter of fact, the quotation from *Lumen Gentium* 1,1 is the key text *not only for the Council's, but also for the Encyclical's concept of the Church*.¹⁸ It forms the stylistically suspenseful climax and conclusion of the entire article of the Encyclical (*RH* 3), while at the same time serving as the direct starting point for the Pope's further reflections on the “consciousness of the Church” (*RH* 4). Up until now, it is the only concrete statement on the dogmatic importance of that consciousness. Apparently, this dogmatic statement is plain and clear for the Pope. That is why he is content with the mere indication of the Council's realization without

¹⁸ Cf. Aloys Grillmeier, *Herder-Kommentar zu Lumen Gentium, LThK XIII*, 157: “This vocation of the Church, namely to be a light for the Gentiles in Christ, is contained in a sentence which is the very heart of the Constitution's ecclesiology: ‘The Church in Christ is in the nature of sacrament ...’”

any commentary, in order to continue from there with a deeper explanation of the consciousness of the Church (*RH* 4).

But the sense of the key text from *Lumen Gentium* 1,1 is not so clear and simple for us, neither in the Council document nor in the Encyclical. Therefore we must discover the precise dogmatic import of that key text before going into the Pope's subsequent remarks on the consciousness of the Church.

3.3 Digression: The Church as the sacrament of unity in the consciousness of the people of God.

In the Pope's vocabulary, "consciousness" comes to the forefront so often (*RH* 3), that one cannot help reducing the "new outlook on the Church," which Vatican II gave us,¹⁹ to a mere question of consciousness and not of dogma. According to the classical teaching, there can always be a new, more broad-minded consciousness of the Church, but not a more broad-minded dogma of the Church. *But the crucial point is dogma.*

As for the question of the dogmatic import of the "present-day consciousness of the Church," the Pope (*RH* 3,2) answers by pointing out the "realization" of the Council:

The Church is "a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind" (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1).

This sentence is of capital importance not only for the entire ecclesiology of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,²⁰ but also for that of the Encyclical *Redemptor*

¹⁹ John Paul II, Address to the clergy of Rome, where the conciliar "new outlook of the Church" is stressed as "an outlook which is more open for the universality of the people of God" (*OR*, dt. Mar. 8, 1991).

²⁰ See footnote 18.

Hominis. The Council's definition gives us the key to the adequate dogmatic understanding of the "present-day consciousness of the Church," even if the Pope's hymn of praise for that consciousness virtually drowns out the Council's definition.

The Council text is rather vague; it is neither plain nor clear. The use of the term "sacrament" is unusual. Since when is the Church simply a sign or instrument "of the unity of all mankind"? Since Vatican II! With this definition, the Council follows the "signs of the times," which point "in the direction of the unity of all mankind."²¹

The majority of the Council Fathers most likely understood and interpreted the definition according to the Church's traditional teaching. And many commentaries strive to uphold that traditional understanding.

Thus says the Herder commentary (Aloys Grillmeier): The Council text is somewhat reserved in its expression. It gives no definition or explanation of "sacrament," nor any indication as to how this idea should be applied to the Church. But then again, the idea of the Church as sacrament of salvation has an intimate connection to the patristic and modern ecclesiology. This idea has its ultimate foundation in the biblical expression *Mysterion*, which means God's entire economy of salvation. Through the Latin translation of the Bible, which renders the term *Mysterion* by *Sacramentum*, it became standard usage in the theology of the Fathers to designate the Church also as *Mysterion-Sacramentum*. The Constitution therefore intends to restore the ancient usage of "referring to the Church in its sacramental signification and instrumentality in the entire divine economy of salvation for all mankind throughout history. It is the 'universal sacrament of salvation' (Art. 48,2)."²²

²¹ Aloys Grillmeier, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

As for the crucial question of how the unity of all mankind is accomplished by the Church, the commentary answers: Through the incorporation of mankind into the Church. In that case, salvation in Christ was likewise communicated to all mankind, who all belong to the eschatological family of the children of God. The commentary goes on to interpret the Council text on the Church as sacrament of unity in this very sense: "Since this Church of perfection is mankind's sole objective, it is the Council's duty to proclaim with all her might the universal meaning of this sacrament of salvation."²³ The attempt to give the Council text an orthodox interpretation is rather obvious, but is it also a faithful interpretation of the text?

It is simply not true that the Council text—"reserved in its expression"—gives no definition or explanation of the term sacrament, nor any indication for its application. Quite the contrary, the text loses no time in giving the definition and application of the term: The Church is "a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind." That describes "the function of the Church," as the commentary of Rahner-Vorgrimler correctly observes.²⁴ But even that is only half the truth: The crucial point of the sentence is precisely the fact that the Church calls herself a sacrament (i.e. by her very nature), which she then defines as her function. That means: The Church's "function" is to be a sacrament, that is, a "sign and means." There is no mention of incorporation into the Church; the Council's definition speaks only of the Church as a sacrament for the unity of all mankind. Up to Vatican II, however, the Church never identified the community of those redeemed in Christ with the community of all mankind; she never understood herself as simply

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁴ Karl Rahner, Herbert Vorgrimler, *Kleines Konzilskompendium* [*A Small Compendium of the Council*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1966), p. 106.

an instrument for the unity of all mankind. Instead, her missionary activity was aimed at the union of all nations in the new people of God. The purpose of her mission was therefore *the new supernatural unity of mankind in the Mystical Body of Christ, in the Church with her marks, which St. Paul defines with the following words*: "One body and one spirit ... One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4:4ff). Through Christ and the mission of the Church, mankind is in a state of "krisis," i.e. judgment, having to make a decision for or against the faith.

In contrast, the Council text as it stands can easily be understood and interpreted *in the sense of the thesis of universal salvation*.

It is obvious that the term "sacrament" in *Lumen Gentium* 1,1 does not correspond to the biblical *Mysterion*, nor has it anything to do with the patristic *Mysterion-Sacramentum*, but it is *the expression of modern ecclesiology*.

The recognition of non-Christian religions as legitimate means of salvation, instituted by God, the proclamation of the universality of the Redemption and divine grace in the context of "anonymous Christianity," both of these represent a theological breakthrough which was made even before the Council. In this light, the Church was regarded as a "sign" of universal salvation and as an "instrument" to make anonymous Christians conscious of their Christianity.²⁵

If the non-Christian world is "anonymous Christianity," then there exist *a priori* an unconscious union of all persons with Christ and a hidden "ontological" unity of the Church and mankind, then we can regard all mankind as a "hidden" Church. Thus what we call the Church is the "sign" of universal salvation and at the same time the "in-

²⁵ Heinz Robert Schlette, *Die Religionen als Thema der Theologie* [Religion as the Theme of Theology] (Freiburg i. Br. 1963).—Eugen Hillman, *The Wider Ecumenism* (London 1968).—Et al.

strument" for the unity of all mankind, and acts in that capacity by her "missionary dynamism," whereby she makes all men aware of the unconscious, hidden, yet real unity of all mankind in Christ, and, by proclaiming revelation *a posteriori* to all mankind, announces the grace of God given to everyone *a priori*—then the mission of the Church to bring about "the unity of all mankind" in God and in Christ is merely a question of consciousness.

In the present stage of theology, there is a strong consensus: The Council text on the Church as sacrament of unity in *Lumen Gentium* 1,1 is understood in the sense of universal salvation. That holds also for Cardinal Wojtyla, even as Pope. In *Sign of Contradiction*, his commentary on this Council text is succinct: "All men are included in this sacrament of unity" (p. 37). The new more broad-minded idea of the Church is also defined there: "The Church of the living God unites all men" (p. 27).

We may conclude: The sentence: The Church is "a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind," sentence which is essential for the entire ecclesiology of the constitution *Lumen Gentium* and for the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, is tantamount in the Encyclical to the thesis of universal salvation, to the more broad-minded Christology and ecclesiology. This is how he defines the dogmatic import of the "present-day consciousness of the Church."

4. Worldwide broadening of the Church's consciousness and the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.*

In the fourth article, the Pope locks into the Council text on the Church as sacrament of unity (LG 1,1), develops his meditation on the "present-day consciousness of the Church" (4,1), and closes with a brief assessment of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae* (4,2).

* Heading in the English translation—"Reference to Paul VI's First Encyclical."

4.1 Broadening of the Church's consciousness to all persons.

Following the Council's definition: The Church is, in Christ, the "sacrament ... for the unity of all mankind," the Pope continues (*RH* 4,1):

Precisely for this reason, the Church's consciousness must go with universal openness, in order that all may be able to find in her "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) spoken of by the Apostle of the Gentiles. Such openness, organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and certainty of her own truth, of which Christ said: "The word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me" (Jn. 14:24), is what gives the Church her apostolic, or in other words her missionary, dynamism, professing and proclaiming in its integrity the whole of the truth transmitted by Christ. At the same time she must carry on the dialogue that Paul VI, in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* called "the dialogue of salvation," distinguishing with precision the various circles within which it was to be carried on (AAS 56,650 ff).

The text offers a self-contained line of reasoning, which proves that, from the new *dogmatic self-image* of the Church, the *postulate* of the worldwide broadening of her consciousness emerges, which determines the character of her new, more broad-minded mission:

Since "the Church is the sacrament ... for the unity of all mankind," "the Church's consciousness must go with universal openness" (*Hac ipsa de causa conscientia Ecclesiae coniungatur oportet cum animo cunctis patente*), "in order that all may be able to find in her 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'" And this spiritual outlook of openness to all (*Eiusmodi animus universis patens*) is in turn "what gives the Church her apostolic, or in other words her missionary, dynamism."

To the extremely acute, epoch-making, conciliar "present-day consciousness of the Church," which is produced,

enlightened, and supported by the Holy Ghost, the Pope adds yet another feature: It is open for all, so that all can find in the Church the riches of Christ. *This openness is the missionary dimension of the present-day consciousness of the Church.*

We can summarize as follows the Pope's missionary theology, as manifested in his pontificate:

– Firstly, the “present-day consciousness of the Church” has a clearly definable dogmatic import, namely the “realization” of the Council:

The Church is “a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind” (Lumen Gentium 1,1).

In the Encyclical, this “fact” should be understood in light of the more broad-minded Christology and ecclesiology (cf. Digression, pp. 73-77). That means the dogmatic widening of the Church's traditional teaching. Never before did the Church understand herself and the mystery of the Redemption in the sense of universal salvation, or “anonymous Christianity.”

*The new definition of the Church's nature by the Second Vatican Council is a new dogma of the new Church, the “Conciliar Church.”*²⁶

– Secondly, *the reason for demanding the worldwide broadening of consciousness is the broadening in the area of dogma: Since the Church is the “sacrament ... for the unity of all mankind,” “the Church's consciousness must go with universal openness” (cum animo cunctis patente).* That stands to reason: For the “present-day consciousness of the Church” is the mainspring for the widening of dogma. We are in fact dealing with an *authentically new more broad-minded consciousness of a new Church*, thanks to its recent, more broad-minded dogmatic origin.

²⁶ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 28.

The Church of Christ was always synonymous with the Catholic Church, which was essentially open to everyone, to all mankind from the beginning. Any misunderstandings in the early Church were cleared up once and for all through St. Paul's struggle for freedom from the law: The new covenant is a covenant for Jews and Gentiles, that is to say for all men (Eph. 2:11-22). Did the Church need a further broadening of her consciousness? The Pope seems to think so (cf. *RH* 11,1).

– Thirdly, the widening of dogma and the broadening of the Church's consciousness has a definite goal: so that all men can find in her the riches of Christ. This purpose results from the nature of the Church, which is a sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind. *The Conciliar Church is "by its very nature" missionary.*²⁷

– Fourthly, the Church strives after this missionary goal through her "*missionary dynamism.*" This is what characterizes the Pope's "*missionary method*":

This missionary dynamism bursts forth from the conciliar broadening of dogma and of the Church's consciousness. It is therefore of the same nature. For so we read: The worldwide broadening of the Church's consciousness, which is "organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and certainty of her own truth," also determines the nature of the Church's missionary dynamism. That awareness of her own nature and that certainty of her own truth are of course to be understood in light of the new definition of the Church's nature, which is to be, in Christ, a "sacrament for the unity of all mankind."

This missionary dynamism becomes manifest in two ways:

On the one hand through preaching: The Church professes the "whole truth," the truth of the Father, "transmit-

²⁷ The Church was always missionary by her very nature. Cf. *Ad Genes* 2.

ted (!) by Christ.” – Of course the Pope does not mean the old (incomplete) truth, but the new “more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ,” which was bestowed on Christianity for the first time with Vatican II (cf. *RH* 11,3). The Church’s more complete message on the mystery of Christ is universal salvation.

On the other hand through dialogue: Through the inter-faith “dialogue of salvation,” the Church overcomes her old narrow-minded consciousness and matures to a “full, universal self-awareness” (*RH* 11,1).—Thus she finds the work of the Holy Ghost in all men and in all religions (cf. *RH* 6,3 et al.).

The Pope’s missionary theology possesses the inner unity of a broad-minded *progress of consciousness*: If the Son of God, through his Incarnation, has formally united himself with each person (see above 1.2, pp. 45-57), and if each man possesses *a priori* being in Christ as an essential part of human nature, then mankind’s “coming unto himself” is a question of consciousness. If all men *a priori* “are included in the Church as the sacrament of unity,”²⁸ then the discovery of the riches of Christ in the Church is also a question of consciousness, then the mission of the Church to realize in Christ the unity of all mankind is likewise a question of consciousness.

Thus John Paul II has clearly outlined the missionary theology of his pontificate.

In the text quoted above, the Pope mentions the Apostle of the Gentiles as well. But St. Paul’s mission was not founded on the axiom of universal salvation. For him, the discovery of the riches of Christ was not a mere question of consciousness, but of faith in Christ crucified.

4.2 Evaluation of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.

²⁸ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 37.

For John Paul II, the chief exponent and model for the realization of the Church's missionary dynamism is the Council Pope Paul VI, who in *Ecclesiam Suam* demonstrated and successfully embarked on the way of dialogue (RH 4,2):

In referring today to this document that gave the program of Paul VI's pontificate, I keep thanking God that this great predecessor of mine, who was also truly my father, knew how to display *ad extra*, externally, the true countenance of the Church, in spite of the various internal weaknesses that affected her in the post-conciliar period. In this way much of the human family has become, it seems, more aware, in all humanity's various spheres of existence, of how really necessary the Church of Christ, her mission and her service are to humanity. At times this awareness has proved stronger than the various critical attitudes attacking *ab intra*, internally, the Church, her institutions and structures, and ecclesiastics and their activities.

The Pope further mentions the criticism of "triumphalism," recalls the duties of love of the Church and what he calls "the attitude of service," and finally thanks Paul VI, "because, while respecting every particle of truth contained in the various human opinions, he preserved at the same time the providential balance of the bark's helmsman."

From the Encyclical's point of view—whether founded or unfounded—Paul VI understood how to display "the true countenance of the Church" outwardly, and to make her known and loved as such to most of the world. Of course the Pope is here referring to the new countenance of the Conciliar Church, as she has manifested herself since Vatican II, above all in the interfaith congresses and prayer meetings. Unquestionably the non-Christian world finds this countenance more sympathetic than that of the Catholic Church before the Council. But is the new countenance of the Conciliar Church the "true countenance" of the

Church, especially when she leads the prayer dance of all religions?

From her foundation, the Church displayed her "true countenance" *ad extra* by proclaiming to everyone their obligation to enter the Church in order to be saved, since the Church's mission is to make disciples of all nations, by leading all men to be disciples of Christ through faith and baptism (cf. Matt. 28:18-20). Has all this been preached to mankind? And if so, has "much of the (non-Christian) human family," which has for quite some time experienced a renaissance of their religions,²⁹ really become "*more aware*" of this obligation, this mission and this service of the Church?

As we know, the display of the Conciliar Church's countenance has also led to critical reactions "from the inside." But we are told that the new conciliar consciousness "has proved stronger."

These expressions give rise to the idea *that the accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae ad intra and ad extra is the principle* by which the Pope judges the missionary proclamation of Paul VI.

As far back as the year 1968, the Council Father Karol Wojtyła put this principle into an essay with the following words:

In the course of theological study of the Council documents, one must bear in mind the general picture and thereby refer constantly to certain ideas or even guiding principles, such as *accommodata renovatio*, ecumenism, or dialogue.³⁰

These guiding principles of his study become later the main ideas of his pontificate. The most far-reaching of the

²⁹ Georg Vicedom, *Die Weltreligionen im Angriff auf die Christenheit* [The World Religion's Attack on Christianity] (Munich 1961).

³⁰ Karol Wojtyła, *Von der Königswürde des Menschen* [On the Kingly Dignity of Men] (Stuttgart 1980), p. 153. Cf. Part I, pp. 20-24.

three main ideas is the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*. It presents the practical guidelines for conciliar renewal in the Church. This renewal is understood as a dynamic transformation of the consciousness, which, on the basis of the "present-day conciliar consciousness of the Church," transforms the life of the Church on a wide scale. This comes about as follows:

The basis for the process of renewal within the Church is the "stage of consciousness which the Church has reached through the Council."³¹ But that is precisely what we described above, namely the "epoch-making, conciliar, missionary, present-day consciousness of the Church," which comes from the Holy Ghost and is therefore also an absolute norm. On this basis follows the transformation of the consciousness both *ad intra*, i.e. renewal within the Church, and *ad extra*, i.e. the adaptation of the conciliar consciousness to the world. The whole program of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae* can be reduced to the formula: Adaptation of the pre-conciliar to the conciliar present-day consciousness of the Church, and adaptation of the conciliar consciousness to the "modern world." The absolute status given to the "present-day conciliar consciousness" shows the intolerant character of the principle of the *accommodata renovatio*, which in the modern Church is apt to become an instrument for the suppression of the "pre-conciliar consciousness" of the Church. In that perspective, nothing seems worse than the "relapse into pre-conciliar thinking"!

It is significant that the process of updating the Church consciousness *ad intra* and *ad extra* is considered in terms of "stronger" or "weaker," as though the conflict with the Church's pre-conciliar position did not involve serious issues and dogmatic truths. But this process will be imposed by force under the name of conciliar consciousness.

³¹ Cf. Part I, pp. 15-19.

– Considering the post-conciliar crisis of faith which has affected the whole Church, it is very interesting, and revealing for the new pontificate, to see how John Paul II views and judges the current condition of the Church in his inaugural Encyclical. Here is his assessment (*RH* 4,2):

The Church that I—through John Paul I—have had entrusted to me almost immediately after him is admittedly not free of internal difficulties and tension. At the same time, however, she is internally more strengthened against the excesses of self-criticism ...more resistant with respect to the various “novelties,” more mature in her spirit of discerning, better able to bring out of her everlasting treasure “what is new and what is old” (Matt. 13:52), more intent on her own mystery, and because of all that more serviceable for her own mission of salvation for all: God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4).

The article closes with I Tim. 2:4, the catch-all phrase for any version of the thesis of universal salvation! – The assessment is overwhelmingly positive.

Paul VI gave a more sober analysis of the post-conciliar condition of the Church: Already three years after the Council, in the famous address of June 30, 1968 which proclaimed the “Credo of the People of God,” he tried to put a stop to the collapse of the faith and the “self-destruction of the Church.” Without success! On the feast of Saints Peter and Paul in 1972, he gave a shocking description of the internal condition of the Church: “The smoke of Satan has entered through a crack into the temple of God: Doubts, uncertainty, calling into question, uneasiness, discontent, confrontations have become prevalent ... Doubt has entered into our conscience.”³² A shocking admission!

No less critical is Joseph Ratzinger’s assessment of the

³² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-46.

Church's situation. Formerly a *peritus* at the Council, he says the following in his book *The New People of God*, which appeared in 1969 (p. 325):

The image of the Church of modern times has changed, and is characterized by the fact that it has become, and will continue to become still more, the Church of pagans: no longer the Church of pagans who have become Christians, as she used to be, but the Church of pagans who still call themselves Christians. Paganism is at home today in the Church, and that is typical of the Church of modern times as well as of the new paganism, which both involve a paganism in the Church and a Church in whose hearts paganism dwells. We are not speaking here of that paganism which has become a united front against the Church in the Eastern countries....But we mean that much more typical phenomenon of our time which constitutes the real threat for Christians, namely paganism within the Church, the "abomination of desolation in the holy place" (Mk. 13:14).

Later on as Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger, in his book *The Ratzinger Report* (1985), unrolls before our eyes the whole panorama of theological currents, which threaten the Catholic faith and water down the foundation of the Church. His analysis ran up against the most vehement opposition: The opposition accused him of relapsing into pre-conciliar thinking. At that time, it was still taboo even to suggest a crisis of faith in the Church!

In light of the current situation, John Paul II's view appears simply preposterous. He mentions "difficulties and tensions," but does not speak of the crisis of faith, let alone its causes. Nevertheless, the Pope's judgment is fully understandable from the point of view of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.

The conciliar renewal of the Church is thus understood as a gradual transformation of the Church's consciousness as a whole, in which the present-day consciousness of the Church, supported by the Holy Ghost, enjoys absolute

status. For the advance of this process, the main element is the forced imposition of the genuinely new conciliar consciousness. Therefore the inaugural Encyclical is not a rebuttal of the "dogmatically outdated stage of consciousness of the pre-conciliar Church," but simply the positive presentation and defense of the novel, progressive tendencies of Vatican II.

In this respect, the Encyclical's positive assessment of the current situation in the Church is fully consistent: The conciliar inheritance had in fact "struck deep roots in the awareness of the Church in an utterly new way, quite unknown previously" and furthermore, in all areas of the Church's life, had developed its progressive transforming power within the Church and in the Church's relations to the modern world. The purpose of the process of renewal is precisely the wide-scale transformation of the old Church, which re-defined her own essence at the Second Vatican Council.

John Paul II completely approves of the development begun by Vatican II with its broadening of dogmatic horizons. He deems it his task to help the Church's "apostolic, or in other words, missionary dynamism" to achieve a radical breakthrough, inspired by the main ideas of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

5. The main objective of the pontificate: the unity of all mankind.*

The main objective of the new pontificate is the unity of all mankind. It is no individual initiative. John Paul II is determined to follow in the footsteps marked out by the Council and Paul VI (*RH 7*).

The objective is clearly defined: It is the broadening of the consciousness of the Church, especially in her doctrine, which produces her missionary dynamism, which *per se* is

* Heading in the English translation="Collegiality and Apostolate."

designed to achieve the unity of all mankind. The basic tenet for the Church's entire ecclesiology: The Church is "a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind" (LG 1,1), already expresses this clear statement of purpose: The unity of all mankind.

The Encyclical indicates the means to attain this objective: the main ideas of ecumenism and dialogue (RH 5 & 6). The starting point is the unity of the Church (RH 5). From thence proceed all efforts of the ecumenical, more broad-minded Church in search of "Christian unity" (RH 6,1.2). The ecumenical unity of Christianity is in turn the starting point for all efforts in search of the unity of all religions (RH 6,3).

5.1 Church unity.

On assuming office, John Paul II sees no dangers for the unity of the Church. On the contrary! He says (RH 5,1):

In spite of all appearances, the Church is now more united in the fellowship of service and in the awareness of apostolate. This unity springs from the principle of collegiality, mentioned by the Second Vatican Council. Christ Himself made this principle a living part of the apostolic college of the Twelve with Peter at their head...

Hence the *unity of the Church* springs from the newly discovered "*principle of collegiality.*"

This principle, bestowed by Christ on the college of the apostles, marks the *Church's entire juridical structure.* The Encyclical elaborates on this point (RH 5,1-2):

The Second Vatican Council not only recalled the "principle of the collegiality of bishops," but also animated and developed it in new way, e.g. in the Roman synod of bishops, in the national episcopal conferences and other collegial structures whether international or continental, in the various diocesan and provincial syn-

ods, and in the collaboration with the metropolitan structure.

The same spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility is also spreading in priestly organizations, organizations for lay apostolate, in conjunction with the Pastors and representatives of the Institutes of consecrated life, and in the spheres of diocesan synods and of the pastoral councils in the parishes and dioceses.

The Pope welcomes this development, encourages everyone to continue in it, and recalls (*RH* 5,3):

with heartfelt gratitude the work of the Second Vatican Council and my great predecessors, who set in motion this new surge of life for the Church, a movement that is much stronger than the symptoms of doubt, collapse and crisis.

Thus the Church, which, thanks to the *principle of the collegiality*, is "united in the fellowship of service and in the awareness of apostolate," is fully equipped to pursue the important ecumenical objectives of the pontificate and to fulfill her mission as a "sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind."

The singular feature of this starting point is its clash with traditional teaching:

The Encyclical mentions only the "principle of collegiality," from which the unity of the Church springs. *But there is no mention of the unity of faith and worship!*

With the First Vatican Council, classical theology distinguishes between *two kinds of unity in the Church*: the *unity of faith (unitas fidei)* and the *unity of communion (unitas communionis)*. The unity of faith consists in the acknowledgement of those truths clearly defined by the Church and presented in the Catholic creed (= symbolic unity); the unity of the community consists in the unity of government (= hierarchical unity) and worship (= liturgical unity).³³ *The unity of faith is fundamental. The unity of*

³³ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis: Herder

communion cannot exist without the unity of faith.

The unity of faith is destroyed through heresy; the unity of communion is broken through schism.³⁴ Hence the non-Catholic "confessions" are institutionalized heresies or schisms. On this basis, the only hope for restoration of the ruptured unity among Christians lay in conversion, in the return to the fold of the Catholic Church. From this teaching followed also the practice of the Catholic Church, up to Vatican II, in her relations with non-Catholics and with non-Christians (cf. *Mortalium Animos*, see Part I, pp. 1-7).

Vatican II was a startling breach of the Catholic Church's pre-conciliar doctrine and practice. The Council's ecumenical broadening of horizons represents the beginning of a novel development on a novel dogmatic basis: *The theological basis for the Church's "new ecumenical orientation" is the widening of Church dogma.*

In front of this backdrop, the Encyclical's *dogmatic position* (RH 5) is clear: The *unity of the Church* is reduced to the *unity of communion*, which in turn is reduced to the "*hierarchical unity*," which is defined as the "principle of the collegiality." The *unity of faith* is entirely left out.

Considering the main ecumenical objectives of the pontificate, that means that the defined, traditional articles of the Catholic faith are blurred out *a priori*. Thus the faith is no major criterion in the Church's "new ecumenical orientation," which seeks after the all-embracing unity of all mankind.

This downplaying of the faith results from the silent refusal of the traditional concept of the Church, which is unobtrusively replaced by that of *Lumen Gentium* 1,1. That might account for the astonishing fact that, *in the entire Encyclical, the Church is never once called by her name: Catholic or Roman-Catholic Church.*

Book Company, 1954), p. 303f.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

Since the Pope establishes "collegiality" as the only "principle of Church unity," it is now possible, on the basis of the new concept of the Church: The Church is "a sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind," that is to say based on the thesis of universal salvation, to strive for the main objective of the pontificate. And no one need trouble himself about unity in the faith of the Catholic Church.

6. Christian unity.*

The first main objective of the pontificate ad extra is universal "Christian unity."

John Paul II is determined to seize upon and pursue the course of ecumenism, which John XXIII expressed with "evangelical clarity," which Vatican II covered "in its *Decree on Ecumenism*," and for the attainment of which Pope Paul VI began the first difficult steps, "availing himself of the activities of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity" (RH 6,1). He begins with a question on the progress of that development:

And what shall I say of all the initiatives that have sprung from the new ecumenical orientation? (RH 6,1)

His assessment of the "new ecumenical orientation" is positive. The fruits are judged as "real and important advances" (RH 6,1). Therefore the quest for that unity must continue at all costs (RH 6,1):

For it is certain "that in the present historical situation of Christianity and the world the only possibility we see of fulfilling the Church's universal mission, with regard to ecumenical questions, is that of seeking sincerely, perseveringly, humbly and also courageously the ways of drawing closer and of union. Pope Paul VI gave us his personal example for this."

* Heading in the English translation="The Road to Christian Unity."

These ecumenical initiatives, to which there is no alternative, are thus a fulfillment of the will of Christ and a demonstration of loyalty to His words (*RH* 6,1). Nevertheless the Church encounters strong reactions from within (*RH* 6,2):

There are people who in the face of the difficulties or because they consider that the first ecumenical endeavors have brought negative results would have liked to turn back. Some even express the opinion that these efforts are harmful to the cause of the Gospel, are leading to a further rupture in the Church, are causing confusion of ideas in questions of faith and morals and are ending up with a specific indifferentism. It is perhaps a good thing that the spokesmen for these opinions should express their fears. However, in this respect also, correct limits must be maintained.

Thus not everyone views the fruits of ecumenism as "real and important advances." The most serious biblical, dogmatic, and moral concerns against "the new ecumenical orientation," which had by then already led to an indisputable protestantizing of the Catholic Church, were of course rated as false alarms, and rejected on the whole.

There are many Catholics who feel that the substance of their faith is in danger, especially with the clearly expressed guidelines of the pre-conciliar Popes in mind (cf. Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos*). The Pope admonishes these Catholics to maintain "correct limits," and he gives them a brief lesson on the nature of "true ecumenical activity" (*RH* 6,2):

It is obvious that this new stage in the Church's life demands of us a faith that is particularly aware, profound and responsible. True ecumenical activity means openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense; but in no way does it or can it mean giving up

or in any way diminishing the treasures of divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught.

The instruction on "true ecumenical activity" follows the well-known scheme of the Church's "apostolic, or in other words missionary dynamism" (*RH* 4,1) in its double aspect: On the one hand, the Pope demands a deep faith and adherence to the Church's constant teaching; on the other hand, he demands "openness" and a "shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense." This paradox of the Pope's ecumenism should suffice to assuage the doubts of those who express concern.

The following, final "argument" leaves no grounds for opposition to ecumenism by those inside the Church (*RH* 6,2):

To all who, for whatever motive, would wish to dissuade the Church from seeking the universal unity of Christians the question must once again be put: Have we the right not to do it? Can we fail to have trust—in spite of all human weakness and all the faults of past centuries—in our Lord's grace as revealed recently through what the Holy Spirit said and we heard during the Council? If we were to do so, we would deny the truth concerning ourselves that was so eloquently expressed by the Apostle: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain" (I Cor. 15,10).

Is the Church allowed to resist the grace of Christ and the word of the Holy Ghost? All who have problems with "the new ecumenical orientation" are confronted with this truly disarming question! The ecumenical "openness" is a divine mandate which allays all fears and leaves no other alternative! A quote from the Bible marks the persuasive climax.

The Encyclical's remarks express the theological orientation of the new pontificate on the question of ecumenism! They give us the following general outline:

– Firstly, conciliar ecumenism admittedly represents “a new orientation,” “a new stage in the Church’s life.” How can this be justified?

The *theological justification* runs as follows: The Church’s “new ecumenical orientation” is simply a consequence of Our Lord’s words expressed in the Upper Room at the Last Supper (RH 6,1). The Church set out on the road to ecumenism in virtue of “Our Lord’s grace as revealed recently through what the Holy Spirit said and we heard during the Council.”

There is no recourse against this “final court of appeal”!

The Pope does not tell us the exact nature of that eschatological revelation. But one thing is clear: The new revelation of the grace of Christ is the axiom of universal salvation, of which the Church has “recently” become aware through the word of the Holy Ghost during the Council.

Hence the connection with the two main points of the Encyclical’s theme: with the axiom of universal salvation and with the “last times,” the “season of a new Advent.”

– Secondly, in this “new stage in the Church’s life,” she has made “real and important advances.” The conciliar assessment is always positive! It is therefore imperative to continue in that course, to the exclusion of all alternatives—despite all protests and concerns expressed within the Church.

Those opposed to ecumenism are told what “true ecumenical activity” is, namely two things: On the one hand, “openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense”; on the other hand, adherence to the “divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught.”—The contradiction is unmistakable:

The *shared investigation of all Christians* for the truth means per se that no special denomination may claim to possess the truth. Everyone is in search of the truth, includ-

ing the Catholic Church.

In search of which truth?—Answer: “the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense”! Therefore not in *the full Catholic sense of doctrines infallibly preserved and taught by the magisterium (fides quae creditur)*. The truth after which all aspire “in the full biblical and Christian sense” is of course not identical with the defined truth in the full sense of the Catholic faith, which most men do not want anyway.

Up to Vatican II, the believing Catholic was by no means part of a shared investigation with all non-Catholics on a constant search for an undefined truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense, but he was devoted and attached to the faith of the Catholic Church. The Catholic faith was the confident acceptance of doctrines defined by the Church with the claim of infallibility. Thus the Catholic faith was obedience in the faith.

To define the common search of Christians of all denominations for the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense as the basis of “true ecumenical activity” is for the believing Catholic an *absolute novelty*, both with regard to the act of faith (*fides qua*) and with regard to the objective truths of the faith (*fides quae*). *Yes, we are looking at the new foundation of a new ecumenical Church and theology.*

After the Pope has urged Catholics to take part in the shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense, he urges them in the same breath to protest their *unwavering adherence* to the “divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught.”

The contradiction is striking—as well it should be for the Pope! For the Catholic Church up to Vatican II has “constantly confessed and taught” that she is the one and only Church founded by Christ, and the sole divinely invested, infallible guardian of revealed truth. Up to Vatican II, she laid an exclusive, “intolerant” claim to teach the truth and to govern in the name of Christ. The purpose of her “true

ecumenical activity" (*Una Sancta*) was the unity of all Christians in *the truth of the Catholic faith*, therefore the return of all those separated from her to the fold of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Pope has thus clearly abandoned the pre-conciliar teaching of the Catholic Church (cf. *Mortalium Animos*).

The new path to universal Christian unity: the shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense, means the abandonment of the Catholic Church's claim to teach and to govern in the name of Christ. It also means the watering down of Catholic dogma and the self-destruction of the infallible magisterium by the Pope himself.

This "true ecumenical activity," which of course includes common ecumenical services and activities at all levels, has led to the protestantizing of the Church and produced the consciousness of imperfect unity among Christians. The Encyclical speaks of "real and important advances"! This assessment follows from the conciliar standpoint of the *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae*.

Thanks to "true ecumenical activity," the pre-conciliar consciousness of the Church was transformed into the conciliar, epoch-making, missionary, ecumenical, present-day consciousness, which was produced and supported by the Holy Ghost, and to which there is no alternative! The absolutism in this line of reasoning is typical of existentialist thinking and also of the intolerance in the process of updating: The serious objections against post-conciliar ecumenism are not refuted by sound arguments, but simply dismissed as expressions of needless worry and totally pushed aside by the continuation of ecumenical practice, with an appeal to the eschatological revelation of the Holy Ghost.

The "new ecumenical orientation" is an *absolute novelty in the history of the Catholic Church and represents an undeniable break with pre-conciliar doctrine and practice*. At least

the Encyclical is consistent when it discreetly regrets the pre-conciliar Church's attitude as "faults of past centuries" (cf. *RH* 6,2), but it is intellectually dishonest to disguise an obvious break with tradition by pretending to uphold the "divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught" (cf. *RH* 6,2).

In the spirit of sincerity, the Encyclical claims to continue the path of "true ecumenical activity" (*RH* 6,1). But we are witnessing intellectual bankruptcy when an indisputable break with tradition is flatly denied and when at the same time the novelty of the Church's ecumenical orientation is maintained, with an appeal to a new eschatological revelation of the grace of Christ and to the word of the Holy Ghost in favor of the Church's new path. A "pastoral Council" suddenly becomes a dogmatic "Super-Council," which succeeded in "re-defining" the nature of the Church.³⁵

What the Encyclical says about the path to universal Christian unity can also be applied, "although in another way," to the path towards the unity of all religions.

6.1 Unity of all religions.

The second main objective ad extra of the pontificate of John Paul II is the unity of all religions.

In addition to the *accommodata renovatio* and ecumenism, dialogue is the third main idea for achieving the unity of all mankind. The dogmatic foundation for conciliar ecumenism and interfaith dialogue is the same in both cases: the thesis of universal salvation. The same main ideas will be achieved therefore, "although in another way." Everything that the Encyclical says about ecumenism holds also, *mutatis mutandis*, for interfaith dialogue, with the unity of all religions in view. Thus it is said (*RH* 6,3):

³⁵ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 28.

What we have just said [about ecumenism] must also be applied—although in another way and with the due differences—to activity for coming closer together with the representatives of the non-Christian religions, an activity expressed through dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality, in which, as we know well, the members of these religions also are not lacking. Does it not sometimes happen that the firm belief of the followers of the non-Christian religions—a belief that is also an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body—can make Christians ashamed at being often themselves so disposed to doubt concerning the truths revealed by God and proclaimed by the Church and so prone to relax moral principles and open the way to ethical permissiveness. It is a noble thing to have a predisposition for understanding every person, analyzing every system and recognizing what is right; this does not at all mean losing certitude about one's own faith or weakening the principles of morality, the lack of which will soon make itself felt in the life of the whole societies with deplorable consequences besides.

The Pope's fundamental thesis, which comes out more clearly in the Latin original than in the English translation, runs as follows: The firm conviction of non-Christian believers proceeds from the Spirit of truth, who operates outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body (*firma persuasio non christianas religiones profitentium—quae et ipsa procedit a Spiritu veritatis, extra fines aspectabiles Corporis mystici operante*). The theological reference to the "firm (religious) belief of the followers of the non-Christian religions" is unusual: It is the fruit of the "Spirit of truth" operating in non-Christian religions, that very Spirit, whom Our Lord in the Upper Room (Jn. 15:26f) specifically promises to the Apostles alone. Thus the Encyclical makes the general statement in such an offhand manner (in parentheses!): The "Spirit of truth," which was bestowed on the Church at Pentecost, operates "outside the visible confines

of the Mystical Body," therefore also in non-Christian religions. He is not only in the Church, but operates in all religions. The existence of "visible" confines is unquestionable. But in this perspective, on a deeper plane, "ontologically" considered, can such "visible confines of the Mystical Body" still exist? Does not everyone belong to the "invisible" Mystical Body?

On this dogmatic foundation, the Encyclical clearly sets its goal: the unity of all religions. The way to get there is by mutually drawing closer. It comes about, just as with ecumenism, in the context of the Church's "missionary dynamism" in its double aspect: On the one hand, the process of coming closer together is accomplished "through dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality." If "true ecumenical activity" consisted in "the shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense," here in the case of non-Christians religions, there is "the search after the treasures of human spirituality," which is also produced by the "Spirit of truth," therefore by the Holy Ghost.—On the other hand, Christians are urged to conduct this search "without losing certitude about one's own faith or weakening the principles of morality." Of course, the certitude about one's own faith implies the new dogma of universal salvation. This is the only conceivable explanation for such a paradoxical process of coming together, but then the paradox is only apparent.

The Pope's general theological and psychological line of reasoning is remarkable: We are given only a partial, rather selectively positive view of non-Christian religions. The high opinion of the non-Christian religions is further accentuated by the fact that their firm beliefs, inspired by the Spirit of truth, are extolled to the skies, to the shame of Christian believers. In relationship to the non-Christian religions, the Christians are expected to show a new openness, a new kind of virtue: The noble predisposition "for

understanding every person, analyzing every system and recognizing what is right." The sharp contrast, which exists between the truths of Christianity and precisely those firm religious convictions of non-Christians, is swept under the carpet. The same for the Church's duty to preach the Gospel and to baptize all nations in the Catholic faith: it is simply ignored.

The Encyclical's "theology of religions" brushes aside the pre-conciliar point of discussion: The possibility of non-Christians to be saved was never denied in the pre-conciliar Church; the point is that non-Christian religions as such are not means of salvation. Moreover, the largely differing central views of these religions were taken into account: Judaism with its denial of Christ; Islam with its denial of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption; Buddhism and Hinduism with their versions of pantheism. In the Pope's New Theology, distinctions and analyses of this kind simply do not seem to apply. The subjective principle of revelation *a priori* is finally the sole criterion for the assessment of non-Christian religions.

We may conclude: The Conciliar Church's openness aims at "coming closer together with the representatives of the non-Christian religions, an activity expressed through dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality." There we have the clear marking of John Paul II's theological journey to the prayer meeting of religions in Assisi—and to the unity of all religions!

Hence, already in his inaugural Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, the Pope considers prayer in common with the representatives of all religions as the main objective of his pontificate. The text quoted above sounds like the theological overture to Assisi—and like the burial service for the Church's mission to teach and baptize all nations, which is not even mentioned once.

CHAPTER II

THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION

The second Chapter (RH 7-12) is wholly dedicated to the Encyclical's central theme, the mystery of Redemption. So it contains the Encyclical's doctrine of Redemption.

7. The Redeemer of man in the present-day consciousness of the Church.*

John Paul II states his determination to move forward along the path shown by the Council and by Paul VI in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (RH 7,1).

What should we do, in order that this new advent of the Church connected with the approaching end of the second millennium may bring us closer to Him whom Sacred Scripture calls "Everlasting Father," *Pater futuri saeculi* (Is. 9:6)?

To this question there is "only one fundamental and essential response" (RH 7,2):

Our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is – towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man.¹ We wish to look towards Him – because there is salvation in no one else but Him, the Son of God – repeating what Peter said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68; cf. Acts

¹ Latin text: "intellectus, voluntas, cor ad unum Christum, Redemptorem nostrum, sunt dirigenda, ad Christum, hominis Redemptorem."

* Heading in the English translation="Within the Mystery of Christ."

4:8-12).

The formulation of the start of the doctrine of Redemption and that of the theme at the beginning of the Encyclical are similar (cf. *RH* 1). The two openings are in content identical. In both cases the main points are: Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man, and the uniqueness of our era (cf. *RH* 1;1,2).

The context in which the "basic question" and the "fundamental answer" are set, give the reader from the outset clearly to understand that the Encyclical is developing its theology of the Redemption in the perspective of the "new Advent of the Church," as part of salvation history.

In the Pope's thinking, time and consciousness belong inseparably together. Together with the time of the new Advent goes the "present-day consciousness of the Church" (cf. *RH* 3;4). Hence we are now called upon to make the turning of our thoughts to the Redeemer of man not only in the perspective of the "new Advent," but also within the present-day conciliar consciousness of the Church. Thus he says (*RH* 7,3):

Through the Church's consciousness, which the Council considerably developed, through all levels of this self-awareness, and through all the fields of activity in which the Church expresses, finds and confirms herself, we must constantly aim at Him "who is the head" (cf. Eph. 1:10, 22; 4:25; Col. 1:18), through whom are all things and through whom we exist (I Cor. 8:6; cf. Col. 1:17), who is both "the way, and the truth" (Jn. 14:6), and "the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25), seeing whom, we see the Father (Jn. 14:9), and who had to go away from us – that is, by His death on the cross and then by His ascension into heaven – in order that the Counselor should come to us and should keep coming to us as the Spirit of truth (cf. Jn. 16:7,13). In Him are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3), and the Church is His Body (cf. Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 6:15; 10:17; 12:12; 12:27; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 4:4; Col. 1:24; 3:15). "By her relationship with

Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind" (LG 1), and the source of this is He, He Himself, He the Redeemer.

The Encyclical begins its theology of the Redemption with the *Redeemer himself* and from there goes straight on to the *Church*: it "is his body." Insofar as it is founded on Christ and has in him the source of its life, it is the sacrament for the innermost union with God, as for the union of all mankind.

All these Scripture quotations concerning the Redeemer could be understood in the sense of the New Testament and Tradition. However, as the text (7,3) emphasized at the outset, it is in the perspective of the "new Advent" and in the "consciousness that the Council considerably developed" that we must constantly aim at Christ. That means, that the quotations concerning the Redeemer are also to be understood and interpreted in the perspective of the new Advent and the new conciliar consciousness of the Church.

Thereby St. Paul's phrase: "The Church is the body of Christ" also acquires a new content in the Encyclical. Since the Church is directly founded on Christ the Redeemer of all men, who through the Incarnation has formally united himself with every man, then it follows that Christ the Universal Redeemer is the content and source of the Church's life, that in Christ the Universal Redeemer the Church is the sacrament of universal salvation embracing all men,² that in the sense of universal salvation the Church is sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind, which is also, in a hidden manner, the body of the Universal Redeemer.³

² Karol Wojtyła, [Sign of Contradiction] (Freiburg i.Br. 1979), p. 37.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 37ff, 52-54, 78ff, 98-101. See further, Part I, pp. 67-78. — On the Incarnation of the Son, we read in *Dominum et Vivificantem* (50,3): "By means of this 'humanization' of the Word-Son the self-communication of God reaches its definitive fullness in the history

of creation and salvation. This fullness acquires a special wealth and expressiveness in the text of John's Gospel: 'The Word became flesh' (Jn. 1:14). The Incarnation of God the Son signifies the taking up into unity with God not only of human nature, but in this human nature, in a sense, of *everything that is 'flesh'*: the whole of humanity, the entire visible and material world. The Incarnation, then, also has a cosmic significance, a cosmic dimension. The 'firstborn of all creation' (Col. 1:15), becoming incarnate in the individual humanity of Christ, unites himself in some way with the entire reality of man, which is also 'flesh' (cf. Gen. 9:11; ... Lk. 3:6; I Pet. 1:24), – and in this reality with all 'flesh,' with the whole of creation."

What exactly does he mean by: "the taking up into unity with God ... human nature and ... the whole of humanity"? In any case, already in the Incarnation of the Son, the self-communication of God reaches its definitive fullness in the history of creation and salvation (cf. *RH* 1,2). Or again: "In the mystery of the Incarnation the work of the Spirit 'who gives life' reaches its highest point" (*DeV* 52,1).

Man becomes a supernatural, adopted child of God through the Incarnation: "The filiation of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of the Incarnation, therefore through Christ the eternal Son. But the birth, or rebirth, happens when God the Father 'sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts'" (*DeV* 52,2).

Just as the Incarnation is the formal union of the Son with every man, so all men receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. On that point, see in *Dominum et Vivificantem* (52,3): "This is what we are told by St. Paul, whose cosmic and theological vision seems to repeat the words of the ancient Psalm: creation 'waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God' (Rom. 8:29), that is, those whom God has 'foreknown' and whom he 'has predestined to be confirmed to the image of his Son.' Thus there is a supernatural 'adoption,' of which the source is the Holy Spirit, love and gift. *As such he is given to man.* And in the *superabundance of the uncreated gift* there begins in the heart of all human beings (!) that particular *created gift* whereby they 'become partakers of the divine nature' (cf. II Pet. 1:4). Thus human life becomes permeated, through participation, by the divine life, and itself acquires a divine, supernatural dimension. There is granted the *new* life, in which as a sharer in the mystery of Incarnation 'man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit' (cf. Eph. 2:18; *Dei Verbum* 2). Thus there is a close relationship *between the Spirit* who gives life and sanctifying grace and *the manifold supernatural vitality* which derives from it in man: between the uncreated Spirit and the created human spirit." See also, *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 27ff. The dogmatic axiom of the prayer meeting at Assisi is the effective, working presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men as a consequence of the Incarnation. Thus John

Thereon follows a change of the relationship of Church and non-Christians to the Redeemer, as also a strange new concept of the Church's mission. Concerning the first the Pope says (*RH* 7,4):

The Church does not cease to listen to His words. She rereads them continually. With the greatest devotion she reconstructs every detail of His life. These words are listened to also by non-Christians. The life of Christ speaks, also, to many who are not capable of repeating with Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). He, the Son of the living God, speaks to people also as man: it is His life that speaks, His humanity, His fidelity to the truth, His all-embracing love. Furthermore, His death on the cross speaks – that is to say the inscrutable depth of His suffering and abandonment ...

The Encyclical's words concerning the relationship of non-Christians to Christ remain *within the frame of the purely human*. To be sure, the word of Christ reaches also to the ears of non-Christians; to be sure, his life speaks to many of them, even as man speaks to man.⁴ But the same can be said of all great personalities of mankind: Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Gandhi and so on. However, Jesus was not content with merely human admiration. He demanded the faith, which Simon Peter professes. But concerning this faith, the Pope says (apologetically?) that many non-Christians, who are drawn by the life of Christ, are "not yet capable" of it. Such a situation is well-known in the New

Paul II: "The meeting of religions in Assisi was meant to be a clear confirmation of the fact that 'every genuine prayer is inspired by the Holy Ghost, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every man (!)'" (Address to the Cardinals on December 22, 1986 [AAS 79, 1987, 1089]; *Redemptoris Missio* 28). Therefore it does not matter to which god one's genuine prayer is addressed. Thus in *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 26ff.

⁴ Cf. my essay: "Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," in *Respondeo* 8 (Abensberg 1988), pp. 126-141.

Testament: very many Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, who admired his words and deeds and the man himself, were "not yet capable" of making Simon Peter's profession of faith. To them the words of Scripture applied: "Seeing they do not see, hearing they do not understand!" (cf. Matt. 13:13ff). But Christ puts men before the decision, and demands of them precisely the faith of Peter in the Son of God. This faith, upon which eternal salvation depends, is what the Church is bound to proclaim (cf. Mk. 16:16).

On this point, the Church's mission, the Encyclical says as follows (*RH7,4*):

The Church lives His mystery, draws unwearingly from it and continually seeks ways of bringing this mystery of her Master and Lord to humanity (*propius adducere possit ad hominum genus*) – to the peoples, the nations, the succeeding generations, and every individual human being – as if she were repeating, as the Apostle did: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). The Church stays within the sphere of the mystery of the Redemption, which has become the fundamental principle of her life and mission.

What conclusion does the Encyclical accordingly draw from the confrontation of the non-Christian world with its Redeemer, concerning the Church's mission? The Church is constantly seeking for ways "of bringing to humanity" the "mystery of her Master and Lord" from which it draws its own life. However, in the Encyclical this "mystery" is universal salvation! Hence the mission of this Church too as sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind can only consist in "manifesting" to man the deepest essence of his being as man, namely his "being in Christ," this through the revelation of the Father and his love. The Encyclical lays out how from the "mystery of the Redemption" (= universal salvation), the basic principle of the Church's life and mission, the Church's mission derives and

is to be understood.

The complete text of the Encyclical's Article 7 gives us the following picture: in the perspective of the new Advent and the Church's new conciliar consciousness, the Pope demands that we turn decisively to Christ, the Redeemer of man and of the world, who through the Incarnation is formally united with every man. That is the basic principle of the "more broad-minded Christianity."

In the universal Redeemer Jesus Christ, the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation, embracing *all* men, Christians and non-Christians alike.⁵ It is in this sense that the Church in Christ is the sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind. That is the basic principle of the "more broad-minded ecclesiology."

The Church lives the mystery of Christ, the Universal Redeemer. This prime principle of its life is also the prime principle of its mission. The Church's mission consists accordingly in further "bringing" to all men, "revealing" to them and making them "aware" of the mystery of its Maker and Lord, the Universal Redeemer. That is the Encyclical's basic outline of the Church's mission. – Obviously, the Church's mission as thus formulated in the Encyclical, "constantly seeking for ways" "to bring to mankind" the mystery of the Redeemer, is not the same as Christ's clear mandate to His Church in the Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20).

The outlines of the theological position taken by the Encyclical are highlighted even more clearly by what the Encyclical does not say: there is no mention of God's demanding the faith in Christ that leads to justification; no mention of God's demanding baptism that incorporates men (sacramentally) in Christ's work of Redemption and his Resurrection, and that applies the fruits of the Redemption to individuals (cf. Rom. 6). Why does the Encyclical

⁵ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 37.

not say one single word about these things?

Article 7 gives us the outline of the Encyclical's doctrine of Redemption which is developed in the following articles.

8. The Redeemer of the world – the Redeemer of man.*

The Pope's introductory explanation (*RH 7*), to the effect that in the perspective of the new Advent and in the conciliar consciousness of the Church there is only one direction for the spirit: "Towards Christ, the Redeemer of man, towards Christ, the Redeemer of the world" (*RH 7,2*); that the Church as body of Christ, the Universal Redeemer, is the sacrament for the unity of all mankind (*RH 7,2*), and receives from him "the fundamental principle of her life and mission" (*RH 7,4*), provides the framework for the following development of his theology of the Redemption (*RH 8-12*).

Again and again, with numerous quotations from Scripture, the Pope turns to the central point of his Redemption doctrine, namely, *the revelation of the Redeemer to the world and to man* (*RH 8*).

Article 8 begins with: "The Redeemer of the world" (*RH 8,1*), and it finishes with: "He, the Redeemer of man!" (*RH 8,2*). That is not just a stylistic flourish,⁶ it expresses also the theological line of thinking which reaches its high point with the latter exclamation. For indeed the relation of the Redeemer to man, who is the "most important point of the visible world" (*RH 8,2*), is the crystallization point of the Pope's Redemption doctrine.

Concerning the relation of the Redeemer to the world

⁶ In the Latin original: *Mundi Redemptor!* (= Beginning of the article) ... *Ipse, hominis Redemptor!* (= End of the article). Evidently an intentional stylistic parallel, otherwise one would have expected the article to end with the Encyclical's title phrase: *Redemptor hominis!*

* Heading in the English translation="Redemption as a New Creation."

the Encyclical explains (*RH* 8,1):

The Redeemer of the world! In him has been revealed in a new and more wonderful way the fundamental truth concerning creation to which the book of Genesis gives witness when it repeats several times: "God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1, *passim*). The good has its source in Wisdom and Love. In Jesus Christ the visible world which God created for man (Gen. 1:26-30), the world that, when sin entered, "was subjected to futility" (Rom. 8:19-22; *Gaudium et Spes* 2,13), recovers again its original link with the divine source of Wisdom and Love. Indeed, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn. 3:16). As this link was broken in the man Adam, so in the Man Christ it was reforged (Rom. 5:12-21).

Are we of the twentieth century not convinced of the overpoweringly eloquent words of the Apostle of the Gentiles concerning the "creation (that) has been groaning in travail until now" (Rom. 8:22), and "waits with eager longing for the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19), the creation that "was subjected to futility"?

At this point the Encyclical seems to interrupt the close theological reasoning in order unexpectedly to turn in more detail to "man of the twentieth century." As further signs of the transitoriness of our time there are quoted one after another: environmental pollution, armed conflicts, possible self-destruction through atomic weapons, lack of respect for unborn life. At first this interruption may seem to be a break in style, but actually it fits in with the basic writing of the Encyclical, the theme of which is the Redeemer's relationship to our era. That is why each of the theological themes brought up is immediately connected with and applied to the characteristic features of our era. In the present case that means that the reflections on the Redeemer of the world are confronted with the problems of contemporary man. However the inner logic of the theological reasoning is unbroken: the Pauline thought, that creation waits for the revelation of the children of God

(Rom. 8:19), follows on the Redemptive work of Christ. So the description of the marks of the passingness of this world, such as modern man experiences them, comes to an end with the rhetorical question:

The world of the new age, the world of space flights ... is it not also the world "groaning in travail" (Rom. 8:22) that "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19)?

The very important statements in this text concerning the Redeemer's relationship to the world may be summarized as follows:

The basic truth of the goodness of creation, arising from the divine source of Wisdom and Love, has, in the Redeemer of the world, been revealed afresh and in more splendid fashion. God created the visible world for man (*propter hominem*).⁷ With the entry of sin into the world, it

⁷ The Church teaches that the creation of the world is the work of the divine wisdom and goodness (D 1783). The purpose of creation (*finis operis*) is primarily to show forth God's perfections and thereby to give God the glory which is due Him (D 1805). The secondary purpose of creation is the bestowal of benefits on creatures, but especially the calling of rational creatures to the beatific vision (D 1783). Both ends of creation are inseparably linked to each other, for the glorification of God through the knowledge and the love of Him is the very beatitude of rational creatures. – Can one isolate the second end from the first, or so shift the emphasis, by simply saying that the visible world was created for man?

But the Encyclical treats primarily the relations between the Redeemer and the world. Cf. also the controversy between the Thomists and the Scotists over the conditioned or unconditioned predestination of the Incarnation. The question is whether the deciding factor in the Incarnation of the Son of God was the redemption of man, so that the Incarnation would not have taken place without the fall of our first parents into sin (conditioned predestination), or if the deciding factor was the glorification of God, so that the Son of God would have become man as the crowning of creation even without the fall of our first parents, only without assuming a body subject to suffering (unconditioned or absolute predestination of the Incarnation).

became subject to perishing. In Jesus the visible world recovers its original connection with the same divine source of Wisdom and Love. "For God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). Just as in the man Adam that bond (*vinculum illud*) was broken, so in the Man Christ is it restored. Creation, which with sin became subject to perishing, lies in birth-pangs and waits with longing for the revelation of the sons of God.

The text can from start to finish be interpreted in the sense of classical theology. However, in the perspective of the new Advent and the new conciliar consciousness of the Church, it is rather to be understood in the sense of universal salvation. This becomes quite clear when the Encyclical next turns in quite specific fashion to "the most important point of the visible world," namely man (*RH* 8,2). Before that, however, a few remarks on the text laid out above.

Firstly, how far is precisely the goodness of creation revealed in a particularly splendid way in the *Redeemer* of the world? —

True, the Old Testament teaches that God created the world good (Gen. 1). But we find the world is not in accord with its being as creation. The same holds true for

The scriptural foundation for the Scotist position is Col. 1:15-19.

The speculative foundation: The end cannot be less than the means. The Incarnation as the highest of all God's works could not be primarily relative to the purpose of redeeming sinful creatures.

The Scotists find it unfitting that sin, which God hates, be the occasion of the most sublime revelation and glorification of God, but the Thomists see therein an even greater demonstration of the love and mercy of God: *O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem (Exsultet)*.

Furthermore, according to the Scotist position, all grace derives from the merits of the God-man, not only the grace of fallen mankind, but also the grace of our first parents and even the grace of the angels. — Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1954), pp. 175-177, 242. — It is interesting to note the close relation between the Pope's covenant theology and the Scotist position.

man. He is God's creature, so created in goodness. But he rose up against God and was cast out of paradise: he is a sinner! Here are the facts of the case in the language of classical theology: World and man are no longer in their condition of the original goodness of creation. Man is no longer in the state of original justice (*in statu iustitiae originalis*), which he himself destroyed by his first sin, rather he is in the state of original sin (*in statu naturae lapsae*). Through sin he has undergone an "ontological" change, a change of his very being; the supernatural likeness to God is gone, the natural image of God is wounded.⁸ He stands in absolute need of redemption.

So the *specific* relationship of the Redeemer to world and man is not simply the goodness of creation, but the fall into sin and the absolute need of redemption on the part of the world created good by God. The text of the Encyclical should read: In the Redeemer is revealed the basic truth of creation's having been originally created good but having then fallen and so being in need of redemption. The text taken by the Pope out of the book of Genesis (1, *passim*) to prove his point refers to God's act of creation – before the Fall! Whereas the Encyclical is referring to the *Redeemer* of the world, i.e. the condition of fallen creation.

Yet the Pope says: In the *Redeemer* the basic truth of the goodness of creation has been revealed in a new and more splendid way. This statement can only be fully understood on the presupposition that all men are redeemed. If man from the outset, from the very act of his creation, possesses once and for all the supernatural likeness of God (*RH* 13,3) and his "being in Christ," then one can say, as the Encyclical says, that in the Redeemer of the world, the basic truth of creation's goodness is revealed in a new way. In fact the Encyclical's phrasing reflects the basic thesis of the Pope's theology of the Covenant (see above, 7.3, pp. 24-32), a

⁸ Cf. Part I, pp. 82-87.

thesis which has no foundation in Scripture. The real condition of the cosmos from the Fall onwards and the relationship of the Old to the New Age are seen differently in Scripture.⁹

– Is the whole visible world really “created by God for man” as the Encyclical so baldly states, and does Genesis 1:26-30 really suffice to prove the point? All that Genesis 1:26-30 talks about is how man should rule “over the whole earth and everything that moveth upon the earth.” Yet the Encyclical’s statements are set in the context of *Christ*, the Redeemer of the world! Should we not rather say of Christ, as Creator of the world, what the Epistle to the Colossians says: “All things were created by him and in him” (1:16)? The Encyclical’s manner of expressing itself, occupying as it does a central place in the Pope’s theology, means nothing less than the beginning of a shift of emphasis from Christ-centeredness to man-centeredness.

– The text of the Encyclical so far has not explained how we are to understand the bond between man and God having been broken in Adam and restored in Christ, but the explanation does come in the course of the further development of the theme (*RH* 8;9). We may anticipate by saying: the text is to be interpreted in the sense of the Pope’s theology of the covenant, whereby creation and the making of the covenant took place in one and the same act (see above, 7.3, pp. 24-32).

In a theology of the redemption based on the axiom of universal salvation and worked out in the perspective of the new Advent and the Church’s conciliar consciousness, the justifying faith as we know it in the New Testament ceases being necessary for salvation, even actually hinders it. The infinite wisdom and love of God are seen as the unique and

⁹ Hermann Sasse, Art. *kósmos*, in: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*] (Stuttgart 1949ff), III, pp. 867-898. By the same author, *Ibid.* Art. *aidon*, I, 197-209.

exclusive source of the objective and subjective universality of Redemption. Thus we read in the text above: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." However we are missing – not unintentionally! – the completion of the Scripture quotation which is so important for the justification of the sinner: "... that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn. 3:16).

– Do the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles concerning the "expectation of the creature for the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19) – taken in their authentic biblical sense! – really so simply convince "us, men of the twentieth century"? Including non-believers and non-Christians? Is "the world" really waiting with longing for the "revelation of the sons of God"? Is that not a quite specific expectation of the Church?

Be that as it may, we can now add to the Pope's portrait of our era another characteristic: our era, time of a new conciliar consciousness of the Church, of a new Advent of the Church and mankind, in expectation of the Jubilee Year 2000, of the messianic kingdom of world peace and of the new coming of the Lord, is now also a time "*of longing expectation by the world*" for the "revelation of the sons of God."

The still unanswered question, whether by "revelation of the sons of God" is really meant all men, because the Son of God in his Incarnation has formally united himself with every man and so all men are children of God in the state of grace (*RH* 11,4), is finally answered by the Encyclical itself, now turning to the special relationship of the Redeemer to man. The Encyclical continues (*RH* 8,2):

In its analysis of "today's world," says the Pope, the council revealed that "most important part of the visible world that is man by penetrating like Christ the depth of human consciousness and by making contact with the inward mystery of man, which ... is expressed by the word

'heart'." This "inward mystery of the human heart in the depth of human consciousness" is stated by the Encyclical in one pithy sentence (*RH* 8,2):

Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his "heart."

Again the question arises: Did Christ enter the heart of every man, and if so, in what way? The Encyclical answers the question with the text well known to us from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* 22, which reads as follows (*RH* 8,2):

Rightly therefore does the Second Vatican Council teach: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come (Rom. 5:14), Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of His love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling." And the Council continues: "He who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), is Himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which has been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in Him has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by His Incarnation, He, the Son of God, in a certain way united Himself with each man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart He loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin," He, the Redeemer of man.¹⁰

This quotation from *Gaudium et Spes* 22 is for the Pope's

¹⁰ Emphasis in the text of the Encyclical is only in the English translation, therefore they are omitted here. On the text itself, see Footnote 3.

New Theology as a whole the fundamental key text, so it is the key text also for the doctrine of Redemption in Redemptor Hominis. Out of this text of the Pastoral Constitution Cardinal Wojtyla evolved his man-centered concept of revelation which he put forward in *Sign of Contradiction*. This concept of revelation is also the Pope's, so that we are sure of how the Pope understands and interprets the Council text quoted above. All of this was laid out in detail in Part I of this work (pp. 78-123) and recapitulated in brief in the Introduction of this book (see above, 6 & 7, pp. 14-36). Hence from the Pope's concept of revelation we know exactly how to interpret the text quoted:

Accordingly revelation consists "in the Son of God's having through the Incarnation united himself with every man," and that in the sense of a formal union infusing grace.¹¹ This revelation which contains the axiom of universal salvation we named *a priori* revelation.¹²

A priori revelation includes the whole "mystery of man": through formal union with Christ in the Incarnation every man "has been raised to a dignity beyond compare," every man from the first moment of his conception possesses the supernatural likeness of God indestructibly within him (*RH* 13,3) and "being in Christ" as his own truest and deepest human being. Hence too the Redeemer by becoming man has entered into the "heart" of every man, hence too St. Paul's phrase of "the revelation of the sons of God" is in the Encyclical to be referred to all men. The phrasing of the *Council text*, whereby the Son of God through the Incarnation united himself "in a certain way" with every man, leaves room for the interpretation of a material union in the sense of the Church Fathers' theology.¹³ But the Pope leaves no such room for a patristic interpretation with

¹¹ Cf. Part I, pp. 61-98. Cf. also Footnote 3.

¹² Part I, pp. 111-116. Cf. also Footnote 3.

¹³ Cf. Part I, pp. 60-73.

his thesis of a formal (supernatural) union, i.e. the thesis of universal salvation.

To a *a priori* revelation corresponds a *posteriori* revelation, the revelation offered in history to men, through the life of Christ.

The "mystery of man," so it says, is solved through the "mystery of the Incarnate Word." "Christ reveals man fully to himself, but does this through the revelation of the Father and his love."¹⁴

Revelation as a whole "circles around man"; it has a man-centered character (see above, 7, pp. 17-36). The historical revelation becomes a means of *interpretation*, whereby man's deepest being as man is made known or conscious to man. Christ himself becomes the *interpreter* of man *a priori* redeemed and justified. Christ's work of Redemption, whose redeeming and justifying effect has already been imparted *a priori* to every man, becomes a *manifestation* of the Father's mercy and love. The Pope's constantly recurring comment thereon is the saying of Jesus: "Whosoever has seen me, has seen the Father." The revelation of the Father's love and mercy in and through Christ puts before man's eyes the *great motive* that should move them to return love for love.

To this *a posteriori* revelation, revealing to man his deepest being as man, so that he may truly "find himself," "come to himself," corresponds "*faith*" as a mere process of awareness. Such a "faith" is not the justifying faith of the New Testament. Man is no longer, as the Council of Trent teaches, through justifying faith and baptism transferred from the state of the sinner far from God into the state of sanctifying grace, because he is already *a priori* redeemed and justified. The application of the fruits of the Redemption to the individual man through the process of justification lapses, because these fruits have already been imparted

¹⁴ Cf. Part I, pp. 112-116.

a priori to all men on the basis of God's unconditional love and mercy.

Revelation and Faith have thereby forfeited their truly *historical* character. The question as to how the Pope's theology of the covenant is presented as a whole on the basis of the man-centered "double revelation," was already answered in the Introduction (7.3, pp. 24-32). Cardinal Wojtyła's *covenant theology* has fully passed over into the Encyclical, and gives us the key to understanding Article 9, which follows.

9. The divine dimension of the mystery of the Redemption.

If the Son of God through his Incarnation has formally united himself with every man and has already entered into the "heart" of every single man (RH 8), how then does the Pope's theology present the "rest" of the Redeemer's work of salvation, in particular the sacrifice of the Cross?

In this Article 9 the Encyclical answers the question as to the Pope's concept of salvation history. After the above (RH 8,2) quoted text from *Gaudium et Spes* the Encyclical goes on (RH 9,1):

As we reflect again on this stupendous text from the Council's teaching, we do not forget even for a moment that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, became our reconciliation with the Father (cf. Rom. 5:11; Col. 1:20). He it was, and He alone, who satisfied the Father's eternal love, that fatherhood that from the beginning found expression in creating the world, giving man all the riches of creation, and making him "little less than God" (Ps. 8:6), in that he was created "in the image and after the likeness of God" (Gen. 1:26). He and He alone also satisfied that fatherhood of God and that love which man in a way rejected by breaking the first Covenant (Gen. 3:6-13), and the later covenants that God "again and again offered to man" (Eucharistic Prayer No. 4).

The "stupendous text from the Council's teaching" taught, as the Pope understands it, the formal union of the Son of God with every man through the Incarnation (= *a posteriori* revelation), and it expressed the man-centered theory of "double revelation" (cf. previous section, pp. 108-118). What is there still left for the Redeemer of man to do, if the reunion of mankind with God in principle already took place with the Son of God's Incarnation?

What is "still left" for him to do, which we may not "forget even for a moment (!)," is "that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God has become our reconciliation with the Father." "He it was, and he alone, who satisfied the Father's eternal love (*satisfecit*)."

The Pope uses the traditional terminology, but not in the traditional sense.

According to *the Church's traditional teaching*, any single deed of Christ was of sufficient value to work our salvation, and all of his deeds taken together make up the complete work of Redemption. However, in the sacrifice on the Cross his redeeming activity reached its highest point, so that the Cross is held to be the main but not exclusive efficient cause of our salvation.¹⁵

It is the Church's teaching that Christ by his sacrificial death on the Cross redeemed us, *reconciled us with God* (D 983; 790), and by his suffering and death *made vicarious atonement for the sins of men* (D 122; 799).¹⁶

Scripture teaches the universality of Christ's work of Redemption and so indirectly of his satisfaction. By satisfaction is meant the reparation or making good again of an offense. The universality of Christ's vicarious satisfaction refers however only to the objective Redemption: Christ made atonement sufficient for all men without exception. Christ so offered up to God the merits of his atonement,

¹⁵ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-188.

that to it corresponds on the part of God a true and sincere will to make all men blessed, and by reason of that atonement all men may and should expect the remission of their sins.¹⁷ Although Christ's *physical and historical activity* alone wrought salvation, redemption and atonement (*opus salutis seu redemptionis*) and was performed only *half-way through world history*, nevertheless the moral efficacy of Christ's meritorious work of Redemption includes the entire history of mankind, reaching back as far as sinful Adam and forwards to the end of the world.¹⁸

However this objectively universal salvation requires the *subjective application of the fruits of the Redemption to, and their appropriation by, every single man through the process of justification*. The subjective appropriation of the fruits of the Redemption is dependent on the fulfillment of certain conditions, on faith (Mk. 16:16) and on observance of the commandments (Heb. 5:9; II Pet. 1:10). In other words: in the sacrifice of the Cross, Christ's satisfaction is universal; as regards man's acceptance of the fruits of that sacrifice, it is particular (cf. *Summa contra Gentiles* IV,55).¹⁹

However, *underlying the Encyclical's theology of the Savior is the Pope's theology of the covenant* (see above, 7.3, pp. 24-32). The Church's old doctrine of Redemption thereby takes on a new form, and familiar theological concepts undergo a change of meaning.

The Pope speaks in the text quoted of a *double satisfaction*, which Jesus made to the Father's eternal love:

– Firstly, “to that fatherhood,” “that from the beginning found expression in creating the world, giving men all the riches of creation, and making him ‘little less than God,’ in

¹⁷ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Erlösungslehre, Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik [Handbook of Catholic Dogma]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1954), *Gesammelte Schriften [Complete Works]*, Vol. VI, 2, pp. 163ff, 203ff, 205ff.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

that he was created 'in the image and after the likeness of God.'"

– Secondly, "to that fatherhood," "which man in a way rejected by breaking the first covenant (cf. Gen. 3:6-13) and the later covenants that God 'again and again offered to man.'"

How are we to understand the first of these two statements? Did neither the bringing into existence of man's being nor his creation as image of God through the Father require Jesus Christ's satisfaction? ... Or did they? ...

As to the Pope's second statement here concerning the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ to God's fatherhood, at first sight it seems to be less difficult to understand. Obviously, the breaking of a covenant with God, or the refusal by man of offers of covenants made by God, offend the Father's love and demand satisfaction. However the phrasing which says that God's loving fatherhood was "in a way rejected" by man, is odd nonetheless.

Both statements and also the Encyclical's *doctrine on the Savior* become understandable when we take into account the Pope's covenant theology which we laid out alongside our presentation of the Church's traditional teaching (see above):

Although the physical activity of Christ in history is the saving, redeeming and atoning work of Redemption and only took place half-way through world history, nevertheless the "ontological" efficacy of Christ's meritorious work of Redemption includes the whole history of mankind, backwards not only to Adam having fallen into sin – as in the traditional teaching – but even *to the act of creation*, and forwards to the end of the world.

That makes the Redemption *not only objectively but also subjectively universal*. Any subjective application or appropriation of the fruits of Redemption thereby lapses. What remains is a mere process of awareness by way of revelation from without or self-discovery from within of what was *a*

priori existent.

This view arises from the basic thesis of the Pope's covenant theology, according to which the creation of man and the making of the covenant with Adam took place simultaneously, and arose from one and the same redeeming love of God. Thus when the man Adam entered into a covenant with God in the act of creation, he was made in the image of God as redeemed "being in Christ" at the same moment. That is to say, Adam was created as the *redeemed* child of God, and entered into existence as "son in the Son of God" the Redeemer. Since "being in Christ" is the being of the Redeemer, then Jesus Christ also made satisfaction to "that fatherhood" which is expressed in the creation of man. So man's deepest being as man, his "being in Christ," also belongs to his nature as man.

The same thought process explains how the Pope views the break or destruction of the first covenant and its restoration "even more radically, in even greater measure, by the Redemption."²⁰ This restoration of the destroyed covenant with Adam through the historical work of Redemption by the second Adam halfway through time, reaches back with its effect of atonement and satisfaction as far as the cove-

²⁰ See above, pp. 27ff. – The Pope summarizes his thoughts on the "divine dimension of the Redemption" in *Dives in Misericordia* 7. The creation of man in the image of God carries the traits of the Redeemer "from the beginning." On the relationship between the creation of man, i.e. the first covenant with Adam, and the covenant made on Golgotha, we hear in *Dives in Misericordia* (7,5): "It is precisely beside the path of man's eternal election to the dignity of being an adopted child of God that there stands in history the cross of Christ, the only-begotten Son, who, as 'light from light, true God from true God,' came to give the final witness to the wonderful *covenant of God with humanity, of God with man* – every human being. This covenant, as old as man – it goes back to the very mystery of creation – and afterwards many times renewed with one single chosen people, is equally the new and definitive covenant, which was established there on Calvary, and is not limited to a single people, to Israel, but is open to each and every individual."

nant with Adam in the act of creation. What we have is so to speak a "*sanatio in radice*" of the first broken covenant on the even deeper basis of the Redemption in the moment of Adam's creation, so that Adam entered into existence quite "legitimately" as the supernaturally redeemed adoptive son of the Father "in Christ." So "being in Christ" belongs indestructibly to man from the very beginning as the deepest being of man's being. Man could lose it neither by breaking the first covenant with God, nor by refusing God's following offers of a covenant, for which "Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, became our reconciliation with the Father." From the first moment of his existence every man carries *indestructibly* within him the image and likeness of God (*RH* 13,3), and "all men from the beginning to the end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through his Cross," "independently of whether man knows it or not, accepts it or not."²¹

This aspect of salvation history belongs for the Pope "to the divine order of things, to the divine view of man and the world." What we have here is "the divine dimension of the mystery of the Redemption," which "corresponds to the divine order of things and to the divine view of man and the world."²²

The other, human, aspect of salvation history arises from the fact that the "being in Christ" imparted *a priori* to man through Christ's work of Redemption has become "a historical fact rooted in time and space."²³ That by no means denies that the Redeemer of mankind wrought his historical work of salvation halfway through time, that he made satisfaction to the Father through his Passion, and that he reconciled mankind with God. Accordingly, the *historical work of salvation* is and remains the saving, redeeming and

²¹ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 103, 108.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 103. See above, pp. 30ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 108ff. See above, pp. 30ff.

reconciling act of Redemption by Jesus Christ, only its "ontological," *redeeming and justifying* effect reaches further back, even to the act of man's creation, so that all men from the beginning to the end of the world are effectively redeemed and justified by the Cross.²⁴

The question was raised at the outset: What is still left for the Redeemer to do if he has performed his work of Redemption and applied its saving fruits *a priori* to every man born alive? We can now answer it: "Ontologically," or in the order of being, nothing whatsoever! All that remains to be added is an awareness, in the order of knowing. The whole traditional view of salvation history and redemption acquires, if we keep the traditional theological vocabulary, a subtle, far-reaching change of meaning. Illuminating in this connection is what the Encyclical for instance does *not* mention. This change of meaning also shows up, now that the Pope turns to the central concept of Redemption.

After the explanations of "reconciliation" and "satisfaction," the Encyclical now gives its definition of *Redemption*. This goes (*RH* 9,1):

The redemption of the world – this tremendous mystery of love in which creation is renewed (*Gaudium et Spes* 37; *Lumen Gentium* 48) – is, at its deepest root, the fullness of justice in a human heart – the Heart of the First-born Son – in order that it may become justice in the hearts of many human beings, predestined from eternity in the First-born Son to be children of God (Rom. 8:29,30; Eph. 1:8), and called to grace, called to love.

The Cross on Calvary, through which Jesus Christ – a Man, the Son of the Virgin Mary, thought to be the son of Joseph of Nazareth – "leaves" this world, is also a fresh manifestation of the eternal fatherhood of God, who in him draws near again to humanity, to each human being, giving him the thrice holy "Spirit of truth" (Jn. 16:13).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

As to the first part of this definition of the Redemption, let us note that it says that in the mystery of the Redemption creation is renewed. According to the Pope's theology, that already effectively took place in the very act of man's creation together with the simultaneous making of the covenant. The "broken covenant" was in principle already renewed in the act of creation "on a deeper basis and in a more comprehensive way."²⁵ Thus man exists from the beginning "in Christ." Adam is already an "anonymous Christian." Through Christ's work of Redemption, this "being in Christ" of Adam and so of mankind has become a historical fact out in the open.

As for the central part of the Encyclical's definition, it runs: the Redemption of the world is in its deepest root the fullness of justice in the human heart of the First-born Son, so that it can become justice in the hearts of many men. Here two things are being said: firstly, Redemption is the fullness of justice in the Son's human heart; secondly, the purpose of this justice is its communication to the hearts of men.

The fullness of justice is present in the heart of the First-born Son at the moment of the Incarnation of the Word. Since according to the Pope's basic thesis the Son of God has through the Incarnation formally united himself with every man, then through the Incarnation the fullness of justice in the Son's human heart has also become the fullness of justice in all men's hearts. So the purpose of God's becoming man, namely the Redemption, has already been attained and realized with the Incarnation. So also realized is what the Encyclical further says of men, namely that they "are predestined from eternity in the First-born Son to be children of God and called to grace, called to love."

The Encyclical's definition of Redemption is even more

²⁵ See above, pp. 27ff.

clearly outlined when we set it before the background of the New Testament and the Church's teaching: the Church teaches that the "Redemption of the world" – precisely "in its deepest root" – is the freeing of Adam's descendants from the power of darkness or from the slavery to Satan, it is their being rescued from the condition of sin and death, in which the children of Adam are really to be found, through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. "Accordingly (justification) is the transfer from the state in which man as son of Adam is born into the state of grace and of acceptance as child of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Savior" (D 796), but that is not possible without faith and baptism (D 793-801).

The difference between this definition of Redemption and the Encyclical's is obvious. Although according to Church teaching the Redemption consists essentially in the effacing of original sin through Christ's vicarious expiatory sacrifice on the Cross, in the Encyclical's definition the word sin is not even mentioned. Such an omission illuminates the Encyclical's definition. The thesis of Universal salvation passes over in silence what is in historical reality the condition of mankind's absolute need of redemption.

The second part of the definition of redemption in the quoted text takes the thought process of the first part one stage further and answers the question still hanging: What does the Cross on Calvary mean, if the Redemption of the world has already in principle taken place through the communication to all men of the fullness of justice in the human heart of the First-begotten Son? Here is the Encyclical's precise answer in the Latin text:

The Cross on Calvary, through which the man Jesus Christ ... "leaves" this world, is also a fresh demonstration (*nova demonstratio*) of the eternal fatherhood of God, who in him again draws near to humanity, to every single human being (*unumquemque hominem*), giving him the thrice holy "Spirit of truth."

The sacrifice of the Cross on Calvary is obviously the deed of Redemption by which Jesus Christ made satisfaction to God's eternal fatherhood and wrought reconciliation with the Father. But why is the Cross on Calvary a *new demonstration* of God's eternal fatherhood, who in Christ *again* draws near to humanity? What do the new demonstration and the new love of the Father refer to? Surely to the first part of the definition, meaning the Incarnation of the Son of God, whereby the fullness of justice in his human heart was imparted to the hearts of all men. But why does the Encyclical speak precisely of a "demonstration"?

It would have been altogether possible for the Pope on the basis of his covenant theology to have characterized the Cross on Calvary directly as the saving deed, which wrought the Redemption of the world, had he here too in the Encyclical repeated his familiar phrase, "All men from beginning to end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through his Cross."²⁶ Or had he recalled that other phrase drawing all men straight into the Church even more inclusively: "The birth of the Church at the moment of Christ's messianic death was basically also the birth of man, independently even of whether man knows it or not, accepts it or not. At this moment man's existence received a new dimension, which is briefly and tersely called by Paul 'being in Christ.'²⁷ Christ's physical-historical work of Redemption is and remains in the Pope's theology too the deed of salvation, which underlies and works the Redemption. But the historical work of Redemption stretches in its "ontological" efficacy according to the Pope's covenant theology backwards as far as the act of creation and forwards to the end of the world, so that all

²⁶ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

men from beginning to end of the world are effectively redeemed and justified through the Cross (see quotation above). And that is the thesis of universal salvation.

There we have the answer to the question: What is the meaning of the Cross, if mankind is already redeemed and justified through the Incarnation? The fullness of justice in the human heart of the First-born Son, which is imparted by the Incarnation to all men's hearts, is the fruit of *the whole historical work of Redemption*, meaning the Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection, in other words the *whole* supernatural "being in Christ." That is why the Encyclical can perfectly aptly speak of the Cross on Calvary as a *demonstration*, even a *new demonstration* of the eternal fatherhood of God, who draws near to each man *again* and grants him the Holy Ghost.

This interpretation of the definition of Redemption, arising from the Pope's covenant theology and ultimately from his concept of Revelation, is confirmed by the following self-interpretation in the Encyclical (*RH* 9,2):

This revelation of the Father (= new demonstration of God's eternal fatherhood) and outpouring of the Holy Spirit (= the thrice holy Spirit of truth), which stamp an indelible seal on the mystery of the Redemption, explain the meaning of the cross and death of Christ. The God of creation is revealed as the God of redemption, as the God who is "faithful to himself" (cf. I Thess. 5:24), and faithful to His love for man and the world, which He revealed on the day of creation. His is a love that does not draw back before anything that justice requires in Him. Therefore "for our sake (God) made him (the Son) to be sin who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5:21; cf. Gal. 3:13). If he "made to be sin" Him who was without any sin whatever, it was to reveal the love that is always greater than the whole of creation, the love that is He Himself, since "God is love" (I Jn. 4:8,16). Above all, love is greater than sin, than weakness, than the "futility of creation" (Rom. 8:20); it is stronger than death; it is a love always ready to raise up and forgive, always ready to go to meet the prodi-

gal son (Lk. 15:11-32), always looking for "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19), who are called to the glory that is to be revealed (Rom. 8:8). ... This revelation of love is also described as mercy; and in man's history this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: that of Jesus Christ.

From the first sentence of this quotation we can draw a threefold statement:

– Firstly, in the sentence concerning the *revelation of the Father* appears the Pope's concept of revelation: the demonstration of God's eternal fatherhood on the Cross on Calvary is the *a posteriori*-historical revelation. The pouring out of the Holy Ghost into the hearts of all men is in content tantamount to the *a priori* revelation; the two ways of revelation make together the "double revelation," the Pope's principle of theological knowledge which implies universal salvation.

– Secondly, the new demonstration of the eternal fatherhood in the Son on the Cross on Calvary and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost into the hearts of all men stamp on the mystery of the Redemption an indelible sign (*indelibile imprimunt signum*). Accordingly God's eternal fatherhood embracing all men, the Son's Incarnation whereby all men are sons of the Father, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost into all men's hearts present the inextinguishable seal in the mystery of the Redemption.

Then Redemption means the self-communication of the triune God in Christ, the Son of God, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost into the hearts of all men. *What is true for the redeemed and justified Christian believer, holds true for all without any conditions, whether they know it and want it, or not. The indelible seal in the mystery of the Redemption is, then, universal salvation.*

Therewith that text from the Pastoral Constitution has found in the Encyclical its specific application. The text runs (*Gaudium et Spes* 22,5):

What holds for Christian believers, holds also “for all men of good will, in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. For, since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.” The Vatican II text leaves room for an interpretation in the sense of the traditional teaching, but that is no longer the case with the Encyclical. What God alone knows becomes, through the criterion of “double revelation” in the Pope’s covenant theology, the rationalist axiom of universal salvation.

– Thirdly, the *meaning* of Christ’s Cross and death is explained by the revelation of the Father presented above and by the *pouring out* of the Holy Ghost (*Per hanc Patris revelationem effusionemque Spiritus Sancti ... explanatur significatio Crucis ac mortis Christi*). So what we have is the “explanation of the meaning” of Christ’s Cross and death, then given according to the principle of “double Revelation.” If man is already effectively redeemed and justified by Christ’s Cross, then indeed all that remains is “*the explanation of the meaning*” of Christ’s Cross and death!

This “explanation” is given by the Encyclical following on the first sentence. It follows amidst the quotation of numerous texts from Scripture, which must however be understood in the sense of the Pope’s covenant theology and concept of revelation: “The God of creation” who reveals himself in Christ’s death on the Cross as the “God of Redemption,” is the God of the Covenant, who “on the very first day of creation” bestowed on man his entire redemptive love and called him into existence as a justified child of God. And to this creative and redemptive love from the day of creation he remains faithful! The “being in Christ” communicated *a priori* to every man in the act of creation and the Adam covenant as man’s true being as man (= *a priori* revelation) is “made known” to him *a*

posteriori (a *posteriori* revelation) through Christ's saving work in history. "Christ, the new Adam," as the Encyclical said above (RH 8,2), "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, *fully reveals man to himself* and brings to light his most high calling." This time the Encyclical says, "This revelation of love and mercy (the Father's) has *in man's history* taken a form and a name: that of Jesus Christ."

10. The human dimension in the mystery of the Redemption.

The divine dimension in the mystery of the Redemption is completed by the human dimension. Under Redemption's human aspect Church dogma brings fully into view the concrete man situated in history: man in the condition of creature fallen away from God, stripped of sanctifying grace and wounded in his human nature, in the state of original sin and absolutely in need of redemption. It brings also fully into view the human-historical character of the work of Redemption itself: the genuinely historical life and activity of the Redeemer for the salvation and rescue of mankind far from God and in absolute need of redemption. The presupposition of redeeming work is mankind in absolute need of redemption as being Adam's descendants in original sin, and mankind's rescue from this condition is that work's purpose. Also brought fully into view is the decision made between eternal salvation or eternal damnation, when sinful mankind far from God meets in history with its crucified Redeemer. Here we have demands being made by God and genuine decisions being made by man: to convert, to believe, to be baptized (Mk. 16:16). The Church clearly teaches that while the Redemption as work of the triune God's mercy and love may be objectively universal, nevertheless it requires the acceptance and subjective application of the Redemption's fruits to the individual man through the process of justification by faith in

Jesus Christ. And justification means the real transition from death to life: "The transfer from the state in which man is born as son of the first Adam into the state of grace and acceptance as children of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer," (Denzinger 796) as the Council of Trent defines.

None of this comes into view in the Encyclical. Nor can it possibly come into view, because it would fundamentally contradict the Pope's doctrine of the Redemption: a man who is on the basis of the infinite love, mercy and generosity of God's fatherhood is *a priori* redeemed and justified, is no more in need of justification or the application of the Redemption's fruits, but only of *self-knowledge and love*. This is exactly the point picked up by the Encyclical as it goes on (*RH* 10,1):

Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself." If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the redemption man becomes newly "expressed" and in a way, is newly created. He is newly created! "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

The text is an authentic interpretation of the "human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption" by the author himself:

The argument follows inductively from the principle of "double Revelation": man is a riddle to himself.

To understand himself he needs to experience love. That is why (!) "Christ the Redeemer fully reveals man to him-

self." This happens by means of the Father's revelation and his love, whereby the Father's love is set before men's eyes as God's deepest motive in the work of creation and of Redemption. At the same time the deepest motive in man for gratitude and for loving God in return is touched on, insofar as Christ manifests to man his true being as man. This is shown in the "human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption." It includes: "the greatness, dignity and value man has that belongs to his humanity (!)." For man, every man, is, as the Encyclical establishes, *a new creature*, and so redeemed and justified. Hence what the Apostle Paul says of the *believer in Christ* (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), and of the *Church of Christ*, holds true for *Christian and non-Christian*, for the *whole of mankind*: "You are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Accordingly the whole of mankind is in hidden fashion the body of Christ, the latent Church.²⁸ The old "ontological" wall of partition between Christian and non-Christian and the old distinction between nature and grace are removed by the axiom of universal salvation.

However, there remains the *barrier of consciousness*. How the *individual man* can break through it, the Encyclical goes on to describe in the following way (RH 10,1):

The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly – and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being – he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into Him with all his own self, he must "appropriate" and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself.

If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he "gained so great a Re-

²⁸ Cf. Part I, pp. 67-73, and above, Footnote 3.

deemer," and if God "gave his only Son" in order that man "should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

What we have here in the man "who wishes to understand himself thoroughly," is a subjective *process of awareness*: "Man must 'appropriate' and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself." However, "the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and the Redemption" is in the Encyclical the formal union of the Son of God with all men, so that every man (cf. *RH* 13,3) from the first moment of his existence onwards possesses in an indestructible, inalienable fashion "being in Christ" (= *a priori* revelation). The historical revelation in Christ (= *a posteriori* revelation) becomes overall a means of making man aware of his dignity *as man*. As the Pope expresses it elsewhere, Revelation has overall a "man-centered character"; it "circles around man."²⁹ This version of Revelation is presented step by step in what follows, with implacable logic.

The first unusual highlighting of the *greatness of man* follows in the text in this way: the process of awareness of man's self-discovery leads not only to the adoration of God but also to man's "deep wonder at himself."³⁰

The wonder at the marvelous works of God runs through the whole of Scripture. This wonder includes wonder at man as God's creature, especially those men in whom God shows forth in special fashion His marvelous power: His people, pious souls, saints, martyrs. This wonder is *God-centered*.³¹ However there follows in the Encyclical

²⁹ Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 120.

³⁰ Cf. the *Magnificat*, i.e. Mary's sense of wonder over the ineffable benefits which the Lord realized in her. The emphasis is clearly God-centered.

³¹ Georg Bertram, Art. "*thaumazein*," *ThWzNT* (Kittel), *op. cit.*, III, p. 34. – However in the Hellenistic versions of the Old Testament, there is also the danger of profanation through an excessive hero worship (p. 35).

cal a subtle displacement of emphasis from Christ and God to man being at the center: in the "Exsultet" of the Easter Vigil liturgy it says: "*O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem.*" In the Encyclical it is the "value of man," who "deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer." Whereas in the *Exsultet* the adoring wonder goes to the Redeemer, in the Encyclical the wonder goes to man. In the Creator's eyes the value of man is so great, that "God gave his Son, so that man might not be lost but have eternal life" (cf. Jn. 3:16). That evokes the question: how great then is the value of man who not only is not lost but once in existence cannot even be lost? As great as the value of the Son, or still greater?

What provokes the question is that the Encyclical gives an incomplete quotation of the text from Scripture and undertakes a double change of meaning. The text from St. John's Gospel runs complete as follows: "God so greatly loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, so that whosoever believeth in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). In context in St. John's Gospel the text is saying that through the sacrifice of His only Son even unto death, God gave visible proof of His love "for the world." But "world" here means, as emerges from what follows, *mankind in the darkness of sin turned away from God and so exposed to judgment and eternal death with no means of salvation.* To this world the way to eternal life is opened up through belief in the Son of God, who gives up his life for its redemption.³²

The double change of meaning is obvious: in the Gospel what we have is *God's love for lost mankind*, in the Encyclical it is *the greatness, dignity, and worth of man*, that very man who *a priori* and inalterably, inalienably possesses "being in Christ" as his own being as man.

³² Eduard Schick, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [*The Gospel According to John*] (Würzburg 1956, Echter-Bibel), pp. 43ff.

In the Gospel *faith is the way to eternal life*. In the Encyclical faith gets – surely deliberately – left out of the Scriptural quotation. The reason is clear: in the Redemption theology based on the axiom of universal salvation, there is no room for belief in Jesus Christ as a condition for obtaining eternal life. Man is *a priori* redeemed and justified! But through belief in Jesus Christ man is and remains oriented on Christ. On removing faith from the Scriptural text as condition for obtaining eternal life there follows simultaneously the re-orientation of Scripture's centeredness on Christ to the Encyclical's centeredness on man. In the same way, whereas God's love for lost man remains precisely through the condition of faith in Christ, *centered on Christ and God*, when the condition of faith is removed, then the course is set for *an interpretation centered on man*. These are precisely the lines along which the Encyclical proceeds to unfold its thinking.

What the Encyclical with its man-centered re-interpretation of the "Exsultet" and of the Scriptural text of Jn. 3:16 introduced by way of "man's deep wonder at himself," it has no fear of taking to its logical conclusion. The Encyclical continues (*RH* 10,2):

In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say, the Good News. It is also called Christianity. This amazement determines the Church's mission in the world and, perhaps even more so, "in the modern world." This amazement, which is also a conviction and a certitude – at its deepest root it is the certainty of faith, but in a hidden and mysterious way it vivifies every aspect of authentic humanism – is closely connected with Christ. It also fixes Christ's place – so to speak, His particular right of citizenship – in the history of man and mankind. Unceasingly contemplating the whole of Christ's mystery, the Church knows with all the certainty of faith that the Redemption that took place through the cross has definitively restored man's dignity and given back meaning to his life in the world, a mean-

ing that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin. And for that reason, the Redemption was accomplished in the paschal mystery, leading through the cross and death to resurrection.

To realize, blow by blow, the full force of what the Pope is here saying, as he says it, one must turn to the original text in Latin:

“Re quidem vera miratio maxima de pretio ac dignitate hominis nuncupatur Evangelium, id est Bonus Nuntius. Vocatur item Christianismus.” (The deep amazement of man at himself, at his value and dignity, is called the Gospel, it is the Good News. It is called Christianity.) *So man’s amazement at himself is identical with the Gospel!*

– From the very same amazement of man at his own value and dignity proceeds the Church’s function in this world! Does not the Church’s function (or mission) in this world stem from Christ? Yet the original Latin text is unambiguous: *“Ex eadem ipsa admiratione proficiscitur Ecclesiae munus in hoc mundo.”* Later in the Encyclical the Pope makes the same point in a formula just as expressive but looking in the reverse direction: “Man is the way of the Church” (RH 14,4).

– Man’s amazement at his value and dignity determines also *Christ’s place and particular right of citizenship in the history of man and mankind.* For the full force of this sentence too (provided by the Pope with a “so to speak”), one needs to turn to the Latin original which leaves no room for doubt: *“Ea (= miratio) etiam statuit locum Christi ac – si ita fas est dicere – peculiare eius ius civitatis in historia hominis hominumque generis.”*

– Man’s amazement at his value and dignity is both conviction and certainty. *This certainty is, according to its innermost nature, the certainty of faith.* Why? The Encyclical answers:

Because this amazement is “closely connected with Christ.” That stands to reason. For in the Pope’s Redemp-

tion doctrine every man is through the Incarnation closely connected with Christ. This indissoluble supernatural connection of Christ to every man is for the Pope, according to its innermost nature, "certainty of faith." But that is not all.

– This "certainty of faith" in a secret and hidden way also gives life to true *humanism* in every area. That too stands to reason, if all men, whether as conscious or anonymous Christians, are connected to Christ. True humanism is accordingly "anonymous Christianity."

– The theological basis of the astonishing statements which the Pope deduces from man's amazement at himself, is the thesis of universal salvation. He says: "The Church, unceasingly contemplating the whole of Christ's mystery, knows with all the certainty of faith that the Redemption that took place through the Cross has definitively restored his dignity to man and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin. And for that reason, the Redemption was accomplished in the paschal mystery, leading through the Cross and death to Resurrection."

These statements are to be understood and interpreted in the sense of the Pope's theology:

Universal salvation is in the Encyclical the "more complete (awareness of the) mystery of Christ" (cf. *RH* 11,3), which the Church unceasingly contemplates "as a whole" – and now proclaims through the Pope. Only through Vatican II has the Church in her contemplation experienced a broadening of her awareness and gained a broader knowledge of Christ. For, as the Pope says, "The opening made by the Second Vatican Council has enabled the Church and all Christians to reach a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" (*RH* 11,3). On this reckoning Christianity which until Vatican II had possessed only an incomplete knowledge of the mystery of Christ, was granted only "in recent times" the "more complete knowl-

edge" of the central mystery of its faith.

It is a matter of intense concern to us that the Pope emphasizes in the strictly dogmatic part of his Encyclical that the thesis of universal salvation is a "certain truth of Faith of the Church." The original Latin runs: "*Ecclesia novit ex certa sua fide.*" Are we in the presence of an *ex cathedra* statement?³³

Lastly there appears also in the text a subtle change of meaning of the *paschal mystery* on the basis of universal salvation: it says that the Redemption "has definitively restored man's dignity and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin. And for that reason, the Redemption was accomplished in the paschal mystery." It does *not* say that man lost his (supernatural) dignity through Adam's sin (*propter peccatum*) – which on the basis of the Pope's covenant theology would in no way be possible – but that man lost to a considerable extent *the meaning of his existence*. So the relative clause speaks only of a *considerable loss of meaning*, with the result that the mention of the paschal mystery refers *exclusively to the loss of meaning!* Accordingly the Encyclical says: *Because* man lost the *meaning* of his existence in the world to a considerable extent (!) because of sin, "for that reason (*quocirca*) the Redemption was accomplished in the paschal mystery." The accomplishment of the Redemption in the paschal mystery is here no more than the disclosure of the meaning of man's existence, a presentation of his inalienable dignity. And that is a pure process of awareness!

Finally the Encyclical gives a brief outline of the Church's task, as it emerges from everything said heretofore (RH 10,3):

³³ Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Theologische Erkenntnislehre, Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik [Handbook of Catholic Dogma]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1948), *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. III, pp. 231-242.

The Church's fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to direct man's gaze (*hominis mentem*), to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, to help all men to be familiar with (*ut percipiant*) the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. At the same time man's deepest sphere is involved – we mean the sphere of human hearts, consciences and events.

The first task of a Church whose function proceeds (see above) from man's wonder at his own dignity which he possesses *a priori* in the mystery of universal salvation in Christ, can only consist in directing men's attention and awareness to this mystery, and in helping them to perceive within themselves what was always ontologically present in hidden fashion in the deepest recesses of their heart and consciousness.

Accordingly the principal task of the Church consists in stirring up, guiding, supporting, and prompting from without the awareness process of self-discovery by the *individual* man, such as the Encyclical described it above (cf. *RH* 10,1).

This doctrine of Redemption proceeding from the Pope's man-centered concept of revelation and covenant theology is a new, self-contained, all-embracing idea, which as such takes the place of the Church's old teaching.

11. The mystery of Christ as the basis of the Church's mission and of Christianity.

The theology of the Redemption (*RH* 7-10) is the basis for the theology of the mission of the Church and of Christianity (*RH* 11-12).

The Pope takes up again the main ideas of the Council which he discussed in the first Chapter (*RH* 3-6), namely ecumenism and dialogue, in order to illustrate them on a broader basis (cf. *RH* 7-10) and once again in a greater and more universal perspective (*RH* 11-12). The thinking does

not proceed as linear, systematic development, but rather in a circular, associative pattern.

The main objective of the new pontificate is the unity of Christianity and of all mankind, attained by means of ecumenism and dialogue (cf. *RH* 5-6). –

According to the Encyclical, the Second Vatican Council has provided the necessary means for the Church to fulfill her mission in today's world, by defining the Church as the sacrament for the unity of all mankind:

1. Vatican II has helped to bring about a new, "full and universal awareness of the Church" (*RH* 11,1).

2. Vatican II has given to Christianity a new, "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" (*RH* 11,3).

3. Vatican II has thereby laid the theological foundation, on which the Pope develops the principles of the mission of the Church and Christianity in today's world (*RH* 11,4-5).

11.1 A new, full and universal awareness of the Church.

On the new awareness of the Church, the Encyclical says the following (*RH* 11,1):

The Second Vatican Council did immense work to form that full and universal awareness by the Church of which Pope Paul VI wrote in his first encyclical. This awareness – or rather self-awareness – by the Church is formed "in dialogue"; and before this dialogue becomes a conversation, attention must be directed to "the other," that is to say; the person with whom we wish to speak. The Ecumenical Council gave a fundamental impulse to forming the Church's self-awareness by so adequately and competently presenting to us a view of the terrestrial globe as a map of various religions. It showed furthermore that this map of the world's religions has superimposed on it, in previously unknown layers typical of our time, the phenomenon of atheism in its various forms ...

The text says three things: The Council did immense work in order to form the "full and universal awareness" of

the Church. Furthermore: That awareness is formed through dialogue with "the other." The very nature of dialogue presupposes knowledge of the other. Finally: It was by its view of other religions that the Council gave a fundamental impulse for the formation of the Church's new self-awareness.

– The Church's new "full and universal awareness ... – or rather self-awareness," which was attained through the Council's painstaking efforts, is not unfamiliar to us. The above quoted text appeals to the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, where Pope Paul VI wrote about the awareness of the Church. We already discussed and analyzed this "present-day consciousness of the Church" at great length in Chapter I (3; 4). But to maintain that the Church's "awareness – or rather self-awareness ... is formed 'in dialogue'" is novel indeed. – Thus it is not formed by means of revelation, Holy Scripture or Church doctrine.

– Dialogue is by no means something new in the life of the Church. Dialogue means nothing other than "a conversation between two or more persons," even in New Testament times, in the ancient world, up to the present day.

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, with His disciples, with the Scribes and Pharisees are all "dialogues." Dialogue, which was long known to Egypt and the Ancient Orient, found its way to the Greeks. That is where it became a classical form of philosophical debate (Socrates, Plato), which was then taken up by early Christianity. The first Christian dialogues were written around 140 or 150, in a debate with Judaism, starting with the "Dialogue between Jason and Papiskos" and St. Justin's "Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon." These dialogues then attained literary status in Minucius Felix's "Octavius," and culminated in St. Augustine's dialogue-works from Cassiciacum.³⁴ Up to

³⁴ Cf. Ernst Günther Schmidt, Art. "Dialogus," *Der Kleine Pauli* (München 1979), II, p. 1575.

Vatican II, dialogue was an essential element in the Church's mission.³⁵ The theological basis of dialogue was the faith of the Church. Its goal was to convince non-Christians of their errors and of the truth of the Christian faith, thus to move them to conversion.

The dialogue to which John Paul II refers in *Redemptor Hominis*, however, means something entirely different. It has a new theological basis, which the Encyclical has already laid in its essentials in Chapter I (3-6): In this perspective, it was the broadening of the Church's dogma which led to the "worldwide broadening of the Church's consciousness," from which the Church's "missionary dynamism" breaks forth and also determines the nature of dialogue (*RH* 4). In Chapter II, the Encyclical through its Redemption doctrine has widened the theological basis for the "dialogue of salvation" and declared the thesis of universal salvation as a truth which "the Church knows with all the certainty of faith" (*RH* 10,2). *The dialogue, which the Encyclical teaches and demands, rests on the axiom of universal salvation. Therefore it represents an absolute novelty in the history of the Church.*

The buzz word "dialogue" is a key idea in the Pope's theology. Through the introduction of a new theological basis, the word dialogue undergoes an essential change in meaning. But the purpose of dialogue has essentially changed, just like the meaning. —

There is no doubt that Vatican II gave a fundamental impulse for the formation of the Church's new self-awareness. The question is: In which Council documents is this decisive impulse to be found? Which Council documents does the Pope acknowledge as a faithful expression of the Council's standpoint, which he then makes his own?

The Encyclical gives us the answer (*RH* 11,2):

³⁵ Cf. Thomas Ohm, *Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker [Make Disciples of all Nations]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1962), pp. 562-566.

The Council document on non-Christian religions in particular is filled with deep esteem for the great spiritual values (*spiritualium bonorum*), indeed for the primacy of the spiritual (*quae spiritualia sunt*), which in the life of mankind finds expression in religion (*in ipsa religione*) and then in morality, with direct effects on the whole of culture.

The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, "seeds of the Word" (*diversis in religionibus totidem imagines unice cuiusdam veritatis tamquam "semina Verbi"*), attesting that, though the routes taken may be different, there is but a single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit as expressed in its quest for God and also in its quest, through its tending towards God, for the full dimension of its humanity (*plenae significationis generis humani*), or in other words for the full meaning (*sensus pleni*) of human life. The Council gave particular attention to the Jewish religion, recalling the great spiritual heritage common to Christians and Jews (*magnum illum thesaurum spiritualem commemorans, qui Christianis et Hebraeis est communis*). It also expressed its esteem for the believers of Islam, whose faith also looks to Abraham (*ad Abraham refertur*).

In support of his overwhelmingly positive view of non-Christian religions, the Pope appeals only to the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which is specifically dedicated to this theme. As a Council document, a declaration has an essentially weaker theological weight than a decree or a dogmatic constitution.

As a document which should further peace and harmony among men, the declaration *Nostra Aetate* emphasizes above all the positive aspect of non-Christian religions, while neglecting to stress the negative aspects with equal force. The document thus comes across as a one-sided, undiscerning appreciation for non-Christian religions.

The short summary of *Nostra Aetate* in the Encyclical appears still more one-sided, still more undiscerning in its

high esteem for non-Christian religions than the Council document itself. Since the Pope in his summary, however, adopts and explains the Council's theological position authoritatively, the above quoted text must be viewed as an authentic interpretation of the supreme magisterium, which clearly states what the Council really meant and desired, as well as what the Pope intends to enforce in his new pontificate.³⁶

All the same, the reader will allow some remarks on this Encyclical text:

In its first lines, the "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions," *Nostra Aetate*, defines the Church's task as follows: "Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, she reflects at the outset on what men have in common and what tends to promote fellowship among them" (NA 1,1). According to this view, the Church's task is simply to further the unity of mankind. This definition of her task corresponds perfectly with the key phrase for the ecclesiology of Vatican II as a whole: The Church is the sacrament for the unity of all mankind (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1). The declaration *Nostra Aetate* lays the theological foundation for the path of interreligious dialogue, which is the aim in view. The main idea is: That which is common to all men leads to unity among all men. In the area of religion, the motto runs: What is common to all religions leads to unity among all religions. Translated that means a one-world religion.³⁷

If one can speak of such a thing in the history of religion, the common element in all religions – an idea in vogue since the enlightenment – could only be the least common denominator, after stripping off the overlay of all concrete-

³⁶ Cf. also *Redemptor Hominis* 6,3.

³⁷ See my analysis of *Nostra Aetate* in: "One Truth and Many Religions," *Respondeo* 8 (Abensberg 1988), pp. 53-61.

historical particularities, resulting in an irrational bewilderment in face of the divine, something in the vein of Rudolf Otto, founder of the modern science of religion, who also brought about the "religious society of mankind" for the purpose of "fostering peace and harmony among religions, conscious as we are of our religious responsibility."³⁸

The Church's task according to Vatican II in *Nostra Aetate* is therefore: Start with the common element in all religions and use it in order to lead all men to religious unity and fellowship! This missionary duty is far removed from that which Christ enjoined to His Church (Matt. 28:18-20).

In the Council documents, we can find numerous texts which blatantly contradict the exuberant, one-sided and undiscerning high esteem for non-Christian religions in the Encyclical's summary. Here is a case in point: The following text from *Ad Gentes* (9,2), the *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, offers a balanced judgment of the "values" of non-Christian religions:

[The Church's missionary activity] purges of evil associations (*a contagiis malignis liberat*) those elements of truth and grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God; and it restores them to Christ their source who overthrows the rule of the devil and limits the manifold malice of evil. So whatever goodness is found in the minds and hearts of men, or in the particular customs and cultures of peoples (*quidquid boni ... seminatum invenitur*), far from being lost is purified, raised to a higher level and reaches its perfection (*sanatur, elevatur et consummatur*), for the glory of God, the confusion of the demon, and the happiness of men.³⁹

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 134ff.

³⁹ Christian Gnllka, *Satura tragica. Zu Juvenal und Prudentius*. Wiener Studien (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1990), Vol. 103, p. 146.

In support of its oversimplified and high estimate of non-Christian religions, the Encyclical makes a totally unfounded appeal to the Church Fathers. By maintaining that the Church Fathers would have seen "in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, 'seeds of the Word'" and various ways of union with God, the Pope makes a contention more in line with the classical form of heathen syncretism than with the teaching of the Church Fathers. The Pope's contention is contradicted by the facts of history. St. Justin, from whom the expression "seeds of the Word" originates, was the very person who brandmarks the heathen religions of his time as so many manifestations of the demonic.⁴⁰ The rest of the Church Fathers shared this view.⁴¹ The theologians and Church Fathers made a critical assessment of the ancient culture associated with these heathen religions. It was a matter of taking individual cultural monuments and customs, sifting, purifying and aligning them on the Faith and thus assimilating them to the Church (e.g. philosophy, art). But the reaction of the theologians and Church Fathers towards the heathen religions as religions, along with their worship, was an unqualified rejection of these religions as idolatry!

The principles which guided the Church Fathers in dealing with the culture of the ancient world, however, are in complete agreement with the points specified in the text from *Ad Gentes* (9,2). These points of agreement were laid out with amazing clarity and erudition by Christian Gnilka:

"The doctrine of the 'seeds' of goodness in pre-Christian

⁴⁰ Paul Hacker, *Theological Foundations of Evangelization* (St. Augustin 1980), p. 36f. Ample proofs can be found there.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-60. — On the whole question, see also Christian Gnilka, *Die vielen Wege und der Eine* [*Many Ways and One Way*], in: *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* (Berlin 1990), Vol. 31, pp. 9-51. — Johannes Dörmann, "One Truth and Many Religions," *Respondeo* 8 (Abensberg 1988).

culture, which St. Justin made the first attempt to develop with the help of Stoic philosophy; the synthesis of internal and external, personal and cultural conversion, which is found everywhere in the Church Fathers; the God-centered aspect of any missionary effort to use the elements of goodness at hand for the glory of God; the firm principle of the Fathers that all goodness belongs to the Creator and must be referred to Him, so that the Christian, in the course of adopting and assimilating elements of truth and goodness, takes in nothing foreign or alien to the Faith, but only that to which he has a right as a worshiper of the true God; the conviction of Church authors, based on experience, that the goods of pre-Christian culture can never be adopted without due caution and filtering out, since partial aspects of the good and beautiful among heathen peoples are invariably marred by unclean and even detrimental elements; and finally the knowledge that, by collecting these elements of goodness and directing them towards Christ, the Church not only preserves them, but also 'purifies, elevates and perfects' them or, as the Council says elsewhere (*Ad Gentes* 11), 'illuminates' them: all the above stated principles served as central ideas in the early Christian *Chrêsis* [correct usage of elements of heathen culture], and they are all to be found in the above quoted text, implicitly or explicitly."⁴²

The high esteem of non-Christian religions in the Encyclical text, *allegedly supported by the Council and the Church Fathers, has in reality no foundation, neither in Holy Scripture, nor in the Church Fathers, nor in the entire body of the Council documents.*

Finally: Does the Pope really believe Mohammed's claim to teach and preserve intact the revelation first proclaimed

⁴² Cf. Christian Gnilka, as in Footnote 39, p. 146f. See also Gnilka's fundamental work: *Chrêsis. Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur* [*The Methods of the Church Fathers in Their Contact with Antique Cultures*] (Basel 1984).

in Mecca to Abraham?⁴³ It is entirely inappropriate to include this historical untenable assertion on the part of Mohammed, and thus to declare Abraham respectfully as the common progenitor of Jews, Christians and Moslems.

The real basis of the Encyclical's novel theological view of non-Christian religions is found in the various pre-conciliar versions of the thesis of "anonymous Christianity" and the Conciliar broadening of Church dogma, from which emerges the new "full and universal awareness of the Church." From this basis results the one-sided interpretation of the Council documents and the misinterpretation of the Church Fathers.

11.2 The new and fuller awareness of all Christians concerning the mystery of Christ.

The Encyclical locks into the statements of *Nostra Aetate* and moves on in the text (RH 11,3):

The opening made by the Second Vatican Council has established the Church and all Christians to reach a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ, "the mystery hidden for ages" (Col. 1:26) in God, to be revealed in time in the Man Jesus Christ, and to be revealed continually in every time. In Christ and through Christ God has revealed Himself fully to mankind and has definitively drawn close to it; at the same time, in Christ and through Christ man has acquired full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity, and of the meaning of his existence.

⁴³ Cf. Gustav Mensching, *Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte* (Heidelberg 1949), p. 221. – H. L. Gottschalk, *Der Islâm, seine Entstehung, Entwicklung und Lehre*. In: Hg. Franz König, *Christus und die Religionen der Erde [Christ and the Religions of the World]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1956), III, p. 14. – W. Montgomery Watt and Alford T. Welch, *Der Islâm*. In: *Die Religionen der Menschheit [The Humanist Religion]*, published by Christel Matthias Schröder (Stuttgart – Berlin – Cologne – Mainz 1980), Vol. 25,1, pp. 72-77; 118-130; 222ff.

The Encyclical text, which we will try to clarify with the help of the Latin original, makes the following statements:

– Because of the new outlook on non-Christian religions, which the Council introduced in *Nostra Aetate (Rebus sic a Concilio apertis*, and not simply “The opening made by the Second Vatican Council has established”), the Church and all Christians were able to reach a “more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ” (*potuerunt pleniorē assequi conscientiam mysterii Christi*).

Therefore the novel high esteem for non-Christian religions, as expressions of the one and only truth and as different ways of union with God, has bestowed on Christianity a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ. The acknowledgement of the work of the Holy Ghost in all religions led accordingly to a more broad-minded knowledge of Christ as the Universal Savior. This recent mind-broadening of Christianity in reference to the central dogma of Christian faith requires an explanation, which is then given immediately:

– The mystery of Christ is the mystery which was hidden in God from all eternity, which was to be revealed in time: that means in the person of Jesus Christ, and was to be revealed throughout all ages(!), therefore not only preached (*ut in tempore recluderetur: hoc est in Homine Iesu Christo, et ut continenter singulis aetatibus revelaretur*).

The revelation of the mystery of Christ is here defined as a gradual *process of unfolding* of that which is at first hidden in God, then made known through Christ and then continuously down the centuries. Thus it becomes understandable why the Church and all Christians up to Vatican II had to wait in order to receive a new outlook on non-Christian religions and thereby achieve a “more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ.” Revelation is then a *process of awareness*, and the more complete mystery of Christ includes all religions, all mankind! That is also explained in due course:

– In Christ and through Christ, God has fully manifested Himself to man and has definitively drawn close to him (*plene se ipsum Deus monstravit hominibus ad eosque modo stabili accessit*). At the same time, in and through Christ, man has acquired full awareness (*plenam conscientiam*) of his dignity and exaltation, thus full awareness of the sense of his existence, of the transcendental value of his own being as a person.

The process of revealing the more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ happens therefore in two ways: As *a posteriori* – historical revelation, in which God fully manifested Himself to man in and through Christ, and as *a priori* revelation, in which God has definitively drawn close to man in and through Christ, or has formally united Himself with each and every man. Through this “double revelation,” Christ, through the manifestation of the Father and the Father’s love, reveals man to himself by making him aware of his paramount dignity, of the meaning of his existence, and of the value of his transcendent nature as man.

The more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ, which was bestowed on Christianity through the Second Vatican Council, is the mystery of universal salvation.

11.3 The fuller awareness of all Christians concerning the mystery of Christ: foundation for the ecumenical unity and mission of Christianity.

The Church’s new, full and universal self-image as well as the new, more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ, which all Christians could achieve through the Second Vatican Council, these both form the premise, from which the Encyclical now infers the need for the union of all Christians (*RH* 11,1) on which follows their common mission (*RH* 11,5) for the unity of all mankind (*RH* 11,4):

All of us who are Christ’s followers must therefore [= a

mandate] meet and unite around Him [= Christ]. This unity in the various fields of the life, tradition, structures and discipline of the individual Christian Churches and ecclesial communities⁴⁴ (*consociatio – variis in partibus vitae*) cannot be brought about (*perfici*) without effective work aimed at getting to know each other and removing the obstacles blocking the way to perfect unity. However, we can and must immediately reach and display to the world our unity in proclaiming the mystery of Christ, in revealing the divine dimension and also the human dimension of the Redemption, and in struggling with unwearying perseverance for the dignity that each human being has reached and can continually reach (*atingere*) in Christ, namely the dignity of both the grace of divine adoption and the inner truth of humanity, a truth which – if in the common awareness of the modern world it has been given such fundamental importance – for us is still clearer in the light of the reality that is Jesus Christ.

The text enables us to outline the Pope's entire theological view of *Conciliar ecumenism*:

The "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ," which all Christians could achieve through the new outlook on religions and the dogmatic broadening of Vatican II, is also the common theological basis for the unity of all Christian denominations. Since all Christians possess "being in Christ" *a priori* in virtue of this more broad-minded mystery of Christ, Christian ecumenism has an "ontological" unity, and since this Christian ecumenism shares the common belief in Jesus Christ, *the Universal Savior*, it forms a *unity in the faith*. Of course this ecumenical faith includes the conviction of the (conscious or unconscious) "ontological" unity of all mankind in Christ.

From this *basic dogmatic premise* of papal ecumenism, the Encyclical infers the obligation for *Christ's followers*, i.e. for

⁴⁴ The Latin text runs: "*Haec vero consociatio – variis in partibus vitae, traditionis, structurarum ac disciplinarum apud singulas Ecclesias vel Communitates ecclesiales – perfici non potest sine assiduo opere, ...*"

all Christians, to meet and unite their efforts for the sake of Christ Himself (*circa illum ipsum congregiamur et coniungamur*). Since the ontological unity in Christ and the unity of belief in Christ the Universal Savior is assumed, the Pope is genuinely convinced that all Christian denominations form one Church, despite the numerous differences among them. The Encyclical says elsewhere that "each Christian in the community of the people of God builds up the Body of Christ" (RH 21.3). We will refer to this clearly defined unity of all Christians in brief as the *ecumenical Church*. That is precisely how the Protestant bishop Kruse described the Church at the ecumenical service with the Pope in Augsburg: Christ at the center is the sun; the Church or Church communities are the planets, which revolve around the sun according to their own paths; all Christian communities form the solar system (= the ecumenical Church).⁴⁵

This union of all Christian confessions despite the diversity of their traditions, structures and disciplines, this union in and through Christ is a real, even fundamental unity of all Christians, which however remains an *imperfect unity* by reason of that diversity. Thus *perfect unity* is the aim of papal ecumenism. The Encyclical indicates the way there: First of all the ecumenical Church itself must be practiced in everyday life. It must deepen and live its belief in the "more complete mystery of Christ," that means it must make all of its members aware of this mystery. The practice of the common awareness of the faith will serve to overcome all obstacles on the way to perfect unity, and to solve the problems arising from the different and opposed traditions, structures and disciplines.

It is the ecumenical Church's responsibility and obligation not only to live its already existing (imperfect) unity,

⁴⁵ May 4, 1987 in the Basilica St. Ulrich and Afra during the ecumenical service officiated by the Pope, Bishop Kruse, Hanselmann, Stimpfle, Metropolitan Augoustinos and Cardinal Höffner.

but also to attest (*testificari*) it to the world. The content of this ecumenical testimony is of course identical with the ecumenical Church's belief and vital principle. According to the Encyclical, the ecumenical testimony includes: The (more complete) mystery of Christ, the divine and human dimension of the Redemption, the dignity of the grace of divine adoption, a dignity which each person has attained in Christ. At the same time, this dignity represents the dignity of the inner truth of mankind (*humani generis*), which illuminates the *Christian* in that truth, Who is the Truth Himself: Jesus Christ.

In one sentence, the content of the ecumenical proclamation is: The more complete mystery of Christ or the axiom of universal salvation. We must lead an untiring fight for the inner truth and dignity of the person and of mankind.

Finally, with a few strokes, the Encyclical outlines *the office and obligations of the ecumenical Church* as follows (*RH* 11,5):

Jesus Christ is the stable principle and fixed center of the mission (*stabile principium est sempiternumque velut centrum istius officii ac muneris*) that God Himself has entrusted to man. We must all share in this mission and concentrate (*dirigere*) all our forces on it, since it is more necessary than ever for modern mankind. If this mission seems to encounter greater opposition nowadays than ever before, this shows that today it is more necessary than ever ... [We are very willing to] join in the great mission of revealing (*ostendendi*) Christ to the world, helping each person to find himself (*detegat*) in Christ, and helping the contemporary generations (*subveniendi temporis nostri hominibus*) of our brothers and sisters, the people, nations, states, mankind, developing countries and countries of opulence – in short, helping everyone to get to know “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8), since these riches are for every individual and are everybody's property (*quippe quae omni homini praesto sint omnisque hominis bonum efficiant*).

According to the text, there is a missionary order, which God Himself "has entrusted to man" and in which we all (= all Christians) "must share." Jesus Christ is the "stable principle and fixed center" of this mission.

Is this possible? Jesus Christ not the one who entrusted, but rather God Himself? But Christ is still the "fixed center" of the mission. — This mission was not entrusted to the Church of Christ, not even to the "ecumenical Church," but quite simply to "man." We all (= all Christians) "must share" in this mission entrusted to mankind. We are therefore dealing with an indirect participation of ecumenical Christianity in the mission entrusted to mankind. — The general ecumenical mission itself, in which we consciously unite, is clear. It runs: Reveal Christ to the world (= of course the more complete mystery of Christ); help each person to find himself in Christ (= the dignity of the partaking in God's life as His adopted children, the dignity of human nature as such); help the men of our time to recognize "the inscrutable riches of Christ," which are at each person's disposal!

The Pope's remarks yield the following picture:

The fixed center of mankind is the Universal Savior Jesus Christ, Who is already formally united with all mankind by the Incarnation. Thus all mankind is ontologically oriented towards Christ and is associated with Him in an organic, supernatural unity. Thus all mankind is involved in the mission entrusted by God to "man" purely and simply, by which he should discover himself in Christ. All of ecumenical Christianity must participate in this mission entrusted to mankind: Christians are aware of the more complete mystery of Christ and live by it. Thus the mission of Christianity is to proclaim this mystery and to make all mankind aware of its "anonymous Christianity."

The ecumenical mission is centered on consciousness. It is the practical application of the axiom of universal salva-

tion and the principle of "double revelation" to the ecumenical Church and its missionary duty in today's world.

This standpoint differs radically from the pre-conciliar understanding of *ecumenism* and the Church's *mission*:

The Pope's Conciliar ecumenism has an entirely new dogmatic foundation and therefore also an entirely different dogmatic character and meaning. If a basic, though imperfect unity among Christians already exists in the ecumenical Church, then membership in a particular church or Christian denomination is not required for Church unity. The visible unity of the Church, as it was understood and taught up to Vatican II by the Catholic Church, no longer exists. Moreover, the age-old doctrine of the Catholic Church, which demanded unity in the Catholic faith (*unitas fidei*) and in the communion of the Catholic Church (*unitas communionis*) as necessary for the visible unity of the Church, has been completely abandoned. Of course the ecumenism of John Paul II is directed towards the "perfect unity" of all Christian denominations, but based on his idea of the ecumenical Church, this goal is sought after in an entirely different way than was the case with the efforts towards unification led by the Catholic Church before the Council, namely as the return of the separated brethren to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is likewise evident that the mission, which according to the Encyclical "God Himself has entrusted to man," and which "we must all share," is essentially different from the missionary mandate given by Christ to His Church (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15ff).

12. The ecumenical Church's missionary activity and the right to religious liberty.*

After the Pope has presented the nature, content and

* Heading in the English translation="The Church's Mission and Human Freedom."

purpose of the ecumenical mission, he proceeds to formulate the practical principles of missionary activity. Upon the "missionary theory" follows the "missionary method."

The theme of Article 12 is, in the language of missionary evangelism, the relationship between the "missionary subject," i.e. the ecumenical Church, and the "missionary object," i.e. non-Christian religions, people and cultures (*RH* 12,1). On this point the problem of religious liberty plays a crucial role (*RH* 12,1-4). The pillars of the Pope's theological position are the Council documents *Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*. The theological horizon which overshadows the theme of the article is the main objective of the pontificate: The unity of all mankind according to the Council's definition: "The Church is, in Christ, the sacrament ... for the unity of all mankind" (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1).

12.1 The ecumenical Church's missionary outlook on the non-Christian world.

All disciples gathered around Christ in the ecumenical Church were already called upon to manifest their imperfect, but fundamental unity in Christ and the "more complete mystery of Christ," which unites them in the faith, and also to proclaim to the whole world particularly the "dignity of the grace of divine adoption" of all men, which at the same time represents "the dignity of the inner truth of humanity" (cf. *RH* 11,3).

The Encyclical now explains this *unity of mission* and formulates *the principles of the ecumenical Church's missionary outlook on the non-Christian world* (*RH* 12,1):

In this unity in mission, which is decided principally by Christ Himself, all Christians must find what already unites them, even before their full communion is achieved. This is apostolic and missionary unity, missionary and apostolic unity.

Thanks to this unity we can together come close to the

magnificent heritage of the human spirit that has been manifested in all religions, as the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1-2) says.

It also enables us to approach all cultures, all ideological concepts, all people of good will. We approach them with the esteem, respect and discernment that since the time of the apostles has marked the missionary attitude, the attitude of the missionary. Suffice it to mention St. Paul and, for instance, his address in the Areopagus at Athens (Acts 17:22-31).

The missionary attitude always begins with a feeling of deep esteem for "what is in man" (Jn. 2:25), for what man has himself worked (*excogitavit*) out in the depths of his spirit concerning the most profound and important problems. It is a question of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which "blows where it wills" (Jn. 3:8). The mission is never destruction, but instead is a taking up and fresh building, even if in practice there has not always been full correspondence with this high ideal. And we know well that the conversion that is begun by the mission is a work of grace, in which man must fully find himself again.

With a few strokes the Encyclical gives us an overview of the ecumenical Church's missionary outlook. No doubt this touches a rather delicate subject in the "modern world."

The "missionary subject" is the ecumenical Church in the sense defined above (see 11.3). The "apostolic and missionary unity" consists in proclaiming to mankind the "more complete mystery of Christ" and hence in proclaiming man's true dignity as man. The *ecumenical Church* is a *missionary and apostolic Church*. The familiar adjectives "apostolic and missionary" have undergone a complete change in meaning.

Whereas the preceding articles described the ecumenical mission as one "which God Himself has entrusted to man" (*RH* 11,5), now we are told that the mission was "decided principally by Christ Himself." That is no contradiction,

no implication of a double mission. The sentence should rather be understood in the context of the Encyclical's missionary outlook, according to which "Jesus Christ is the stable principle and fixed center of the mission that God Himself has entrusted to man" (cf. *RH* 11,5). That means: It is "principally ... Christ himself" (= the Universal Savior), Who "decides" on the *content and form* of the mission, which is to say: Jesus Christ is the model and norm.

Thanks to the solidarity and unity of mission, the former missionary pluralism of opposing Christian denominations is replaced by the friendly and peace-making mission of the ecumenical Church. The Church begins by making religious peace within, among the evangelizing denominations themselves, then she continues without, in a united missionary effort, by striving for religious peace in the non-Christian world. This she does in accordance with "the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*" (uti docet Concilii Vaticani II Declaratio *Nostra Aetate*).

The topic of the declaration *Nostra Aetate* is "the Church's relations with non-Christian religions."⁴⁶ The present topic of the Encyclical is "the *ecumenical Church's* relations with non-Christian religions." The principles established by *Nostra Aetate* for the Church's relations hold equally for the ecumenical Church.

Since the Pope has already explained the principles of the declaration *Nostra Aetate* more extensively in the preceding (cf. *RH* 11,2), he can afford to state them here more succinctly. The ecumenical Church's relations with the "missionary object" are of course determined by how she *evaluates* them (i.e. non-Christian religions). On the subject of that "missionary object," the Encyclical can only speak with the utmost esteem (cf. *RH* 11,2):

⁴⁶ The Latin title runs: "*Declaratio de Ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non-christianas.*" The issue is quite literally the Church's "attitude" towards non-Christian religions.

All religions are a "magnificent heritage of the human spirit." That is no *theological*, but rather a purely *human assessment*. All other forms of human culture, all world views and all men of good will are evaluated on that very basis (*cunctas humani cultus formas; omnes ideologicas opiniones; singulos homines bonae voluntatis*).

The evaluation of the "missionary object" follows from the high esteem for the "missionary subject," the ecumenical Church (RH 11,2).

Based on this attitude (with the spirit of "discernment"), the Pope claims that the Church's missionary outlook was realized in an exemplary fashion since apostolic times. He says: "We approach [the religions, cultures, world views and persons] with the esteem, respect and discernment that since the time of the apostles has marked the *missionary* attitude, the attitude of the *missionary*." As proof it suffices to quote the example of St. Paul's discourse at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31).

What holds in the general holds also for the individual case: "The missionary attitude always begins with a feeling of deep esteem for 'what is in man' (Jn. 2:25), ... [and especially for] everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which 'blows where it wills' (Jn. 3:8)."

Therefore mission is never destruction, but rather taking up the existing values and building on them afresh. "Conversion" is also mentioned at the conclusion. It must originate from the mission. Conversion is the effect of grace. In and through it, "man must fully find himself again (*homo se ipsum plene reperiat oportet*).

The Pope's missionary ecumenism is a totally new *idea*, which as such replaces the Catholic Church's pre-conciliar position. Some remarks on this point are in order:

It is obvious that the "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" (which includes unity of being, of belief and of mission in the ecumenical Church) has no basis in the New Testament nor in the Tradition of the Catholic

Church. The mission of an ecumenical Church, which is founded on the axiom of universal salvation as its content and purpose, is plainly *an absolute novelty in the history of the Church*.

It is obvious that the mission of the ecumenical Church, "which God Himself has entrusted to man," in which all Christians "must participate" (cf. *RH* 11,5), and "which is decided principally by Christ Himself," has very little to do with the missionary mandate which Christ gave to His Church (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15f). In the Encyclical text on the topic of mission, there is no mention of the requirement to believe and to be baptized! The reason for that omission is of course the axiom of universal salvation.

The concept of an "ecumenical Church," which is gathered around Christ in a fuzzy pluralism of "Churches and Church communities" who find in Christ their fundamental, though imperfect unity, solemnly pleads ignorance of the dogma of the visibility of Christ's Church, which is a historical reality in virtue of the unity of the Catholic faith (*unitas fidei*) and in the unity of the communion of the Catholic Church (*unitas communitatis*, i.e. hierarchical and liturgical unity). For the ecumenical Church and her "apostolic and missionary unity," the "four marks" of the true Church of Christ are unimportant. By the very concept of the ecumenical Church, the Encyclical renounces *per se* any former claims of the Catholic Church to be the one true Church instituted by Christ.

The declaration *Nostra Aetate* is not the Council's only statement on the relationship of the Church towards non-Christian religions. Nevertheless, according to the Encyclical, it is the only admitted standard for judging the relations of the ecumenical Church towards non-Christian religions, people and cultures. Suprisingly enough, the Encyclical does not quote the Council's decree on missions *Ad Gentes* when treating the question of missions.

The attitude demanded by the ecumenical Church to-

wards non-Christian religions, people and cultures can be summed up in one word: Respect. But the very nature of mission involves not only the question of a purely human, cultural, anthropological or missionary evangelical view and appraisal, but rather first and foremost the question of eternal salvation, and hence mission must be judged from the point of view of the New Testament and of Catholic dogma.

Even the most nonpartisan student, who considers the history of religion and civilization solely from the point of view of science and who ventures an evaluation, would not dare make such brazen and sweeping statements as the Encyclical does when it speaks of the "magnificent heritage of the human spirit" which merit the greatest esteem, but the objective student would also acknowledge the darker aspects of these religions, which often reach significant proportions. Or should only Christianity and Christian culture be laid bare for criticism?

The Encyclical, however, also considers the theological point of view. In support of its high esteem for all religions, cultures and world views, albeit with "discernment," it appeals to Holy Scripture and to the Church's missionary tradition since apostolic times. The Encyclical merely refers to the Apostle St. Paul. Such a pretention as invoking the Apostle of the Gentiles and the Church's entire missionary history in support of its own thesis is fully unwarranted. What is more, the reference to St. Paul's discourse at the Areopagus lends no support to the high esteem, which the ecumenical Church demands of its missionaries in their dealings with non-Christian religions and cultures. There is not even a trace of the spirit of "discernment" in the Encyclical. One should at least give due consideration to the context of the passage from the Acts of the Apostles, which is given as a paradigm (i.e. model and exemplar). Did St. Paul really "approach" the heathen religions "with respect?" We hear in the Acts of the Apostles (17:16):

Now whilst Paul waited for them [his companions] at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him, seeing the city was wholly given to idolatry.

On that passage, a Biblical commentary says the following:⁴⁷

Paul's indignation flares up on account of that very element which was the Athenians' greatest claim to glory and the touchstone of their piety, namely that nowhere else in the world could one see as many different representations of the divinity as in their city. But this piety, in Paul's eyes, was total confusion; his anger is the biblical anger in the face of heathenism, the same anger as expressed by the prophets, reflecting the anger of God (cf. Rom. 1:18ff).

St. Paul's judgment on the heathen religions in his Epistle to the Romans (cf. 1:18ff) is simply devastating. One might object that the judgment of Scripture and Tradition is erroneous or relative to the mentality of its time, but in that case one cannot appeal to it in support of the novel high esteem for all religions. Holy Scripture would not have us bow down before every idol that comes our way.

It is the Church's traditional doctrine that God desires all men to be saved, that He gives each person a chance to save his soul, that His grace precedes and aids the work of missions and conversions (*gratia praeveniens*). Therefore the pre-conciliar Catholic Church's missionary work also posed the question of what the Holy Ghost could have already worked in the hearts of person and their cultures, to prepare them for the reception of the Faith. But this outlook was not founded, as in the Encyclical, on the thesis of universal salvation and the presence of the Holy Ghost in

⁴⁷ Gustav Stählin, *Die Apostelgeschichte. Das Neue Testament Deutsch* [*Acts of the Apostles. The German New Testament*] (Göttingen 1966), V, p. 228.

the hearts of all men, but on the central dogma of Christianity concerning man's absolute need for Redemption from original sin, in virtue of the Catholic Church's faith by which she judges all things. Once again, there is no trace of this spirit of "discernment" in the Encyclical. Nor is there any mention of the depths of misery and sin of mankind without redemption (cf. Rom. 3:9-18).

The bald statement: "Mission is never destruction, but rather taking up the existing values and building on them afresh," could be interpreted according to the traditional concept of mission. But in the Encyclical it can only be understood in the sense of universal salvation, which also forms the wide-scale basis for the post-conciliar missionary activity. According to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Nations, Cardinal Tomko, the consequences for the missions have been "devastating."⁴⁸ Moreover, the traditional view is still faithfully set forth in the decree *Ad Gentes* and confirmed by the Council for our times (see above AG 9,2). But the decree on missions is completely ignored in the Encyclical.

The Pope concludes his remarks on the mission of the ecumenical Church with the mention of "conversion." Of course it was a bit hard to leave that word out altogether.

The biblical key word "conversion" marks the goal of Christian missions from the beginning. In the New Testament, conversion means: Doing penance, changing one's evil ways, turning away from sin, giving oneself over to the God of biblical revelation.⁴⁹ Conversion is a prerequisite for belief in the gospel. St. Mark the Evangelist sums up the whole Gospel in one sentence (1,15): "The kingdom of God is at hand: Repent and believe the Gospel!" St. Paul

⁴⁸ Cardinal Tomko in the essay: "The rising influence of sects and the preaching of Christ as the one and only Savior" (*OR*, dt. Apr. 26, 1991).

⁴⁹ Cf. Johannes Behm and Ernst Würthwein, *Art. metanóō*, *ThWzNT* (Kittel), IV, pp. 972-1004.

praises the Thessalonians because they "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God" (I Thess. 1:9).

For St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, conversion means being liberated from idols through Christ crucified, and turning with one's whole heart to God and the Father of Jesus Christ. In the Encyclical, "conversion" is fully compatible with respect for the gods of non-Christian religions; conversion means simply turning towards man: so that man can "fully find himself again." In the Bible, the prophets' call to penance was: "shubu," return to God! The Pope's call to penance is: Man, discover your greatness! In Holy Scripture, conversion is God-centered; in the Encyclical, it is man-centered: that is the consequence of the man-centered character of "double revelation," of the Pope's principles of theological knowledge.

12.2 The ecumenical Church's missionary mandate and the right to religious liberty.

In our day and age, a mission for the purpose of conversion, be it in the sense of Tradition or of the Encyclical, must face the problem of religious liberty which is generally acknowledged as a human right.

The rapid expansion of Christianity in the first centuries came about by acts of conversion, faith, baptism, reception into the Church. Conversion to Christianity (not self-discovery) was often associated with persecution and martyrdom. The same holds today above all in the more stringent Islamic countries. The Church, which up until Constantine was not a religion officially approved in the Roman empire, also demanded for herself the right to the free exercise of her religion. Later there developed an intricate and involved fusion of the state, politics, the Church and missions which led to well-known conflicts in the course of history. Even the history of Christian missions traversed periods of the unholy alliance of the sword and the Cross, of political conquest, forced conversions, while at the same

time more noble heroes fought for the rights of the oppressed and for the freedom of the act of conversion. Therefore, after discussing the general principles of the ecumenical Church's mission, the Encyclical comes to the point by facing the problem: Conversion and religious liberty. The paragraph closed with the definition of "conversion": "Man must fully find himself again" (*RH* 12,1). Later on in the text, we read (*RH* 12,2):

For this reason the Church in our time attaches great importance (*pondus maximum*) to all that is stated by the Second Vatican Council in its *Declaration on Religious Liberty* ... We perceive immediately that the truth revealed to us by God imposes on us an obligation. We have, in particular, a great sense of responsibility for this truth. By Christ's institution the Church is its guardian and teacher, having been endowed with a unique assistance of the Holy Spirit in order to guard and teach it in its most exact integrity (cf. Jn. 14:26). In fulfilling this mission, we look towards Christ Himself, the first evangelizer (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 6), and also towards His apostles, martyrs and confessors.

One could hardly be more explicit about the obligation to proclaim revealed truth. It is likewise strongly emphasized that missionary relations with the non-Christian world should be guided by revealed truth without any reductions or omissions. But for the Encyclical, the "integrity" or fullness of revealed truth is the "fuller awareness of the mystery of Christ," which ecumenical Christianity has been enabled to reach thanks to the opening of Vatican II (cf. *RH* 11,3).

In the fulfillment of her mission, the ecumenical Church looks towards Christ. Christ Himself is the first one to preach the Gospel; Christ Himself, together with the apostles, martyrs and confessors, is *the* exemplar and model for the fulfillment of the ecumenical Church's mission. But the Christ of universal salvation in the Encyclical is not the

Christ of the Gospel!

One would expect the Encyclical to present the problem in question: conversion and religious liberty, in light of the New Testament. But that does not happen. Rather the Pope appeals to the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* to prove his point. For the moment, we will not follow his line of reasoning, but will retain the undisputed fact that Christ Himself and the apostles are the exemplar and model for the missionary evangelization, for our analysis of the problem: conversion and religious liberty, in the context of the New Testament.

The Gospel is the only basis on which we can hold a theological discussion on conversion and religious liberty. From beginning to end, the Gospel is a call to conversion (cf. Mk. 1:15). Thus conversion plays a crucial role in the New Testament. But the Gospel is also a continual "dialogue" between Jesus Christ and the various representatives and groups of His people. The way in which Jesus and His apostles first preached the Gospel, as outlined in the New Testament, also sets the norm for the Church's later missionary activity until the end of time. Thus the question is: How is the relationship between conversion and religious liberty presented in the context of the Bible?

In the "dialogue" of Jesus and the apostles with their "dialogue partners," man is directly confronted with the person of his God, Who has become man, and Who calls upon man to convert. At the same time, all the consequences of his decision, whether for or against, are placed before his eyes. The faith required in the Gospel is and remains a free, personal act of each man. He can refuse it. It is up to each man whether he converts or not. The preaching of Jesus and the apostles is addressed to man's freedom to choose. It is thus primarily a question of man's free will, which is required for any human act of the moral or religious order. Hence, in his attitude towards God and Christ, man has the possibility to accept or refuse the Gos-

pel, even God Himself and his commandments. Hence, for the free act of conversion, this freedom is essential, which the Gospel leaves intact. But does man have also the *moral right* to refuse God's Will, especially since he has the obligation to follow God's commandments? The first three commandments are also included in the Decalogue. As man has the freedom, but not the right, to steal, to murder, to lie or to commit adultery, so also he has the freedom, but not the right, to do away with the commandments which concern his duties to God. If he had such a right, there would be no such thing as judgment day. Such a right is not "part" of divine revelation. Thus it cannot be founded on that revelation.

The New Testament's perspective should serve as the basis for the Encyclical's presentation. In presenting the way Christ and the apostles first proclaimed the truth, the Pope does not appeal to Holy Scripture, but rather to the Council's *Declaration on Religious Liberty*. He thus continues as follows (RH 12,2):

The *Declaration on Religious Liberty* shows us convincingly that, when Christ and, after Him, His apostles proclaimed the truth that comes not from men but from God, ... a deep esteem for man, for his intellect, his will, his conscience and his freedom. Thus the human person's dignity itself becomes part of the content of that proclamation, being included not necessarily in words but by an attitude towards it. This attitude seems to fit the special needs of our times. Since man's true freedom is not found in everything that the various systems and individuals see and propagate as freedom, the Church, because of her divine mission, becomes all the more guardian of this freedom, which is the condition and basis for the human person's true dignity.

Unquestionably, the way in which Christ and the apostles proclaimed the Gospel is "part of the content of that proclamation" – and also the norm of the Church's mis-

sionary activity for all times. Thus the founding of the Congregation for Missions (1622) was directed towards the evangelization of the heathens in the spirit of the apostles and the early Church.⁵⁰ The continued reform of the Church's missions from Benedict XV down to John XXIII was nothing fundamentally novel, but it was the realization of the original objectives of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith: the renewal of the Church's missions in the spirit of the apostles and the early Church.

But did the Council's *Declaration on Religious Liberty* really "show us convincingly" the way in which Christ and the apostles preached? The Encyclical offers us the bleak phrase: The preaching of Christ and the apostles shows "a deep esteem for man, for his intellect, his will, his conscience and his freedom." Should we simply swallow it? This formula, which neglects altogether the religious aspect of Holy Scripture, remains on the level of the purely human, and hence follows in the footsteps of the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which also mentions the esteem and respect for all religions, cultures, and world views, which allegedly has marked the Church's missionary attitude since the time of the apostles (cf. *RH* 12,1). The Encyclical stoops from the Gospel down to a modern and purely human perspective, which becomes clear at the latest with the following statement: "This attitude (= of Christ and the apostles) seems to fit the special needs of our times."

In this way, thus in accordance with the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* and its description of the attitude of Christ and the apostles, by which they always showed the utmost respect for the intellect, will, conscience and freedom of those persons to whom they preached the Gospel, "the human person's dignity itself becomes part of the con-

⁵⁰ Johannes Dörmann, *Die universale Mission der Kirche vor der Herausforderung der einheimischen Kulturen. Das Problem der Indigenisation*. In: *Weltmission in der Weltkrise* (St. Augustin 1979), p. 13f.

tent of that proclamation." Why this detour through the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, when dealing with the attitude of Christ and His esteem for man and his freedom? Man himself, the things he loves and the way he lives, is surely a key element in the Gospel, indeed in the entire biblical perspective. But the Gospel is mainly concerned with man's relations to God His Lord and Savior, man's sinfulness and need of redemption, man's faith or rejection of the faith, his salvation or damnation, therefore his dignity as a child of God, which he can and should attain through participation in the glory (*doxa*) of God the Son through faith. In this biblical context, the "attitude" of Christ and the apostles, as well as their "deep esteem" for man, is directed towards the proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, one cannot separate these elements from their biblical context. But that is just what happens in the Encyclical when it appeals to *Dignitatis Humanae*: The attitude of Christ and the apostles is lifted from the biblical context, and thereby isolated, re-interpreted and christened as an element of the Gospel. Thus the modern notion of religious liberty is given definitive status as an element of the Gospel, and the Church is declared the divinely commissioned "guardian of this freedom."

If one bears in mind that, in the Encyclical, the dignity of the human person already includes the grace of divine adoption, which in turn constitutes the very nature of man (cf. *RH* 11,4), then through the phrase maintaining that, in virtue of the attitude of Christ and the apostles, "the human person's dignity itself becomes part of the content of that proclamation," the thesis of universal salvation has surreptitiously been introduced as "part of the content" of the Gospel.

Finally a philosophical question: Is freedom really "the condition and basis (*condicio ac fundamentum*) for the human person's true dignity?" Is not the ontological basis of freedom rather the spiritual nature of man and the dignity

ensuing therefrom? When Christ was in chains and deprived of His freedom, did He thereby lose His dignity?

According to the Encyclical, Jesus Christ is not only the one Who through His attitude proclaims human freedom, the condition and basis for the human person's true dignity, as an element of the Gospel, but also the one Who teaches and imparts true freedom to man. Thus the text of the Encyclical continues (*RH* 12,3):

Jesus Christ meets the man of every age, including our own, with the same words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn. 8:32). These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world. Today also, even after 2,000 years, we see Christ as the one who brings man freedom based on truth, frees man from what curtails, diminishes and as it were breaks off this freedom at its root, in man's soul, his heart and his conscience.

What a stupendous confirmation of this has been given ... by those who, thanks to Christ and in Christ, have reached true freedom and have manifested it even in situations of external constraint!

In his presentation, the Pope argues from Jn. 8:32. The true meaning of the passage is seen by the context, which runs as follows (Jn. 8:31f):

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him: If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free.

Jesus therefore turns especially to the believing Jews. To these He explains the true nature of being a disciple: namely the acceptance and faithful observance of His word. In those true disciples who believe in Christ and

follow His word, it is this living faith which brings forth the knowledge of the truth. In St. John, the word truth assumes not a philosophical, but rather a religious meaning. It means always the reality of the divine, made known to man through divine revelation. Jesus claims not only to communicate divine truth, but also to be that very truth in person (Jn. 12:45;14:6,9f). *The knowledge of the truth is therefore the knowledge of Jesus Christ.* A second fruit of living faith promised by Christ is Redemption through the truth, which He Himself is. *Freedom* is not merely a natural, ethical endowment, but a supernatural, religious gift, which the Evangelist then declares as *Redemption from the slavery of sin.*⁵¹

The comparison of the biblical text with the above quoted Encyclical text clearly reveals the following differences:

The text in Jn. 8:32 is meant to be neither a "fundamental requirement," nor a "warning." It is rather *Jesus' own promise* to the Jews, "who believed in Him." *This promise is based on the condition of belief in Christ.* To be a true disciple of Christ means not only the readiness to believe, but also the actual acceptance of Christ's word and the faithful observance of it in everyday life. That means therefore exactly what Jesus said to His disciples in Jn. 15:14: "You are my friends if you do the things that I command you."

None of this is mentioned in the Encyclical. The Pope is surely not preaching unbridled liberty. But the Encyclical shifts the emphasis from fidelity in Christ's service to the "condition for authentic freedom" of each person. Faith in Christ is by no means required for this freedom, but "an honest relationship with regard to the truth" is enough, provided one avoids any false freedom, "that fails to enter

⁵¹ For the interpretation of Jn. 8:32, see Eduard Schick, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes [The Gospel According to John]* (Würzburg 1956, Echter-Bibel), pp. 86ff.

into the whole truth about man." Anyone can accept and satisfy this condition. It has nothing to do with the Joannine condition for being a disciple of Christ, which is based on the faith. The word faith is not even mentioned.

In the Encyclical text, what is meant by freedom, "authentic freedom," which for St. John is freedom from the slavery of sin? Answer: It is marked by "the whole truth about man" and is therefore already in man *a priori*. For, as the Encyclical states, Christ is the one Who "frees man from what curtails, diminishes and as it were breaks off this freedom at its root, in man's soul, his heart and his conscience." Of course that means the man's hidden dignity which he already possesses *a priori* thanks to universal salvation.

The scriptural passage Jn. 8:32 is therefore lifted from its context, sanitized and re-interpreted in a merely human perspective. In the Encyclical, the very meaning of Christ's words is altered in virtue of the principle of man-centered "double revelation."

The Pope's line of reasoning can be traced as follows: The conversion sought after by ecumenical missionary work is essentially *man's self-discovery*, which leads to man's full knowledge of the truth about himself, his true dignity and authentic freedom. It is Christ who reveals to man the full truth about human nature: "Christ reveals man to himself." He also makes man aware of his "authentic freedom," which is the "fundamental requirement" for man's true being as man. That is how Christ frees man from everything that stifles freedom in the human soul, and breaks off freedom at its roots (*ipsis in eius radicibus*). Consequently the Encyclical has bridged the gap between conversion and universal salvation, and thus laid the theological foundation for the requirement of religious liberty as a right of all men. All this is eloquently confirmed by those who have attained this freedom.

Finally the Encyclical appeals to Christ as witness and

guarantor of its interpretation of Jn. 8:32 (*RH* 12,4):

When Jesus Christ Himself appeared as a prisoner before Pilate's tribunal and was interrogated by him about the accusation made against Him ... , did He not answer: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn. 18:37)? It was as if with these words spoken before the judge at the decisive moment He was once more confirming what He had said earlier: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Later on it becomes clear that the Evangelist's idea of truth differs considerably from the Encyclical's idea, which is centered on man (*RH* 12,4):

In the course of so many centuries, of so many generations, from the time of the apostles on, is it not often Jesus Christ Himself that has made an appearance at the side of people judged for the sake of the truth? And has He not gone to death with people condemned for the sake of the truth? Does He ever cease to be the continuous spokesman and advocate for the person who lives "in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23)? Just as He does not cease to be it before the Father, He is it also with regard to the history of man. And in her turn the Church, in spite of all the weaknesses that are part of her human history, does not cease to follow Him who said: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23-24).

These pressing words would be rather convincing, if understood from the biblical standpoint of Jn. 8:32 and the whole of St. John's Gospel, and not from the theological principles of the Encyclical. In the Encyclical, Christ is said to be the advocate "for the person who lives in spirit and in truth." Of course Christ is always present "with regard to the history of man," but He has promised this abiding

presence only to His Church: "Behold I am with you always even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Article 12 of the Encyclical closes with the scriptural passage Jn. 4:23-24. The article comes to a triumphal conclusion with this passage mentioning the true adorers "in spirit and in truth." It joyfully announces the first stages of a "new, universal religion based on freedom in the Holy Spirit, who is given to all men, and who reveals to all men the full truth of their greatness. For this hour has now arrived! Assisi is the beginning of this new age!"⁵²

The prayer meeting of all religions is not only the main objective of the pontificate, which the Pope proclaims in his inaugural Encyclical (*RH* 6,3), but also the public manifestation of the core of his Redemption doctrine.

12.3 Digression: The mission of the ecumenical Church and natural right to religious liberty.

The new outlook on the ecumenical Church's missionary relations to non-Christian religions, people and cultures (cf. *RH* 11,2;12,1) leads the Pope to raise the problem of religious liberty and to consider it in the perspective of the Conciliar declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (cf. *RH* 12,2). The question at hand is not the *theological basis* for the right to religious liberty in the context of the Encyclical's Redemption doctrine, therefore the Pope is not concerned with the realization of this right in the domain of state affairs. He goes into that point later in more detail (cf. *RH* 17).

The *traditional doctrine* founded the right to religious liberty on the nature of the one true revealed religion: Since God has revealed Himself and has accomplished the work of the Redemption for the salvation of the world through

⁵² Johannes Dörmann, "Assisi: Beginning of a New Age," (Abensberg 1988), *Respondeo* 8, pp. 126-182.

His Son, it followed that only the religion which God founded had the right to free and public exercise of its worship. The grave issues involved in divine revelation therefore resulted in dogmatic intolerance, which however was always tempered by tolerance in the practical order.⁵³ The Catholic Church always taught that conversion to the true religion could not be obtained by force, but had to be a free decision, no matter if the biblical expression "compel them to come in" (Lk. 14:23) gave rise to misinterpretations in ages gone by. In the Gospel itself, nobody is ever forced to convert or to believe. But this does not mean that man has a right to religious liberty before God (*ius ad libertatem religiosam*). The basic tenet held sway: The right to freedom is founded on the rights of objective truth. Traditional teaching upheld the primacy of the truth over freedom, as well as the principle that error could have no rights against the truth.

The declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* is not an insignificant, but rather a substantial deviation from the traditional teaching.⁵⁴ The Council document acknowledges the public right of each person to religious liberty, which it defines as an inalienable right of the human person. It touches the private and public exercise of religion according to the demands of one's conscience. This right to freedom is not founded on any determined subjective dispositions of the person, for instance on his belief in the true faith, but rather on his objective being and nature. Thus the critical step is made from the "rights of the truth" to the "rights of the person." The declaration clearly states that the right to religious liberty exists regardless of the objective truth of the individual's religious conviction and irrespective of his personal effort to attain this truth. The right remains even

⁵³ Cf. Part I, pp. 1ff and Footnote 2.

⁵⁴ Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, "Der Abschied vom Gottesstaat," Article (*Deutsche Tagespost*, Apr. 18, 1987), pp. 21ff. — The contrary position is there defended by Arthur F. Utz (pp. 23ff).

for him who does not fulfill his duty to search for the truth and to adhere to it. The Council's declaration has thereby acknowledged the modern, liberal principle of freedom of thought – and that in the name of the Gospel!

The *Encyclical* firmly adheres to the Council's declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* without any misgivings (cf. *RH* 12). However, in the context of the *Encyclical*, the Pope's doctrine has a structure and theological foundation all its own. John Paul II founds the right to religious liberty on the only true revealed religion, as well as on the dignity of the human person. *The "rights of the truth" are at the same time the "rights of the person."*

In the *Encyclical*, the problem of religious liberty is raised in light of the ecumenical Church's missionary outlook on non-Christian religions, people and cultures (cf. *RH* 12). The theological evaluation of the ecumenical Church's relationship to other religions reflects the standpoint of the declaration *Nostra Aetate*. Accordingly, the missionary outlook is marked by a high esteem for other religions, in which the Holy Ghost also operates (cf. also *RH* 6,3). In the context of missions, "conversion" is an important factor. In the *Encyclical*, conversion, towards which the first step is made by missionary work, is defined as man's complete self-discovery. Thus it is clear that this whole conception is based on the Pope's idea of revelation, which therefore is also the basis for the right to religious liberty.

Nevertheless for the theological basis of the right to religious liberty, the *Encyclical* also appeals to the Council's declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (cf. *RH* 12,2). On that subject, it emphasizes three points: Firstly, the right to religious liberty is a truth which is indirectly revealed. For on account of the missionary outlook of Christ and the apostles in the proclamation of the Gospel, which shows "a deep esteem for man, for his intellect, his will, his conscience and his freedom," the dignity of the human person

"becomes part of the content of that proclamation." On which follows, secondly, that freedom is "the condition and basis for the human person's true dignity" (*condicio ac fundamentum*), and thus also an inalienable element of the dignity of the human person. Therefore the right of each person to religious liberty (*ius ad libertatem religiosam*) is an inalienable right of the human person, a right which is also confirmed by revealed truth. Thirdly, in virtue of her divine mission, the Church is the teacher and guardian of this freedom.

The Pope's theology of religious liberty, presented here in light of *Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*, is based on a totally self-contained conception of revelation, from which the right of religious liberty can be rigorously proven:

For John Paul II, revelation consists in the fact that the Son of God has formally united Himself with each man through His Incarnation.⁵⁵ Thus each man, from the beginning of his existence, possesses "being in Christ" which belongs to his very nature as man (cf. *RH* 13,3).⁵⁶ "Being in Christ," as the core of human nature, is equivalent to the dignity of "the grace of divine adoption," as well as the dignity of "the inner truth of humanity" (cf. *RH* 11,3). This revelation *a priori* involves the subjective universality of revelation as well as that of salvation.

If the right to religious liberty is based on universal revelation and salvation *a priori*, so also the right to religious liberty is per se a universal human right, rooted in the nature and dignity of each person as such. One can then also say: The right to religious liberty is founded on both the one true revelation (*a priori*) and the dignity of the human person. Or: The "rights of the truth" are at the same time the "rights of the person" (see above). The indisputably free act of conversion is merely that of self-discov-

⁵⁵ Cf. Part I, pp. 78ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

ery.

From the idea of revelation *a priori* follows the hidden presence and operation of Christ and the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. Therefore all other religions must have legitimate standing as divine revelation.

The (historical) revelation *a posteriori* in and through Christ reveals to man his true being, the dignity of the inner truth of his being as man, and hence also his right to religious liberty which flows from that dignity. The historical revelation *a posteriori* is therefore not only the Christian interpretation of the revelation *a priori*, but also of the universal human right to religious liberty. Thus, in the Encyclical, Christ appears as the bearer, guarantor and interpreter of this human right. In the Encyclical, religious liberty, in virtue of the attitude of Christ and the apostles, becomes a truth revealed *a posteriori* and the Church, "because of her divine mission," becomes the teacher and guardian of this truth (cf. *RH* 12,2-3). Thus religious liberty belongs to the substance of "double revelation" and the ecumenical Church's "divine mission."

We can conclude: Thanks to the principle of universal salvation, all persons and religions have a fundamental right to religious liberty.

On this universal basis, we are authorized in promoting interreligious dialogue among equals, in the spirit of dogmatic tolerance and mutual respect; a person's self-discovery can pass for his conversion, which is begun by the mission of the ecumenical Church (cf. *RH* 12,1). The paradigm is Assisi!

CHAPTER III

REDEEMED MAN AND HIS SITUATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

Chapter 3 goes into the Encyclical theme and main points for the third time: Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man, and the uniqueness of our era.

The *Redemptor Hominis* is indeed the Savior of each man, since the Son of God has formally united Himself with each man through His Incarnation: "This man is the way of the Church" (*RH* 13-14). Then the Pope confronts this man with the circumstances and demands of our era (*RH* 15-17).

13. Christ united Himself with each man.

The Pope speaks of the many ways in which the Conciliar Church must move forward in our era, one of which is the way which has stood the test of centuries and is the basis for all the others (*RH* 13,1):

When we penetrate by means of the continually and rapidly increasing experience of the human family into the mystery of Jesus Christ, we understand with greater clarity that there is at the basis of all these ways that the Church of our time must follow, in accordance with the wisdom of Pope Paul VI (*Ecclesiam Suam*), one single way (*quasi fundamentum*): it is the way that has stood the test of centuries and it is also the way of the future.

Accordingly it is through the "rapidly increasing experience of the human family"—and not through divine revelation—that we penetrate more profoundly into the mystery

of Christ and understand with greater clarity the one single way of the Church which has stood the test of centuries. This way is then further specified (*RH* 13,1):

Christ the Lord indicated this way especially, when, as the Council teaches, "by His Incarnation, He the Son of God, in a certain way united Himself with each man" (*Gaudium et Spes* 22). The Church therefore sees its fundamental task in enabling that union to be brought about and renewed continually. The Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of this life, with the power of the truth about man and the world that is contained in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption and with the power of the love that is radiated by that truth.

The way that has stood the test of centuries, and which Christ Himself indicated, is accordingly that unity (*unitas*) which comes about in virtue of the formal union of the Son of God with each man through the Incarnation. *The axiom of universal salvation is therefore the foundation of all the Conciliar Church's activities.*

The wording of the above quoted text confirms this interpretation: The Encyclical does not say that the fundamental task of the Church is "to do all in its power to bring about" the (formal) union of the Son of God with all men through conversion, faith and baptism, but rather "to enable that union to be brought about and renewed continually." This unity is therefore assumed *a priori*. The Church sees her fundamental task as one of bringing about and renewing this unity: "The Church wishes to serve this single end!"

The means referred to in the text, by which the Church works towards this end, are all found in the area of consciousness and in light of revelation *a posteriori*, in which Christ "reveals man to himself" and makes him aware of "the power of the truth about man," and of course "by

revealing the Father and His love.”

The way of the Conciliar Church spoken of in the Encyclical is by no means the way that has stood the test of centuries, which Christ Himself has indicated to His Church. If the latter were the case, then the text would have to read: Guided by *revelation*, the Church constantly penetrates deeper into the mystery of Christ. All her ways are founded on only one way, which the Son of God indicated to His Church by the Incarnation. And this way is Jesus Christ Himself. *That* is the Church's way which has stood the test of centuries, which is also the “one single way” of Christianity. The way which the Encyclical declares as having stood the test of centuries is in reality a startling innovation!

If *the unity of the Son of God with each man* (= the axiom of universal salvation) is the way of the Church and foundation for all other ways, or more clearly expressed, if that unity is “at the basis” of all the Church's activities, what remains of Our Lord's words: “I am the way” (Jn. 14:6)? The Encyclical is quick to address this inescapable question (RH 13,2):

Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He Himself is our way “to the Father's house” (cf. Jn. 14:1ff) and is the way to each man. On this way (*in hac via*) leading from Christ to man, on this way on which Christ unites Himself with each man, nobody can halt the Church.

Based on the foregoing, there are two fundamental ways of the Church: On the one hand, the “one single way,” based on Christ's unity with each man, thus on the axiom of universal salvation; on the other hand, the “chief way,” who is Christ Himself: He is the way to the Father's house and, at the same time, the way to each man. The “chief way” therefore goes in two directions, namely to the Father's house and to man. But in the above quoted text's further explanation of the “chief way,” the direction to the

Father is no longer mentioned. There remains just the pithy phrase: The way leads "from Christ to man," and Christ assists every man (!) on this way. We are left on a one-way street! That is already an indication of the subtle *man-centered twist*! This becomes entirely clear, when the Encyclical describes the "chief way" more precisely as follows (*RH* 13,2):

Out of regard for Christ and in view of the mystery that constitutes the Church's own life, the Church cannot remain insensible to whatever serves man's true welfare, any more than she can remain indifferent to what threatens it. In various passages in its documents the Second Vatican Council has expressed the Church's fundamental solicitude that life in "the world should conform more to man's surpassing dignity" (*GS* 91) in all its aspects, so as to make that life "ever more human" (*GS* 38). This is the solicitude of Christ Himself, the good Shepherd of all men.

Thus *the Church's fundamental concern* is to make life in this world more and more human, so that in all its aspects it conforms "more to man's surpassing dignity." In this increasingly more human formation of the world, man is declared as the measure of all things. *That is a purely man-centered view, limited to this world!* And this solicitude of the Church for the welfare of man in this world is allegedly Christ's own concern, the concern of the "good Shepherd of all men!"

It is clear that the "chief way for the Church," which leads "from Christ to man," is a distortion of the God-centered character of the Gospel, which is watered down to a merely temporal, man-centered search for prosperity in which Christianity plays no part.

It is clear that the Good Shepherd of the Gospel, Who knows His own, calls and leads them, and by laying down His life for them, gives to those who believe in Him a participation in His own inner life of communion with the

Father (cf. Jn. 10:1-21), is not the Encyclical's "good Shepherd of *all* men," whose fold includes *all* men without distinction.

It is clear that the Christ's pastoral concern for the eternal life of souls is not the pastoral concern of the Encyclical's good Shepherd, which is directed towards the increasingly more human formation the "life in this world" according to the measure of man. It is also clear that the fundamental solicitude of the true Church of Christ, which faithfully reflects the concern of the Good Shepherd of the Gospel for the eternal life of souls and for the supernatural, is not the fundamental solicitude of the Church of the Encyclical, which is concerned about "life in this world," thus about the merely natural life. With an appeal to the pastoral care of its good Shepherd, the Encyclical text goes on (*RH* 13,2):

In the name of this solicitude, as we read in the Council's Pastoral Constitution, "the Church must in no way be confused with the political community, nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person" (*GS* 76).

Of course the Conciliar Church of the Encyclical, despite its alignment on the ever more human formation of "life in this world," does not want to "be confused" with political communities and systems, whose task is also the formation of the temporal sphere, and this distinction is in accordance with the Church's fundamental solicitude for the temporal sphere. Characteristically enough, the Encyclical, in the name of the good Shepherd's pastoral care, can invoke no higher basis for the Church's mission than the humanistic claim to be "at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person." However, in the name of the good Shepherd's pastoral care, the Church can define and promote her mission on a much higher basis, namely that of Christianity.

In the Pope's theology, the Church's claim to be "at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person" has a very special meaning. This was already formulated by Cardinal Wojtyla in "*Sign of Contradiction*" (pp. 27ff) as follows:

The Church of the living God gathers together all men who in one way or another share this marvelous transcendence of the human spirit ... This transcendence of the human person ... is a special manifestation (in prayer and silence) of the vital bond linking God and the human spirit. The Church of our day has become particularly conscious of this truth; and it was in light of this truth that the Church succeeded, during the Second Vatican Council, in redefining her own nature.

The Encyclical's statement: the Church is "at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person," therefore expresses the thesis of universal salvation, which has its place in the context of a "good Shepherd of *all* men" and a Church which includes all men, since all men participate in the transcendence of the human person.

We learn, however, from the Encyclical itself what exactly is meant by the "transcendence of the human person" mentioned above, and why the Conciliar Church, in the name of the pastoral care of the Universal Savior, lays claim to being "a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person." The important text puts it as follows (*RH* 13,3):

Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude. We are not dealing with the "abstract" man, but the real, "concrete," "historical" man. We are dealing with "each" man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united Himself for ever through this mystery. Every man comes into the world through being conceived in his mother's womb and being born of his mother, and precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption is

entrusted to the solicitude of the Church. Her solicitude is about the whole man and is focused on Him in an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself (cf. Gen. 1:27). The Council points out this very fact when, speaking of that likeness, it recalls that "man is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself" (GS 24). Man as "willed" by God, as "chosen" by Him from eternity and called, destined for grace and glory – this is "each" man, "the most concrete" man, "the most real"; this is man in all the fullness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ, the mystery in which each one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother.

The text formulates the axiom of universal salvation with surprising clarity.¹ At long last we have the answer to the question: For the Pope, in what specifically does the "transcendence of the human person" consist, why is Christ the "good Shepherd of all men," and why, in virtue of the mystery of the Redemption, the Conciliar Church includes all mankind in a hidden manner?

We can conclude: The Encyclical teaches that "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church." This way leads "from Christ to man," to man who is redeemed *a priori*. The solicitude of the "good Shepherd of all men," and therefore also the "fundamental solicitude of the Church," focuses on precisely this man. The solicitude common to both Shepherd and Church seeks to establish a life which is ever more human, which should conform to man's surpassing dignity in all its aspects.

14. For the Church all ways lead to man.

The focus on man continues adamantly in the next arti-

¹ See my analysis of the text in Part I, pp. 85ff.

cle (*RH* 14,1):

The Church cannot abandon man, for his "destiny," that is to say his election, calling, birth and death, salvation or perdition, is so closely and unbreakably linked with Christ. We are speaking precisely of each man on this planet, this earth that the Creator gave to the first man, saying to the man and the woman: "subdue it and have domination" (Gen. 1:28). Each man in all the unrepeatable reality of what he does, of his intellect and will, of his conscience and heart.

We are sufficiently informed as to the Encyclical's dogmatic outlook on man (cf. *RH* 13). The Encyclical offers no further explanation for this outlook. The text from the creation account quoted above, which for the Pope plays a key role, is important for further analysis. From quotation of Genesis 1:28 ensues the definitive alignment of all the Church's activities on man, as well as the one-sided program for the human formation of the life of mankind in temporal affairs.

On the subject of man, who is redeemed and is charged to subdue the earth, the Encyclical goes on (*RH* 14,1):

Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being ... this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ Himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption.

It was "this man in all the truth of his life," which Vatican II was bearing in mind, when it described his situation in today's world (*RH* 14,2). The Encyclical summarizes the Council's description in *Gaudium et Spes* (10) as follows (*RH* 14,3):

This man is the way for the Church – a way that, in a

sense, is the basis of all the other ways that the Church must walk – because man – every man without any exception whatever – has been redeemed by Christ, and because with man – with each man without any exception whatever – Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it: “Christ, who died and was raised up for all, provides man” – each man and every man – “with the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme calling” (GS 10).

With these kinds of texts, which recur in varying forms and, in the Encyclical, should be understood according to the thesis of universal salvation, the foundation (= “the way of the Church”) is laid, on which the Church’s entire activity rests. The foundation for the Church’s entire activity is redeemed man in all his relations, which include both “his personal being” and at the same time “his community and social being” (*RH* 14,1). Or, as the Encyclical puts it: “This man is the way for the Church.” Inasmuch as man appears in light of his task assigned by the Creator in Genesis 1:28, the Church’s activity is likewise oriented on the formation of man’s life in this world. Thus human dignity is the standard by which “all areas of life” must be judged. Therefore the last paragraph of the Encyclical’s present article summarizes the matter as follows (*RH* 14,4):

Since this man is the way for the Church, the way for her daily life and experience, for her mission and toil, the Church of today must be aware in an always new manner of man’s “situation.” That means that she must be aware of his possibilities, which keep returning to their proper bearings and thus revealing themselves. She must likewise be aware of the threats to man and of all that seems to oppose the endeavor “to make human life ever more human” (GS 38) and make every element of this life correspond to man’s true dignity – in a word, she must be aware of all that is opposed to that process.

Why does the text not at least say: The Church must

strive to make the life of man "ever more Christian"?

14.1 Digression: Who is the way of the Church, Christ or man?

The Encyclical enumerates three fundamental ways, which are the basis for all other ways of the Church: Firstly, the "one single way," which rests on the unity of the Son of God with each man, since the Son of God, through His Incarnation, has united Himself with each man. Then secondly, we hear: "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church." – Finally: "Man in the full truth of his existence is the primary and fundamental way of the Church."

Since each of these various ways is referred to as the basis of all the Church's activities, it is important to clear up the confusion at hand:

In the first of these ways, called the "one single way," which rests on *the unity of the Son of God with each man* and involves both partners, and which relationship is not further specified, we have the dogmatic axiom of universal salvation, only without explanation. That explanation is provided by the other two ways, which are nothing else than an elaboration on that unity possessed by all men at their birth.

Thus, in the Encyclical, there are not three fundamentally different ways, but only one, the "one single way," which represents the radical unity, from which the other two ways emerge as two impulses.

The concept of the various ways clearly follows on the Pope's idea of revelation.²

For the Pope, revelation primarily consists in the fact that the Son of God, through His Incarnation, has formally united Himself with each man. The "one single way" corresponds to, and is founded on this unity by definition.

² On the Pope's idea of revelation, see Part I, pp. 111-123, and above, 7.1-7.3, pp. 18-32.

Since the Pope refers to this union as revelation, revelation *a priori* means that each man also possesses "being in Christ" *a priori* as his innermost being. Hence man who is already redeemed is also "the primary and fundamental way of the Church" and the basis of all her activity.

To revelation *a priori* corresponds the historical revelation *a posteriori* in Christ. The latter is characterized by the fact that Christ "fully reveals man to himself," and hence makes man aware of his true and innermost being as man. "He does this by revealing the Father and His Love." Revelation *a posteriori* becomes therefore the means by which all men come to know their salvation *a priori*, while Christ Himself is the interpreter and visible image of each man. That is how "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church."

To "double revelation" corresponds therefore the "double way of the Church": On the one hand, man who is already redeemed is "the primary and fundamental way for the Church," on the other hand, "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church." Both ways relate to each other just like revelation *a priori* to revelation *a posteriori*.

Just as "double revelation" inevitably bears a "man-centered character," so also the double way of the Church. Just as "double revelation" revolves "around man," so also the way of the Church founded on this revelation leads to the man-centered orientation of all her activity.

What remains for the Church to do, if the *Redemptor Hominis* has already imparted His supernatural work of Redemption to each man fundamentally and ontologically?

15. Mankind's risk of self-destruction and the mission of the Church.*

After the Encyclical sketches the "picture" of man in light of the last Council (RH 13-14), it proceeds, in the next three articles (RH 15-17), to adapt that picture to the

* Heading in the English Translation="What Modern Man Is Afraid Of"

demands of the present situation which is constantly changing, especially considering the "signs of the time" (cf. *RH* 15,1).

Since concrete man in all his aspects is the "way for the church," the description of his situation includes also the whole panorama of major contemporary problems. As the Pope's remarks in this paragraph are not the main topic of our research, we content ourselves with a brief summary of the most important statements.

The Pope places his general outlook at the beginning: Man has produced a culture which constantly turns against him, leads to alienation, and becomes even a threat for him. On that point we hear (*RH* 15,1):

This seems to make up the main chapter of the drama of present-day human existence in its broadest and universal dimension.

Thus the Pope asks (*RH* 15,1):

Why is it that the power given to man from the beginning by which he was to subdue the earth turns against himself, producing an understandable state of disquiet, of conscious or unconscious fear of menace, which in various ways is being communicated to the whole of the present-day human family and is manifesting itself under various aspects?

The Pope gives no deeper theological answer to the question at hand, but outlines first of all the various manifestations of the threat, each of which he criticizes in turn and presses his demands for a solution.³

³ Faced with the question of why man's power, given to him by God from the beginning (Gen. 1:28), turned against him, the way to the Bible's answer was suggested, namely: Adam's revolt against God, mankind's fall into original and personal sin. Hence follows man's absolute need of Redemption, mankind's need for a Redeemer. From Redemption in Christ (in the sense of the Church's traditional

The first manifestation of the threat from "what he produces" concerns *man's relationship to nature*. The Pope reprimands the uncontrolled exploitation of the earth for purposes of immediate use and consumption. In the Encyclical's own words, it is the will of the Creator (RH 15,2):

that man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble "master" and "guardian," and not as a heedless "exploiter" and "destroyer."

Therefore the Pope demands a "long-range authentically humanistic plan" which spares man's natural environment and does not lead to his alienation from nature (RH 15,3-6).

The second manifestation of the threat from human production concerns *man's relationship to the progress of a civilization* (RH 3-6) *marked by technology*. The amazing progress in this area is on the one hand among the "authentic signs of man's greatness," as already revealed in Genesis 1-2, while on the other hand it is cause for concern, since the ethical and moral development is left behind.

Therefore the Pope demands a "proportional development of morals and ethics" to match the progress in technology (RH 15,3). This brings us to the "essential and fundamental question" (RH 15,3):

Does this progress, which has man for its author and promoter, make human life on earth "more human" in every aspect of that life? Does it make it more "worthy of man"? ... [Is man,] in the context of this progress, ... becoming truly better, that is to say more mature spiritu-

doctrine), the line of reasoning leads necessarily to a (Christian) social order and world peace, in accordance with the Father's eternal decree: "to restore all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). – The Encyclical's presentation, however, rests on the Pope's *New Theology*, from which he develops the principles for a humanist social order and world peace, with man as the measure of all things.

ally, more aware of the dignity of his humanity, more responsible, more open to others, especially the neediest and the weakest, and readier to give and to aid all.

This is the question which the Christians should be the first to ask, "because Jesus Christ has made them so universally sensitive about the problem of man."

Finally, all past achievements or projects for the future must be examined with the following criterion: Do they "accord with man's moral and spiritual progress?"

But why must the Church deal with all these problems? The Pope's answers on three counts: Firstly, because the subject of "development and progress" is on everybody's mind. Secondly, because human nature has a fundamental need for "solicitude by man for man, for his humanity, and for the future of people on earth." Thirdly, because this solicitude is an essential element of her mission. The Encyclical develops this last point as follows (*RH* 15,6):

Inspired by eschatological faith, the Church considers an essential, unbreakably united element of her mission this solicitude for man, for his humanity, for the future of men on earth and therefore also for the course set for the whole of development and progress. She finds the principle of this solicitude in Jesus Christ Himself, as the Gospels witness. This is why she wishes to make it grow continually through her relationship with Christ, reading man's situation in the modern world in accordance with the most important signs of our time.

On this analysis, Jesus Christ cares essentially about man's humanity, his future on earth, and the course which development and progress are taking; hence these are also essential elements of the Church's mission, marked by her eschatological faith.

The reader will allow some remarks on this point. The Church cannot trace her solicitude for man's temporal future and for technological progress back to Jesus Christ, as

the Gospels attest. The Christ of the Gospels oriented the entire human person of His disciples on the kingdom of God which is not of this world, and on the supernatural, on life everlasting. He left the anxious worry about man's temporal welfare to those of little faith and to the heathens (cf. Matt. 6:25-34; Lk. 12:22-31).

Like the kingdom of God, so also the Church has an eschatological dimension. The Church, the bride of Christ, has her gaze entirely fixed on her Lord and waits with longing expectation for the arrival of her Bridegroom.

The purpose of the Church founded by Christ is purely religious: the sanctification and the eternal salvation of souls. She has *per se* no political, economic, social or purely cultural goals to achieve.⁴ Nor are such programs found in the Gospel. Nevertheless, she is no enemy of culture or of progress. The particular character of her relationship to culture flows from the eschatological nature of her mission, which is: "Make disciples of all nations!" (Matt. 28:19). From the religious heart of her mission followed the "christianization" of cultures.⁵

The eschatological faith of the Church was never the solicitude "for the future of people on earth," but rather the expectation of Our Lord's Second Coming for the Last Judgment at the end of history. Ever since the Ascension, the Church's gaze is constantly fixed on Christ, on those things "that are above" (Col. 3:1). This fundamentally supernatural attitude is an essential element of Christian existence. In countless parables, Jesus Christ clearly emphasized the constant watch for the coming of the Lord at the

4 Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1954), p. 273.

5 Cf. Thomas Ohm, *Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker [Make Disciples of All Nations]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1961), p. 56; 311; 413. — Johannes Dörmann, Series of Articles in the Pastoral Bulletin for the dioceses of Aachen, Berlin, Essen, Cologne, Osnabrück (Cologne), 9/1984-3/1985.

hour we least expect it. This attitude is plainly the heart of Our Lord's solicitude for man. In virtue of her union with Him and of *this* eschatological faith, the Church has furnished all the details for the living of a Christian life in this world.

By observing the contrast between the Church's traditional eschatological faith and the Encyclical's new outlook, which reflects the Pastoral Constitution's turning towards the world,⁶ we come to discover the profound change in meaning from what the Gospel says. The New Testament's eschatology is transformed into a mere temporal hope for good things to come. The Encyclical's "eschatological faith" is situated in the perspective of salvation history, that means the "new Advent of the Church and of mankind," and the "Second Coming of the Lord." This is the faith of the "Church of the new Advent" (see above, 1.2b, pp. 49-57).

16. Our era: a time of great progress and of threats in many forms – Outline of a humane world order.*

Article 16 re-introduces and sheds more light on the problems raised in the previous article (15). This time the theme is: The present era as "a time of great progress," but also as "a time of threat in many forms for man" (*RH* 16,1). The Pope lays out his theological perspective, by which he assesses the problem, as follows (*RH* 16,1):

We are dealing here only with that which found expression in the Creator's first message to man at the moment in which He was giving him the earth, to "subdue" it (Gen. 1:28). This first message was confirmed by Christ the Lord in the mystery of the Redemption. This is ex-

⁶ Regarding the reception and assessment of *Gaudium et Spes*, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Theologische Prinzipienlehre [Theological Principles]* (Munich 1982), pp. 395-411.

* Heading in the English Translation="Progress or Threat."

pressed by the Second Vatican Council in these beautiful chapters of its teaching that concern man's "kingship," that is to say his call to share in the kingly function – the *munus regale* – of Christ Himself (LG 10; 36). The essential meaning of this "kingship" and "dominion" of man over the visible world, which the Creator Himself gave man for his task, consists in the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, and in the superiority of spirit over matter.

On this analysis, the Creator's injunction (Gen. 1:28), newly confirmed by the mystery of the Redemption, means the participation of mankind in the kingly function of Christ. The "essential meaning" of this kingship and this dominion of man over the visible world, according to the Encyclical, consists in the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, in the transcendence of the spirit over matter. The Pope has thereby laid out his theological perspective, by which he considers and "x-rays" the global turn of events (RH 16,2). We will now sketch the most important points as follows:

– At each stage of progress, the nature of *man as a person* cannot be overlooked. For it is a question of the "advancement of persons," not of things; what matters is not "having more," but "being more" (RH 16,2).⁷

– There is a danger *that man lose his dominion over the world of things, and let his humanity become subject to them.* Therefore the motto (RH 16,2):

Man "cannot become the slave of things, the slave of economic systems, the slave of production, the slave of his own

⁷ From the philosophical standpoint, it must here be asked: Can one speak of "becoming" with respect to the person? Already in his main work, *Person und Tat* [*The Acting Person*], Karol Wojtyła speaks of a "*fieri* [becoming] of the person" – (especially pp. 120ff.). But can the person as such undergo a process of "*fieri*"? The person is an ontic reality, either *it is* or *it isn't*, though there is a development of the personal character.

products."

– In caring for present-day man, the following problem is at stake (*RH* 16,2):

It is not a matter here merely of giving an abstract answer to the question: Who is man? It is a matter of the whole of the dynamism of life and civilization. It is a matter of the meaningfulness of the various initiatives of everyday life and also of the premises for many civilization programs, political programs, economic ones, social ones, state ones, and many others.

This text makes even more clear what the Pope means by the axiom: Man is the way for the Church. Since the Church cares about each individual person in the various aspects of his life, she must strive constantly to grasp the "meaningfulness" of the whole dynamism of life and civilization, and also of the premises for the many civilization programs in their relationship to man. The Church is thus the universal interpreter of the world's entire development, and at the same time the highest court in the humanistic, ethical sphere.

– The Pope makes a broad statement on the status of global development in the area of ethics and human dignity in the following words (*RH* 16,3):

Man's situation is still "far removed from the objective demands of the moral order, from the exigencies of justice, and still more from social love."

This is demonstrated by the contrast between rich and poor, "consumer civilization" and third world, abuse of the freedom on the one hand and oppression of freedom on the other. The world's present-day status represents "the gigantic development of the parable in the Bible of the rich banqueter and the poor man Lazarus" (*RH* 16,5).

Hence the status and extent of the problem call into question "the financial, monetary, production and com-

mercial mechanisms that, resting on various political pressures, support the world economy," and which are incapable "either of remedying the unjust social situations inherited from the past or of dealing with the urgent challenges and ethical demands of the present" (*RH* 16,6).

The Encyclical enumerates still further symptoms of this world-wide "moral disorder," such as "the fever of inflation and the plague of unemployment": All this "requires daring creative resolves in keeping with man's authentic dignity" (*RH* 16,7).

The realization of this task is not impossible. But the global reorganization of all the structures and mechanisms mentioned above, in accordance with the dignity of the human person, means nothing less than the creation of a new world order. On this point, the Pope formulates a number of basic principles. Here are the most important ones:

1) "The principle of solidarity, in a wide sense, must inspire the effective search for appropriate institutions and mechanisms, whether in the sector of trade, where the laws of healthy competition must be allowed to lead the way, or on the level of a wider and more immediate redistribution of riches and of control over them, in order that the economically developing peoples may be able not only to satisfy their essential needs but also to advance gradually and effectively" (*RH* 16,8).

2) This indispensable transformation of the structures of economic life requires "the intervention of a true conversion of mind, will and heart. The task requires resolute commitment by individuals and peoples that are free and linked in solidarity" (*RH* 16,9).

3) "But no truly human economy will be possible unless they are taken up, directed and dominated by the deepest powers in man, which decide the true culture of peoples. These are the very sources for the effort which will express man's true freedom and which will be capable of ensuring it in the economic field also. Economic development, with every factor in its adequate functioning,

must be constantly programmed and realized within a perspective of universal joint development of each individual and people" (*RH* 16,8).

It is therefore the "the deepest powers in man," and not the efforts of Christians as such, upon which "man's true freedom" and the reorganization of the world economy both depend.

4) "However, one thing is certain: at the basis of this gigantic sector it is necessary to establish, accept and deepen the sense of moral responsibility, which man must undertake. Again, and always man. This responsibility becomes especially evident for us Christians when we recall ... the scene of the last judgment according to the words of Christ related in Matthew's Gospel (cf. Matt. 25:31-46)" (*RH* 16,9).

The subject of this reorganization is thus again and always "man," without further specification. Such a responsibility becomes only "especially evident" for the Christian in virtue of the words of Matt. 25:31ff.

On Matt. 25:31ff, the Encyclical continues (*RH* 16,10):

5) "This eschatological scene must always be 'applied' to man's history; it must always be made the 'measure' for human acts as an essential outline for an examination of conscience by each and every one."

In this examination of conscience, we could even include the problem of tensions between North and South. And, of course, we must never forget that "the areas of misery and hunger on our globe could have been made fertile in a short time, if the gigantic investments for armaments at the service of war and destruction had been changed into investments for food at the service of life" (*RH* 16,10).

Surely the acknowledgement of Christ's Second Coming at the Last Judgment marks the way Christians live. Are Buddhists, Hindus or Animists also moved by this truth?

Does it suffice to reduce the serious reality of the Last Judgment to a mere "eschatological symbol," in order to make it a norm for human acts on the whole, and thereby to create a rough draft for an examination of conscience acceptable to all?

6) The Pope concludes by observing that the Church has only spiritual weapons at her disposal. He then reaches for the most powerful weapon, Holy Scripture, and supports his previous statements with a quote from St. Paul: "Preach the word! Be instant, in season, out of season (II Tim. 4:2). In context, "the word" means the Gospel.

The article ends with the appeal "in the name of God and in the name of man": "Respect each one's dignity and freedom!" (RH 16,11). This is the only time in the article that God is even mentioned.

The Pope's remarks are brief, and therefore remain somewhat up in the clouds (cf. RH 16,10). They appear at first glance like a scattered collection of isolated statements. Upon closer analysis, however, we come to see the grand, self-contained vision of a humanistic new world order, which is centered on each man in his numerous cultural relationships. It is the world of man, fashioned on the principles of the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, in the transcendence of the spirit over matter (cf. RH 16,1).

It is obvious, however, that these undeniably noble humanistic principles by no means represent the "essential meaning" of man's kingship and domination over the visible world which he derives from Christ's own royal office. The "essential meaning" of Christ's offices as King and as Shepherd is to save man from the sinful state into which he has fallen, and to lead him on the straight path towards his supernatural goal.⁸ The purposes of Christ's royal office (*munus regale*) are the establishment, growth and comple-

tion of the kingdom of God on earth.⁹ It is the Church's common teaching that visible creation culminates in man (Gen. 1). That is why man in the state of original justice is made king over the visible world. However, the essential meaning of this kingship is for man to serve God through the enjoyment and right use of the goods of this world, and thus to glorify God through the whole of creation.¹⁰ This God-centered character of man's kingship is not diminished "in the mystery of the Redemption," but rather is confirmed and elevated.

Through the Encyclical's definition of the "essential meaning" of man's kingship, derived from Christ's own kingly office, a central article of faith is stripped of its specifically Christian meaning, reduced to a purely human level, and established as the norm for all areas of life. The priority of ethics over technology, the primacy of the person over things and the transcendence of the spirit over matter are so many buzz words of humanistic ethics which anyone can accept and which are open to any interpretation.

The definition of that "essential meaning" is tantamount to the rejection of the supernatural, and includes the transformation of the Christian, God-centered religion into a humanistic, man-centered religion, directed towards life in this world. Through the Encyclical's description of the various destructive factors accompanying the global trend of "progress," we should be exhorted to go to the root cause of all disorder, namely sin in the world, to emphasize man's absolute need for Redemption, and hence to preach the Savior of the world and demand faith in Him, in order to

8 Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 179

9 Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, Erlösungslehre, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik [Handbook of Catholic Dogma]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1954), Complete Works VI/2, p. 305.

10 Matthias Joseph Scheeben, trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J., *The Mysteries of Christianity* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), p. 237.

restore all things in Christ, and not in man. The world should even expect that from a Pope.

The Encyclical's presentation opens (Gen. 1:28) and closes (II Tim. 4:2) with Holy Scripture. It begins with the kingship of Christ and concludes with an appeal to the text of St. Paul, which concerns the preaching of the "word," therefore of the Gospel. We have here a breathtaking demonstration of the use of Scripture for promoting a new world order, based on the principles of the Pope's *New Theology*, and centered on man. Thus the Pope explains to mankind how his motto is to be understood: "Man is the way for the Church."

17. Human rights: the guiding principle of all endeavors for man's welfare.*

This article also re-introduces the same basic theme: Man in the midst of the great calamities, of the material and moral devastations of our century, and also whether this fateful development can be stopped (*RH* 17,1).

Therefore the Pope searches for collaborators and finds a powerful ally in the United Nations Organization, which has already laid the cornerstone for peace and the new world order by its declaration of human rights. Now it is only a matter of putting the spirit of this Charter into action. On the efforts of the UN, the Encyclical says point blank (*RH* 17,1):

In any case, we cannot fail to recall at this point, with esteem and profound hope for the future, the magnificent effort made to give life to the United Nations Organization, an effort conducive to the definition and establishment of man's objective and inviolable rights, with the member states obliging each other to observe them rigorously. This commitment has been accepted and ratified by almost all present-day states, and this should constitute a

* Heading in the English Translation= "Human Rights: 'Letter' or 'Spirit'"

guarantee that human rights will become throughout the world a fundamental principle of work for man's welfare.

On the relationship between the Church and the UN in the area of human rights, the Encyclical states (17,2):

There is no need for the Church to confirm how closely this problem [of the rights of man] is linked with her mission in the modern world. ... After all, peace comes down to respect for man's inviolable rights.

In addition to the UN, the Pope finds a second ally in the trend of our era: John Paul II thinks that, in today's world, no social, economic or political program can do without the "humanistic" dimension and spirit. The Pope is

firmly convinced that there is no program in today's world in which man is not invariably brought to the fore, even when the platforms of the programs are made up of conflicting ideologies concerning the way of conceiving the world (*RH 17,2*).

Nevertheless human rights are still violated (concentration camps, violence and torture, terrorism and widespread discrimination), evidently as a consequence of the very elements which hinder the effectiveness of humanistic programs and systems. Therefore it is our duty to revise these programs constantly on the basis of objective and inviolable human rights (*RH 17,2*).

The Pope is therefore convinced that the UN's Declaration of Human Rights is a suitable basis "for continual revision of programs, systems and regimes." He further emphasizes that this revision be accomplished "precisely from this single point of view, namely the welfare of man." That is why the Encyclical demands (*RH 17,3*):

[Human welfare] must, as a fundamental factor in the common good, constitute the essential criterion for all

programs, systems and regimes. If the opposite happens, human life is, even in time of peace, condemned to various sufferings ... (*The Encyclical then mentions explicitly the various forms of domination, totalitarianism, neocolonialism and imperialism*).

The Pope declares the Church as the "guardian of human rights." Her task is to check constantly "whether the Declaration of Human Rights and the acceptance of their 'letter' mean everywhere also the actualization of their 'spirit'." If human rights are violated, the transgressors bear "special responsibility towards [their] societies and the history of man" (*RH 17,4*).¹¹

The realization of human rights occurs on the state level. Therefore the Pope defines the nature of the state and the relationship between citizens' rights and those of the state.

On the essence of the state, the Encyclical says (*RH 17,5*):

The essential sense of the state, as a political community, consists in that the society and people composing it are master and sovereign of their own destiny.

That is a profession of democracy.

On the relationship between citizens' rights, human rights and the state, the Encyclical goes on (*RH 17,6*):

The Church has always taught the duty to act for the common good and, in so doing, has likewise educated good citizens for each state. Furthermore, she always taught that the fundamental duty of power is solicitude for the common good of society, this is what gives power its fundamental rights. Precisely in the name of these

¹¹ The Pope's mention of man's responsibility towards "societies" and the "history of man" is an eloquent demonstration of the reduction of Christianity to the level of the merely human and temporal sphere. Even the Preamble of the German Constitution speaks of responsibility before God.

premises of the objective ethical order, the rights of power can only be understood on the basis of respect for the objective and inviolable rights of man. The common good that authority in the state serves is brought to full realization only when all the citizens are sure of their rights. ... Thus the principle of human rights is of profound concern to the area of social justice and is the measure by which it can be tested in the life of political bodies.

The Encyclical's remarks end on the question of the religious liberty and freedom of conscience, for which the Pope claims special competence. In the UN Charter, religious liberty and freedom of conscience belong to the catalog of human rights. The Pope agrees with this, as he explicitly states (*RH* 17,7):

These rights are rightly reckoned to include the right to religious freedom together with the right to freedom of conscience. The Second Vatican Council considered especially necessary the preparation of a fairly long declaration (= *Dignitatis Humanae*) on this subject. ... Certainly the curtailment of the religious freedom of individuals and communities is not only a painful experience but it is above all an attack on man's very dignity, independently of the religion professed or of the concept of the world which these individuals and communities have. The curtailment and violation of religious freedom are in contrast with man's dignity and his objective rights. ... In this case we are undoubtedly confronted with a radical injustice with regard to what is particularly deep within man, what is authentically human.

The violation of the human right to religious liberty is a general phenomenon in today's world. This time, however, the Pope spares us the details and concludes the article with a solemn appeal for the respect of the right to religious liberty (*RH* 17,9):

Even if briefly, this subject must also be dealt with, because it too enters into the complex of man's situations

in the present-day world and because it too gives evidence of the degree to which this situation is overburdened by prejudices and injustices of various kinds. If we refrain from entering into details in this field in which we would have a special right and duty to do so, it is above all because, together with all those who are suffering the torments of discrimination and persecution for the name of God, we are guided by faith in the redeeming power of the cross of Christ. However, because of my office, I appeal in the name of all believers throughout the world to those on whom the organization of social and public life in some way depends, earnestly requesting them to respect the rights of religion and of the Church's activity. No privilege is asked for, but only respect for an elementary right. Actuation of this right is one of the fundamental tests of man's authentic progress in any regime, in any society, system or milieu.

Article 17 shows us for the third time how the Pope understands his motto: "Man is the way for the Church."

According to that principle, in striving for peace and the new world order, man must always be brought to the fore (cf. *RH* 17,2). Throughout the world, the fundamental principles of all work for man's welfare are human rights as contained in the Charter of the United Nations Organization (cf. *RH* 17,1). That means: By human rights are meant those rights which exist prior to the state and transcend the state. Therefore the state does not grant them, but these rights are in force independently of state constitutions, though they can be recognized by the ordinance of the state. By human rights are meant primarily the political rights to freedom or the fundamental rights (right to equality, protection, property, freedom of expression and of worship, right to resist oppression). We are therefore dealing with the idea of rights which exist prior to the state and transcend the state, of fundamental rights which are granted to man in virtue of his nature.¹²

The Church's agreement with the spirit of the UN Charter, the harmony between the Church's mission and the

efforts of the UN (cf. 17,2) means that the right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience are also to be understood in light of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. But the Encyclical also points to the Vatican II declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*. That is meant to show that these human rights are not only inherent in the nature of man, but are also found in revelation (cf. *RH* 17,8).¹³ Therefore the violation of the religious freedom of individuals and communities is an attack on man's nature, his dignity and his inviolable human rights, independently of the religion professed or of the concept of the world which these individuals and communities have (cf. *RH* 17,8). This realization should put an end to all arguments in the Church on the meaning of religious liberty and freedom of conscience: They are to be understood in light of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights.

At first glance, it may come as a surprise that, in Pope's concept of peace and the new world order, the question of the various religions does not come up. But this question is already answered by the UN's declaration of the human right to religious liberty. Thus the universal right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience contains the principle of religious tolerance in the liberal sense, and lays the cornerstone for universal religious peace.

The Pope demands respect for the rights of religion and the Church's activity. He demands no privileges, but simply respect for an elementary right, possessed by "believers" of all religions alike, and which the Pope sees as a fundamental test of man's authentic progress (cf. *RH* 17,9).

It is a question of a social order conducive to world peace, in which "the fundamental principles of all work for man's welfare are human rights" as contained in the Charter of the UN (cf. *RH* 17,1), an order which is concen-

¹² See Digression, 12.3, pp. 175-179.

¹³ *Ibid.*

trated entirely on man and on life in this world. The Pope's remarks on the humanist peace and the new world order, founded on the UN's Declaration of Human Rights, could just as easily have come from the UN General Secretary, with the exception of the last paragraph.

In the whole of Article 17, the name of "God" is only mentioned once, in the last paragraph (see above, *RH* 17,9). Here the Pope appeals, in virtue of his office, "in the name of all believers throughout the world to those on whom the organization of social and public life in some way depends." In the Pope's vocabulary, the God of "all believers" is the God of all religions: the God of Assisi!

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND MAN'S DESTINY

In Chapter 4, from yet another aspect, the Pope develops the Encyclical theme for the fourth time. Man's union with Christ determines the nature and mission of the Church in our era (*RH 18*). The Church's mission is her participation in "Christ's triple mission, His triple office": as prophet (*RH 19*), as priest (*RH 20*) and as king (*RH 21*). The last article is dedicated to Mary, the "mother of the Church" (*RH 22*).

18. The Church's nature and mission is centered on man.*

Article 18 forms the dogmatic basis for all of Chapter 4. The introductory text, which we reproduce here completely with a few unimportant omissions, runs as follows (*RH 18,1*):

If Christ "united Himself with each man (*GS 22*)," the Church lives more profoundly her own nature and missions by penetrating into the depths of this mystery ... It was not without reason that the Apostle speaks of Christ's Body, the Church (cf. I Cor. 6:15; 11:3; 12:12-13; Eph. 1:22; 2:15-16; 4:4-5; Col. 1:18; 3:15; Rom. 12:4-5; Gal. 3:28). If this Mystical Body of Christ is God's People ... this means that in it each man receives within himself that breath of life that comes from Christ. In this way, turning to man and his real problems, his hopes and sufferings,

* Heading in the English Translation="The Church as Concerned for Man's Vocation in Christ"

his achievements and falls – this too also makes the Church as a body, an organism, a social unity perceive the same divine influences, the light and strength of the Spirit that come from the crucified and risen Christ, and it is for this very reason that she lives her life. The Church has only one life: that which is given her by her Spouse and Lord. Indeed, precisely because Christ united Himself with her in His mystery of The Redemption, the Church must be strongly united with each man.

In the Pope's theology, Christ's union with each man (through the Incarnation) is the definition of revelation (*a priori*). In the text above, the mystery of this union is the source from which the Church also draws the deeper knowledge of her own nature and mission. This has notable consequences for the Encyclical's idea of the Church:

If Christ is united with each person, then all mankind is "anonymous Christianity" or the hidden Church.²

The hidden Church, which includes all mankind in an unknown fashion, is distinct from the visible Church "as a body, an organism, a social unity."³ (Why is the visible Church not simply referred to as the Catholic Church?)

Thus in the Encyclical there is a twofold idea of the Church: the invisible and the visible Church. The invisible Church is ontologically not only more broad-minded, since it includes all mankind, but also more fundamental, since it emerges *a priori* from the union of Christ with each man and therefore embraces all mankind from the beginning to the end of the world.⁴

In a manner similar to the above quoted text, Cardinal

1 The last sentence was made clearer based on the Latin text (*Nam, quia Christus in mysterio Redemptionis eam sibi iunxit, ob id ipsum oportet Ecclesia cum quolibet homine arcte coniungatur*).

2 Cf. Karol Wojtyła, [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 27ff.; see also Part I, pp. 80-98.

3 Cf. RH 6; 11; 12.

4 Karol Wojtyła, *op. cit.*, p. 103; 108.

Wojtyla already portrayed the Church under the images of the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ, in order to illustrate the mystery of the Redemption. The twofold idea of the Church is conveyed by the Cardinal's usage of these two images, Body and Bride of Christ, not only for Christ's relationship to the visible Church, but also for His relationship to the invisible Church, to all mankind.⁵

From the unity of head and members follows the union of interior life and of mind. This is outlined above by the Encyclical: All members of the Body of Christ are also imbued with the breath of life that comes from Christ. The same holds for the image of Bride and Bridegroom: "The Church has only one life: that which is given her by her Spouse and Lord."

From the deeper knowledge of the Church's nature, the character of her mission is derived. The Church's mission is paraphrased as a turning towards the concrete man with his problems in today's world. That is how the Church follows the inspirations and powers of the Spirit of Christ, the Crucified and the Risen One. Hence this mission receives its divine authorization: The Church's mission in the Encyclical appears identical with that of given by Christ Resurrected – as in the Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20). But is it really the same in content?

In the following text, the Encyclical deepens and develops its thoughts from the first paragraph (RH 18,2):

This union of Christ with man is in itself a mystery. From the mystery is born (*unde nascitur*) "the new man," called to become a partaker of God's life (II Pet. 1:4), and newly created in Christ (*denuo in Christo natus*) for the fullness of grace and truth (Eph. 2:10; Jn. 1:14,16). Christ's union with man is power and the source of power, as St. John stated so incisively in the prologue of his Gospel: "(The Word) gave power to become children

⁵ See Part I, pp. 67-78.

of God" (Jn. 1:12).

The text clearly states: From the union of Christ with man, which extends to every man through the Incarnation, the "new man" is born. What St. Paul says of the Christian believer: "He who is in Christ is a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17; cf. also Gal. 6:15), holds in the Encyclical for each man. What St. John says in the Prologue of the Christian believer's supernatural birth from God holds in the Encyclical for all persons. From the union of Christ with each man, emerges man redeemed and justified *a priori*. There are no conditions attached, neither that of faith nor that of baptism. Thus the striking words of St. John: "The Word gave power to become children of God," appear in the Encyclical – for a good reason – with characteristic omissions. The complete text from the Prologue runs: "But to them that received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God, to them that believe in His name." Logically, the Pope leaves out the subjective element of the Redemption: the reception of the Logos and faith in Jesus Christ. Why this omission? Because he teaches universal salvation.

If the unity of Christ with each man, if the birth from God which follows from that, is proper to all men, this must also be expressed in the life of everyone, whether Christian or non-Christian. But just how is this grace expressed in the life of each man, the grace of being a child of God which is given to all *a priori*? How does it work out in practice? The Encyclical answers this question immediately as follows (RH 18,2):

Man is transformed inwardly (*Haec est illa vis*) by this power (Christ's union with each man) as the source of a new life that does not disappear and pass away but lasts to eternal life (Jn. 4:14). This life, which the Father has promised and offered to each man in Jesus Christ, His eternal and only Son ... is the final fulfillment of man's vocation. It is in a way the fulfillment of the "destiny"

(*sortis*) that God has prepared for him (man) from eternity. This "divine destiny" is advancing (*Ea "sors" divina efficitur*), in spite of all the enigmas, the unsolved riddles, the twists and turns of "human destiny" in the world of time. Indeed, while all this (earthly existence) ... necessarily and inevitably leads to the frontier of death and the goal of the destruction of the human body, beyond that goal we see Christ. "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me ... shall never die" (Jn. 11:25f) In Jesus Christ, who was crucified and laid in the tomb and then rose again, "our hope of resurrection dawned (*spes beatæ resurrectionis*) ... the bright promise of immortality" (Jn. 6:23), on the way to which man, through the death of the body, shares with the whole of visible creation the necessity to which matter is subject. We intend and are trying to fathom (*perscrutari*) ever more deeply the language of the truth that man's Redeemer enshrined in the phrase "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail" (Jn. 6:63). In spite of appearances, these words express the highest affirmation of man – the affirmation of the body given life by the Spirit."⁶

What the Encyclical says here of the divine principle of life for "man" in general, that is also the teaching of the New Testament regarding the Christian believer, but with two major differences: The New Testament also speaks of man's share in God's grace, but only with man's free cooperation, and faith is required above all. The Encyclical text is silent on this point. The second major difference becomes apparent in the application of Our Lord's words to Martha (Jn. 11:25). In the Gospel, the eternal salvation of each man depends on his faith in the resurrection of Christ here and now, in this life. In the Encyclical text, however, we hear: When a soul has overstepped "the frontier of death, ... beyond that goal we see Christ." He speaks to us the words: "I am the resurrection and the life, he who

⁶ The English translation should here be compared with the official Latin Text.

believes in me ... shall never die" (Jn. 11:25f). But that means that the man, as portrayed in the Encyclical, can wait until death before having to face the issue of Christ and the need for faith in His resurrection. Such a theory may dispense the "anonymous Christian" from the fundamental requirement of faith in the resurrection of Christ in this life, but the issue is raised personally after death by Christ Resurrected. After death, however, the Christian does not expect an encounter with the Christ of faith in the next life, but rather the vision of the divinity "face to face" (I Cor. 13:9-12).

The Encyclical deals just as loosely with Our Lord's words from the Eucharistic discourse: "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail" (Jn. 6:63). This scriptural passage refers to the Eucharist, not to "the highest affirmation of man." In the context of the Encyclical, should we take these words of Our Lord, whose more profound import the Pope announces, to mean that the body of each man is a temple of the Holy Ghost thanks to universal redemption (cf. I Cor. 3:16f.; 6:19), just as each man from the first moment of his existence already possesses the image (*imago*) and the likeness (the supernatural *similitudo*) of God once and for all (cf. *RH* 13,3)?

The Pope penetrates still deeper into the inner life of man who has been universally redeemed, in order to discover in the heart of each man the divine life of grace and to lay bare for everyone the spiritual basis of the Church's mission. The text runs (*RH* 18,3):

The Church lives these realities; she lives by this truth about man, which enables him to go beyond the bounds of temporariness and at the same time to think with particular love and solicitude of everything within the dimensions of this temporariness that affect man's life and the life of the human spirit, in which is expressed that never-ending restlessness referred to in the words of St. Augustine: "You made us for Yourself, Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." In this creative restlessness

beats and pulsates what is most deeply human (*quod potissimum in homine est*)—the search for truth, the insatiable need for the good, hunger for freedom, nostalgia for the beautiful, and the voice of conscience. Seeking to see man as it were with “the eyes of Christ Himself,” the Church becomes more and more aware that she is the guardian of a great treasure, which she may not waste but must continually increase. Indeed (*nam*), the Lord Jesus said: “He who does not gather with me scatters” (Matt. 12:30). This treasure of humanity enriched by the inexpressible mystery of divine filiation (Jn. 1:12) and by the grace of “adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:5) in the only Son of God, through whom we call God “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15), is also a powerful force unifying the Church above all inwardly and giving meaning to all her activity. Through this force the Church is united with the Spirit of Christ, that Holy Spirit promised and continually communicated (*quem continenter impertit*) by the Redeemer and whose descent, which was revealed on the day of Pentecost, endures for ever (*semper descendit*). Thus the powers of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 15:13; I Cor. 1:24), the gifts of the Spirit (cf. Is. 11:2; Acts 2:38), and the fruits of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22-23) are revealed in men. The present-day Church seems to repeat with ever greater fervor and with holy insistence: “Come, Holy Spirit! Come! Come! Wash the stains of guilt away! ...”⁷

According to the text, the Church, who lives from the supposed reality and truth of universal salvation, recognizes in the hearts of men the Augustinian restlessness for God, for Whom this creative restlessness beats and pulsates. With Christ's own eyes, she looks still further and sees in the deepest recesses of the human heart even the life of grace in every man, a life which befits a child of God.

In this supposed reality and truth of man, which includes not only the noblest in the human heart but also the grace of divine adoption (Jn. 1:12), therefore grace as well as nature, the Church recognizes the most precious treasure

⁷ As in Footnote 6.

of humanity. This treasure belongs to humanity, since it represents its deepest nature. The Church understands herself as the guardian of this treasure. Why only as the guardian? Because the most precious fruits of Christ's redemptive work do not belong to the Church, and are not entrusted to her as the sole custodian – as previously believed – but because they are to be found already in the treasure of humanity.

But why is this treasure of humanity such a powerful force unifying the Church above all inwardly and giving meaning to all her activity? Because the Church possesses a most profound unity and solidarity with humanity. Because the Church herself is an integral part of redeemed mankind, and as such lives from the supposed reality and truth of this treasure, and derives her meaning therefrom.

Through the powerful force of this treasure (Jn. 1:12), which belongs in common to all mankind, the Church unites herself with the Spirit of Christ, with the Holy Spirit, Whom the Redeemer constantly bestows, and Who continually descends, of course not only on the Church, but also on all mankind. Therefore the power, gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost are found quite simply "in man." What Holy Scripture says about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost in the Christian believer and in the Church, the Encyclical applies with amazing consistency to all men, to all humanity.

The Pope understands revelation in the same way as he understands the descent of the Holy Ghost: as a continuing process. That concrete, historical event in God's plan of salvation, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Church at Pentecost, becomes an outward sign of the perpetual descent of the Holy Ghost on all mankind. –

The Pope's vision of man and of mankind is certainly grand and impressively consistent from the standpoint of universal salvation. However, it is simply inadmissible when a Pope, in an Encyclical on the Redeemer, so grossly

ignores mankind's abysmal fall into sin and his absolute need of Redemption, let alone when he completely disregards the necessity of faith in the Redeemer, which is demanded on each page of the Gospel. Compared with the authentic view of Holy Scripture, the Pope's vision is sheer poetry. —

After the Encyclical's remarks on the operation of the Holy Spirit upon all mankind, the question arises: does the Church's prayer to the Holy Ghost also take place outside her visible boundaries? The Pope asks the question anyway, in order to examine the Church's nature and the mission more profoundly from the spiritual nucleus of prayer. In Assisi it was also a question of the prayer of all religions, as we already saw in the first chapter, such that the firm religious beliefs of the followers of non-Christian religions is "an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body" (*RH* 6,3; see above 6.1).

The Church's intense prayer to the Holy Ghost is therefore the occasion for the question (*RH* 18,4):

Can it be said that the Church is not alone in making this appeal? Yes it can, because the "need" for what is spiritual is expressed also by people (*non pauci*) who are outside the visible confines of the Church. Is not this confirmed by the truth concerning the Church that the recent Council so acutely emphasized at the point in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* where it teaches that the Church is a "sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind?" — This invocation addressed to the Spirit to obtain the Spirit is really a constant self-insertion into the full magnitude of the mystery of the Redemption, in which (*quo*) Christ, united with the Father and with each man, continually communicates to us the Spirit who places within us the sentiments of the Son (*qui sensus Filii infundit*) and directs us towards the Father (cf. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

In support of the thesis that the invocation "addressed to the Spirit to obtain the Spirit" is also expressed in the spiritual yearnings of the non-Christian world, the Pope appeals to the Council's key ecclesiological text on the Church as sacrament of the unity of all mankind. It is thereby affirmed that this sentence is to be applied to mankind, all of which is redeemed. Thus the Church is the sign of mankind's universal salvation, and also the instrument which should announce and make known this "reality."

Finally and in summary fashion, the Pope reveals "the full dimension of the whole mystery of the Redemption" (*totius mysterii Redemptionis*). It is its trinitary mystery: "Christ, united with the Father and with each man, continually communicates to us the Spirit who places within us the sentiments of the Son and directs us towards the Father." This formula is stated with reference to Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6, where St. Paul proclaims the working of divine grace, bestowed by the three persons of the Trinity on the Christian believer. The Pope applies it to each man without distinction.

After the Pope has presented the full dimension of the mystery of the Redemption, he infers the Church's mission from that mystery once again. The text says (*RH* 18,4):

This is why the Church of our time ... must concentrate and gather around that Mystery (*circa mysterium illud quasi se colligat et congreget*), finding in it the light and the strength that are indispensable for her mission (*ut inde lumen viresque necessarias hauriat ad munus suum implendum*). For if ... man is the way for the Church's daily life, the Church (*Ecclesia*) must be always aware of the dignity of the divine adoption received by man in Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit and of his destination to grace and glory (Rom. 8:15,30). By reflecting ever anew on all this, and by accepting it with a faith that is more and more aware and a love that is more and more firm, the Church also makes herself better fitted for the service to man to which Christ the Lord calls her when

He says: "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28).

Hence the mystery of universal salvation is the basis for the Church's mission. The professed motto: Man is the way for the Church, is tantamount to saying that it is in reference to man, universally redeemed and possessing the dignity of divine sonship, that the Church's activity is defined, namely as "service to man." In the Encyclical, "man" always refers to universally redeemed man; for there is no other.

The visible Church performs the office of service to man by "sharing in the 'triple office' belonging to her Master and Redeemer," Christ's office as prophet, priest and king (cf. *RH* 18,4). The themes of the following three articles are thereby announced (19-21).

We can outline the Pope's dogmatic position briefly as follows: What holds in the Trinitary mystery of the Redemption for the Christian believer, the same holds for every man. What is true for the visible Church as a social unity, as Body and Bride of Christ, the same is also "ontologically" true for the invisible Church in the unity of all mankind, as Body and Bride of Christ in the wider sense.⁸ The difference consists only in the diversity of dimensions: the "historical-human" and the invisible "divine dimension." Between the Christian believer and the anonymous Christian, between the institutional and the hidden Church exists only a difference of consciousness. The Trini-

⁸ See Part I, 67-78. – On the "mystery of unity in the Trinity," the Pope expressed the following characteristic view on May 25, 1986: "The Church bears this ineffable mystery of God in herself: God – Trinity. And every believer bears it within himself, since the Apostle asks the question: 'Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?' In this Spirit, who is love and self-giving, God One and Triune offers Himself to His creatures." (*OR*, dt., May 30, 1986, S.3). Evidently, the expression "every believer" here refers to members of any religion.

tary mystery of the Redemption, present in all humanity, is either conscious or unconscious. This mystery is also the basis for the Church's mission as sacrament of the unity of all mankind.

The Pope's Redemption theology is nothing other than the unconditional application of the Council's thesis that everything relating to the paschal mystery "holds true ... for all men of good will" (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 22,5). The Pope's presentation of this thesis, however, flows from his theological principle of knowledge, namely "double revelation." The invisible Church, which encompasses the Trinitarian mystery or grace, of universal salvation, follows on revelation *a priori*, the historical reality of the visible Church on revelation *a posteriori*.

19. The prophetic office.*

By conceiving his doctrine on the triple office of Christ and the Church from the deeper insight of Vatican II into the mystery of the Redemption and the nature of the Church (cf. *RH* 18), John Paul II also arrives at a new theological standpoint. *We intend to focus on the Encyclical's new conception of the triple office of Christ and the Church in our following investigation.* Since the Encyclical is no theological treatise on the triple office, the Pope's thinking must be deduced from the texts. We can only single out a few sample texts for analysis, while leaving aside the Encyclical's extensive comments on the Church's discipline, morals, piety and motivation.

For the sake of an overview, we begin with a few remarks:

In classical theology, the triple office of Christ means the authorization and commission, by which the purpose of the Redemption is fulfilled. Thus Christ accomplished the

* Heading in the English Translation="The Church as Responsible for Truth" ~ Cardinal Wojtyla also delivered his main thoughts on the triple office in *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 137-167.

work of the Redemption through His triple office as prophet, priest and king. This triple office is suggested by Christ's own words (Jn. 14,6): "I am the way (kingship-jurisdiction), the truth (prophet-magisterium) and the life (priesthood-ministerium)."⁹

To continue this work of Redemption for all time, Christ founded the Church (cf. D 1821). Therefore the triple office which He committed to His Church is the same office and mission which He received from His Father. The crucial difference regarding the office of Christ consists in this: Christ Himself accomplished the work of the Redemption and acquired the fruits of the Redemption through His own power, whereas the Church's task is to apply the fruits of the Redemption to men, through the exercise of the offices of magisterium, ministerium and jurisdiction which she received from Christ. Thus the Church is the continuation and prolongation of Christ on earth.¹⁰

The Encyclical begins with the *prophetic office of Christ and the Church*. As the Second Vatican Council affirmed, the Church is the society responsible for revealed divine truth, which has also been committed to her (*RH* 19,1).

For the understanding of the Church's prophetic office, faith and divine revelation are indispensable.

On revelation, the Encyclical says:

Revealed truth is "the 'property' of God Himself." Furthermore it is the revelation of the Father in and through His Son Jesus Christ. The Father reveals Himself through the Son's human nature and actions: "He who sees me, sees the Father." The same is true of Christ's preaching: "The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (Jn. 14:24). Christ is acting "in full fidelity"

⁹ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1954), pp. 179-189.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 274ff.

to the divine source of truth, by "transmitting that truth as a prophet and as a teacher" (RH 19,1).

The Church is held to that same fidelity towards revealed truth. Therefore this fidelity must be an essential part of her *faith*, when Christ teaches or proclaims it.

On faith, it is said (RH 19,1):

Faith as a specific supernatural virtue infused into the human spirit makes us sharers in knowledge of God as a response to His revealed Word.

Is it precise enough to say that faith is infused into the "human spirit"? Can we therefore refer to the followers of all religions as "believers," as the Pope does constantly?

In any case, says the text, all members of the people of God, though in different ways "have their own part to play in Christ's prophetic mission and service of divine truth" (RH 19,6). This sharing "shapes the life of the whole of the Church in her fundamental dimension" (RH 19,5). In a summary statement on how the whole people of God share in the prophetic office of Christ, the Encyclical says (RH 19,2):

Consequently, we have become sharers in this mission of the prophet Christ, and in virtue of that mission we together with Him are serving divine truth in the Church. Being responsible for that truth also means loving it and seeking the most exact understanding of it, in order to bring it closer to ourselves and others in all its saying power, its splendor and its profundity joined with simplicity.

Thus Christ, just like us, is a "servant" of divine truth *in the Church*. An unusual statement on the part of the Pope.

In the Encyclical's perspective, revelation occurs only in and through Christ. The Old Testament is not even considered. The problem of revelation in the non-Christian religions is not raised either. The logical thing would have been

to address the question of Christian revelation in all religions from the standpoint of the universal principle of revelation *a priori*, as has long since been done in the theology of religions.¹¹ However, in the Encyclical that is not the case. For the Pope, this question has been adequately answered, both theoretically and practically by the Second Vatican Council: Theoretically by the axiom of universal salvation, through the positive outlook on other religions in *Nostra Aetate* (cf. *RH* 11,1) and through the declaration on religious liberty *Dignitatis Humanae* (cf. *RH* 12;17). The practical consequences of that are dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, and investigation of the treasures of human spirituality (cf. *RH* 6). The Pope's position is distinguished by its great clarity and simplicity: On the theological basis of the allegedly revealed right of all men to religious liberty, which in the UN's perspective implies dogmatic tolerance (cf. *RH* 17), the prayer meeting at Assisi appears as the visible manifestation and practical consequence of that theological principle. Thus the foundation for universal religious peace among men is firmly established.

The Pope's remarks concern primarily the Church's inner life, such as theology and magisterium, theology and philosophy, catechesis and modern science. But the crisis of the Church, which goes back to a collapse of the revealed faith, is totally overlooked. On the crucial problem in our century of the relations between theology and philosophy, we are merely told that philosophy "as the Second Vatican Council recalled, is closely linked with theology" (*RH* 19,3).

Nevertheless the Encyclical's presentation of the prophetic office of Christ and the Church has a recognizable basis in the Pope's specific understanding of revelation. The

11 On that point, see Johannes Dörmann, "Theology of Religions," in: *Christliches ABC* (Bad Homburg 1987), Gr. 4, pp. 131-146.

prophet office belongs to historical revelation *a posteriori* as a complement of revelation *a priori*.

In the above quoted texts, divine revelation proceeds from the Father; still more, it is the revelation of the Father and his love in Christ, in his humanity, life and teachings. And this revelation, according to the Pope's oft repeated phrase, "is centered on man": "Christ fully reveals man to himself, but he does so by revealing the Father and the Father's love (cf. Jn. 17:6)." The definition of Christ's prophetic office as the "office of service in the Church" makes sense only in light of this idea of revelation. Christ's prophetic office of service, and therefore that of the Church, are directed towards "revealing man to himself," making man more aware of himself, and that by means of the revelation of the Father.

The Encyclical's Article 19 closes with an appeal, which sounds traditional but means something novel (*RH* 19,6):

The present-day Church, guided by a sense of responsibility for truth (*officii conscientia circa veritatem ducta*), must persevere in fidelity to her own nature, which involves the prophetic mission (*munus*) that comes from Christ Himself (*manans*): "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you ... Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21f).

The novel element in the Encyclical's presentation of the prophetic office of Christ and of the Church comes to light when compared with the Church's traditional doctrine: The Christ of the Encyclical is not portrayed as the absolute teacher of all mankind in such a way that, invested with divine authority, He demands of all mankind faith in Himself, and punishes the refusal of that faith with damnation (Mk. 16:16f). His teaching authority rests not only on His authorization by the Father, but also in the fact that He is God Himself and announces His word with full divine authority as the Son. He does not merely serve the revela-

tion of the Father in the Church just as we do, but He is the sovereign Lord and God of His Church and over His Church. Through His humanity, He was not simply the human manifestation of the Father, but the actual revelation of the Second Divine Person. For only the Son, the eternal image of the Father, became man. Our Lord's words to Philip (Jn. 14:9) are to be understood in the very sense in which Jesus Himself interpreted them by means of His question to the Apostles: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (Jn. 14:10). The soteriological meaning of Christ's prophetic office consists in dispelling religious ignorance, into which mankind has fallen through sin, and bringing him to the light of true knowledge. Christ attests the saving power of the truth with His words: "The truth will make you free" (Jn. 8:32).¹² But man partakes of this liberating and saving truth only by his *free decision* to embrace the faith, thus only by faith in Christ. The Encyclical ignores this point. The character of the prophetic office of Christ and the Church is briefly and tersely expressed in the missionary mandate of the Risen Lord (Matt. 28:18ff). But this is the very character which the Encyclical text neglects and omits. The reason is simple: The Pope's idea of revelation implies universal salvation. In the Encyclical's conception of the prophetic office of Christ and the Church, which flows from the principle of "double revelation," Christ's only function is to reveal man to himself by means of the revelation of the Father and His love. Christ Himself is the great prophet of universal salvation and the revealer of the deepest truth of man. Hence the prophetic office of the Church is the participation in *this* mission of Christ.

¹² Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

* Heading in the English Translation= "Eucharist and Penance."

20. The priestly office.*

Under this heading one would expect the Encyclical to offer a detailed presentation of the priesthood of Christ and the Church. That does not happen. Instead, more in the pastoral sphere, it furnishes an extensive treatment only of the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Penance, and attempts to correct certain post-Conciliar abuses. But the article begins with some basic principles which lay the dogmatic foundation for its subsequent remarks. Our question is: Does the Pope also understand the priestly office of Christ and the Church in the sense of universal salvation?

For an immediate focus on the essential point, we give a brief summary of the traditional teaching: This teaching holds that Christ brought to mankind not only a new knowledge of God and of His commandments (prophetic office), but through the work of the Redemption He has also restored the friendship between God and mankind, which was broken by sin.¹³

The central act of Christ's priestly office is the sacrifice of the Cross, which is the high point of the work of the Redemption in all of salvation history. But Christ's office as eternal High Priest includes not only the historical redemptive act, but also the continuing efficacy of Christ in heaven and on earth, therefore the application of the fruits of the Redemption to individual men throughout history. That is what makes up the whole economy of Christ's activity which is ordered to the sanctification and perfection of mankind, which He accomplished above all by the foundation of the Church.¹⁴

The most essential difference between the priesthood of Christ and that of the Church consists in this: The work of Redemption is Christ's own work, whereas the priesthood in the Church is a participation in the priesthood of Christ,

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 188ff, 274ff.

which comprises *the sacramental application of the fruits of the Redemption to individual men, fruits which Christ acquired for all men objectively.*

Therefore, in its presentation of the priesthood, the Encyclical must decide, at least indirectly, whether the Redemption is objectively or also subjectively universal, which touches the central question of universal salvation.

The article (20) begins with some general reflections on the Eucharist (RH 20,1):

In the mystery of the Redemption, that is to say in Jesus Christ's saving work, the Church not only shares in the Gospel of her Master through fidelity to the word and service of truth, but she also shares, through a submission filled with hope and love, in the power of His redeeming action expressed and enshrined by Him in a sacramental form, especially in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the center and summit of the whole of sacramental life, through which each Christian (*unusquisque Christianus*) receives the saving power of the Redemption, beginning with the mystery of Baptism, in which we are buried into the death of Christ, in order to become sharers in His resurrection, as the Apostle teaches (Rom. 6:3ff).

In the light of this teaching, we see still more clearly the reason why the entire sacramental life of the Church and of each Christian reaches its summit and fullness in the Eucharist. For by Christ's will there is in this sacrament a continual renewing of the mystery of the sacrifice of Himself that Christ offered to the Father on the altar of the cross, a sacrifice that the Father accepted, giving, in return for this total self-giving by His Son, who "became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8), His own paternal gift, that is to say the grant of new immortal life in the resurrection, since the Father is the first source and the giver of life from the beginning. That new life, which involves the bodily glorification of the crucified Christ, became an efficacious sign of the new gift granted to humanity, the gift that is the Holy Spirit, through whom the divine life that the Father has in Himself and gives to His Son (cf. Jn. 5:26; I Jn. 5:11) is communicated to all men who are united with Christ.¹⁵

united with Christ.¹⁵

The phrase: "The mystery of the Redemption is the saving work of Jesus Christ," says nothing about the objective or the subjective universality of the Redemption.

But can one say with the Encyclical that the Church shares, through her submission "filled with hope and love," in the power of Christ's sacramental redeeming action, therefore in the priesthood of Christ? The Church shares Christ's powers because of her nature as a Church, not because of subjective acts like fidelity and commitment. The Church possesses her powers by virtue of divine institution, establishment and authorization. She can exercise her offices carelessly and faithlessly, but by the same token, she can also do it with zeal, devotion and total commitment.

Thus the Encyclical's expression leaves no place for the objective fact of the founding of the Church by Christ as an "institution" with definite powers, with divine authorization and orders, rights and duties. But that was the very reason for the Catholic Church's claim to be the one true Church. That was her claim to legitimacy by virtue of divine right; that gave her the right to the lawful exercise of her office, both before the state and before other Christian denominations. Does the Encyclical's expression perhaps betray a new understanding of the Church?

That is clearly the case. If it is so baldly stated that *each* Christian (*unusquisque Christianus*), through the sacramental life, receives the saving power of the Redemption, then we are in the presence of a new "ecumenical" understanding of the sacraments and of the Church, then have Christians of all denominations – regardless of their understanding of the sacraments or of the question their apos-

¹⁵ The English translation should here be compared with the official Latin Text.

toxic succession – are made to share in the priesthood of Christ, then each Christian receives (*redemptoris eius actionis*) through the sacramental life in his respective denomination.

The sacramental life of the Christian begins with baptism. In the Pope's conception, Baptism might represent the sacramental basis of the ecumenical Church. But, as the Pope states, the reception of the saving power of Christ's redemptive act through the sacramental life in all denominations is realized in *all* of their sacraments. The Encyclical says this explicitly of the Eucharist, which is defined as the center and fullness of the sacramental life, from which each Christian draws the saving power of the Redemption. Thus it is only logical if the ecumenical efforts are directed towards the formulation of Eucharistic liturgies which all Christians can pray together. Then the rejection of the Mass of St. Pius V is fully understandable, since the rite was so decidedly Catholic!

But the Pope by no means leaves the Eucharist open to any arbitrary interpretation, neither inside nor outside of his Church. Therefore he describes the nature of the Eucharist above in the text as follows: "For by Christ's will there is in this sacrament a continual renewing of the mystery of the sacrifice of Himself that Christ offered to the Father on the altar of the cross." That is not necessarily the Catholic Church's pre-Conciliar doctrine on the Holy Mass. Quite the contrary, the formulation remains open to many different interpretations. That becomes abundantly clear upon comparison with the declarations of the Council of Trent, where it is emphatically stated that the Mass repeats Christ's sacrifice of the Cross, and does not merely commemorate it. What is more, the Mass, like the sacrifice of the Cross, is a sacrifice of propitiation, i.e. for the forgiveness of sins; it is "a real sacrifice, which Christ offers to God through the ministry of the priest" (D 940; 948-950). Furthermore, the Council of Trent describes the relation-

ship of the Sacrifice of the Mass to the Sacrifice of the Cross as follows: "It is one and the same victim, and the one who now offers Himself [Christ] through the ministry of the priest is the very same person as the one who offered Himself then on the Cross. Only the manner of offering is different" (D 940). The Church's participation in the priesthood of Christ is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

But the Encyclical's definition omits all the controversial points defined by the Council of Trent in opposition to the views of the Reformers: It remains an open question whether the Eucharist is a simple commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross, or whether it is a true sacrifice in itself. The sacrifice of propitiation is not even mentioned, nor is the nature and purpose of the priesthood. For the ecumenical distribution of the sacraments, they are apparently unimportant. The Encyclical's formulation remains open to an "ecumenical" understanding of the Eucharist.

If, according to the above quoted Encyclical text, the Father gave the Son the gift of "new immortal life in the resurrection" in return for His Son's total self-giving, then this Resurrection is no longer a Resurrection which takes place by Christ's own divine power, but rather a "raising up" by which the Father grants a "new immortal life in the resurrection." This presentation is not so much a reflection of the words of Holy Scripture as it is the expression of the Pope's theology, in which the idea of everything coming from the Father as from "the first source and the giver of life from the beginning," is coherently developed.

Finally the Encyclical says: "That new life, which involves the bodily glorification of the crucified Christ," hence of the Risen Christ, is at the same time an "efficacious sign of the new gift granted to humanity (*doni hominibus traditi*), the gift that is the Holy Spirit, through whom the divine life that the Father has in Himself and gives to His Son is communicated to all men who are

united with Christ.”

The Pope's constantly recurring thesis maintains that all men are united with Christ *a priori* through the Incarnation. That means that all men possess the gift of the Risen One, the Holy Spirit.

As we know, post-Conciliar theologians since Karl Rahner uphold the thesis of “anonymous Christianity,” according to which the *Church* is the sign of the saving presence of God's grace in all men and in all religions. The Encyclical goes even further, and is fully consistent, by declaring not only the Church, but also the Risen One as the “efficacious sign” of universal salvation! The theological principle of “double revelation” comes out once again: The Holy Ghost's inner gift of grace is given to all men (= revelation *a priori*), and is proclaimed to all men by the Risen Christ (= revelation *a posteriori*).¹⁶

That gives us the answer to the question which we posed at the outset: The Encyclical teaches the objective and subjective universality of the Redemption.

On the royal priesthood of the children of God, the Encyclical makes the following noteworthy statement (*RH* 20,2):

For by becoming “children of God” (Jn. 1:12), adopted sons (Rom. 8:23), we also become in His likeness “a kingdom and priests” and obtain “a royal priesthood” (Apoc. 5:10; I Pet. 2:9), that is to say we share in that unique and irreversible restoration of man and the world to the Father that was carried out once for all by Him, who is both the eternal Son (cf. Jn. 1:1-4; et al.) and also true Man.

¹⁶ Many times and on important occasions, John Paul II has expressed his conviction that the Holy Ghost “is present in the hearts of all men in a mysterious way” (e.g. Address to the Cardinals, Dec. 22, 1986, AAS 79 (1987), 1089; *Redemptoris Missio* 28). The Pope gave his shortest and clearest summary of the theology of Assisi in the address of Dec. 22, 1986.

In this text, the "royal priesthood" follows directly from the status as an adopted child of God. But as stated on numerous occasions, this privilege is a treasure of all mankind. That has noticeable consequences for the understanding of the offices of the Church, as will become clearer in the next article. Up until now we can say: On the basis of universal salvation, the sacramental life of Christians of all denominations is the very heart of Christianity, which however remains open for all mankind. – Unfortunately, the idea which the Encyclical text expresses, namely the restoration of the world to the Father, hardly bears upon the Encyclical's presentation as a whole.

We can conclude: In the Pope's remarks, one can discern a parallel in the structure of the prophetic and priestly offices. Just as Christ, as *Prophet*, receives divine revelation from the Father and, by revealing the Father and His love, reveals man to himself, so also Christ, as *Priest*, in return for His total self-giving on the Cross, receives the gift of a new immortal life in the resurrection, namely the Holy Ghost, who is granted to all mankind. The Risen Christ is the "efficacious sign" of this gift. Just as *the Church's participation in the prophetic office of Christ* consists in the fact that, in virtue of Christ's prophetic mission, she serves divine truth in the Church together with Him, so the Church also receives *a share in Christ's royal priesthood* on account of her devotion, and is thus in Christ a sign and instrument for the unity of all mankind.

St. Paul's words: "Let each man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (I Cor. 11:28), announce the shift of the Pope's attention to the sacrament of Penance. Both sacraments must ultimately be considered in the perspective of the "new Advent," as the conclusion of the chapter strongly emphasizes (*RH* 20,7):

In the Church, gathering particularly today in a special way around the Eucharist and desiring that the authentic Eucharistic community should become a sign of the

gradually maturing unity of all Christians, there must be a lively-felt need for penance ... Nevertheless, it is certain that the Church of the new advent, the Church that is continually preparing for the new coming of the Lord, must be the Church of the Eucharist and of Penance. Only when viewed in this spiritual aspect of her life and activity is she seen to be the Church of the divine mission, the Church *in statu missionis*, as the Second Vatican Council has shown her to be.

21. The kingly office.*

The Second Vatican Council, so begins the article, built up the picture of the Church as people of God. The Council thereby began with the very foundations of the Church itself (*ab ipsis fundamentis propriis*) and also highlighted the particularly royal character of the Christian vocation. The exact words are (*RH* 21,1):

In building up from the very foundations the picture of the Church as the People of God – by showing the three-fold mission (*munere*) of Christ Himself, through participation in which we become (*constituimur*) truly God's People – the Second Vatican Council highlighted (*qualitatem istam peculiarem*), among other characteristics of the Christian vocation, the one that can be described as “kingly.” ... [That means] the sharing in Christ's kingly mission (*munere*), that is to say the fact of rediscovering in oneself and others the special dignity of our vocation that can be described as “kingship.” This dignity is expressed in readiness to serve, in keeping with the example of Christ, who “came not to be served but to serve” (Matt. 20:38) ... Our sharing in Christ's kingly mission – His “kingly function” (*munus*) – is closely linked with every sphere of both Christian and human morality (*cum omni regione doctrinae moralis, tam christianae quam etiam humanae*).

* Heading in the English Translation=“The Christian Vocation to Service and Kingship.”

The text says the most important thing in parentheses, and casually drops a definition of the "people of God." This runs: We "become" the people of God by our participation in the triple office of Christ. Is that really correct? Yes, from the standpoint of the Encyclical and its double idea of the Church. No, from the standpoint of Catholic dogma:

– From the standpoint of Catholic dogma, we can say the following about the expression "people of God," which is necessarily the same as the Church: A Church which "becomes" or is founded by means of participation in the offices of Christ is not the Church of Christ. A Church which is constituted by participation in offices, that is to say in "functions," can itself only be a mere "function" and have only a "sense of identity" concerning its mission.¹⁷ The Encyclical's definition is clearly marked by existentialist, nominalist thinking, which dissolves all being into existence, all substance into acts and functions. In contrast, from the standpoint of Catholic doctrine, it must be said: The Church *was founded by Christ Himself*; and that is the main point. She is a visible institution, the Catholic Church founded by Christ. To this Church, which is an already existing natural and supernatural entity, Christ then "handed over the same powers and duties, which He had Himself received from the Father, that the Church might continue His mission."¹⁸ Just as there are no powers of Christ without Christ, so also there are no powers of the Church without the Church. But the Encyclical says something entirely different with its definition: the "people of God" is constituted, or "becomes" by means of participa-

¹⁷ Cf. Ludwig Rütli, *Zur Theologie der Mission [To a Theology of Mission]* (Munich 1972), pp. 257-345. – See further my rescension: *Theologie der Mission? [Theology of Mission?]*, in: *Theologie und Glaube [Theology and Faith]* (1973), pp. 342-361.

¹⁸ Thus Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Satis Cognitum* (1896); see Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

tion in the offices of Christ. The idea "people of God" is a slogan which serves as the vehicle for introducing a novel idea of the Church.

— From the standpoint of the Encyclical, that is to say of "double revelation" and the "double idea of the Church" (cf. Article 18), the definition is correct. According to this understanding of the Church, the invisible Church includes all mankind in Christ. Thus the "people of God," which "becomes" by means of participation in *the offices* (=the functions) of Christ, can only be a mere function and can only possess a "sense of identity" concerning its mission. This works out as follows:

If all men possess the grace of adopted children of God or "being in Christ" *a priori* as the very core of human nature, and that through the Incarnation of the Son of God, then all men are also radically equal as persons, then the royal dignity of the human person belongs to all men, then all men form an "ontological" organic unity in the one invisible Church which is mankind.

But that means that the visible "ecumenical Church" has her "ontological" foundation in the invisible Church, that the Church of mankind is basically the same nature as the ecumenical Church. Thus the ecumenical Church can possess only a "sense of identity" concerning her "function," which she fulfills in the invisible Church of mankind. And this consists in being a sign and instrument for the visible unity of all mankind in Christ. Her duty is to bring to light the treasures of grace which lie hidden in the desires and aspirations of mankind, to proclaim universally, to make all aware of the ontological unity of all mankind, and to bring out the hidden unity of mankind into a historical unity.

On the basis of "double idea of revelation," the other formulations in the above quoted text become clearly understandable: From the "sharing in Christ's kingly mission," the following postulate is derived in particular, that is "the fact of rediscovering in oneself and others the special

dignity of our vocation," our "kingship." In the preceding articles (18-20), we already noticed that all men are children of God (Jn. 1:12) and as such have attained (constituimur) the dignity of kingship (cf. 20,2). Thus one need only discover "in oneself and others" the royal dignity which all men possess. Whereas the "new man" is "constituted," or receives a *new being* through the gift of divine sonship (Jn. 1:12), the "people of God" are "constituted" by means of participation in the offices and tasks of Christ, hence through participation in Christ's functions. This is a logical application of the Pope's "double idea of revelation and of the Church."

Finally, man's royal dignity is expressed (*monstratur*) above in the text by the Christ's example of serving, and with that we are on the level of "both Christian and human morality," which is again consistent, if all men possess the treasure of divine sonship.

The Encyclical now sketches the picture of the (visible) Church and answers the question: who belongs to her. As a human society, the Church can of course be scientifically studied and defined according to the criteria which are applicable to any human society. However these criteria do not suffice in the case of the Church (*RH* 21,2).

The Encyclical develops the criteria in the particular case of the Church (*RH* 21,2):

For the whole of the community of the People of God and for each member of it what is in question is not just a specific "social membership" (*vinculo sociali*); rather, for each and every one what is essential is a particular "vocation" (*sed potius requiritur, tamquam res unicuique et omnibus necessaria, specialis 'vocatio'*). Indeed, the Church as the People of God is also – according to the teaching of St. Paul mentioned above, of which Pius XII reminded us in wonderful terms (*doctrinam mirabiliter a Pio XII expositam*) – "Christ's Mystical Body." Membership in that body has for its source a particular call, united with the saving action of grace (*Ius ad illud Corpus pertinendi pro-*

cedit ex particulari invitatione, ad quam actio salvifica gratiae accedit). Therefore, if we wish to keep in mind this community of the People of God (*Si vere conscii nobis esse cupimus huius communitatis Populi Dei*) ... we must see first and foremost Christ saying in a way to each member of the community: "Follow me" (Jn. 1:23). It is the community of the disciples, each of whom in a different way – at times very consciously and consistently, at other times not very consciously and very consistently – is following Christ. This shows also the deeply "personal" aspect and dimension (*proprietas*) of this society, which, in spite of all the deficiencies of its community life – in the human meaning of this word – is a community precisely because all its members form it together with Christ Himself, at least because they bear in their souls the indelible mark of a Christian (*proprium eius, qui Christianus est*).

– According to this text, the first, indispensable criterion for membership among the people of God is a "particular vocation." The reason given is: For the Church as people of God is also the "Mystical Body of Christ." This is proposed with a reference to St. Paul and to Pius XII (*Encyclical Mystici Corporis?*). But it is precisely the Apostle and Pius XII who explicitly demand faith, over and above a mere "particular vocation." Pius XII specifically requires the faith of the Catholic Church. Appropriately enough, the Encyclical makes no mention of this.

– The second criterion is "the right to membership" in the Mystical Body on account of a "particular call." In this text, such a "right" is compared with an "invitation" to a party or a dinner, which gives the "right" of admission. But there is no reference to Our Lord's parable of the invitation to the royal wedding feast (Matt. 22:1ff).

– The third criterion is the grace associated with the "particular invitation."

– The fourth criterion is that of the "community of the disciples" who follow Christ.

The Church is thus a kind of "loosely structured

Church¹⁹ which has a special “personal profile” all the same.

– The fifth criterion is the union of all the baptized (implied by “*signum indelebile*”) with Christ.

Faith is not even mentioned. Thus it forms no decisive criterion for membership in the Church.

In summary, then, the elements required for membership in the Church, the Body of Christ or the people of God, are the particular vocation, the particular invitation and the grace united with it, the personal readiness to follow Christ, and finally baptism. The Church is the community of all the baptized in Christ.

Faith is not mentioned here as a criterion, but we can add it to complete the list. For it is obvious that the notion of “Church” here described fully agrees with that of the “ecumenical Church,” sketched by the Encyclical in Article 11, along with the “ecumenical faith.” That becomes abundantly clear later on in the Encyclical text (*RH* 21,3):

The Second Vatican Council devoted very special attention to showing how this “ontological” community of disciples and confessors (*confessorum*) must increasingly become, even from the “human” point of view, a community aware of its own life and activity. The initiatives taken by the Council in this field have been followed up by the many further initiatives of a synodal, apostolic and organizational kind. We must, however, always keep in mind the truth that every initiative serves true renewal in the Church and helps to bring the authentic light that is Christ (*LG* 1), insofar as the initiative is based on adequate (*consentanea*) awareness of the individual Christian’s vocation and of responsibility for this singular, unique and unrepeatably grace by which each Christian in the community of the People of God builds up the Body of Christ. This principle, the key rule for the whole of Christian practice – apostolic and pastoral practice, practice of

¹⁹ After the last war, Josef Klein was known for his idea of a “loosely structured Church” (*Kirche der freien Gefolgschaft*).

interior and of social life – must with due proportion be applied to the whole of humanity and to each human being.

The Encyclical itself gives a clear definition of the “ecumenical Church”:

The whole of Christianity (= each Christian) forms the body of Christ. In face of this “ontological” community of the baptized disciples of Christ in the “imperfect unity” (cf. Art. 11) of the ecumenical Church, the division into countless confessions and denominations is a merely historical “human” question. She should work to establish a “human community” (= “perfect unity”), the goal of all ecumenical endeavors.

At the same time, the Pope formulates in the above quoted text nothing less than a *new, fundamental rule for the whole of Christian practice (primaria norma est totius vitae et actionis christianae)*. As we have seen (cf. RH 11), the principle of this universal Christian norm is the vital principle of the “ecumenical Church.”

But the Pope formulates not only this primary, universal norm for all Christianity – that is taken for granted, since he mentions it only in passing. What the text really wants to say is found in the main clause and touches all mankind: The principle (*principium*) which holds for the ecumenical Church holds also for non-Christians, for the whole of humanity and for each human being – of course with due proportion (*iusta proportione servata*). That means, as in Article 11, the application of the double idea of the Church, namely of the visible and the hidden Church, to all mankind. In the Pope's theology, the Mystical Body of Christ comprises all mankind in a wider sense, on various levels.²⁰ That is surely what he means by the expression “with due proportion.”

²⁰ Karol Wojtyła, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-118. – Part I, pp. 67-73.

The Encyclical urges all Christians, from the Pope down to the lowest worker, to apply the ecumenical principle to himself and to make it his own, to live by and to act upon this ecumenical awareness (cf. Art. 11). From this premise the Pope infers the office of royal service for the Church and for each Christian. The exact words are (*RH* 21,3):

It is precisely the principle of the "kingly service" that imposes on each one of us, in imitation of Christ's example, the duty to demand of himself exactly what we have been called to, what we have personally obliged ourselves to by God's grace, in order to respond to our vocation. This fidelity to the vocation received from God through Christ involves the joint responsibility (*commune officium conscientiae*) for the [whole] Church (*totam*) for which the Second Vatican Council wishes to educate all Christians. Indeed (*etenim*), in the Church as the community of the People of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit's (*a Spiritu Sancto*) working, each member has "his own special gift" (I Cor. 7:7; cf. 12:7,27; Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7), as St. Paul teaches. Although this "gift" is a personal vocation and a form of participation in the Church's saving work, it also serves others, builds the Church and the fraternal communities in the various spheres of human life on earth.²¹

On this analysis, the purpose of Vatican II was to educate the whole of Christianity to loyal observance of the office of "kingly service" as a consequence of the ecumenical principle. We can now summarize the Encyclical's doctrine on the Church's kingly office: The "kingly service" of each Christian consists in the imitation of Christ and is a participation in the redemptive work of the *ecumenical Church* led by the Holy Ghost.

After extensive reflections on "kingly service" after the example of Christ, the Encyclical says by way of summary

²¹ The English translation should here be compared with the official Latin text.

(*RH* 21, 5):

His Church made up of all of us, is "for men" in the sense that, by basing ourselves on Christ's example (cf. *LG* 36) and collaborating with the grace that He has gained for us, we are able to attain to "being kings," that is to say we are able to produce a mature humanity in each one of us. Mature humanity means full use of the gift of freedom received from the Creator when He called to existence the man made "in his image, after his likeness."

After the Encyclical has finished proving that, according to the doctrine of Christ, "the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service," the article (*RH* 21,6) closes:

The full truth about human freedom is indelibly inscribed on the mystery of the Redemption. The Church truly serves mankind when she guards this truth with untiring attention, fervent love and mature commitment and when in the whole of her own community she transmits it and gives it concrete form in human life through each Christian's fidelity to his vocation. This confirms what we have already referred to, namely that man is and always becomes the "way" for the Church's daily life.

What exactly is meant by man's self-actualization, by the Church's kingly service to mankind in God-given freedom after the example of Christ, was already analyzed thoroughly in Articles 12 and 17.

It is evident that the Encyclical hardly reflects pre-Vatican II teaching on the kingly office, on the power of jurisdiction belonging to Christ and through Him to the Church. Christ's kingly office or power of jurisdiction presupposes unredeemed mankind. The purpose of this office is to deliver mankind from their separation from God, which is a result of sin, and to set them on the way towards their supernatural end. And this way is none other than Christ, not merely as a lofty human example, but as the

Good Shepherd and King, as Legislator and Judge of all mankind, as sovereign Lord and God, who requires faith in Himself. "I am the Way" and "no one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6), *refers primarily to faith in Christ as the foundation of this way.* Secondly, Christ's words: "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36), hold for the kingly office of Christ and the Church. The office is not simply placed at the service of man and of mankind, but is meant to accomplish the purpose of the Redemption. It includes particularly the functions which bring about the establishment, growth and perfection of the supernatural kingdom of God.

Looking back on Chapter 4 as a whole, which relies on the new, deeper insight of Vatican II into the mystery of Christ and into the Church's nature and mission as the basis for Christ's triple office and the exercise of those offices needed in the modern world, there emerges a general outlook of concern for the welfare of man, whereby a central dogmatic theme is derived with astonishing coherence from the principles of "double revelation," hence of universal salvation. But the question remains: how can this conception be reconciled with Holy Scripture and the faith of the Catholic Church?

22. Mary, mother of the Church.*

The last article is dedicated to Mary, "Mother of the Church." During the Council, this was a controversial title. For the sake of dogmatic clarity, the use of the title was avoided in the Chapter: "The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church" of the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 60-65).²² But in his closing address at the end of the

²² Otto Semmelroth, Herder Commentary on *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 8, *LThK* XII, 326.

* Title in the English Translation= "The Mother in Whom We Trust."

third session, Paul VI declared the Mother of God as "Mother of the Church" (Nov. 21, 1964). In the inaugural Encyclical, John Paul II places Mary, the Mother of the Church, at the center of his final meditation on the mystery of the Redemption (cf. *RH* 22,2).

For a correct understanding of this new title of the mother of God, the idea of the Church is of course fundamental. That means that, in the Encyclical, we must also view the title of Mary, mother of the Church, in the framework of John Paul II's idea of the Church.

On the controversy over the new title during the Council, Otto Semmelroth, in his Herder-commentary makes some informative remarks, which go to the dogmatic heart of the matter and could help us towards a deeper understanding of the Pope's remarks in the Encyclical. There it is said:

As early as St. Augustine, the Church was said to play the role of the mother and the child. Considered as a whole, the Church is said to be the mother; considered in her members, she is said to be the children. The Church, considered as the community of salvation existing prior to the individual members, is the spiritual mother, into whose womb the individual faithful must enter as children, in order to partake of the life of grace given by Christ. From the earliest tradition, they are reborn to the life of grace in the womb of the Church through baptism. In this respect, the Church is herself the spiritual mother of the faithful. And since this very idea corresponds to the Catholic understanding of the Church, namely to see the Church as the community of salvation existing prior to the individual members, whereas the Protestant understanding of the Church during the Reformation saw the Church rather as the sum total of many individuals, one can understand why there are certain misgivings about calling Mary the mother of the Church. ... But if instead one means by "Church" the society of many individuals ... one can also call Mary mother of the Church, in addi-

tion to her undisputed spiritual motherhood.²³

It is obvious that the Reformation's understanding of the Church represents as it were the vehicle for the Pope's idea of the Church. However, the Pope's "double idea of the Church" has its peculiarities: It is much more broad-minded than that of the Reformers. More specifically, it includes not only all individuals as children of God in the visible, but also in the invisible Church, which comprises all mankind. Moreover, as a consequence of universal salvation, the visible Church is merely a "function" and has only a "sense of identity" concerning her mission. This is precisely the understanding of the Church which lurks beneath the Encyclical's remarks on Mary, the mother of the Church:

The Church, we read, who draws her life from Christ (the Universal Savior) in the mystery of the Redemption, wishes only one thing: that all men have the fullness of life in Christ, and have it more abundantly. The exact words are (*RH* 22,1):

This fullness of life in Him is at the same time for man. Therefore the Church, uniting herself with all the riches of the mystery of the Redemption, becomes the Church of living people, living because given life from within by the working of "the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 16:13) and visited by the love that the Holy Spirit has poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). The aim of any service in the Church ... is to keep up this dynamic link between the mystery of the Redemption and every man.

That brings up the question: Why does the Church become a Church "of living people," given life from within by the Holy Ghost, only by "uniting herself" with all the riches of the Redemption? The Encyclical's only answer can be: Because it was through the "opening made by Vatican

²³ *Ibid.*, in a paragraph on that subject, pp. 339ff.

II" that Christianity was first able "to reach a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" (cf. *RH* 11,3).

By reason of this more complete awareness, the Encyclical makes bold to keep up the "dynamic link between the mystery of the Redemption and every man" as the "aim of any service in the Church." From the standpoint of universal salvation, this aim in view is fully understandable.

From this all-embracing task of the Church, it becomes increasingly clear why "the Church is a mother" and why Mary is "the mother of the Church" (*RH* 22,2). The Pope's remarks on this subject have an ecumenical purpose. They should uphold tradition and still be recognized as the common patrimony of all Christians, of the ecumenical Church. Thus the Encyclical goes on (*RH* 22,2):

Accordingly, we who form today's generation of disciples of Christ [= all Christians] all wish to unite ourselves with her [Mary] in a special way. We do so with all our attachment to our ancient tradition and also with full respect and love for the members of all the Christian communities (*et simul plane reverentes et amore complectentes membra omnium Communitatum christianarum*).

After the Pope has turned to Christ, "who is Lord of the Church Lord of man's history on account of the mystery of the Redemption," he now turns to Mary, for nobody else can bring us "into the divine and human dimension of this mystery" better than she, for nobody "has been brought into it by God Himself as Mary has." Furthermore, it is in this "that the exceptional character of the grace of the divine Motherhood consists" (*RH* 22,3).

If nobody else can bring us "into the divine and human dimension of this mystery" (cf. *RH* 9;10) better than Mary the mother of the Church, then she will lead us into the mystery of universal salvation!

The Encyclical describes the nature of this motherhood as follows (*RH* 22,4):

The special characteristic of the motherly love that the Mother of God inserts in the mystery of the Redemption and the life of the Church finds expression in its exceptional closeness to man and all that happens to him. It is in this that the mystery of the Mother consists.

The Church, who "wishes to make this mystery her own in an ever deeper manner," recognizes her own way precisely in this: Man is the way for the Church (*RH* 22,4). That is how the Pope has introduced "the mystery of the Mother" into his conception of man as the way for the Church (cf. *RH* 13;14).

But the connection between the Father's love, which revealed itself in the Son, and the mother of the Son still needs to be specified. That connection is made in the following excerpt (*RH* 22,5):

The Father's eternal love, which has been manifested in the history of mankind through the Son whom the Father gave, "that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16), comes close to each of us through this Mother and thus takes on tokens that are of more easy understanding and access by each person (*offeritur per hanc Matrem atque hoc modo signa accipit ad intelligendum accommodatiora et facilliora cuique homini*). Consequently, Mary must be on all the ways for the Church's daily life.

As in the first article (*RH* 1,1) so also in the last article we get the quotation from St. John (3,16), which requires faith as a condition for salvation. But everything that lies between the first and last articles eliminates this condition. Just as the Father's love was manifested (*manifestus est*) in the history of mankind through the Son, so also in a motherly way through the mother of the Son. Both must always be present on the Church's way to man.

The Encyclical names yet a final aspect, which assigns Mary her place in the Pope's entire theology of the Redemption (*RH* 22,5):

Through her maternal presence the Church acquires certainty that she is truly living the life of her Master and Lord and that she is living the mystery of the Redemption in all its life-giving profundity and fullness. Likewise the Church, which has struck root in many varied fields of the life of the whole present-day humanity, also acquires the certainty and, one could say, the experience of being close to man, to each person, of being each person's Church, the Church of the People of God.

Since when has the Church struck root in all mankind or (literally) in all men (*universorum hominum*)? Only if all men are united with Christ in the sense of universal salvation. Only if all mankind is the invisible Church. In the Encyclical, the theology of the Redemption rests on this axiom. In this sense the last article is the mariological vision of the mystery of universal salvation, Mary is the "mother of the Church."

The humble call to prayer forms the Encyclical's impressive conclusion. That forms the link between the first and the last article, from the prayer of the Church in the Advent of our era to the prayer of the early Church in the Upper Room after Our Lord's Ascension. The Pope's request for prayer runs (*RH 22,6*):

Above all, I implore Mary, the heavenly Mother of the Church, to be so good as to devote herself to this prayer of humanity's new advent, together with us who make up the Church, that is to say the Mystical Body of her only Son. I hope that through this prayer we shall be able to receive the Holy Spirit coming upon us, and thus become Christ's witnesses "to the end of the earth," like those who went forth from the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

— The Pope's message is a new message, still more universal than that of the Risen One. It is the message of the "full dimension of the whole mystery of the Redemption" (cf.

RH 18,4), of universal salvation. It leads the Church and mankind towards Assisi!

Pope John Paul II's
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to the
PRAYER MEETING
OF RELIGIONS
IN ASSISI

Part II, Volume 2

The "Trinitarian Trilogy"
Redemptor Hominis, Dives in Misericordia,
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FOREWORD

The second part does not contain two volumes, as was originally planned, but three. The first volume deals with the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* [= *RH*], this second volume, *Dives in Misericordia* [= *DiM*], and the third *Dominum et Vivificantem* [= *DeV*].

The subject is still very much up to date. "Assisi 1986" was followed up by the subsequent meetings at Kyoto (1987), Rome (1988), Warsaw (1989), Bari (1990), Malta (1991) and finally in Brussels on the 14th-15th September 1992. The second prayer meeting with the Pope in Assisi (9th-10th January 1993) to which John Paul II and the presidents of the European bishops' conferences on the 1st December also invited "the other churches and Christian communities in Europe" as well as the Jews and Moslems, was meant "in a certain way to renew the remarkable meeting of the 27th October 1986" and "to be, as it were, a symbol and focus of prayer for all men of good will."¹ It was a sign of the new way in which Europe was to be evangelised. The original enthusiasm for united and inter-religious prayer for peace of the first meeting was, however, lacking. The planned prayer meeting in Jerusalem for September 1994 ought to have a new symbolic quality.²

It is quite possible to say with Francis Cardinal Arinze, the president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dia-

¹ Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition [hereafter abbreviated to *OR*, Eng.] from 9th December 1992, documents p. 1 (*Assisi — On the Way to Peace, Call of John Paul II and the Presidents of the European Bishops' Conferences for a Day of Prayer for Peace in Europe*).

² See *OR*, Eng., from 13th January 1993, p. 1 and 2ff. — Guido Horst, *Deutsche Tagespost*, 12th January 1993, p.3. — Lucio Brunelli, *30 Days*, January 1993, p. 11ff. — Concerning the meeting in Jerusalem see

logue, that John Paul II has made inter-religious dialogue "a mark of his pontificate." Such a dialogue is, as the Cardinal said in his speech in Nuremberg on 14th April 1989,

a meeting of heart and spirit between the followers of the different religions. It is a spiritual exchange between two believers on a religious plane. It is a joint journey to the truth and a working together on projects of common interest. It is an absolute religious partnership with no hidden aims or motives.

The high point of inter-religious dialogue is of course praying together, which John Paul II already put forward as the aim of his pontificate in his inaugural Encyclical (cf. *RH* 6,3) and put into practise for the first time in the history of the Church on 27th October 1986.³

In his message on 19th September 1992 to the sixth follow-up meeting in Brussels the Pope mentioned to the president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, how happy, grateful and joyful he is about inter-religious prayer for peace. He feels himself obliged to continue in the spirit of the first meeting at Assisi and asks everyone to live and spread the "spirit of Assisi."⁴ In this message John Paul II explains again how he sees the essence of this

Paulinus, 13th February 1994: "The next international prayer meeting of the world's religions for peace will be in September 1994 in Jerusalem. The yearly meeting which not only representatives of the various Christian churches but also Jews, Moslems, Buddhists and Animists take part in, is part of the tradition of the first inter-religious prayer for peace to which Pope John Paul II invited everyone to Assisi in 1986."

³ Johannes Dörmann, *Die eine Wahrheit und die vielen Religionen*. [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*]. — *Assisi: Anfang einer neuen Zeit* [*Assisi: Beginning of a new Age*] (Abensberg, 1988), pp. 125-182. Furthermore: *Theological Journey* [*Der theologische Weg*] Part I, pp. 15ff.; 26ff. and Part II/1, pp. 5ff.

⁴ *OR*, Eng., 23rd September 1992, pp. 1-2.

prayer meeting of the religions and how he wants it to be understood. The authentic interpretation of the Pope is as follows:

The prayer meetings themselves show more clearly the solidarity of the faithful of the various religions between themselves and are a sign for the world. They are an example and an encouragement for more understanding between peoples. The religions must be aware of their responsibility of working for the unity of humanity.

Prayer is the bond that unites most effectively because, thanks to it, the faithful meet each other where inequality, misunderstanding, resentment and enmities are overcome, namely before God, the Lord and Father of all. In so far as it is a true expression of the correct relationship with God and one's fellow man, it is already a positive contribution towards peace (Message to the 25th World day of peace, no. 4).⁵

According to the text "inequalities" are overcome in prayer before God, the Lord and Father of all. The Pope had already given the reason why he thinks this in his talk to the cardinals on 22nd December 1986 and he repeated it in his Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (Art. 29), "The meeting of religions in Assisi intended to emphasise clearly my conviction that 'all authentic prayer is from the Holy Ghost Who in a mysterious way is present in the heart of every man.'" ⁶ "Authentic prayer" meant concretely, in Assisi 1986, the representatives of the religions, in "radical faithfulness" to their respective "traditions" offering their "prayers" to their "divinities." Nonetheless these "prayers" were inspired by the Holy Ghost because He is "present in the heart of every man." In the end it is this con-

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Redemptoris Missio* (7th December 1990), *Deutsche Tagespost*, 24th January 1991, p. 8 — Pope's talk to cardinals of 22nd December 1986, 11 AAS 79 (1987), 1089.

viction of the Pope which is the reason behind the inter-religious prayers for peace. According to the Gospel, however, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Ghost as fruit of the Redemption into the hearts of Christ's disciples (Jn. 15:26f; 16:5ff.), in Whom we may say "Abba," Father. (cf. Rom. 8:15ff).

At his general audience at Castel Gandolfo on 9th September 1992 the Pope justified his generous interpretation of what authentic prayer is with reference to the well-known "restless heart" of St. Augustine and continued, "That is why the experience of prayer is a basic act common to believers of all religions, even those where the belief in God as a person has either completely disappeared or is obscured by false representations."⁷

From this point of view, inter-religious prayer which overcomes all differences is already a sign of the unity in the Holy Ghost of the believers of all religions.⁸ It was this conviction which made the Pope invite representatives of the world's religions to pray for peace in Assisi. This invitation alone is recognition enough of the power of the prayer of all religions to their various *Numina* to bring about peace; it also recognises the non-Christian religions as paths of salvation and means of revealing God.

The declared intention of the inter-religious prayer meeting in the "spirit of Assisi" is the "unity of mankind" which is supposed to be an implicit reality in the authentic prayer of all religions and therefore a "positive contribution towards peace."

This is an extraordinary viewpoint for the Pope to have. It does not take much to see how unrealistic an "*interpretatio christiana*" of completely different religious realities is. At the root of the Pope's behaviour lies his inadmissible generalisation of the following hypotheses which are simply in complete con-

⁷ OR, Eng. of 16th September 1992.

⁸ Already in *Sign of Contradiction [Zeichen des Widerspruchs]* (Seabury Press, New York, 1979), p. 19ff. — cf. Part I, pp. 49-59.

tradition with historical reality:

– The most effective bond of solidarity between the believers of all religions is prayer. But such a bond is nonexistent since each religion understands something else by the word “prayer.” The way of Buddha to enlightenment is self-Redemption, submersion (*jhana*), not “prayer.”

– The followers of very different religions are called “faithful” or “believers.” But depending on their religion they have a very different concept of what “Faith” is. It is impossible to generalise the uniqueness of faith in Christ which is the foundation of the specifically Christian belief.

– The “believers” of all religions meet in prayer before “God, the Lord and Father of all” and by this overcome their differences. But precisely in their “prayers” it is not before the one God of biblical revelation, the only “Lord and Father of all” that they stand but they turn to their own particular, very different “divinities.” Many not only have a “rather indistinct view of God as a person” but refuse even to recognise a personal God and Creator as Lord and Father.

– All religions have the “historical responsibility” of working for the “unity of mankind.” But this *per se* political, Freemasonic aim is not only foreign to the essence of Christianity but also to other religions.

The radical differences between the historical religions are not an obstacle for the Pope to talk about a “common experience of prayer” of the “believers of all religions” and about an “authentic prayer” of everyone in the Holy Ghost to God, “the Lord and Father of all.”

The Pope’s extremely subjective view quite simply ignores the given reality of historical religions. It places radically different realities under one Christian umbrella and thus puts forward an identity which simply does not exist.

The “God of Assisi” is not the God of the Bible. In the inter-religious prayer to the “one” God of all religions in the “unity of the believers of all religions” it is not just a question of making a hypothesis of the Pope a reality which is at odds

with it. It is a matter of the First Commandment!

Seen dogmatically the Pope's teachings and praxis are a complete *novum* for the Catholic Church. They are contradictory to the whole of Sacred Scripture and Tradition. It is unthinkable that a Pope before the Second Vatican Council would have closed his English address to the Head of State in the capital of an Islamic country in which Christians are bloodily persecuted and repressed under Islamic law in the name of Allah with the blessing "Baraka Allah as-Sudan" (Allah = God bless the Sudan) calling down Allah's blessing on that country.⁹ For the Moslem Allah is the God of the Koran. A Moslem would have to understand the Pope's intercessory prayer in Arabic as a confirmation of the legitimate spreading of Islam in the name of Allah.

By calling upon people to live and spread the "spirit of Assisi" the Pope has breathed this spirit into his own conciliar Church and her mission. The "spirit of Assisi" has long since seeped into the inner sanctuary of the Church, the celebration of the Eucharist. A clear expression of this may be found in the "prayer from India" which was printed in *Missio's* "Suggestions and Elements to Shape the Community Mass" and made a prayer after Communion in Aachen on World Mission Sunday 1992 (p. 11):

⁹ *OR*, Eng., 17th February 1993, p. 13. It would certainly have been possible to continue in English and in the Christian sense call upon the name of God concerning the terrible happenings in Sudan. — In his talk to the leaders of the various religious communities in Khartoum on 10th February 1993 the Pope said, "Here in Sudan I cannot omit to stress the high regard which the Catholic Church has for the followers of Islam" (*OR*, Eng., 13th February 1993, p. 13). — Since May 1983 there are said to have been over 1.3 million Sudanese killed (cf. *Die katholischen Missionen [The Catholic missions]*, Aachen, May/June 1994, p. 77).

Lord, you created
the continents.
You made men
differ in language and culture.
You make the rice grow
As long as man can remember.
You are the one
who appears in
the many faces of religions...

The “spirit of Assisi 1986” up to Assisi 1993 is also the spirit of John Paul II’s “Trinitarian Theology” on his way to the world day of prayer of the religions in the city of St. Francis.

INTRODUCTION

1. Presentation and method

The same presentation and method as in Part II, Volume 1 which dealt with the inaugural Encyclical will also be used for this commentary.¹

Dives in Misericordia is a well composed unity. The delicate language, style and composition that appear when the Encyclical is closely examined show how carefully it has been put together. Often the precise meaning of a theological statement is seen only after the whole style and language has been clearly taken into account. It would, however, be outside the scope of this study to give a full stylistic analysis. This will be done by way of example in two particular passages. (see *DiM* 1.1; 3).

The main point of this study is once again to understand the Pope. Karl Lehmann sees no difficulty here. In his Herder commentary on *Dives in Misericordia* he writes,

Pope John Paul II speaks an especially simple and rousing language in his new Encyclical on divine mercy. That is why it is not necessary to write a detailed commentary explaining each sentence. The text of the Encyclical is mostly self explanatory. A commentary therefore just needs to show the basic perspectives of the links with the Second Vatican Council and earlier statements of the present Pope as well as the importance of this document.²

¹ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 43-45.

² *Der bedrohte Mensch und die Kraft des Erbarmens. Die Enzyklika über das Erbarmen Gottes Papst Johannes Pauls II. (Threatened Man and the Power of Mercy. Pope John Paul II's Encyclical on Divine Mercy).* Revised German translation and commentary by Karl Lehmann (Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1981).

Lehmann could be underestimating the difficulties of interpretation. Really understanding the Pope means understanding him from his own theological suppositions. These are, however, by no means obvious. John Paul II's *nouvelle théologie* [new theology] has its own theological principles of knowledge and thence its own individual form. That is also why our commentary starts from the Pope's principles of knowledge as they were deduced from *Sign of Contradiction* in Part I.³ The results will be used as a sure working hypothesis which will nonetheless be adapted to *Dives in Misericordia*.

By looking at the actual words used in the Encyclical we will try to find the main theological points and to show how John Paul II's theology continues to develop in *Dives in Misericordia*. In this way our commentary will accompany the Encyclical.

The extensive quotation of the text of the Encyclical in the theologically fundamental first section of the Encyclical (Ch. I-V) is necessary so that the reader can see in an authentic manner each theological statement, its language and argumentation, together with the Pope's way of looking at things. The way the Pope, because of the theological foundation of his personal concept of revelation, subtly changes the meaning of Sacred Scripture and Tradition can only be seen in longer texts in their context.

2. Plan and layout

The plan and layout of the commentary follow that of *Dives in Misericordia*:

The Encyclical is divided into 8 chapters with 15 articles:

I-V: fundamental theological development of the theme (1-9).

VI: A picture of our generation which is so much in need of divine mercy (10-12).

³ See Part I pp. 47-98. But also Part II/1, pp. 3-36 [entire INTRODUCTION].

VII-VIII: God's mercy in the mission of the Church (13-15).⁴

The edition of the text of the Encyclical follows the official English translation published by the Catholic International News Service.* Often the translation does not accurately convey the sense of the Latin text.⁵ Where the English text departs from the Latin original this will be demonstrated by quoting from the original Latin.

⁴ The Latin text has no special title for each chapter or article. The titles of the chapters and articles in the official English translation are only followed in part. Where they differ they are noted. The titles of the individual paragraphs in the main theological section (1-5) have been added.

* Also available from Pauline Books & Media, Boston, MA, *The Mercy of God—Dives in Misericordia* (no date).

⁵ Cf. the commentary by Karl Lehmann, *op. cit.*, p. 116-118. — Comments on the official English translation will only be made where the Latin original seems to require it.

DIVES IN MISERICORDIA:
ENCYCLICAL OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
ON THE DIVINE MERCY*

Title—Address—Salutation

The title *Dives in Misericordia* contains *in nuce* the whole theological and pastoral programme of the Encyclical. Concerning how mercy is to be understood in the Encyclical Karl Lehmann remarks in his commentary,

Mercy thus understood can take the world off its hinges. Merciful love is the strongest revolutionary power in the world. In this sense the theme of the Pope's second Encyclical contains an explosive spiritual potential to change inter human relations and also socio-political structures.¹

The idea of thoroughly changing the world through merciful love is in harmony with the essence of the Christian faith and the mission of the Church.² When the love of the

* *Litterae Encyclicae Ad Episcopos, Sacerdotes et Christifideles totius Catholicae Ecclesiae: de Divina Misericordia. Joannes Paulus PP. II. — Venerabiles Fratres, Dilecti Filii et Filiae, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. — AAS Vol. 72 (1980), 1177-1232.*

¹ Karl Lehmann, *Der bedrohte Mensch und die Kraft des Erbarmens. Die Enzyklika über das Erbarmen Gottes Papst Johannes Pauls II. [Threatened Man and the Power of Mercy. Pope John Paul II's Encyclical on Divine Mercy.]* Revised German translation and commentary by Karl Lehmann (Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1981).

² Johannes Dörmann, *Mission und Heilsangebot [Mission and the Offer of Salvation]*, in Adolf Exeler, (pub.), *Fragen der Kirche heute [Questions*

Gospel came into the world it brought with it in fact the “strongest revolutionary power.”³ But it is not simply a matter of the strongest revolutionary power in “the world.” The love of the Gospel is of divine origin. It is “not of this world.” Bearing in mind “political theology,” “liberation theology” and “theology of the revolution” we must be careful. Making brothers of the Gospel of love and the teaching of Marxism and Neomarxism is rather macabre.⁴

In his presentation of the Encyclical Lehmann sees no sign of a misinterpretation of this “revolutionary power” of the Gospel, but rather the joining of the classical social teaching of the Church with the heart of the “Christian good news of Salvation” and in it an enriching of what has been taught so far “in a new dimension.”⁵ This joining has also been a part of the classical social teaching of the Church but it takes place in the Encyclical through a new definition of mercy and in a completely new way.

Dives in Misericordia is not written, as *Redemptor Hominis* was, for the Church and humanity but only for the “bishops, priests and faithful of the whole Catholic Church.” The address is as follows, “Venerable brethren, beloved sons and daughters.” An issue is not made of the relationship with the non-Christian religions. Since however the Pope’s *nouvelle théologie* is based fundamentally on universal-religious principles *Dives in Misericordia* is another milestone on the way to Assisi.

for the Church Today] (Würzburg 1971), pp. 229-236.

³ Johannes Dörmann, *Die universale Mission der Kirche vor der Herausforderung der einheimischen Kulturen* [The Church's Universal Mission Faced With the Challenge of Native Cultures], in Johannes Dörmann, (pub.) *Weltmission in der Weltkrise* [World Mission in a World Crisis] (St. Augustin 1978), pp. 9-20.

⁴ Johannes Dörmann, *Theologie der Mission?* [Theology of the Mission], in *theologie und glaube* [Theology and Faith] (Paderborn 1973), pp. 342-361; Johannes Dörmann, series of articles *Kirchliche Basisgemeinden* [Basic Communities in the Church], in *Der Fels* [The Rock] (Regensburg 1984), No. 2-no. 6.

⁵ Karl Lehmann, *op. cit.* p. 112.

CHAPTER I

“WHO SEES ME, SEES THE FATHER” (CF. JN. 14:9)

The first chapter contains in two articles the plan (*DiM 1*) and a sketch (*DiM 2*) of the Encyclical.

1. Plan of the Encyclical *

The Pope first formulates the theme of the Encyclical (*DiM 1.1*), then he shows the relationship with his first Encyclical (*DiM 1.2-4*)

1.1 Theme and main points

The Encyclical begins with the programmatic sentences (*DiM 1.1*):

“God..., who is full of mercy” (Eph. 2:4), was revealed as a Father by Jesus Christ: it is His very Son who, in Himself, has manifested Him and made Him known to us. (cf. Jn. 1:18; Heb. 1,1ff.). Memorable in this regard is the moment when Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, turned to Christ and said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied”; and Jesus replied, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me...? He who has seen me has seen the Father” (cf. Jn. 14:8ff.). These words were spoken during the final discourse at the end of the Paschal meal which was followed by the events of those holy days when it became obvious to everyone that “God..., who is full of mercy, for his

* Title in the English translation, “The Revelation of Mercy.” The English translation has no titles for the different sub-articles like this commentary.

exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ" (Eph. 2:4ff.).

The first sentence gives the theme the second shows the main points.

The English translation of the first sentence is imprecise and does not completely express the fullness of the Latin original. The subtle way in which the Pope constructs his sentences, however, requires a more exact rendering of what is said especially when dealing with this key text of the Encyclical's theme.

The Latin text is as follows: "*Dives in Misericordia Deus* (cf. Eph 2:4) *ipse quidem est nobis quem Christus Iesus revelavit ut Patrem: immo quem ostendit nobis ac demonstravit in sese Filius nempe eius* (cf. Jn. 1:18; Heb. 1:1ff.)." Which literally translated means,

It is God Himself who is rich in mercy, whom Jesus Christ has revealed as Father, indeed whom the Son showed and made known to us in Himself.

This formulation of the theme gives the point of departure (*Qua in re*) for marking the Encyclical's main point: "Who has seen me has seen the Father."

Theme and emphasis are presented in biblical raiment (Eph. 2:4; Jn. 1:18; 14:8ff.; Heb. 1:1ff.). Nonetheless the formulation of the theme seems on closer inspection rather odd. Why is "*Deus*" moved in the quotation from Scripture Eph. 2:4 (= *Deus autem, qui dives est in misericordia*, becomes *Dives in misericordia Deus*) in connection with the Father who is not mentioned in Eph. 2:4? The following paragraph answers this (*DiM* 1.2).

1.2 "Double revelation": The Encyclical's theological principles of knowledge

The Pope shows the connection and relation of his first Encyclical to *Dives in Misericordia* (*DiM* 1.2):

Following the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and with reference to the special needs of our time, I dedicated the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* to the truth about man who is revealed to us in his fullness and depth in Christ. A need no less important in these critical and by no means easy times requires me to once again go into the mystery of Christ in order to discover in Him the face of the Father who is the "Father of mercy and the God of all consolation" (II Cor 1:3). In the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* [= GS] we read, "Christ the new Adam, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling," and he does this "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love" (GS 22).

The words that I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference—not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way—to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love.

Dives in Misericordia is based on *Redemptor Hominis*. Both Encyclicals have the same plan.

Fr. R. Tucci the head of Radio Vatican showed in a very striking way the relationship of the two Encyclicals to one another when he presented *Dives in Misericordia* by comparing them with a painting in two parts: the first picture shows man in his great dignity, the second God in His mercy.¹

This diptych is an organic whole. *Dives in Misericordia* is not only the thematic continuation of *Redemptor Hominis* but also the completion of its organic unity. The mutual ordering of both Encyclicals to each other matches the theological principle of knowledge: the "double revelation."

This principle which Cardinal Wojtyla drew from *Gaudium*

¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, German ed. [hereafter abbreviated to OR, dt.] 120 (1980) of 3rd December 1980 (no. 280, pp. 5 & 8).

et Spes (22, 1-2) has been dealt with in detail in vols. I and II/1.² That is why it is enough here with reference to the present quoted text to pick out the essential:

The "truth about man" or "the full dignity of his nature" is the "being in Christ" which has been given in an inalienable manner to the whole of humanity without any condition *actu uno* by the act of Creation and each individual man from the first moment of his existence participates in this because the Son of God by His Incarnation has formally united Himself with each man.³ This "*a priori* revelation" in the depths of human existence is the axiom of universal salvation. The Pope's Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* is dedicated to this "truth about man." The thesis of universal salvation then is obviously the presupposition of the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*.

The "truth about man" is made known in and through Christ by means of the "revelation of the Father and His (merciful) love." The Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* is dedicated to this historical "*a posteriori* revelation." It makes known to the redeemed man the "full dignity of his nature."

Hence the "double revelation," as Cardinal Wojtyła already stressed, has *per se* an "anthropocentric character."⁴

It is now possible to answer the question which after the proper formulation of the Encyclical's theme was still open. The formulation runs (*DiM* 1.1):

It is God Himself who is rich in mercy, whom Jesus Christ has revealed as Father, indeed whom the Son showed and made known to us in Himself.

It is clear: the theme agrees with the definition of the "*a posteriori* revelation" and has the same content. Thus the Pope

² Cf. Part I, pp. 78-123; Part II/1, pp. 18-36.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cf. *Sign of Contradiction*, (Seabury Press, New York, 1979), pp. 117ff.

has already made clear in the first sentence of his Encyclical that *Dives in Misericordia* rests on the foundation of his theological principle of knowledge of the "double revelation" just like *Redemptor Hominis* and must be understood in this way.

The declared aim of the Encyclical, "to discover the face of the Father in the mystery of Christ" is thus the development of the "*a posteriori* revelation" in the sense of the proposed understanding of revelation. What is specific about *Dives in Misericordia* is the stress laid on of the visibility of the Father in Jesus Christ. The quotation, "Who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9), appears many times in important places in the Encyclical (*DiM* 1.1; 4.12; 7.6; 8.6; 13.2). By this central idea the Father is likewise brought into the realm of experience and as it were made the subject of the revelation in the history of salvation.

The "double revelation" principle determines therefore the whole construction of the Encyclical. That is to say, the *a priori* revelation is always presupposed and, therefore, universal salvation. The theme of *Dives in Misericordia* is to be understood in the sense of the historical "*a posteriori* revelation" as a means of interpreting the *a priori* revelation. This suggests a more precise consideration of the well thought out formulation of the theme. It contains three points:

- Jesus Christ has revealed the God rich in mercy as Father.
- The Son has showed Him and made Him known to us in Himself. Hence the emphasis:
 - With the words, "Who has seen me has seen the Father" Jesus Christ Himself tells us that we see the God rich in mercy as Father in Him.

The three statements taken in themselves seem to represent the sense of the quotation from St. John's Gospel. But they are to be understood in the sense of the Pope's idea of revelation and have undergone therefore an inner, almost imperceptible change: they are to be taken as a means of communicating the theory of universal salvation.

For a better understanding of the problem and of the mat-

ter itself we should ask three questions about the three statements:

– Certainly Christ has made the God rich in mercy known to us as Father. But does that mean that Christ revealed Him simply “as Father” thus “only” as Father?

Christ Himself speaks about God the Father, from “my and from your Father.” The Christian terminology presupposes a Trinitarian God and talks therefore about God the Father but also about God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Christian revelation knows the merciful God not only “as Father” but also “as Son” and “as Holy Ghost.” It is dogma that “all God’s external activities are common to all three Persons.”⁵ By the way the theme is formulated the revelation of the merciful God can be reduced to simply “God as Father” and only “as Father.” To reduce Christian revelation from a trinitarian God to a “Father God” in such a way would be modalistic.

– The second statement leads in the same direction. Has Christ really made immediately visible for us the God rich in mercy and only “as Father”?

The thought that God has appeared to us in Jesus Christ occurs throughout St. John’s Gospel. But it is rather the Son of God made man in whom we see the “glory of God.” That is how John the Evangelist gives witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ. The Evangelist already gives the foundation of this divinity in the prologue to his Gospel: The Word, which is God, “became flesh and dwelt amongst us. And we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). In faith therefore we see the divine glory of the “only begotten of the Father,” not the Father Himself. St. John says the same at the beginning of his first epistle, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

⁵ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* [*Grundriß der katholischen Dogmatik*], trans. Patrick Lynch (Herder Book, St. Louis, 1954), p. 80-81.

and our hands have handled, of the word of life, that we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you" (I Jn. 1:1). This applies only to the Son not to the Father.

The *Logos*, the eternal Son became flesh and dwelt amongst us, not the Father. The incarnate Son of God offered the redemptive sacrifice on the Cross, not the Father. The redemptive sacrifice is not only the revelation of the Father's love but also the work of the Son which He offered due to His own divine authority and love.

– Did Christ by saying, "Who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9) really only reveal the mystery of "God as Father" and His love?

These majestic words of Jesus are really saying to Philip first of all that the person who is speaking to him is God Himself as His Father is and for that reason embodies for the disciples the essence of the Father as Son. It means that from the knowledge of Jesus Christ knowledge of the Father must necessarily follow. It communicates the essential unity of the Father and the Son (cf. Jn. 10:30). It is not a modalistic statement. The Son is also not only the revealer or the medium of "revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love." The Son Himself is God and reveals Himself through His word and ministry as the consubstantial Son of the Father. Christ Himself tells the apostle Philip how the relationship between the Father and the Son is to be understood, "Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (Jn. 14:10).

The question remains: how are we to understand the redemptive work of Christ if this has already been determined by the Pope's special way of looking at revelation and the theme and emphasis of the Encyclical and if the "truth about man" is "announced" to man in and through Christ only via the revelation of God as Father and His merciful love? The answer is to be found in the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*.

Digression: Concerning the artistic way in which the Encyclical is written

Dives in Misericordia is a cleverly composed and well rounded unity. This aspect should be taken into consideration when judging the intention of a particular statement within the text. This is the case for the whole Encyclical but can only be gone into detail in this commentary with two examples. The first example is in the first paragraph of the Encyclical which is reproduced here with some non-essential omissions.

“It is God Himself who is rich in mercy,” (Eph. 2:4) whom Jesus Christ has revealed as Father, indeed whom the Son showed and made known to us in Himself (cf. Jn. 1:18; Heb. 1:1ff.). Memorable in this regard is the moment (*Qua in re*) when Philip...turns to Jesus with the request, “Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us,” and he receives the answer, “Who has seen me has seen the Father” (cf. Jn. 14:8ff.). These words were spoken...at the end of the Paschal meal which was followed by the events of those holy days during which confirmation was to be given once and for all of the fact that “God..., who is full of mercy, for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ” (Eph. 2:4ff.).

The artistic formulation so rich in biblical references has already been commented on in the analysis of the theme. It remains to analyse the careful way in which it is written and the use of biblical texts.

The title of the Encyclical which refers to Eph. 2:4 makes the reader ask himself what St. Paul himself is saying in that verse in his epistle. The Apostle is describing (Eph. 2:1-9) the earlier way of life of the Christians who were formerly heathens or Jews when they were still under the influence of Satan and “by nature children of wrath” (Eph. 2:1-3). But then God’s mercy and love brought about a change (cf. Eph. 2:4). This change says St. Paul is the Redemption as a passage from the death of sin to life. It happens with and in Christ by grace

because of faith (Eph. 2:8).⁶

Starting the Encyclical with Eph. 2:4 does not mean that John Paul II intends to make the Apostle's teaching on the Redemption the theme of his Encyclical. If that were the case then it would be impossible for the Pope to continue teaching universal salvation in *Dives in Misericordia* as he did in *Redemptor Hominis*.

The careful way in which the text has been put together has the following structure: The Encyclical begins with "*Dives in Misericordia Deus*" from Ephesians (2:4) but does not quote directly (it changes the place of the word *Deus*) but then after the first few words interrupts this with the insertion of the theme and main points of the Encyclical before taking up the text again at the end of the paragraph and continuing to the end of the sentence.

It is clear then that Eph. 2:4 is only the framework for the formulation of the theme and main points. It is not Eph. 2:4 but the *insertion* which is more important. Starting the Encyclical with Eph. 2:4 is simply a means of giving the Encyclical its impressive title. The quotation is not exegetically developed. It is simply the point of departure for the formulation of the theme of how the Pope defines revelation. Thus the Pope's universal salvation thesis is put programmatically at the start of the Encyclical.

When the Pope finally comes back to Eph. 2:4ff. and quotes (almost) the whole sentence this is not in relation to what St. Paul is talking about in his epistle but rather the "events of those holy days" at the end of the Paschal meal,

during which confirmation was to be given once and for all of the fact that "God..., who is full of mercy, for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ" (Eph. 2:4ff.).

⁶ Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Der Brief an die Epheser* [*The Epistle to the Ephesians*] (Göttingen 1968), NTD VIII, pp. 64ff.

“The events of those holy days” are not, however, interpreted in the sense of St. Paul’s teaching on the Redemption but rather according to the Pope’s concept of revelation, that is, universal salvation (cf. *DiM* 7-8). The Encyclical never talks about those who are “by nature children of wrath” as St. Paul does (cf. Eph. 2:1-3) and who must first be redeemed from this state, he only talks about man “in the full dignity of his nature.” Eph. 2:4 only gives the title. For the true meaning of the Encyclical it has no importance. It turns out to be just an artistic turn of style.⁷

1.3 Man is the Way of the Church

Just as in *Redemptor Hominis*, in *Dives in Misericordia* the Pope gives a picture of our present generation after the main theological part (*DiM* 10-12) in order to confront it with the Father’s mercy in the mission of the Church (*DiM* 13-15). In this introduction he just defines the Church’s central task in our needy times. He joins to the last sentence of the previous paragraph (*DiM* 1:2): “Man and man’s lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love” and continues (*DiM* 1:3):

To turn oneself to this mystery is called for by the varied experiences of the Church and of contemporary man. It is also demanded by the pleas of many human hearts, their sufferings and hopes, their anxieties and expectations. While it is true that every individual human being is, as I said in my Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, the way for the Church, at the same time the Gospel and the whole of Tradition constantly show us that we must travel this way with every individual just as Christ traced it out by revealing in Himself the Father and His love (*GS* 22). In Jesus Christ, every path to

⁷ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 46-49.

man, as it has been assigned once and for all to the Church in the changing context of the times, is simultaneously an approach to the Father and His love. The Second Vatican Council has confirmed this truth for our time.

It is man whose deepest essence is revealed to man by Christ through the revelation of the Father and His love. The anthropocentrism of this way of looking at revelation determines the anthropocentric character of the Church's mission. The motto from *Redemptor Hominis* is also valid for *Dives in Misericordia*: "Man is the way in the Church."⁸

The Pope, however, goes beyond his first Encyclical when, calling on "the Gospel and the whole of Tradition" he says that this way has been traced out by Christ to the Church by "revealing in Himself the Father and His love" (*perinde ac designavit illam (viam) Christus, cum Patrem in se aperiret eiusque amorem*). What is compared, therefore, is the revelation of the Father in Christ Himself. That is why explains the Pope "that way" which leads from Christ to man is at the same time the way that leads "to the Father and His love" (*Quotiens igitur in Christo ad hominem via illa dirigitur, quae semel Ecclesiae commissa..., totiens Patri obviam proceditur et eius amori*). The English text of the Encyclical loses the sense of the Latin original. In the Latin it does not say that "every" but "that" (*illa*), that is, the previously mentioned way leads "in Christ to man" and at the same time to the Father also. "That way" is, however, so unusual that it needs some critical explanation.

Of course the Church, with every man, must go along the path shown by Christ. But Christ's words are not, "Man is the way" but "I am the way" (Jn. 14:6). That is why the Church's motto should be Christ—and not man!—is the way of the Church.⁹ But this well known way of the *Imitation of Christ* is

⁸ Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 14.—Part III/1, pp. 187-191.

⁹ *Ibid.*

not "that way" which the Encyclical is talking about. Here, and this sentence must be read twice, it is talking about a way by which *every man* in himself is to reveal the Father and His love "just as *Christ* in Himself revealed the Father and His love."

Christ could reveal the Father in Himself because He is the consubstantial Son of the Father. That is why He could also say, "Who sees me sees the Father." This unique revelation of the Father in Christ, which is because of the Incarnation of the *Logos*, is according to the text of the Encyclical the way shown by Christ which the Church with every man "has to" go.

We are faced with the question: how shall man, every man, "reveal the Father and His love in himself" as Christ "revealed the Father and His love in Himself"? And from this parallel comes quite logically the question: how shall man, every man, be able to say, as Christ said, "Who sees me sees the Father"? And the Church is supposed to awaken this consciousness of superhuman, divine dignity in every man!

How should this claim be understood? Is it at all possible to understand it or can it be understood?

The claim is not some careless statement but a well thought out consequence from the Pope's concept of revelation. From the anthropocentrism of the concept of revelation: "Christ announces man to man himself but he does this by means of the revelation of the Father and His love (cf. Jn. 17:6)" follows on from the anthropocentrism of the Church's mission according to the motto: "Man is the way in the Church."

For a man to be truly man for the Pope means "that the Son of God has (formally) united Himself by His Incarnation to every man."¹⁰ By this man has "being in Christ" *a priori* within himself as his *raison d'être* for being man. "Christ's being" is like every man's "being in Christ" the "being the Son" of the

¹⁰ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 117-119.

Father. Just as the revelation of the Father in Christ is founded on the Incarnation of the Son so also the revelation of the Father in every man is founded on this very Incarnation of the Son in so far as the Son by His Incarnation unites Himself formally to every man and has communicated "being in Christ." But only when "Christ's being" is identical with the "being in Christ" of every man can one say that every man reveals the Father in himself as Christ does. The inevitable consequence of this parallel is: either man is God—like Jesus Christ or God is man—like Jesus Christ.

This problem isn't new. It was already dealt with in the first part when we analysed Cardinal Wojtyla's concept of revelation which essentially comes from Henri de Lubac.¹¹ Cardinal Siri draws the same conclusion from de Lubac's concept of revelation:

Father de Lubac says that Christ, by revealing the Father and through being revealed by Him, reveals man to man himself in the end. What can this proposition mean? Either Christ is merely man or man is divine. Perhaps these conclusions are not so clearly expressed but they always lead to this conception of the supernatural which is implicitly present in human nature; from there the way is open, without wanting it consciously, to a fundamental anthropocentrism.¹²

The Pope does not exclude a "fundamental anthropocentrism" in his theology but rather takes it up resolutely and makes it the main point of his considerations (cf. *DiM* 1.4).

1.4 The organic link between anthropocentrism and theocentrism

This is what the Encyclical has to say about the relationship

¹¹ Part I, pp. 95-98.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 97.

between anthropocentrism and theocentrism in the Church's theology and mission (*DiM* 1.4):

The more the Church's mission is centred upon man—the more it is, so to speak, anthropocentric—the more it must be confirmed and actualised theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father. While the various currents of human thought both in the past and at present have tended and still tend to separate theocentrism and anthropocentrism, and even to set them in opposition to each other, the Church, following Christ seeks to link them up in human history, in a profound and organic way. And this is also one of the basic principles, perhaps the most important one, of the teaching of the last Council. Since, therefore, in the present phase of the Church's history we put before ourselves as our primary task the implementation of the doctrine of the great Council, we must act upon this principle with faith, with an open mind and with all our heart. In the Encyclical already referred to, I have tried to show that the deepening and the many-faceted enrichment of the Church's consciousness resulting from the Council must open our minds and our hearts more widely to Christ. Today I wish to say that openness to Christ, who as the Redeemer of the world fully "reveals man to himself," can only be achieved through an ever more mature reference to the Father and His love.

The text contains a thesis (a) and an *adhortatio* (b), which need to be gone into further.

a) The thesis is as follows: the more the Church's mission (*Ecclesiae opus*) is anthropocentric the more it must be confirmed theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father (*theocentricale ratiōne: ordinandum nempe in Christi [sic] Iesu ad Patrem*).

The thesis is the last part of the development of the Encyclical's theme (*DiM* 1.1): from the Pope's concept of revelation (*DiM* 1.2) we get the anthropocentric motto for the Church's mission "man is the way in the Church" (cf. *DiM* 1.3). The Church's mission is once again concentrated anthro-

pocentrically on man "in Christ" and at the same time directed towards the Father theocentrically (*DiM* 1.4).

The whole train of thought is nothing more than a logical application of the Pope's concept of revelation taken from *Gaudium et Spes* (22) on the Church's mission.

The anthropocentrism and theocentrism of this concept of revelation can be presented as follows:

"Christ announces man to himself." This revelation of man "in and through Christ" is obviously anthropocentric. It concentrates on man.

But the revelation of man occurs in and through Christ "by means of the revelation of the Father and His love": This historical revelation is directed theocentrically towards the Father "in and through Christ" in so far as it reveals the Father; and at the same time it concentrates on man anthropocentrically in so far as the revelation of the Father in and through Christ "reveals man to himself."

The "double revelation" in and through Christ is thus both anthropocentrically concentrated on man and theocentrically directed towards the Father, but *per se* and on the whole it has an "anthropocentric character" as Cardinal Wojtyla already showed in *Sign of Contradiction* (p. 120): it reveals "the mystery of man," it "deals therefore with man."¹³

From this anthropocentrism and theocentrism of the Encyclical's concept of revelation we get the mission of the Church which derives from it.

With the thesis of an organic link of anthropocentrism and theocentrism in revelation and the Church's mission the Pope comes to the heart of his whole theology: to his concept of revelation which affects everything else.

Thus we may understand the decisiveness with which he rejects all other ways of looking at revelation "past and present." And he justifies himself by calling on the highest of authori-

¹³ Cf. Part I, pp. 110-123.

ties: Christ Himself, "perhaps the most important idea" of the last council and *Redemptor Hominis*. Apart from that he gives no other justification but just an *adhortatio* to willingly accept his thesis in faith.

There can, however, be no doubt that the Pope's concept of revelation is something completely new in the history of the Church's Magisterium. Nowhere in Church history do we find the Pope's conception of anthropocentrism and theocentrism in revelation because the Church's revelation principle is completely different. It was of course because biblical revelation and therefore also theology and the Church's mission are theocentrically directed. Theology is "teaching about God," and the Church's mission is to lead men to God.

In classical theology the material and formal object are both God Himself. It is the same for natural and supernatural theology. The classical definition is, "The formal object of natural theology is God as He is known by natural reason out of the Creation; The formal object of supernatural theology is God as He is known by faith from revelation."¹⁴

Biblical revelation and the Church's theology are not and essentially have never been anthropocentric but always theocentric. If words are to maintain their meaning then anthropocentric can only be theocentric at the same time if man is God or God is man. That is the case with Jesus Christ true God and true man. That is why a Christocentric theology is also theocentric, Christocentrism is also theocentrism because the man Jesus Christ is God Himself.

This thesis: anthropocentrism is the same as theocentrism leads inexorably to the conclusion that man is God or God is man. Then theology is anthropology and vice versa.

But that is not the Encyclical's thesis. It does not say, the more anthropocentric the Church's mission is the more it is theocentric, but the more it "must be theocentrically directed

¹⁴ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.* p. 1.

in Jesus Christ towards the Father." It is not claimed that they are the same but there is an inner, organic link between anthropocentrism and theocentrism. The organic link, however, is from "double revelation." But this is, in spite of all this talk about an organic link between anthropocentrism and theocentrism, on the whole concentrated on man. On the whole it has an "anthropocentric character."

One could object, in the Encyclical we are clearly talking about revelation and the Church's mission "in Christ." Mustn't a revelation like this which, in Christ, is directed anthropocentrically to man and theocentrically to the Father be called Christocentric?

That is, however, with the Encyclical's concept of revelation not possible. For the "double revelation" is also "in Christ" concentrated on man. The central point of reference of both means of revelation is man "in Christ." Christ Himself is the interpreter who "reveals man to man himself" and the historical revelation of the Father "in Christ" is what man announces. That is why even the theocentric revelation of the Father "in Christ" is not Christocentric but in the end also anthropocentric. The general anthropocentric character of the double revelation remains intact "*in Christus*" and determines the general character of the Church's mission which is as follows:

The Church's mission concentrates on man who is redeemed and justified *a priori*, has an inviolable dignity of being a Son and possesses "being in Christ" (= *a priori* revelation). This truth about man is revealed to man through and in Christ anthropocentrically. This is the case "theocentrically" once again "in Christ" by means of "the revelation of the Father and His love" (= *a posteriori* revelation). It is, however, clear that the historical revelation of the Father in Christ is in the end directed towards man anthropocentrically. That is why the general character of the Church's mission is concentrated on man, why "man is the way in the Church," why the Church's mission is "fundamentally anthropocentric."¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. Part I, pp. 110-123.

Thus we come back to the question once again (cf. above 1.3): what is the relationship between "Christ's being" and each human being's "Being in Christ" which is the *raison d'être* of man's being and where the Church's mission is concentrated? In the Encyclical's rigorous anthropocentrism the answer seems to be unavoidably: they are the same. The Son of God who united Himself formally by His Incarnation with every human being is thus the humano-divine principle of man's being.¹⁶ *Dives in Misericordia* gives more details. For the Encyclical's theme is the "integrally existential reference" of man to God as Father without which man cannot be manifested "in the full dignity of his nature" (*DiM* 1.2). A reference which is revealed in the visible revelation of the Father in Christ.

b) In his *adhortatio* the Pope asks us in a general way to accept and make a reality in our lives the Council's basic idea of the link between anthropocentrism and theocentrism as it is presented in the Encyclical with faith and with an open mind.

The Encyclical names two fruits of that conciliar principle which have already been discussed in *Redemptor Hominis* (cf. *DiM* 1.4) and they are:

– the Church's new, full and universal self understanding (*RH* 11, 1). It claims that humanity as a whole is the invisible Church.¹⁷

– the second fruit is a new and more perfect knowledge of the mystery of the Redemption which Christianity received at the Second Vatican Council (cf. *RH* 11.3). Through the "opening up of the Church to Christ the Redeemer of the World" is said to have "fully revealed man to man" (*DiM* 1.4). And this full revelation is the knowledge of universal Redemption.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 117ff.; cf. Part I, pp. 110ff.

¹⁷ *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 101; Part II/1, pp. 141-149.

¹⁸ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 181-187.

The declared aim of *Dives in Misericordia* is therefore to deepen and complete the new and more perfect knowledge from the Council of the Redeemer of all, by opening the consciousness to the universal Redeemer's Father who as love and mercy visibly appeared in Christ.

2. Plan of the Encyclical *

The sketch of the Encyclical divides it up materially. It is based on biblical revelation, first the Old and then the New Testament (Ch. II-V). Then there is a sketch of our present generation (Ch. VI) and of the divine mercy in the Church's mission for today (Ch. VII-VIII).

2.1 God's revelation in Creation and in Christ

The Encyclical is based on divine revelation (*DiM* 2.1):

Although God "dwells in unapproachable light" (I Tim. 6:16), He speaks to man by means of the whole of the universe: "ever since the Creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:20). This indirect and imperfect knowledge, achieved by the intellect seeking God by means of creatures through the visible world, falls short of "vision of the Father." "No one has ever seen God," writes St. John, in order to stress the truth that "the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known" (Jn. 1:18). This "making known" reveals God in the most profound mystery of His being, one and three, surrounded by "unapproachable light" (*Deum patefacit imperscrutabili in vitae ipsius mysterio—unum ac trinum—qui lucem habitat inaccessibilem*. I Tim. 6:16). Nevertheless, through this "making known" by Christ we know God above all in His relationship of love for man: in His "philanthropy" (Philanthrop'a Tit. 3:4). It is precisely here that "His invis-

* Article's title (2) in the English translation: "The Incarnation of Mercy."

ible nature" becomes in a special way "visible," incomparably more visible than through all the other "things that have been made": it becomes visible in Christ and through Christ, through His actions and His words, and finally through His death on the cross and His resurrection.

The text reflects the classical teaching of natural and supernatural revelation and the knowledge of God. In this traditional beginning the Pope immediately goes to the heart of his Encyclical: to "seeing the Father" in the Son made man, to the visible revelation of God's "philanthropy" in Jesus Christ, in His deeds and words, in His death on the cross and His resurrection. Thus he has already communicated to the reader the development of the theme in the Life of Jesus Christ.

2.2 Divine mercy in the Old and New Testament

The Encyclical takes its teachings on the divine mercy from the sources of revelation of the Old and New Testament (*DiM* 2.2):

In this way, in Christ and through Christ, God also becomes especially visible in His mercy: that is to say, there is emphasised that attribute of the divinity which the Old Testament, using various concepts and terms, already defined as "mercy." Christ confers on the whole of the Old Testament tradition about God's mercy a definitive meaning. Not only does He speak of it and explain it by the use of comparisons and parables, but above all He Himself makes it incarnate and personifies it. He Himself, in a certain sense, is mercy. To the person who sees it in Him—and finds it in Him—God becomes "visible" in a particular way as the Father "who is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4).

With this text biblical revelation and knowledge of God meet with the Encyclical's theme and main points and by this into the Pope's concept of revelation: Christ is the "embodiment of mercy," in His person God "becomes visible as Father

who is full of mercy." In the last sentence which takes up Eph. 2:4 we have a similar formulation to the beginning of the Encyclical (cf. *DiM* 1.1).

At the same time the reader is made aware of the development of the theme: God's mercy in the Old Testament finds its definitive perfection in the New Testament.

2.3 Our age before God the Father of mercy and the Church's mission

After the main exegetical part the Pope gives a sketch taken from the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on our times (*DiM* 2.3-2.4) and the Church's mission in the modern world (*DiM* 2.5-2.8). The Church must "think through" man's situation "in the light of the truth received from God" that is of divine mercy. Here is the most important paragraph (*DiM* 2.5):

The truth, revealed in Christ, about God the "Father of mercies" (II Cor. 1:3), enables us to "see" Him as particularly close to man, especially when man is suffering, when he is under threat at the very heart of his existence and dignity. And this is why, in the situation of the Church and the world today, many individuals and groups guided by a lively sense of faith are turning, I would say almost spontaneously, to the mercy of God. They are certainly being moved to do this by Christ Himself, who through His Spirit works within human hearts. For the mystery of God the "Father of mercies" revealed by Christ becomes, in the context of today's threats to man, as it were a unique appeal addressed to the Church.

So ends the sketch or plan of the Encyclical.

The Pope sees the Holy Ghost at work in the hearts of many people of our time so that they turn spontaneously to the God of mercy. He sees there an urgent appeal to the Church of our age.

The Pope accepts this appeal. He makes the central theme of the Church's mission and his Encyclical the mystery of God

as Father and His merciful love visibly revealed in Christ (*DiM* 2.6-2.8).

CHAPTER II

THE MESSIAH MAKES THE FATHER PRESENT AS MERCY*

In the second chapter, using only one article (3) the Pope sketches the Messiah's mission and lays the foundation for the development of the theme in the Old and New Testament. (Ch. III-V).

3. The Messiah's mission**

The third article is like an overture to the Encyclical's theme. The *leitmotiv* clearly resounds in the careful way the Encyclical is constructed. Considering this construction as a whole is here the key to a better understanding of what is being said theologically. We shall give examples later.¹ That is why our commentary concentrates primarily on explaining the structure as a whole and how the text is put together: paragraph by paragraph the Encyclical gets closer to its object; at the same time each text from the New Testament is transposed into the Encyclical's theme and thus, with variations in how it is expressed, into the Pope's concept of revelation (*DiM* 3.1-3.5).

3.1 The first revelation of Jesus as Messiah in St. Luke (4:18ff.)

At the beginning we have Jesus' revelation of Himself as

* The chapter's title in the English translation is, "The Messianic Message."

** The article's title in the English translation is, "When Christ Began to Do and to Teach."

¹ Cf. above INTRODUCTION, 1. Presentation and Method (p. 17).

Messiah in the Synagogue at Nazareth (*DiM* 3.1):

Before his own townspeople, in Nazareth, Christ refers to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18ff.). These phrases, according to Luke, are His first messianic declaration which we see in the Gospel. By these actions and words Christ makes the Father present among men.

The words of the prophet Isaiah are the words of Scripture which the Pope uses to describe not only the "first" revelation but also the revelation of the Messiah full stop. Thus he has changed the Encyclical's whole way of looking at the revelation of the Messiah in the New Testament. At the same time this text receives its first and fundamental exegesis, "By these actions and words Christ makes the Father present among men." Thus the "first revelation of the Messiah" has already been adapted to the Encyclical's theme, and concept of revelation, even in its germinal form.

The Pope continues with his exegesis of Lk. 4:18ff. by interpreting the prophet's words (*DiM* 3.1):

It is very significant that the people in question are especially poor, those without means of subsistence, those deprived of their freedom, the blind who cannot see the beauty of Creation, those living with broken hearts, or suffering from social injustice, and finally sinners. It is especially for these last that the Messiah becomes a particularly clear sign of God who is love, a sign of the Father. In this visible sign the people of our own time, just like the people then, can see the Father.

Thus the present revelation of the Messiah, concentrated on man's suffering, becomes part of the theme and the Encyclical's concept of revelation. The Messiah is a visible sign

of God the Father who is love for all men.

3.2 The messengers from the Baptist and the testimony of Jesus

The Pope lets Jesus as it were ratify this interpreted revelation of the Messiah (*DiM* 3.2):

It is significant that, when the messengers sent by John the Baptist came to Jesus to ask Him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Lk. 7:19) he answered by referring to the same testimony with which He had begun His teaching at Nazareth, "Go and tell John what it is that you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." He then ended with the words, "And blessed is he who takes no offence at me!" (Lk. 7:22ff).

With these words to the messengers from the Baptist Jesus Himself expressly confirms the first revelation of the Messiah and then underlines it by calling blessed all those who take no offence at "the visible sign of the Father."

3.3 Through Jesus' actions love is made present in our world

The first, interpreted and adapted revelation of the Messiah is now generalised by being extended to Jesus' general actions (*DiM* 3.3):

Especially through His lifestyle and through His actions, Jesus revealed that love is present in the world in which we live—an effective love, a love that addresses itself to man and embraces everything that makes up his humanity. This love makes itself particularly noticed in contact with suffering, injustice and poverty—in contact with the whole historical "human condition," which in various ways manifests man's limitation and frailty, both physical and moral. It is precisely

the mode and sphere in which love manifests itself that in biblical language is called "mercy."

The first revelation of the Messiah is performed therefore in a general way by Jesus' lifestyle and actions. The conclusion is: the Messiah's effective love embraces in a loving and merciful way the whole historical "human condition," but especially the suffering "*conditio humana*." Sin is not particularly mentioned in this conclusion. It is contained in "man's limitation and frailty, both physical and moral."

3.4 Jesus' effective love reveals the Father and makes Him present

By making in His life and actions the all embracing love towards man a reality, especially towards suffering man, the Messiah is the revelation of the Father and His love (*DiM* 3.4):

Christ, then, reveals God who is Father, who is "love" (*Ideo que Christus Deum patefecit, qui Pater est, qui est "amor"*), as St. John expresses it in his first letter (I Jn. 4:8-16); Christ reveals God as "rich in mercy," as we read in St. Paul (Eph. 2:4). This truth is not just the subject of a teaching; it is a reality made present to us by Christ. Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ's own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of His mission as the Messiah; this is confirmed by the words that He uttered first in the synagogue at Nazareth and later in the presence of His disciples and of John the Baptist's messengers.

Thus Christ's whole life and actions as a realisation of the first revelation of the Messiah becomes once again part of the theme and hence of the Encyclical's concept of revelation. The Pope summarises the result of his consideration, which he lets Christ confirm, in one pregnant sentence:

Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ's

own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of His mission as the Messiah.

Thus the circle of the revelation of the Father through Jesus' messianic actions is completed. This revelation becomes now the frame for Jesus' messianic words.

3.5 Jesus' teaching within the framework of the revelation of God as Father

We have not yet seen Jesus as a preacher. This aspect is now introduced, in the framework of the "fundamental realisation of the Messiah's mission" (*DiM* 3.5).

On the basis of this way of manifesting the presence of God who is Father, love and mercy, Jesus makes mercy one of the principal themes of His preaching. As is His custom, He first teaches "in parables," since these express better the very essence of things. It is sufficient to recall the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32) or the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-37) but also, by contrast, the parable of the merciless servant (Mt. 18:23-35). There are many passages in the teaching of Christ that manifest love-mercy under some ever-fresh aspect. We need only consider the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep (Mt. 18:12-14; Lk. 15:3-7) or the woman who sweeps the house in search of the lost coin (Lk. 15:8-10). The Gospel writer who deals with these themes in Christ's teaching particularly is Luke, whose Gospel has earned the title of "the Gospel of mercy."

Thus the Pope transposes the preaching of Jesus as well—and so the whole public working of the Messiah—into the framework of the Encyclical's theme and principle of revelation. The parables mentioned certainly contain Jesus' Good News.² But what change do they undergo in the framework of

² Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu [The Parables of Jesus]* (Zurich 1952), pp. 102ff.

the Encyclical's principle of revelation?³

3.6 The important problem: "The definition of mercy and love"

The main part of the Pope's consideration of Jesus' preaching is as follows:

When one speaks of preaching, one encounters a problem of major importance with reference to the meaning of terms and the content of concepts, especially the content of the concept of "mercy" (in relationship to the concept of "love"). A grasp of the content of these concepts is the key to the understanding of the very reality of mercy. And this is what is most important for us. However, before devoting a further part of our considerations to this subject, that is to say, to establishing the meaning of the vocabulary and the content proper to the concept of "mercy," we must note that Christ, in revealing the love-mercy of God, at the same time demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy. This requirement forms part of the very essence of the messianic message, and constitutes the heart of the Gospel ethos. The Teacher expresses this both through the medium of the commandment which He describes as "the greatest" (Mt. 22:38) and also in the form of a blessing, when in the Sermon on the Mount He proclaims, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Mt. 5:7).

According to this, the explanation of the terms mercy and love in Jesus' preaching is one of the main points of *Dives in Misericordia*. For an Encyclical such an aim is astonishing. The Pope gives as the main aim and the key to his Encyclical—with what theological justification?—something which is a matter for scientific exegesis and which can be looked up in

³ See Ch. IV, the exegesis of the parable of the Prodigal Son.

any dictionary of the Old and New Testament. How far the Pope goes can be seen in his exegesis of the New Testament (Ch. 4-5).

The same may be said of the definition of mercy and love as the "centre of the evangelical ethos." Here one should remark on the well thought out formulation of the Encyclical's text that in Mt. 22:38 the "greatest" of the commandments is the love of God to which the second, the love of neighbour is likened (cf. Mt. 22:39). Christian charity is rooted in Christian love of God, that is, in the faith in Christ.

3.7 Review

The second chapter closes with a short review (*DiM* 3.7):

In this way, the messianic message about mercy preserves a particular divine-human dimension. Christ, the very fulfilment of the messianic prophecy, by becoming the incarnation of the love that is manifested with particular force with regard to the suffering, the unfortunate and sinners, makes present and thus more fully reveals the Father, who is God "rich in mercy." At the same time, by becoming for people a model of merciful love for others, Christ proclaims by His actions even more than by His words that call to mercy which is one of the essential elements of the Gospel ethos. In this instance it is not just a case of fulfilling a commandment or an obligation of an ethical nature; it is also a case of satisfying a condition of major importance for God to reveal Himself in His mercy to man, "The merciful...shall obtain mercy."

In this way the Pope in a pregnant manner puts into his own words the messianic message and makes it fit in with the Encyclical's concept of revelation:

Christ Himself is the incarnation of mercy. In turning to the suffering, the miserable and the sinner He makes the Father present and thereby shows all the more perfectly the Father who is a God full of mercy (*praesentem adducit Patrem eoque modo plenius ostendit Patrem, qui Deus est "dives in mise-*

ricordia”).

Stylistically brilliant the overture of the Encyclical begins and ends with the title and *leitmotiv* “*dives in misericordia*.”

The messianic message of divine mercy is completed by the Christian ethos of mercy.

Doubtlessly Christ is the incarnation of mercy. Doubtlessly Christ is *the* “Model” of the “Christian ethos.” The question is whether the Encyclical’s main aim, the understanding of the definitions of mercy and love (cf. *DiM* 3.6) can be reconciled with the Gospel or whether preconceptions about revelation will change it into something else. In the end the question is whether the Messiah of the Encyclical is the same Christ from the Gospel and the Christian ethos of the Encyclical the same as that of the New Testament.

3.8 Critical review of chapter II

The critical review of the commentary of the whole of the second chapter is first of all an admiration for the magnificent composition, the exposition centred on the theme and the compressed reflection of the Messiah’s mission. The commentary’s praise of the religious depth seems understandable. Even if there is in Chapter II only an introductory sketch of the whole Encyclical, nonetheless the contours of the whole conception are clearly recognisable.

Starting from St. Luke’s Gospel, what happens in Nazareth right at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry has a typical significance just as the words of the prophet quoted by Him have a central meaning.

In the Encyclical’s structure “Jesus’ first revelation as Messiah” according to St. Luke (4:18ff.) is the basis and framework for the presentation of the mission and the activity of the Messiah. The theological statement and the composition of the whole text form a single unity. The former may therefore be drawn out of the formation of the latter as a whole.

In the original context of the Old Testament the words of the prophet Isaiah announce a change for the better in the

fortunes of the misery stricken Israelites returning from exile: a year of God's grace. By applying (and slightly changing) the prophet's words to Himself, Jesus says to his neighbours: the time of salvation is here, for the Messiah is here! You are eye-witnesses that this scripture has been fulfilled.⁴

"Jesus' first revelation as Messiah" is therefore not simply the "revelation of the Father," but of the Messiah.

In St. Luke's Gospel "Jesus' first revelation as Messiah" is directly and indissolubly linked to this claim to be the Messiah. This challenge to believe in His person enrages the community. They refuse faith and try to kill Jesus. Already in these events in St. Luke's Gospel we see what the Messiah can expect in His public mission from His people. His messianic mission ends on Calvary.

The Encyclical mentions none of this.

Also in the Gospel "Jesus' first revelation as Messiah" in Nazareth is the announcement of His messianic programme. His miraculous cures are proof of the fulfilment of the prophet Isaiah's words. Just as His "first revelation as Messiah" is directly and indissolubly linked to the challenge of the faith in His person so are His messianic actions. All of Jesus' public ministry takes place in the framework of the challenge to believe. It is because of this claim that His messianic actions become a stumbling block.

In the New Testament "Jesus' first revelation as Messiah" and His messianic actions are in the context of the preaching of the Kingdom of God. The Son of God came down from Heaven and became man "*propter nos homines*." Full of mercy and healing, He also considered every suffering of man. But all this was in the end "*propter nostram salutem*" and for our

⁴ Cf. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* [The Gospel According to St. Luke] (Göttingen 1967), NTD III, pp. 67ff.—Karl Staab, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Würzburg 1956, Echter-Bibel), pp. 37ff.—Joachim Jeremias, *Jesu Verheißung für die Völker* [Jesus' Promise for the Nations] (Stuttgart 1956), pp. 37ff.

“eternal” salvation.

In the Encyclical “Jesus’ first revelation as Messiah” and His messianic actions appear without any challenge to believe. They are completely divorced from their biblical context of the announcement of the Kingdom of God. They are thus one-sidedly applied to the removal of earthly suffering and interpreted, ratified and generalised in this way. The framework of the messianic mission is the healing of all human suffering, a universal love of man. The Messiah’s working did not have for its aim the restoration of a state of paradise here on earth to the chagrin of all Israel’s expectations.

Coupled with this reduction of the biblical revelation of the Messiah to the simply human is the transposition of a few selected New Testament texts in a form distorted to fit the Encyclical’s theme and view of revelation: In the general love of man for man the all merciful love of the Father is revealed. This distorted form determines the central message of the New Testament. This can clearly be seen in the Encyclical’s two main theses which we have looked at:

The first main thesis describes summarily “how” the Messiah’s “active love” works (cf. 3.3-4):

According to this Jesus, through His life and actions revealed and made present the effect of love in our world. His effective love embraces the whole of historical humanity, quite simply the *conditio humana*, especially its limitations and weakness. By doing this He revealed God who is Father—who is “love.”

The second main thesis describes summarily the aim or the reason why of the Messiah’s mission (*DiM* 3.4):

To make present the Father as love and mercy is for (Christ) the fundamental actualisation of His mission as Messiah (cf. *DiM* 3.4)

Both main theses seem at first sight to reflect the spirit of

the New Testament. This first impression changes when one realises that in the presentation of the Messiah's mission in the Encyclical it is a question of the *Redeemer's* mission and therefore the Pope's soteriology is in play. The special character of the two theses is best seen in what they *do not* say.

In the general characterisation of the Messiah's all embracing love sin is not mentioned by name (cf. *DiM* 3.3). It is implied in man's "moral limitations." In other places sinners are mentioned in the same breath as the suffering and the unhappy (cf. *DiM* 3.1; 3.7).

Sin is, however, decisive in the "*conditio humana*" for the Messiah of the New Testament. Sin is not on the same plane as other evils in this world. It is the root of all evils in the sense of the "radical" separation of man from God that is Original Sin.⁵

In the New Testament the Messiah is above all the sinner's Redeemer. In His redeeming love He does not simply embrace everything human, rather His redeeming love is there to redeem man: to convert the sinner, to reconcile him with God. This Messiah is not so much interested in the temporal life as in the eternal. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). Even when Christ embraces the whole of man's suffering with His merciful love, He is more interested in the Faith and the eternal salvation of man rather than just a cure. Indeed in Nazareth He could perform no miracles because He found no faith there (cf. Mk. 6:5). At any rate the Messiah reveals in the Gospel "how" His effective love works by always making clear the relationship with faith and eternal life. This is particularly evident in the cure of the paralytic (Mk. 2:1-12). This "how" was not simply an embracing of what is involved in making man human. It goes much deeper. It is a question of the relationship of man to God which has been fundamentally destroyed by Original

⁵ Cf. Rom. 3:9ff.; 5:1ff.

Sin. To heal this relationship and to redeem and reconcile man who has been separated from God through His blood is the "fundamental actualisation of the Messiah's mission" in the New Testament.

The same goes for the Encyclical's second main thesis. Of course the Messiah made the love of the Father visible and present in His mission. But the "fundamental actualisation of Christ's mission as Messiah" is the Redemption of man which the Saviour wrought to the glory of God and the salvation of man. Why is it precisely this central dogma, the Son of God was made man in order to redeem us from sin through His cross, which is missing in the magnificent overture of the Pope's teaching on Redemption?⁶

The reason is clear: the Encyclical's soteriology is based on the "double revelation" principle. If all men from the beginning to the end of the world have already been redeemed and justified by the Cross of Christ⁷ then the work of man's Redemption has already essentially been carried out. It then remains for the "fundamental actualisation of the Messiah's mission" only to reveal "the Father as love and mercy" and "make Him present" in our world. Then the Messiah in His loving turning towards the suffering left over in this world is just "a sign of the Father who is love and mercy."

In the Encyclical the active love of the Messiah is infinitely open to the purely human but there is absolutely no mention of man's absolute need for Redemption from Original Sin nor of the necessity of faith and baptism for salvation. What is missing is precisely the essential and specific redeeming love of Christ.

⁶ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch (Herder Book, St. Louis, 1954), p. 175.

⁷ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, p.101.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the third chapter (art. 4) we have the exegetical development of the theme. The main aim is to explain the word “mercy” and its relation to love and justice.

The Pope begins with the Old Testament as a background “that the mercy revealed by Christ may shine forth more clearly” (*DiM* 4.1).

4. God’s mercy in the history of Israel*

In the commentary on this article we shall not give lengthy quotations from the Encyclical but rather present a short essay in which the most important points of the Pope’s train of thought will be cited literally.

4.1 The experience of mercy in the history of a frequently-broken covenant

When Christ revealed God’s mercy by word and deed, He

addressed Himself to people who not only knew the concept of mercy, but who also, as the People of God of the Old Covenant, had drawn from their age-long history a special experience of the mercy of God (*DiM* 4.1).

Israel’s history is the history of a covenant with God, “a

* The English translation has the following title for the whole article, “The Concept of ‘Mercy’ in the Old Testament” but no titles for the sub-articles.

covenant which is often broken." When Israel became aware of her unfaithfulness she called on the mercy of God. This we read in the books of the Old Testament (*DiM* 4.2).

The prophets announce God's mercy with the chosen people using images of tender love (*DiM* 4.3):

The Lord loves Israel with the love of a special choosing, much like the love of a spouse, and for this reason He pardons its sins and even its infidelities and betrayals. When He finds repentance and true conversion, He brings His people back to grace. In the preaching of the prophets, mercy signifies a special power of love, which prevails over the sin and infidelity of the chosen people.

Mercy does not just affect God's relationship with His people but also with every member of this people. In every need the sons and daughters of Israel turn to the Lord and call upon His mercy. Divine mercy embraces "both physical evil and moral evil namely sin" (*DiM* 4.4).

4.2 Already in the beginning there is a fundamental experience of mercy

Israel experienced God's mercy especially in her history. There is a fundamental experience of divine mercy right at the beginning (*DiM* 4.5):

The Lord saw the affliction of His people reduced to slavery, heard their cry, knew their sufferings and decided to deliver them. In this act of salvation by the Lord, the prophet perceived his love and compassion (cf. Is. 63:9). This is precisely the grounds upon which the people and each of its members based their certainty of the mercy of God, which can be invoked whenever tragedy strikes.

Later on, regarding the wretchedness of the enslaved people, the Pope mentions (*DiM* 4.6): "Added to this is the fact that sin too constitutes man's misery."

Man's wretchedness in sin appears almost like an added "ingredient" to man's general misery. In the Old Testament, however, it is the central point of the relationship of God with Israel. The history of the covenant is the history of the First Commandment.¹

In its substance the misery of sin is determined by the Encyclical as the falling away from the God of the Covenant and it is also given some consideration: it is seen in the apostate people's dance around the golden calf.

God's reaction to this central breach of the covenant is divine mercy. God's wrath is not mentioned (*DiM* 4.6):

The Lord Himself triumphed over this act of breaking the covenant when He solemnly declared to Moses that He was a "God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex. 34:6).

From this source Israel's piety received an unshakeable trust in God's mercy (4.6):

It is in this central revelation that the chosen people, and each of its members, will find, every time that they have sinned, the strength and the motive for turning to the Lord to remind Him of exactly what He had revealed about Himself and to beseech His forgiveness.

The revelation of God's mercy with His people shows from the beginning all types of the Lord's love for His own (*DiM* 4.7):

He is their Father (cf. Is. 63:16) for Israel is His firstborn son (cf. Ex. 4:22); the Lord is also the bridegroom of her whose new name the prophet proclaims, "*Ruhamah*," "Beloved" or "she has obtained pity" (Hos. 2:3).

¹ Cf. Gerhard v. Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* [*Theology of the Old Testament*] (Munich 1962, 5th edition), pp. 216ff.

God's generous love for His people that causes Him always to forget His wrath makes the Psalmist praise His love, His tenderness, His mercy and His faithfulness (*DiM* 4.8).

What does all this mean for the biblical conception of God and of Israel's piety? The answer is (*DiM* 4.9):

From all this it follows that mercy does not pertain only to the notion of God, but it is something that characterises the life of the whole people of Israel and each of its sons and daughters: mercy is the content of intimacy with their Lord, the content of their dialogue with Him.

The aim of the Pope's exegesis is to draw "especially the definition of mercy" out of the history of the covenant with Israel. About this he says (*DiM* 4.9):

It may be difficult to find in these books a purely theoretical answer to the question of what mercy is in itself. Nevertheless, the terminology that is used is in itself able to tell us much about this subject.

4.3 The definition of mercy in Israel's history

In one of the many pages of notes (no. 52) the Encyclical gives in some detail an exegetical definition as one might read in a good dictionary.² In the Encyclical's text there is the following review (*DiM* 4.10):

In order to express the experience of mercy, the Old Testament uses various words which have different meanings but which as it were "all converge from different directions on one single fundamental content." This fundamental content is described in the following way (*DiM* 4.10):

The Old Testament encourages people suffering from mis-

² E.g. Kittel's [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*], II, 474-483.

fortune, especially those weighed down by sin—as also the whole of Israel, which had entered into the covenant with God—to appeal for mercy, and enables them to count upon it: it reminds them of His mercy in times of failure and loss of trust. Subsequently, the Old Testament gives thanks and glory for mercy every time that mercy is made manifest in the life of the people or in the lives of individuals.

In this way “mercy is in a certain sense contrasted with God’s justice,” and in many cases is shown to be not only stronger but also more profound because love is primary and fundamental. The relationship between justice and mercy in God is said to have its foundation in “God’s relations with man and the world” thus finally in “the very mystery of Creation.” That is why we must go back to “the beginning” (*DiM* 4.11).³

By going back to the “mystery of Creation” the Pope makes his presentation of the Old Testament as a whole flow into the beginning of his theology on the covenant. In this way he anchors the history of the covenant in the act of Creation, in order to interpret it in a new way (cf. *DiM* 4.12).

4.4 The covenant with man at the beginning of Creation

While he was still Cardinal Wojtyła, John Paul II stressed that human history can only really be understood from the beginning of the Creation.⁴ In the Encyclical he presents this view as follows (*DiM* 4.12):

Connected with the mystery of Creation is the mystery of the election, which in a special way shaped the history of the people whose spiritual father is Abraham by virtue of his faith. Nevertheless, through this people which journeys forward through the history both of the Old Covenant and of the New, that mystery of election refers to every man and woman,

³ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 24-32; 118-131.

⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 19ff.

to the whole great human family.

"I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jer. 31:3). "For the mountains may depart...my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed" (Is. 54:10). This truth, once proclaimed to Israel, involves a perspective of the whole history of man, a perspective both temporal and eschatological (Jn. 4:2.11 *etc.*). Christ reveals the Father within the framework of the same perspective and on ground already prepared, as many pages of the Old Testament writings demonstrate. At the end of this revelation, on the night before He dies, He says to the apostle Philip these memorable words, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me...? He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

The text is a perfect formulation in a complete chain of thought whose logic can be seen when what is said in each sentence is interpreted in the sense of the papal theology and then reviewed in the light of traditional teaching:

There is only one mention of the mystery of Creation in the first sentence, "Connected with the mystery of Creation is the mystery of the election." This sentence which is so decisive for the understanding of the whole passage seems to be a theologically obvious thing to say. It is, however, as it stands a completely neutral thing and open to any interpretation. In the Encyclical it is obviously to be understood in the sense of the Pope's theology of the covenant and then it has a very clear meaning: By being created man is chosen. The "Mystery of election" means that God by creating Adam *actu uno* made a covenant of grace with him, *i.e.*, with every man with humanity. This *ab origine* covenant of grace is indissoluble and inviolable. The mystery of election is thus the mystery of the giving of grace to everyone.⁵

⁵ Cf. The Pope's theology of the covenant in Part II/1, pp. 24-32 & pp. 118ff.

From this starting point the presentation of the quoted text is absolutely consistent: The *per se* universal mystery of the election of all men affected the history of the chosen people only "in a special way." This biblical term "election" is the verbal bridge which joins the irrevocable general giving of grace to all men *ab origine* with the history of the chosen people whose Father because of his Faith is Abraham.

If the history of the chosen people is the special expression or the particular sign of the election of the whole of humanity then through this people the mystery of universal salvation extends through the history of the Old and the New Testament to every individual man, to the whole vast family of man (*At tamen per hunc ipsum populum...refertur mysterium electionis istud ad unumquemque hominem et immensam cunctam hominum familiam*). In the quoted text God's oath of loyalty and love quite consistently is not just made with reference to Israel but also with reference to the irrevocable covenant of grace with humanity. Then this truth once announced to Israel (universal election or giving of grace to all) bears in actual fact a perspective both temporal and eschatological of all humanity in itself. In *this* perspective Christ is supposed to have revealed the Father to the listeners of His people prepared in this way. The main point of this revelation of God the Father rich in mercy is said to be contained in Christ's words, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:8). With the last sentence the Pope joins up with the beginning of the Encyclical (*DiM* 1.1), which contains the thesis of universal salvation *in nuce*.

One should remark with reference to the Pope's view of the situation the traditional teaching of the Church:

It is also possible to say in the sense of traditional teaching that the mystery of Creation is linked with the mystery of election. Adam began his existence with *iustitia originalis*. But the covenant of grace with Adam was not indissoluble, it was broken. The grace of original justice was lost by our first parents. In Scripture there is no unbroken or unbreakable cov-

enant of Grace *ab origine* between God and man. Basically this is enough to reject the Encyclical's theology of the Covenant which is simply a consistent explanation of the idea of an unbreakable covenant of grace *ab origine*.

Since, after Original Sin, there has never been such an unbreakable covenant of grace between God and man it also cannot have affected the history of that people "whose Father because of his Faith is Abraham."

That is why Israel's path in the Faith of Abraham does not lead through the New Testament. Rather Israel's path in the Faith of Abraham leads directly to Christ and because of the Faith in Christ to the New Israel, the Church (cf. Rom. 3:21-4:25). The Old Testament has its fulfilment and therefore its end in the New (Rom. 10:4).

That is why the giving of grace to everyone *ab origine* is in no way the perspective of the "writings of the Old Testament," neither of Christ's listeners, neither of Christ's preaching. Christ also did not reveal the Father in this perspective.

Even in the early Church it was disputed whether the heathen could receive baptism without the Law.

The result of our analysis is that the Encyclical's theme leads to a picture of God in the Old Testament whose only quality is mercy and where all other ways of revealing God's nature are left out. By taking divine mercy in the Old Testament back to the mystery of Creation and an absolute universal election, the Encyclical comes to a completely new interpretation of the whole of the history of revelation and salvation in the Old Testament from the point of view of universal salvation. This new interpretation becomes clear in the last paragraph of the quoted text. The subtle change of meaning of what the Old Testament says is hardly perceptible before that because the history of the covenant in general seems unchanged and only at the end, by the axiom of universal salvation since the Creation of man, does it receive a new more universal interpretation.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW TESTAMENT:*

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The fourth chapter (art. 5 & 6) deals with God's mercy in Christ's teaching (cf. above 3.5). The paradigm is the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32).

It is the only parable which is presented and interpreted in the "Trinitarian Trilogy." From this impressive parable the Pope draws as exemplary of Christ's teaching the main thrust of his theology. The aim of his exegesis is to go from the biblical parable to the heart of the truth of revelation of divine mercy in the New Testament, not so much by using terminology as analogy (cf. *DiM* 5.2).

5. The figure of the Prodigal Son**

After a short bridge from the Old to the New Testament (*DiM* 5.1-2) the Pope presents the figure first of the Prodigal Son (*DiM* 5.3-6), then that of the father (*DiM* 6). The older son receives no detailed attention (cf. *DiM* 6.1 & 2).

5.1 Echo of the Old Testament in the New

The Encyclical begins with the canticles at the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel (*DiM* 5.1):

At the very beginning of the New Testament, two voices

* Chapter title in the English translation only, "Parable of the Prodigal Son."

** Article title in the English translation, "An Analogy."

resound in St. Luke's Gospel in unique harmony concerning the mercy of God, a harmony which forcefully echoes the whole Old Testament tradition. They express the semantic elements linked to the differentiated terminology in the ancient books. Mary, entering the house of Zechariah, magnifies the Lord with all her soul for "his mercy," which "from generation to generation" is bestowed upon them that fear Him. A little later, as she recalls the election of Israel, she proclaims the mercy which He who has chosen her holds "in remembrance" from all time. Afterwards, in the same house, when John the Baptist is born, his father Zechariah blesses the God of Israel and glorifies Him for performing the mercy promised to our fathers and for remembering His holy covenant.

After this bridge from the Old Testament to the New the Encyclical comes to speak of Christ Himself. The praise of Mary, "His mercy is from generation to generation" (Lk. 1:50), is like a *leitmotiv* throughout the whole Encyclical.

5.2 Parable of divine mercy

"In the teaching of Christ Himself," it continues (*DiM 5.2*),

this image inherited from the Old Testament becomes at the same time simpler and more profound. This is perhaps most evident in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). Although the word "mercy" does not appear, it nevertheless expresses the essence of the divine mercy in a particularly clear way. This is due not so much to the terminology, as in the Old Testament books, as to the analogy that enables us to understand more fully the mystery of mercy, as a profound drama played out between the father's love and prodigality and sin of the son.

Thus the Pope draws the reader's attention to the parable of the Prodigal Son and at the same time the crux of his own exegesis: analogy.

It is only when it is closely examined that the Encyclical's

deliberate train of thought is made clear. In order to leave the papal exegesis as much as possible untouched we shall keep our commentary to just critical remarks and bring out the essential points in this train of thought.

5.3 The Prodigal Son: Man of every period

The Encyclical assumes the reader knows the parable and so begins with its detailed exegesis (*DiM* 5.3):

That son who receives from the father the portion of the inheritance that is due to him and leaves home to squander it in a far country "in loose living," in a certain sense is the man of every period, beginning with the one who was the first to lose the inheritance of grace and original justice. The analogy at this point is very wide-ranging. The parable indirectly touches upon every breach of the covenant of love, every loss of grace, every sin. In this analogy there is less emphasis than in the prophetic tradition of the unfaithfulness of the whole people of Israel, although the analogy of the Prodigal Son may extend to this also. "When he had spent everything," the son "began to be in need," especially as "a great famine arose in that country" to which he had gone after leaving his father's house. And in this situation "he would gladly have fed on" anything, even "the husks of swine," the swine that he herded for "one of the citizens of that country." But even this was refused him.

This presentation of the Prodigal Son is an essay on the biblical parable which needs no commentary. What we should notice is the analogy which has been put into this essay.

– the Prodigal Son is "in a certain sense is the man of every period, beginning with the one who was the first to lose the inheritance of grace and original justice."

– The other analogies: every breach of the covenant of love, every loss of grace, every sin, the unfaithfulness of the whole people of Israel can be passed over since they play no part in the interpretation of the parable.

5.4 The analogy turns towards man's interior

The Encyclical turns now to the interior life of the Prodigal Son (*DiM* 5.4):

The analogy turns clearly towards man's interior. The inheritance that the son had received from his father was a quantity of material goods, but more important than these goods was his dignity as a son in his father's house. The situation in which he found himself when he lost the material goods should have made him aware of the loss of that dignity. He had not thought about it previously, when he had asked his father to give him the part of the inheritance that was due to him, in order to go away. He seems not to be conscious of it even now, when he says to himself, "how many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger."¹ He measures himself by the standard of the goods that he has lost, that he no longer "possesses," while the hired servants of his father's house "possess" them. These words express above all his attitude to material goods; nevertheless, under their surface is concealed the tragedy of lost dignity, the awareness of squandered sonship.

The Encyclical shows, as does the biblical parable, first of all the external misery of the Prodigal Son out of which matures the decision to return home. What is special about this description is that it concentrates on the material view of the son and the exegesis of his words. Thus the Pope says: from his words we can see that he is interested in external goods. But this veneer hides the "drama of lost dignity, the awareness of squandered sonship."

The clear statement of the son's "lost dignity" in his father's house and the "squandered sonship" seem to be in open contradiction to the thesis of universal salvation.²

¹ In comparison to the Latin text the English translation starts no new paragraph here. We follow the English translation.

² Cf. the clear statement of universal salvation in *Redemptor Hominis* 13.3; Part I, pp. 78ff., Part II/1, pp. 181ff.

5.5 The Prodigal Son's decision to return home

The Prodigal Son's decision to return home which comes from material wretchedness is interpreted as follows (*DiM* 5.5):

It is at this point that he makes the decision, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants'" (Lk. 15:18ff.). These are words that reveal more deeply the essential problem. Through the complex material situation in which the Prodigal Son found himself because of his folly, because of sin, the sense of lost dignity had matured. When he decides to return to his father's house, to ask his father to be received—no longer by virtue of his right as a son, but as an employee—at first sight he seems to be acting by reason of the hunger and poverty that he had fallen into; this motive, however, is permeated by an awareness of a deeper loss: to be a hired servant in his own father's house is certainly a great humiliation and source of shame. Nevertheless, the Prodigal Son is ready to undergo that humiliation and shame. He realises that he no longer has any right except to be an employee in his father's house. His decision is taken in full consciousness of what he has deserved and of what he can still have a right to in accordance with the norms of justice. Precisely this reasoning demonstrates that, at the centre of the Prodigal Son's consciousness, the sense of lost dignity is emerging, the sense of that dignity that springs from the relationship of the son with the father. And it is with this decision that he sets out.

According to this the Prodigal Son's words bring the essential problem into view. This is as follows: out of material need matures the sense of lost dignity of sonship until the clear knowledge: I have lost dignity of being a son which came from the relationship of being my father's son, but according to the norms of justice I still have the right to be a hired servant even if this state of being a servant in my father's house is for me "a humiliation and shame."

This consideration is the substance of the decision which makes the Prodigal Son return to his father.

5.6 The permanence of being a son

The Prodigal Son's right according to the "norms of justice" is the Pope's point of departure whence he asks quite generally about the relationship between justice and merciful love in Jesus' parable (*DiM* 5.6):

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the term "justice" is not used even once; just as in the original text the term "mercy" is not used either. Nevertheless, the relationship between justice and love, that is manifested as mercy, is inscribed with great exactness in the content of the Gospel parable. It becomes more evident that love is transformed into mercy when it is necessary to go beyond the precise norm of justice—precise and often too narrow. The Prodigal Son, having wasted the property he received from his father, deserves—after his return—to earn his living by working in his father's house as a hired servant and possibly, little by little, to build up a certain provision of material goods, though perhaps never as much as the amount he had squandered. This would be demanded by the order of justice, especially as the son had not only squandered the part of the inheritance belonging to him but had also hurt and offended his father by his whole conduct. Since this conduct had in his own eyes deprived him of his dignity as a son, it could not be a matter of indifference to his father. It was bound to make him suffer. It was also bound to implicate him in some way. And yet, after all, it was his own son who was involved, and such a relationship could never be altered or destroyed by any sort of behaviour (*Agitur ad extremum tamen de proprio filio; neque illa necessitas auferri valuit nec qualibuscumque actibus dissolvi*). The Prodigal Son is aware of this and it is precisely this awareness that shows him clearly the dignity which he has lost and which makes him honestly evaluate the position that he could still expect in his father's house.

The word justice does not occur in the biblical parable because there is no claim to rights on the part of the returned son and thus no problem of the relationship between justice and merciful love. This problem is invented by the Pope and inserted into St. Luke's Gospel. It can be summarised thus:

The relationship between justice and mercy exists concretely in the rights that remain for the returning son and the father rich in mercy.

What is special in this relationship is the familial relationship: the son has "hurt and offended" his father by his behaviour but son remains son and father remains father.

It is a convincing argument which every father of a wayward son can understand as can every wayward son, the prodigal included.

That is why it is "precisely this knowledge"—as it says in the text—which makes the Prodigal Son "clearly recognise the dignity which he has lost and honestly evaluate the position that he could still expect in his father's house." It is also "precisely this knowledge" which makes the son return home.

We can give the substance of the Pope's argumentation in three sentences which are not completely incontrovertible: The Prodigal Son has "squandered his sonship" (*filiatatis dissipatae*) and lost his dignity of being a son. It is now left him according to justice a right to be a hired labourer in his father's house. However, the bond of blood between the father and the son could not be put aside nor dissolved.

6. The figure of the father in the parable*

Up to now the Pope has described the Prodigal Son, now he describes the father.

6.1 The divine mercy is revealed in the father

The Pope continues with his exegesis of the parable (*DiM*

* Article title in the English translation, "Particular Concentration on Human Dignity."

6.1):

This exact picture of the Prodigal Son's state of mind enables us to understand exactly what the mercy of God consists in. There is no doubt that in this simple but penetrating analogy the figure of the father reveals to us God as Father. The conduct of the father in the parable and his whole behaviour, which manifests his internal attitude, enables us to rediscover the individual threads of the Old Testament vision of mercy in a synthesis which is totally new, full of simplicity and depth. The father of the Prodigal Son is faithful to his fatherhood, faithful to the love that he had always lavished on his son. This fidelity is expressed in the parable not only by his immediate readiness to welcome him home when he returns after having squandered his inheritance; it is expressed even more fully by that joy, that merrymaking for the squanderer after his return, merrymaking which is so generous that it provokes the opposition and hatred of the elder brother, who had never gone far away from his father and had never abandoned the home.

The "state of mind" of the son corresponds with the "internal attitude" of the father. And this "internal attitude" of the father reveals the divine mercy. Thus the relationship of mercy and justice is quite concretely defined, as the Pope sees it, and written with great exactness into the biblical parable.

The quoted text has two very important things to say about the father:

– The figure of the father in the parable is an analogy of "God the Father." In this God's mercy as it was seen in the Old Testament is seen "in a synthesis which is totally new, full of simplicity and depth."

– The synthesis is the fatherly love of God. The father of the Prodigal Son is true to himself: to his fatherhood and love which he had given to his son from always.

The proof for the faithfulness of the father to himself is the readiness with which he receives his son when he returns home and the inexpressible joy with which he covers the squanderer

with gifts. This provokes the opposition and envy of his elder son.

6.2 The father's faithfulness to himself

The father's faithfulness to himself is described in the Encyclical with images taken from the parable (*DiM* 6.2):

The father's fidelity to himself—a trait already known by the Old Testament term "hesed"—is at the same time expressed in a manner particularly charged with affection. We read, in fact, that when the father saw the Prodigal Son returning home "he had compassion, ran to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him" (Lk. 15:20). He certainly does this under the influence of a deep affection, and this also explains his generosity towards his son, that generosity which so angers the elder son.

This confirms what has already been said: the behaviour of the father is the visible sign that "the father of the Prodigal Son is true to himself: to his fatherhood and love which he had given to his son from always."

The Pope develops this consistently by asking after the deeper reasons for it (*DiM* 6.2):

Nevertheless, the causes of this emotion are to be sought at a deeper level. Notice, the father is aware that a fundamental good has been saved: the good of his son's humanity. Although the son has squandered the inheritance, nevertheless his humanity is saved. Indeed, it has been, in a way, found again. The father's words to the elder son reveal this, "It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found" (Lk. 15:32). In the same chapter fifteen of St. Luke's Gospel, we read the parable of the sheep that was found (Lk. 15:3-6) and then the parable of the coin that was found. (Lk. 15:8ff.). Each time there is an emphasis on the same joy that is present in the case of the Prodigal Son. The father's fidelity to himself is totally concentrated upon the humanity of the lost son, upon

his dignity. This explains above all his joyous emotion at the moment of the son's return home.

The first deep reason for the emotional reception of the returned son is that the son's humanity has been saved, even if he has squandered his inheritance. Because "his humanity is saved" it can be "found again." What does this mean that "his humanity is saved" which according to the text is what the father's words to his elder son mean? Does this not contradict the previous statement concerning the loss of the "dignity of being a son" and the "awareness of squandered sonship"?

One needs to read the text twice. "The father's fidelity to himself is totally concentrated upon the humanity of the lost son, upon his dignity." There does not seem anything wrong with that but it implies something new and surprising, the "humanity" and the "dignity of being a son" are "saved"—despite his scandalous behaviour! And it is precisely that which is the source of the father's "joyous emotion at the moment of the son's return home."

The father's joy concerning the dignity of a son which has been saved is meant to be expressed in a similar way by the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin.

Is this really what Jesus is announcing in his most beautiful parables?

6.3 The son never ceases to be the son of his father

The Pope goes further to find the reasons for the father's joy "at the moment of the son's return home." (*DiM* 6.3):

Going on, one can therefore say that the love for the son, the love that springs from the very essence of fatherhood, in a way obliges the father to be concerned about his son's dignity. This concern is the measure of his love, the love of which Saint Paul was to write, "Love is patient and kind...love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful...but rejoices in the right...hopes all things, endures all things" and "love never ends" (I Cor. 13:4-8). Mercy—as Christ has pre-

sented it in the parable of the Prodigal Son—has the interior form of the love that in the New Testament is called *agape*. This love is able to reach down to every form of moral misery, to sin. When this happens, the person who is the object of mercy does not feel humiliated, but rather found again and “restored to value.” The father first and foremost expresses to him his joy that he has been “found again” and that he has “returned to life.” This joy indicates a good that has remained intact: even if he is a prodigal, a son does not cease to be truly his father’s son; it also indicates a good that has been found again, which in the case of the Prodigal Son was his return to the truth about himself.

The decisive sentence is, “a son does not cease to be truly his father’s son.” This sentence says very clearly what has already been hinted at in many ways earlier (cf. *DiM* 5.6 & 6.3): the bond between father and son cannot be dissolved! Father remains father and son remains son.

Which makes the Pope’s teaching as follows: the deepest reason for the indestructibility of the dignity of the son is the fatherhood of the father, the faithfulness of the father to himself. The faithfulness to his fatherhood is the guarantee for the mercy of God as father. This is called *agape* in the New Testament. It kept the humanity and the dignity of a son intact despite the scandalous behaviour of the Prodigal Son.

The return of the Prodigal Son “to the truth about himself” means quite simply the recognition of his nature given and, therefore, inviolable quality of being a son which comes to him when his father receives him with great joy.

6.4 Man’s dignity: common experience of father and son

The Pope goes further into the relationship of the father and the son and reveals what he finds there (*DiM* 6.5):

What took place in the relationship between the father and the son in Christ’s parable is not to be evaluated “from the outside.” Our prejudices about mercy are mostly the re-

sult of appraising them only from the outside. At times it happens that by following this method of evaluation we see in mercy above all a relationship of inequality between the one offering it and the one receiving it. And, in consequence, we are quick to deduce that mercy belittles the receiver, that it offends the dignity of man. The parable of the Prodigal Son shows that the reality is different: the relationship of mercy is based on the common experience of that good which is man, on the common experience of the dignity that is proper to him. This common experience makes the Prodigal Son begin to see himself and his actions in their full truth (this vision in truth is a genuine form of humility); on the other hand, for this very reason he becomes a particular good for his father: the father sees so clearly the good which has been achieved thanks to a mysterious radiation of truth and love, that he seems to forget all the evil which the son had committed.

The idea "that mercy belittles the receiver, that it offends the dignity of man" has been expressed many times before. Now we learn that this is the wrong way of looking at it because it sees in mercy a relationship of (offensive) inequality. True mercy rests—*per consequentiam*—on a relationship of equality. The relationship of equality is at the same time the basis on which mercy as the "common experience of that good which is man" rests and is at all possible as the "the common experience of the dignity that is proper to him." The Pope is convinced that the parable of the Prodigal Son proves his thesis.

Later on in the Encyclical the Pope goes back to this theme (*DiM* 14.11):

In analysing the parable of the Prodigal Son, we have already called attention to the fact that he who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential value of the person, a point which cannot be lost and the affirmation of which, or its rediscovery, is a source of the greatest joy (cf. Lk. 15:32).

We may summarise the Pope's thoughts thus: In the parable of the Prodigal Son the blood bond between the father and the son is the foundation of an equality upon which their "common experience" of mercy rests and is possible. The object of this common experience is the inviolable value of the dignity of being man and a son.

We can now say quite concretely what the common experience is where the father and son meet:

From the father's side it is the son's being a son which is indeed a product of his fatherhood. The father has begotten the son and communicated to him for ever the basic value of the dignity of being a son.

From the son's side it is his humanity and his dignity of sonship which he possesses as a basic value because of his sonship from his father. This son's dignity is inviolable because it belongs to his nature and the father remains in constant faithfulness to his love and fatherhood.

In this way the "father and son meet" in a "common experience" of the inviolable good of the son's dignity of man.

This common experience becomes an event when the son returns home. It is described as an inner process as follows (*DiM* 6.4):

The relationship of mercy is based on the common experience of that good which is man, on the common experience of the dignity that is proper to him. This common experience makes the Prodigal Son begin to see himself (= his inviolable son's dignity) and his actions in their full truth (this vision in truth is a genuine form of humility); on the other hand, for this very reason he becomes a particular good for his father: the father sees so clearly the good which has been achieved thanks to a mysterious radiation of truth and love, that he seems to forget all the evil which the son had committed.

The inner process which the Pope calls here a "common experience of mercy" of the father and the son is the conver-

sion (*conversio*) though he does not use that word. It occurs, however, later in the following paragraph (*DiM* 6.5).

The aim of the Pope's exegesis of St. Luke's parable is to "understand exactly what the mercy of God consists in" (cf. *DiM* 6.1). That has been done. There now follows the review.

6.5 Conversion: the basic content of Christ's messianic message

After describing in detail the inner process of conversion (*DiM* 6.4) the Pope uses the word itself (*DiM* 6.5):

The parable of the Prodigal Son expresses in a simple but profound way the reality of conversion. Conversion is the most concrete expression of the working of love and of the presence of mercy in the human world. The true and proper meaning of mercy does not consist only in looking, however penetratingly and compassionately, at moral, physical or material evil: mercy is manifested in its true and proper aspect when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man. Understood in this way, mercy constitutes the fundamental content of the messianic message of Christ and the constitutive power of His mission. His disciples and followers understood and practised mercy in the same way. Mercy never ceased to reveal itself, in their hearts and in their actions, as an especially creative proof of the love which does not allow itself to be "conquered by evil," but overcomes "evil with good" (cf. Rom. 12:21). The genuine face of mercy has to be ever revealed anew. In spite of many prejudices, mercy seems particularly necessary for our times.

The "reality of conversion" is according to this "the most concrete expression of the working of love and of the presence of mercy in the human world." True mercy shows itself "when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man." This is presented in the example of the conversion of the prodigal in the

following way: In the "mysterious radiation" of the father's love the Prodigal Son recognises his inviolable dignity of being a son. The father's joy is so great over this that he "seems to forget all the evil which the son had committed" (*DiM* 6.4).

Unquestionably God's mercy constitutes "the fundamental content of the messianic message of Christ and the constitutive power of His mission." But there remains the question whether this "fundamental content" which the Pope has drawn out of the "common experience" of the father and the Prodigal Son is really the message of Jesus' parable.

6.6 The parable of the Prodigal Son in the Pope's allegory

In the Pope's exegesis we have an allegorical treatment of Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son.

Interpreting isolated aspects of Jesus' parables in an allegorical way was already done in the early Church, mainly from St. Matthew, rarely from St. Luke. The reasons for an allegorical interpretation are due to the situation of the early Church which was in an hellenistic milieu, to the requirements of the mission but soon also to the desire to get to the deeper meaning of Jesus' parables.³ The Encyclical similarly wants to help to a greater understanding of the deeper meaning of the parable of the Prodigal Son by an allegorical interpretation.

There is no difficulty in summarising the Encyclical's comments on Jesus' parable as an independent allegory of the Pope.⁴ The papal allegory of the parable of the Prodigal Son is as follows:

The Prodigal Son is an analogy of the man of every period, beginning with Adam who first lost the inheritance of grace and original justice. The father in the parable is an analogy of God the Father.

³ Cf. Joachim Jeremias, [*The Parables of Jesus*] (Zurich 1952), pp. 50-70.

⁴ *Ibid.* allegorisation in the early Church (e.g., Mt. 13:1-9 = Jesus' parable; Mt. 13:18-23 = the evangelist's allegory).

This son demanded his inheritance from his father. He received it, squandered it and ended up with the pigs. Then he thought about it and said to himself, "the hired labourers in my father's house have everything they need and here I die in wretchedness. I will go back to my father and serve him from now on as a hired labourer. That will certainly be a humiliation for me but I have lost my dignity of a son and according to the norms of justice I now only have the right to be a labourer in my father's house."

Thinking this he made the decision to go home. There he got a big surprise.

His father received the one who had grievously offended him by his scandalous behaviour, with exceeding great joy and lavished presents upon him. For the father saw the situation completely differently to the Prodigal Son: because of his constant faithfulness to himself, to his fatherhood, he knew that his son, even when he was far away never lost his dignity of being a son and never could. Even if his son hadn't seen that in his misery the basic value of his son's dignity remained intact. For the bond between father and son could never be dissolved!

The father's joy at the return of the Prodigal Son makes the son aware of this fact: even when he had previously thought that he had lost his dignity of being a son he now recognises the full truth about himself, his inviolable and therefore never lost dignity of being a son.

The double statement, that the son believed he had lost his dignity when he was far from home but now realised that he had never lost it is thus not *per se* a contradiction, but simply the transition of the consciousness of the son in misery to the consciousness of the son when he comes home. A change of consciousness which represents a "conversion" when he meets his overjoyed father.

The father's mercy is not a humiliation of the son. For mercy does not rest on a principle of inequality but equality. The inviolable bond between father and son is the foundation of

their common experience of the basic value of the Prodigal Son's inviolable dignity of being a son. The recognition of this profound truth about himself which he receives when he is so joyfully accepted by his father is on the son's side the conversion process. On the father's side this process of his son's "finding himself" leads to the Prodigal Son being particularly dear to him. Then the father sees "so clearly the good which has been achieved thanks to a mysterious radiation of truth and love, that he seems to forget all the evil which the son had committed." Conversion and mercy are therefore necessary to one another. Mercy can be seen most clearly and truly when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man. This is the "fundamental content of Christ's messianic message and the constitutive power of His mission."

6.7 Critical examination of the allegorical interpretation of the parable

In St. Luke's Gospel the parable of the Prodigal Son is a story out of real life,⁵ in the Encyclical it becomes an allegory.

Considering that allegorical interpretations of Jesus' parables already exist in the Gospels themselves and continued under the heading of the many senses of Sacred Scripture,⁶ it is quite legitimate for the Pope to try to explain one of Jesus' most beautiful parables in an allegorical interpretation for the people of his period, especially when this is done as a "development of the full power of the biblical message."⁷

The important points in the Pope's interpretation are the

⁵ *Ibid.* cf. p. 106.

⁶ Cf. Augustin Bea, in *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* (= *LThK*) (Freiburg i. Br. 1986), II, pp. 435ff.

⁷ Thus Karl Lehmann in his Herder commentary on *Dives in Misericordia: [Threatened Man and the Power of Mercy]* (Freiburg i. Br. 1981), p. 93.—Concerning the Encyclical's language and argumentation see *ibid.* pp. 96ff.

analogies (cf. *DiM* 5.2).

– The first analogy is: the Prodigal Son is the man of every period. But this is in contradiction to the parable as presented by St. Luke: the elder son is also a “man”! He behaved completely different to the “man for every period” to whom he also should belong. He did not forsake his father and did not squander his inheritance but rather served his father faithfully. The “elder brother” is—consistently enough—only fleetingly mentioned twice in the Pope’s exegesis (cf. *DiM* 6.1 & 2). It is not without importance for the exegesis of the parable for it is a “twin peaked” parable and the elder son is the second peak and one that is especially stressed.⁸

The analogy does not just say the Prodigal Son is the man of every period but also the “man of every period, beginning with the one who was the first to lose the inheritance of grace and original justice” (*qui primus gratiae perdidit hereditatem pristinaeque honestatis*). This is a very significant thing to say dogmatically for Adam is also brought into this analogy and the *status iustitiae originalis* is his “inheritance.”

At first sight the Encyclical seems to give the traditional teaching regarding the loss of original justice and to abandon the thesis of universal salvation.

On closer inspection, however, the way the Encyclical expresses itself is strange. For according to Church teaching it is not the “man of every period” who lost the state of grace but only our first parents. It was only our first parents who had this original grace therefore it was only they who could lose it.

The justice in their original state was also not an “inheritance” that was due to the first parents but rather a gift of grace. From whom could Adam have inherited, required or demanded this original state of grace and with which contemporaries could the first man have squandered this inheritance in a foreign land?

It is true that the first parents’ original justice was to be at

⁸ Joachim Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

the same time an inherited justice for their descendants. But this intended inheritance was never inherited. The first parents lost "the original state of grace" and their descendants could neither inherit it, nor lose it nor pass it on. Adam's descendants began life with Original Sin *in statu naturae lapsae*.

The Encyclical's formulation is, however, not a slip of the pen. Rather the Pope by the sentence, "man of every period, beginning with the one who was the first to lose the inheritance of grace and original justice" is taking the analogy of his exegesis back to the "beginning" to the "mystery of the Creation and election" (cf. *DiM* 4.12). Thus he has fixed the paradigm of the New Testament—as he already did with the Old Testament (cf. above *DiM* 4.4)—firmly in his theology of the covenant. It is from this point of view that we are to understand the exegesis of the parable in the Encyclical. From this point of view the Prodigal Son is in fact like Adam "the man of every period." For in Adam God made an inviolable covenant with the whole of humanity *actu uno* with the Creation. This was broken by Adam but at the same time healed *a priori* by the Cross of Christ in Adam so that Cardinal Wojtyła could say, "All men from the beginning to the end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through His Cross."⁹

From the point of view of his theology of the covenant and quoting Scripture the Pope can thus speak of "the man of every period" and the loss of "original justice" and at the same time announce the Redemption and justification of all men.

– the second analogy is: The father in the parable is "God the Father" (cf. *DiM* 6.1). This does not tie up with the sense of St. Luke's parable either for if we look at the words of the Prodigal Son himself he says, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven (=God) and thee" (Lk. 15:18 & 21). This shows clearly that the father in the parable is not God but an earthly fa-

⁹ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, p. 101. For the indestructibility of God's image in man see *Redemptor Hominis* 13.3 and Part II/1, pp. 181-187.

ther.¹⁰

The difference does not seem to be important since Jesus Himself uses the example of the earthly father in the parable against the critics of the Gospel: that is what your heavenly Father is like, so full of love and mercy!¹¹ The earthly father is thus here not an analogy for the heavenly Father.

The difference is, however, of extreme importance in the Pope's exegesis because there the analogy of God as Father is extended to the relationship with the son. That means:

If—as the Encyclical says—the father in the parable is “God the Father,” then the Prodigal Son in the parable is the natural son of the divine Father.

That is precisely the third analogy in the Encyclical: the natural, biological relationship of the earthly father with his Prodigal Son in the parable is an analogy of the relationship between God the Father and the man of every period.

All through Jesus' preaching runs the theme of the relationship between God and man. Jesus builds on the faith of His listeners. They knew God as a Father (cf. Deut. 32:6; II Ki. 7:14; *etc.*). It is this Father which he presents to them in such an insistent way. The prayer of his disciples is the “Our Father, who art in Heaven.” He emphasises to them that they are children of their heavenly Father and must behave as such. And it is this relationship which is in question in the parable of the Prodigal Son. But it remains clear in Jesus' parable that the natural biological relationship of the earthly father to his son is not a physical fatherhood of God for all men. This is the case only for the only begotten Son, begotten from all eternity. The blood bond of the father and the Prodigal Son in Jesus' parable is simply not an analogy for a natural bond between the heavenly Father and man.

But that is the Pope's interpretation and forms in fact the

¹⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 106.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 108.

dogmatic basis of his interpretation: If the father in the parable is simply "God the Father" then the Prodigal Son and thus the natural relationship between the father and son must consistently be brought into the analogy. The most significant consequences of this analogy in the Encyclical are:

Just as the blood bond between the earthly father and the Prodigal Son is of its nature indissoluble so is the bond between the heavenly Father and the "man of every period." Just as the Prodigal Son as the natural son of his father cannot lose the dignity of his being a son and always remains the son of his father whatever he does, so man as son of the heavenly Father can never lose the basic value of his filial dignity, his being a son.

Of course the Pope knows that the natural relationship between a father and his son is in classical theology the preferred analogy to express the unique relationship between God the Father and His only begotten Son and therefore the metaphysical way in which Jesus Christ is the Son of God.¹² This unique relationship is extended in the Encyclical to the relationship between God as Father and the "man of every period" that is to the whole of humanity. The difference is that Christ is sinless whereas sinful but universally redeemed man must become aware of the full truth of his humanity, the inviolable dignity of his sonship.

This remarkable conclusion is just the consequence of the Pope's theology of the covenant and his concept of revelation: According to this the deepest humanity of each man which *a priori* he possesses as an inviolable basic value is his dignity of being a son because of his nature. The extension of the unique relationship between God the Father and the only begotten Son to man generally means that the way in which Christ is the Son is identical with the way in which the "man of every period" is the son. This means that Christ, the Son of God,

¹² Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 62ff.; 128ff.

who formally united Himself to every man by His Incarnation is humanity's universal principle of being. Christ Himself seen in this way is only the most perfect expression of that which every man, the whole of humanity, is ontologically.¹³

Thus we are once again faced with the alternative, as we were in the Pope's thesis of revelation's anthropocentrism and theocentrism:¹⁴ "Either Christ is only man or man is divine."¹⁵

Doubtless the relationship of the earthly father to the Prodigal Son in Jesus' parable is also an analogy for the relationship of God to man. But man remains a wretched man compared to God as the parable describes him. If we look dogmatically at the concrete example in the biblical parable of the relationship of God to man then we may say from the point of view of classical theology:

God, the almighty Father, is the Creator of man. Man was not begotten but created in the image and likeness of God. The relationship of God to man consists of a double bond of nature and grace. The different qualities of this bond show themselves after the Fall of our first parents in a double consequence: The *imago Dei*, the natural image of God is wounded, the *similitudo Dei*, the supernatural likeness of God or sanctifying grace is lost.¹⁶ Similarly every man who has been redeemed by the Cross of Christ and justified by faith loses this likeness of God through any mortal sin and breaks the bond of grace which joined him to God.¹⁷ The likeness of God means a supernatural "likeness" of man with God. It is a *gratia creata* and not a consubstantial equality with God, not a *gratia increata*.

The double relationship of God to man is thus in no way

¹³ The similarity to Henri de Lubac and Karl Rahner is remarkable. For the Pope's theology of the covenant see Part II/1, pp. 24-32 & pp. 118ff.

¹⁴ See above *DiM* 1.4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* and Part I, p. 114.

¹⁶ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.* pp. 105ff.; 128ff.

¹⁷ Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* [Eng. ver. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*] [= D], 808; 837; 862; 894; 899; 1290.

simply indissoluble and man's supernatural dignity of being a son is in no way impossible to lose as the Encyclical presents it. It simply ignores the necessary distinction of nature and grace in the relationship of God to man. In contrast to the classical teaching the Encyclical affirms the bond of God to man to be inviolable: both as the *imago Dei* and the *similitudo Dei*, both nature and grace. The third analogy similarly understands grace as being *increated*. The Encyclical goes into more details in Chapter V.

The fourth analogy in the Pope's exegesis is "man's interior" (cf. *DiM* 5.4). It manifests itself in the Prodigal Son's words which in his misery he says to himself and then, when he arrives home, to his father.

Exegetes are united in saying that these words of the Prodigal Son in a unique way express what contrition, penance, return and conversion mean for Jesus and the New Testament. Contrition and penance mean the decisive turning away from sin and the trusting and obedient turning back to God with nothing held back and no claim to rights. That is what St. Luke's parable of the Prodigal Son says about the "main problem" of conversion!¹⁸

The Encyclical teaches something completely different. The Pope makes Jesus think things which are completely alien to Him. The most important biblical words contrition, penance and return are not mentioned, "conversion" is given another meaning.

In Jesus' parable the decision to return home matures in the Prodigal Son immediately out of the humiliations which he suffers in the foreign land and which he is no longer able to put up with. Such a degradation means he has no thoughts of the "humiliation and shame" which are to be associated with his return to his father's house. From the prodigal's words, "I no longer deserve to be called thy son; treat me as one of thy

¹⁸ Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, [*The Gospel According to St. Luke*] (Göttingen 1967), NTD III, p. 185.

hired labourers" (Lk. 15:19), there is no sign of a consciousness of "the norms of justice" a claim to the right to work as a hired labourer in his father's house. The words are rather a completely humble plea without any sign of a right! The Prodigal Son has lost any "rights" by his behaviour. Such a claim, which is neither contained nor to be found in the son's words, would completely invalidate the act of contrition, penance, return and conversion in the sense that Jesus or the New Testament see them.

But that is precisely what happens in the Encyclical! From the conversion of the Prodigal Son which in Jesus' parable is an act of contrite decisiveness, a decisive turning away from his sinful life and a trusting, pleading turning to his father, we get in the Encyclical a pure process of consciousness. This is described in the following way: When his father receives him with great joy the Prodigal Son begins "to see himself and what he has done in the fullness of truth." And this happens according to the principle of equality and the "common experience" of father and son. The son recognises the inviolable basic value of his dignity as a son and sees in the light of this self-experience his earlier wrong behaviour.—What is described here is "conversion" based on equality. The relationship of father and son consists in a "familial" equality and mercy in a "common experience" of God as Father and man.

The full extent of the change of meaning which Jesus' parable undergoes with the magisterial authority of an Encyclical becomes clear when we confront the Pope's exegesis with a scientific exegesis. We will now present a general characterisation of the parable by Joachim Jeremias:

The parable of the Prodigal Son is not an allegory but a story from real life as we see in the way God is named in vv. 18 & 21...

The parable belongs to that group of parables that contain the essential Gospel which says, the time of salvation has come, the Saviour is here! Salvation has been sent—to the poor! Jesus has come—a Saviour for *sinners!*...

The parable is given for the opponents of this Gospel of salvation. It is a defence, a justification of the Gospel, a weapon in the fight against critics and enemies of the Gospel. The parable of the Prodigal Son should really be called the parable of the Father's love...

It portrays in an overwhelming simplicity the following: This is what God is like, so kind, so good, so full of mercy, so overflowing with love. He is overjoyed by the return of the lost as is the father who holds the feast. But this is only the first half (vv. 11-24); the parable has, however, two peaks: it shows not only the return of the younger son but also the protest of the elder. Since the first half is complete in itself it seems superfluous at first sight to add a second half. Why does Jesus add it on? There is only one answer: because of the concrete situation! The parable is for people who are like this elder brother, *i.e.*, for people who are scandalised by the Gospel. They should have their conscience pricked. Jesus says to *them*, that is how great God's love is for his lost children and you are miserable, harsh, ungrateful and self righteous! Be merciful! Do not be so harsh! The spiritually dead rise up, the lost find their home, rejoice! That is, just as in the other twin peaked parables, the emphasis is on the second peak. The parable of the Prodigal Son is therefore not so much an announcement of the Gospel to the poor as the justification of the Gospel for its critics. Jesus' own justification is due to God's love being so great. (Jesus claims God Himself to support his Gospel!) Jesus does not rest with a simple analogy. The parable is suddenly interrupted and the end remains open. This is meant to reflect the reality that confronts Jesus at that time. Jesus' listeners are in the elder son's situation and must decide whether they are going to follow the difficult words of the Father and rejoice. Jesus does not break the stick over their backs, He still has hope that they will overcome this stumbling block to the Gospel. The justification of the Gospel becomes a reproach and an attempt to win the hearts of His critics.¹⁹

¹⁹ Joachim Jeremias, *op. cit.* pp. 106; 102ff.; 108ff.

The results of our analysis are: by importing analogies that are foreign to the text of the biblical parable the Pope has brought in the principles of knowledge of his *nouvelle théologie* loaded with his own favourite special philosophical ideas. Thus he himself has laid the foundations for his own exegesis. On this foundation Jesus' parable becomes an allegory of the Pope's theology. At the same time, the biblical parable, which is a paradigm for the New Testament, is simply the supplier of material for the presentation of his own theology. The "fundamental content of Christ's messianic message" undergoes in this way a radical and profound change.

CHAPTER V

COMPLETION OF THE MESSIANIC MISSION IN THE PASCHAL MYSTERY*

The fifth Chapter continues the exegesis of the New Testament and reaches the Encyclical's theological high point: the completion of the messianic mission in the Paschal mystery. The Pope first presents the revelation of mercy in the Passion and Resurrection (7) then he confronts the Paschal mystery with evil in the history of man (8). With the "mother of mercy" (9) the main theological section of the Encyclical which is full of references to Sacred Scripture comes to a close (Ch. II-V).¹

7. The revelation of mercy in the Passion and Resurrection**

The seventh article is the first main section of John Paul II's teaching on the Redemption in *Dives in Misericordia*.

7.1 The human and divine dimension of the Redemption

The Pope takes up where he left off in the last article (6) and continues (*DiM* 7.1):

The messianic message of Christ and His activity among people end with the cross and resurrection.² We have to pen-

* Chapter title in the English translation, "The Paschal Mystery."

** Chapter title in the English translation, "Mercy Revealed in the Cross and Resurrection."

1 Cf. INTRODUCTION, 2. Outline and Arrangement (p. 18).

2 The Ascension is missing from the English translation.

trate deeply into this final event—which especially in the language of the Council is defined as the *Mysterium Paschale*—if we wish to express in depth the truth about mercy, as it has been revealed in depth in the history of our salvation. At this point of our considerations, we shall have to draw closer still to the teaching (*Magisterium*) of the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. If, in fact, the reality (*veritas*) of the Redemption, in its human dimension, reveals the unheard-of greatness of man, *qui talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem*, (cf. Holy Saturday liturgy “*Exultet*”) at the same time the divine dimension of the Redemption enables us, I would say, in the most empirical and “historical” way, to uncover the depth of that love which does not recoil (*abhorret*) before the extraordinary sacrifice of the Son, in order to satisfy the fidelity of the Creator and Father towards human beings, created in His image and chosen from “the beginning,” in this Son, for grace and glory (*ut satis faciat Creatoris ac Patris fidelitati erga homines eius ad imaginem effectos iamque a “principio” electos in gratiam et gloriam*).

The Pope begins his teaching on the Redemption with a reference to his principle of knowledge. He repeats what he has already said in a general way in the introduction to the whole Encyclical: *Redemptor Hominis* is the presupposition for *Dives in Misericordia*. The principle of “double revelation” is also valid for considering the Paschal mystery which means:

– the “human dimension of the truth of the Redemption” or the *a priori* revelation is the same as the axiom of universal salvation. That is why, as the quoted text says, the content of this revelation is not the “*felix culpa*” from Holy Saturday’s *Exultet* but in an extraordinary changing of meaning “the unheard-of greatness of man who deserved to have such and so great a redeemer.”

– “the divine dimension of the truth of the Redemption” or the *a posteriori* revelation is identical to the historical revelation. It is related to the *a priori* revelation and reveals to man his “unheard-of greatness” by, in and through Christ, “revealing in the most empirical and “historical” way the depth of

the Father's love." The Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* is dedicated to this revelation (cf. *DiM* 1.1 & 1.2) and especially this fifth chapter with its emphasis on the teaching on the Redemption. Thus it is said from the beginning that humanity is *ab origine* in a state of effectively being redeemed and that the historical revelation of the Father in Christ is basically to reveal the depth of the Father's love which has *a priori* given man his unheard-of greatness.

The Pope does not just give the theological principles in advance but immediately draws from them the fundamental thesis of his teaching on Redemption. This is:

The depth of the Father's love for man shows itself by giving the Son "in order to satisfy the fidelity of the Creator and Father towards human beings, created in His image and chosen from "the beginning," in this Son, for grace and glory."

The thesis means the definitive predestination of the whole of humanity to grace and glory "*a principio*." On this foundation follows logically the radical shift in meaning of the sacrifice of the cross: It is the satisfaction for the constant faithfulness of the Father to this very covenant with man *a principio*. In this sense the axiom of universal salvation or rather universal giving of grace is the centre of the Encyclical's teaching on Redemption. It is a teaching of the Redemption of people who are effectively redeemed and justified *a priori*. The traditional conception of Redemption is given a whole new meaning by the principle of universal giving of grace *a principio*.

7.2 The suffering Messiah receives no mercy from man

The Pope turns first to the suffering side of the Paschal mystery and begins his teaching on Redemption—like any theological treatise³—with the person of the Redeemer (*DiM* 7.2):

³ The teaching on God the Redeemer is normally the forerunner of Christian anthropology with the teaching on Original Sin. In the Encyclical it is the thesis of the universal giving of grace (*DiM* 7.1).

The events of Good Friday and, even before that, in prayer in Gethsemane, introduce a fundamental change into the whole course of the revelation of love and mercy in the messianic mission of Christ. The one who "went about doing good and healing" (Acts 10:38) and "curing every sickness and disease" (Mt. 9:35) now Himself seems to merit the greatest mercy and to appeal* for mercy, when He is arrested, abused, condemned, scourged, crowned with thorns, when He is nailed to the cross and dies amidst agonising torments (cf. Mk. 15:37; Jn. 19:30). It is then that He particularly deserves mercy from the people to whom He has done good, and He does not receive it. Even those who are closest to Him cannot protect Him and snatch Him from the hands of His oppressors.

At this final stage of His messianic activity the words which the prophets, especially Isaiah, uttered concerning the Servant of Yahweh are fulfilled in Christ: "Through his stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:5).

According to the careful and restrained text the events in Gethsemane and on Good Friday show a "fundamental change" in the mission of the Messiah: Christ, who in His whole life has shown mercy to man becomes in His Passion an object of mercy for man. But His expectation of experiencing help and mercy, especially from them that are closest to Him, is disappointed.

This thesis goes right to the centre of the previous teaching of the Church on the Redemption. For:

A Messiah who expects help and deliverance from his suffering from man does not carry His cross willingly! Thence the fearful question:

Did Christ really hope for such mercy from man in His

* The Latin text says, "*nunc contra ipse plurimam promereri videtur misericordiam eamque evocare.*" The English translation is thus inaccurate. It is *evocare* not *invocare*. In general, however, the Encyclical has the basic idea.

Passion so that one can speak of a "fundamental change...in the messianic mission of Christ"?

The answer can be found in Sacred Scripture: In the Gospels it is stressed with every emphasis that Christ accepted his redeeming sufferings absolutely voluntarily. He had predicted his terrible sufferings. Knowing about these sufferings he went up to Jerusalem voluntarily. He neither appealed* for the mercy of man nor did He want or expect "to be freed from the hands of his enemies." Rather He decisively rejected any attempt to hold Him back from His Passion, to "protect Him and snatch Him from the hands of His oppressors" (cf. Mt. 16:22ff.; 22:49ff.). Indeed Christ's messianic mission consisted precisely in redeeming man by His absolutely voluntary sacrifice of atonement!⁴

How Christ answered any such well-meaning attempt to hold him back from His journey to His Passion in Jerusalem is seen in the Gospel with Simon Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Christ rejected the worried attempts of the Apostle to restrain Him from accepting His sufferings and death with the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men" (Mt. 16:23). That is how the Lord Himself characterises the pious considerations of Peter's successor concerning the "truth of mercy" and the "fundamental change...in the messianic mission of Christ." Christ likewise rejects his disciple's attempts to free Him from the hands of his persecutors by the sword with the words, "Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (Mt. 26:53ff.).

We are forced by Holy Scripture to disagree with the Encyclical: Even in the Passion of Christ there is no appeal for the mercy of man, there is no expectation to be delivered from the hands of his enemies, there is therefore no "fundamental

⁴ D. 86; 223; 314; 333; 570; 711; 718; 747; 794.

change...in the messianic mission of Christ." This thesis has no support in the Gospel.

The question remains: where does the Encyclical get this thesis from? The question can easily be answered. The Pope develops his idea from the relationship between equality and the common experience in mercy (*DiM* 6.4), by adding a third element: reciprocity.

The Pope himself gives a more precise definition of reciprocity in mercy later on in the Encyclical. There he says that mercy cannot work in only one direction. Rather, following the "example of Christ," the principle is (*DiM* 14.3):

An act of merciful love is only really such when we are deeply convinced at the moment we perform it that we are at the same time receiving mercy from the people who are accepting it from us. If this bilateral and reciprocal quality is absent, our actions are not yet true acts of mercy, nor has there yet been fully completed in us that conversion to which Christ has shown us the way by His words and example, even to the cross, nor are we yet sharing fully in the magnificent source of merciful love that has been revealed to us by Him.

According to this Christ Himself gave the example that a true act of mercy must be reciprocal. That is why Christ also had to have the expectation in His Passion of receiving man's mercy and help for His mercy to be real.

The thesis of reciprocity in mercy is the third main idea in the Pope's teaching on Redemption.

By importing such ideas into the very centre of the redemptive work of Christ the Encyclical in a careful and pious way formulates the essence of the Redeemer and His Passion. A Redeemer who in His Passion appeals for or expects man's mercy but finds none, who hopes to be freed by His followers from the hands of his enemies but is disappointed is not, however, the Christ of the Gospels.

7.3 The suffering Messiah appeals in vain for mercy from the Father

Christ now turns in His suffering “as man” to the Father (*DiM* 7.3):

Christ, as the man who suffers really and in a terrible way in the Garden of Olives and on Calvary, addresses Himself to the Father—that Father whose love He has preached to people, to whose mercy He has borne witness through all of His activity. But He is not spared—not even He—the terrible suffering of death on the cross: “For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin,” (II Cor. 5:21), St. Paul writes, summing up in a few words the whole depth of the Cross and at the same time the divine dimension of the reality of the Redemption (*indolem divinam veritatis Redemptionis*).

The Pope draws a parallel with the preceding paragraph. This is carefully and impressively built up on the foundation of the reciprocity of mercy: Just as Christ in His Passion is said to have appealed for help in vain from man (*DiM* 7.2), so now he turns “as man” who suffers in a terrible way in His Passion to the Father—also in vain.

From this presentation follows in cold logic what the author probably does not see:

A father who answers the call for mercy of his son in terrible sufferings to spare him these sufferings by “making him to be sin who knew no sin” and handing him over to these terrible sufferings, acts in a capricious and merciless way. The punishment of the innocent instead of the guilty makes no sense since a punishment *per se* can only be given to a person who has deserved it. Otherwise it would completely lose its point, indeed completely take away the moral meaning of sin and the moral order itself.⁵ That is precisely what happens in

⁵ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* [*Handbook of Catholic Dogma*] [= *Dogmatik*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1954), Collected writings V/2, no. 1304.

the text of the Encyclical and is not cancelled by the later revelation of the Father's love in raising his Son from the dead (cf. *DiM* 7.4; 8.6).

Using biblical language the Encyclical covers up the terrible contents of what is said.

The formulation that Christ "as man" turned to the Father must not make us forget that Christ always acts as God and man. That alone gives the divine dimension to the work of Redemption and stops Christ's acts from being something purely human. Only because Christ is God and man can he wipe out sin by His work of Redemption and reconcile us with God.

According to how the Pope sees it, Christ's appeal to His Father, whose mercy He has preached, presupposes the expectation of receiving mercy from the Father: "If this reciprocity is missing, then our actions are not yet true acts of mercy" (cf. *DiM* 7.2; 14.3). Christ's appeal to the Father for mercy is then to be understood in the sense of a real request and a firm hope that he will be spared the suffering. But that would be "a fundamental change in Christ's messianic mission." For the Son of God became man to redeem us by His Passion. Does the Gospel really show a desperate plea from the Son for mercy and through this a break in the centre of Christ's messianic mission?

Jesus Himself gives the definitive answer to this question before His sufferings, "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (Jn. 12:27ff.). Thus He directly refuses to ask the Father to keep Him from the Passion. In sovereign willingness He fulfils His messianic mission as Redeemer of the world to the glory of the Father.

The Encyclical gives no authority for its thesis. The only thing mentioned is Christ's prayer in the Garden of Olives, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt. 26:39). Can this moving text be used to back the Pope's thesis?

The prayer reveals Christ's agony but at the same time His overcoming it by giving Himself up to the will of the Father. It shows the Messiah in His last great temptation which he overcomes victoriously (cf. Mt. 26:36-46).⁶ Jesus' prayer is not a vain appeal for the Father to spare Him the Passion but the Son of man's great *Fiat* in His agony to God's plan of Redemption.⁷ In St. Luke an angel appears from Heaven, not to take the chalice away but to give Him strength to bring the sacrifice to completion (Lk. 22:43), to which He has dedicated Himself (Jn. 17:1ff.).⁸ And Jesus accepts the chalice.

If we accept the Pope's thesis then the prayer would have to be—without any *Fiat*—"Father, have mercy on me! Spare me this hour and spare me this terrible suffering!"

Because there is no vain plea of the Son for the Father's mercy to spare Him the Passion, thus II Cor. 5:21 is not the answer of an unmerciful and capricious God. Just as in the case of Christ's appeal for mercy from man so also in this appeal for mercy from the Father the same decisive inner significance of Christ's mission is ignored—the Son's absolute free choice, His *Fiat* which He had spoken even as He came into the world (Heb. 10:5ff.) and confirmed before His suffering in Gethsemane. Christ's Passion as a sacrifice for sin as St. Paul expresses it in II Cor. 5:21 is wholly determined by the Son's *Fiat*. Through his voluntary acceptance of humanity's guilt of sin Christ Himself becomes in no way a sinner.

Considered from the side of sinful man the satisfaction rendered by the third party involves the transfer of the evil of punishment from the sinner to an innocent but this is by no means the punishment of an innocent instead of the guilty. Rather the taking away of the guilt is essentially conditioned by the free, loving acceptance of the suffering of the punish-

⁶ Cf. Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* [*The Gospel According to Matthew*] (Göttingen 1964), NTD II pp. 259ff.—Karl Staab, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Würzburg 1951), Echter-Bibel, p. 145.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

ment and the great favour that he enjoys with God.⁹

There is another inner significance which cannot be overlooked and which is added to the Son's *Fiat* according to the Church's oral and written tradition. This significance is the high majesty of the Redeemer that not only influences the Messiah's whole way of acting but also makes the death on the cross a sacrifice of sovereign devotion. We see this significance in the Lord's words, "The Father loves me because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of my Father" (Jn. 10:17ff.).

Christ is not only the sacrificial lamb who speaks His *Fiat* out of obedience but also the sacrificial priest. As head of mankind and consubstantial Son of the Father He offers Himself in sovereign freedom and in divine authority over His own life as a victim for sin for the sins of men. The high priestly sacrifice of Christ leaves no room for a Messiah who in His Passion "as man" appeals to the Father for mercy to take away the suffering and who only passively suffers the Cross as a punishment for our sins.

The Pope's "biblical" grounds for his teaching on Redemption has in fact no support in the Bible. Rather the omission of the important inner significance in the Redeemer's actions leads to a further distortion of the biblical figure of Christ.

– Misinterpreting the Redeemer leads necessarily to misinterpreting His work of Redemption. The key text of this misinterpretation is for the Pope II Cor. 5:21. Obviously St. Paul's words uncover "the depth of the mystery of the Cross," but not in the way the Encyclical interprets them. That is, however, what is meant as we see when the Pope continues his train of thought and says (*DiM* 7.3):

Indeed this (form of) Redemption (*Quae quidem ipsa*

⁹ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *op. cit.* no. 1304.

redemptio) is the ultimate and definitive revelation (*definitiva patefactio*) of the holiness of God, who (*ipse*) is the absolute fullness of perfection: (The) fullness of justice and of love, since justice is based on love, flows from it and tends towards it. In the passion and death of Christ—in the fact that the Father did not spare His own Son, but “for our sake made him sin” (*ibid.*)—absolute justice is expressed, for Christ undergoes the passion and cross because of the sins of humanity. This constitutes even a “superabundance” of justice, for the sins of man are “compensated for” by the sacrifice of the Man-God.

According to this II Cor. 5:21 would be in the Pope’s interpretation the definitive revelation of the Redemption of the holiness, love and justice of God.

The quoted text as it stands sounds absolutely good and Catholic (cf. D 799). But there is a fundamental shift of meaning: In II Cor. 5:21 St. Paul presupposes the truth of faith of Original Sin, the Encyclical the axiom of universal salvation.

This hardly noticeable change of meaning in the centre of the work of Redemption concerns the very centre of the Pope’s teaching on the Redemption. That is why it must be explained in the context of the Encyclical.

The quoted text says only a part of the truth: Christ “suffered His Passion and Cross for the sins of men” But the most important thing is not said here—to whom this satisfaction is made—because this is already clear from what has been said, especially in the fundamental thesis of the Pope’s teaching on the Redemption at the beginning of this article (cf. *DiM* 7.1). With reference to this thesis the complete sense of what the Encyclical says is as follows:

In the Son’s sacrifice on the cross the Father has “in the most empirical and “historical” way,” revealed the depth of His love for man. He gave His innocent and sinless Son for us made as sin and handed Him over to suffering and the cross so that this faithfulness of the Father and Creator to man made in His image and likeness and chosen for grace *a principio*

should do satisfaction for the sins of humanity. This election means the thesis of universal Redemption or giving of grace.

The decisive point is thus: The Father gives His Son as satisfaction for the sins of humanity not to redeem them from Original Sin but because the Father, even considering the sins of humanity, is constant in his faithfulness to his covenant of grace *ab origine* with universally redeemed man (cf. also Part II/1, pp. 118ff.).

This would conform to the traditional teaching of the Church if it meant that the Father revealed His love for man by giving His only begotten Son (cf. Jn. 3:16), so that He could perform satisfaction to the Father by His sacrifice on the cross for the sins of men in their place, to release them from the "slavery of sin" and to reconcile them to God. When we talk about sin we mean primarily the general sin of mankind, Original Sin but also following on from that all other sins committed as a consequence.

In the Pope's teaching on Redemption this central mystery of Redemption is rather different: Since God as Creator and Father in absolute faithfulness to man honours the covenant of grace with man—despite his sins—man is in an inviolable state of grace and salvation. The sacrifice of the Son for the sins of man has therefore a completely different character. The Father delivers His Son up to the death on the cross as a satisfaction for His own faithfulness to the inviolable covenant of grace which He made with universally redeemed man (cf. *DiM* 6).

Therefore in the Encyclical the words of St. Paul in II Cor. 5:21 revealing God's absolute holiness and justice have a new meaning and content: *Because* the Father—despite the sins of man—remains united with humanity in inviolable faithfulness *ab origine* in a covenant of grace, His absolute holiness and justice requires satisfaction for the sins of man. That is why the Father makes the Son as a sin for us and delivers Him up to suffering and death.

It should, however, be clear that the idea of an inviolable

faithfulness of God to an indestructible holy covenant of grace with man, who commits the most terrible sins, insults God's holiness in a most flagrant way. The idea of an absolute faithfulness of the Father to the axiom of universal giving of grace eliminates the dogma of Original Sin and means in the end nothing but a senseless clinging of a holy God to a covenant with man which remains intact despite any sin. The idea of such a covenant is a utopia which utterly insults God's holiness.

Such a distortion of St. Paul's words in II Cor. 5:21 is also of course no revelation of the absolute holiness and justice of God.

Only in the authentic history of salvation in the New Testament is the Cross the revelation of the absolute holiness, justice and love of God, and the Redemption of man by the Passion of the Man-God the divine measure of justice and the "abundance" of divine mercy (cf. D 550),—and the cross for each who believes not foolishness nor a scandal but the strength of God and His wisdom (cf. I Cor. 1:22-24).

—After talking about the Person and actions of the Redeemer the Pope comes to the "Fruits of salvation." What sort of fruits these are we see in the following passage (*DiM* 7.3):

Nevertheless, this justice, which is properly justice "to God's measure," springs completely from love: from the love of the Father and of the Son, and completely bears fruit in love. Precisely for this reason the divine justice revealed in the cross of Christ is "to God's measure," because it springs from love and is accomplished in love, producing fruits of salvation (*quia oritur ex amore in amoreque perficitur, dum fructus parit salutis*). The divine dimension of Redemption is put into effect not only by bringing justice to bear upon sin, but also by restoring to love that creative power in man thanks to which he once more has access to the fullness of life and holiness that come from God (*Ratio divina Redemptionis non solum completur, cum peccatum vindicatur, sed cum amori redditur illa vis in homine creatrix, ob quam is accedere iterum valet ad vitae plenitudinem ac sanctimoniam a Deo procedentem*). In

this way, Redemption involves the revelation of mercy in its fullness (*plenitudine*).

It is a question then of the fruits of salvation from the tree of divine justice and love which the Cross reveals. The actual substance of this justice and love has already been analysed and described in the previous paragraph.

According to the text, the fruits of salvation of that justice and love belong, as we might have expected to "the divine dimension of the Redemption" that is to the dimension of empirical history of salvation. So it is already clear that these fruits which the Cross is said to reveal are not the fruits of Redemption in their traditional sense that is of the justification and salvation of man. For the Redemption and justification of all men from the beginning to the end of the world belong in the Pope's theology to the "human dimension of the Redemption," the dimension of the *a priori* universal giving of grace.

The text of the Encyclical distinguishes two sorts of fruits of salvation in the "divine dimension of salvation": the "bringing justice to bear upon sin" and the renewal of the "creative power in man." The judgment of sin which was performed by the offering of the Son is merely mentioned. It has just been dealt with in the Encyclical in some detail. Now it is the turn of the "creative power in man."

The original nature of this "fruit of salvation" which the Cross is said to reveal becomes clear when it is compared with the "fruits of Redemption" in the traditional teaching of the Church:

According to this, the prerequisite for the work of Redemption is the absolute need of humanity to be redeemed since from the time of Adam it is in a state of Original Sin.

In order to redeem man from this state of being far from God and to reconcile him with Him, Christ accepted the Passion and through His sacrifice on the cross earned all fruits of the Redemption for the whole human race. These fruits are

according to Matthias Joseph Scheeben,

negatively the freeing from evil especially the forgiveness of sin and the punishments due to them and the taking away of the slavery to the devil; positively the giving of supernatural grace which is necessary for man to obtain eternal salvation. Above all there is also sanctifying grace belongs to the fruit of reparation and, in it, the reconciliation with God or the possession of friendship with God, being His child and finally the "opening of Heaven's Gate."¹⁰

Theoretically the divine Redeemer could have applied His reparative merits unconditionally to every individual immediately. But according to the whole of written and oral tradition that is not the case. The fruits of salvation do not fall automatically into man's lap but they must be applied to each individual by Christ and likewise accepted by each individual being with reason and will. The application and acceptance of the fruits of Redemption happens in the process of justification and is linked with the fulfilment of certain subjective conditions—penance, faith, baptism. The Church teaches the objective but not the subjective universality of the Redemption. The clearly defined concept of "justification" (cf. D 792ff.) never occurs in the Encyclical.

According to the Encyclical's teaching man finds himself principally in a state of being redeemed and not in a state of Original Sin. This state of salvation belongs in the Pope's terminology to the "human dimension of the Redemption" and contains the inviolable giving of grace to the whole of humanity *ab origine*. That is why the individual man needs no special application of the fruits of Redemption. That is why in the "divine dimension of the Redemption" it is simply a question of the judgment over sin as satisfaction for the absolute faithfulness of the Father to His never broken covenant of grace

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 1326.—concerning the following paragraph cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 252ff.

with man and "that creative power in man" which, once love has been returned, makes man capable of reaching the "fullness" of the divine life. But that is only a process of consciousness in a man who was always in possession of the inviolable dignity of being a son.

It is, nonetheless, the teaching of the Church that since Original Sin "that creative power" is absolutely no longer "in man." Classical theology has been through this point carefully. It does not speak of a "*vis in homine creatrix*" but of a "*potentia oboedientialis*," a passive capacity in man to receive the fruits of the Redemption. "A natural positive disposition to grace cannot exist due to Original Sin, because there is no inner proportion between nature and grace."¹¹ The Church teaches the absolute need of Redemption for every man and for the whole of humanity (cf. Rom. 3:9ff.).

7.4 The revelation of mercy in its completeness

The central problem of the teaching on Redemption in the Encyclical is that God's covenant of grace with man *ab origine*, because of the Father's faithfulness to his fatherhood in spite of all man's sins, remains indissoluble and intact. The Pope solves this problem by going to the centre of his teaching step by step.

First of all he draws the conclusion from what he said in the previous paragraph (*DiM* 7.4):

The Paschal Mystery is therefore (*ideo*) the culmination of this revealing and effecting of mercy, which is able to justify man, to restore justice (*potest iustum facere iustitiamque ipsam reficere*) in the sense of that salvific order which God willed from the beginning in man and, through man, in the world (*quem ab initio Deus in homine optaverat ac per hominem in mundo*).

The suffering Christ speaks in a special way to man, and

¹¹ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 117; 273.

not only to the believer. The non-believer also will be able to discover in Him the eloquence of solidarity with the human lot, as also the harmonious fullness of a disinterested dedication to the cause of man, to truth and to love.

The review of what has just been said (*DiM* 7.3) appears this time in traditional language but which has a new meaning: The restoration of God's wounded justice consists according to this in the offering of the Son so that He can make satisfaction for the sins of man to the faithfulness of the Father due to his inviolable covenant of grace with man *ab origine*. The "making man just" is linked to "that creative power in man" and means that it makes man, who *a priori* possesses his inviolable dignity of being a son, capable of advancing to "the fullness" of the divine life (cf. *DiM* 7.3).

This form of the realisation of mercy is done, or added, in the sense of the salvific order "which God willed from the beginning in man and through man in the world."

In the salvific order of the New Testament it is by no means simply man "in whom and through whom" God brought about the Redemption of the world but alone in Christ "in whom and through whom" God wrought the Redemption. As Head of humanity Christ perfects the work of the Redemption by offering Himself to God in man's place as a propitiatory sacrifice and making reparation for our sins. Man is the "object" of the Redemption absolutely in need of being redeemed. He must *let himself* be redeemed from the hopeless state of Original Sin and be reconciled with God (cf. II Cor. 5:20). In the New Testament there is no self-Redemption. Christ's action of taking our place and being the means of the Redemption is a *ministerium* that He alone offers to God in the name of humanity and which He alone *can* offer. For it is a substantial part of the *ministerium* that Christ Himself is God and in the work of Redemption as the perfect intermediary between God and man acts in His own name due to His divine authority (Heb. 9:11 ff.). Due to His own divine authority He Himself makes His service of reparation effectively valid, He ratifies it

and guarantees the acceptance of the same by God.¹²

Of course the Pope knows this teaching of the Church. It sounds like an antithesis when he says, God perfects the work of Redemption according to the salvific order from the beginning “in and through man.” This new thesis is only understandable under the presupposition that the universal divine principle of Redemption exists in man himself from the beginning. Once again we are confronted with the question: Is man—like Christ—God?

The Pope does not give an answer. He continues with the Paschal mystery which reveals the true nature of man and his ontological relationship to the Father (*DiM* 7.4):

And yet the divine dimension of the Paschal Mystery goes still deeper. The cross on Calvary, the cross upon which Christ conducts His final dialogue with the Father, emerges from the very heart of the love that man, created in the image and likeness of God, has been given as a gift, according to God's eternal plan (*Crux...exurgit quasi de illius amoris medullis, quo ipse homo ad imaginem Dei ac similitudinem conditus aequabiliter secundum aeternum Dei consilium est honestatus*).

According to this the “divine dimension of the Paschal mystery” reveals the Father's love for man and, by so doing, man's essence. This revelation consists of three theses:

– It is the Father's love out of which according to the eternal salvific order, man as God's image (*imago*) and likeness (*similitudo*) has been created, or given existence, as an equal.¹³ Therefore the image and likeness of God constitute the essence of man and together make up his nature.

In classical theology the *imago Dei* means the natural image of God, *i.e.*, man as God's creature. The *similitudo Dei* means the *supernatural* likeness to God, *i.e.*, man as a child of God

¹² Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *op. cit.*, no. 1275.

¹³ The root meaning of *condere*—to put together—should show what is meant.

by sanctifying grace. If the natural image and the supernatural likeness of God make up together man's nature then nature and supernature are the same thing. Because this unity makes up the essence of man it is also indissoluble. Overcoming the traditional distinction between nature and grace has been one of the main aims of the *nouvelle théologie* since Maurice Blondel.

According to traditional Church teaching Adam himself is created as the natural image and supernatural likeness of God. But these two do not make "*conditus aequabiliter*" man's nature. The supernatural likeness is sanctifying grace. It is not part of man's nature but is a pure gift from God: a created supernatural gift "*quoad substantiam*," i.e., it is a *gratia creata* which in its inner substance goes beyond the being, strength and requirements of created nature. Because it is not part of man's nature is is also possible to lose it. It was lost by Adam's sin and is lost through every mortal sin.¹⁴

Man's sin and God's holiness are mutually exclusive. God loves the repentant sinner who does penance and gives him then once more His grace, but there is no indissoluble covenant of grace between God and man in mortal sin.

– The next statement in the text of the Encyclical is the Father's love for man and for His only begotten Son emerges from the very heart of that love. The love is therefore the same.

An identical love is, however, only possible if the object of love is identical in substance and nature. In the identical love of the Father for man *and* for His Son on the cross, the love for man is even the more important. From this we see the Pope's thesis which changes the original meaning but which keeps repeating that it is the greatness of man which deserved such a Redeemer (cf. "*Exultet*" of the Paschal Vigil) and for which the Father gave His only begotten Son.¹⁵ How great this greatness of man must be!

– Finally we see in the Encyclical the Father's love for man

¹⁴ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 294ff.; 304.

¹⁵ Particularly emphasised *RH* 10. Cf. Part II/1, pp. 131-141.

is specific. It is identical with the Father's love for His Son on the cross.

If it is the same love of the Father for His Son on the cross, out of which man emerges as an equal in the image and likeness of God, then man was created also as redeemer and justifier, then man bears *ab origine* the features of Christ's countenance, then Adam is the first "anonymous Christian."¹⁶

But the Encyclical does not stop there. The Pope himself gives an additional explanation of the link that unites God to man in such a close way (*DiM 7.4*):

God, as Christ has revealed Him, does not merely remain closely linked with the world as the Creator and the ultimate source of existence. He is also Father: He is linked to man, whom He called to existence in the visible world, by a bond still more intimate than that of Creation. It is love which not only creates the good but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. For he who loves desires to give himself (*donare se ipsum*).

According to this God is and remains linked to each man by a double ontological bond:

– an intimate bond links God as creator and source of life with His Creation (*Deus...artis cum mundo vinculis colligatur uti Creator primusque ipsius vitae fons*). This bond links God to man as the created, natural *imago Dei*. This relationship between Creator and creature is *cum grano salis* comparable with that of an artist and his work.

– a closer bond links God as Father with man whom He has called into existence and created as His natural image

¹⁶ Concerning the idea that the original creative intent of God was not to send a non-suffering Christ, M.J. Scheeben writes (*op. cit.* no. 1384), "Rather we should think of Christ perfected in Himself and perfecting the world by His cross as what God intended originally in the Creation in the same way that Christ's sacrifice of the Cross was not intended in the Scotist sense as a remedy for sin but as the concrete form of the highest perfection of the world and revelation of God."

(*Pater...cum homine a se vocato ad vitam in mundo aspectabili ducendam coniungitur nexu aliquo vel strictiore quam Creationis*), by God giving Himself as a gift to man as Father and thereby making man His child. This bond rests on God's true fatherhood, comparable with the relationship of an earthly father with his natural son.

Since no further distinction follows, we are here dealing with a substantial union of God with man, the uniting of man as God's created image to the indissoluble unity of image and likeness of God.

This "bond of love" which joins the Father and man has also been contemplated by the Pope in the parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. Ch. 4). There the natural biological relationship of the earthly father to his Prodigal Son is the analogy for the metaphysical relationship of God the Father to the man of every period. This relationship cannot therefore be lost by the sins of the Prodigal Son.

The analogy goes further however. The biological Father/Son relationship is a familial relationship which rests on begetting. This "flows from the substance of the Father" and because of his constant faithfulness to his fatherhood it is indissoluble (cf. *DiM* 5.5; 6.1; 6.3). Man's unheard-of greatness consists in the basic value of his inviolable dignity of being a son!

But the offering of oneself to another is not simply begetting. That is why the devotion of God the Father to man as His created image need not necessarily be a begetting. According to the quoted text the Father has given man a participation "in the very life of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost." According to this God's devotion to man can only mean that the Father gives himself to man as His created image *in the Son* and in this substantial union ("equally brought together") constitutes and calls into being the substance: man. This means that "Christ's being" is identical to "being in Christ" as the most profound being of every man. The eternally begotten Son would be the universal ontological principle of being of

humanity. That explains the strong statement that it is the same love of the Father for man and for His only begotten Son on the cross; a love which is said to have called into existence man as the image and likeness of God. The Sonship would not just be "constitutive" for the relationship of the Father to His eternally begotten Son, the "figure of His substance" (Heb. 1:3), but also for the relationship of the Father to man, the "likeness of His substance." That is the case for every man *ab origine*, for the whole of humanity.

The particular in the teaching on the Redemption in the Encyclical shows itself when it is compared with the New Testament and classical theology:

According to Sacred Scripture the fruit of the Redemption is to become a true child of God, "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God" (I Jn. 3:1). In St. Paul it is written of God, "(I) will be a Father to you; and you shall be my sons and daughters" (II Cor. 6:18). God makes Himself a gift and according to Jesus' words dwells in the disciples, "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). Through this, according to the words of the Lord, there will be a "perfect unity" in Christ,

That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as we also are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one (Jn. 17:21-23).

The new being of a Christian is then a "being in Christ." From the many places in St. Paul we give here just one example, "The grace of God is life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The Christian's new principle of life is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and is sent into our hearts. Thus is the Epistle to the Romans

(5:5) we read, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. 5,5). Further, "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. 8:15). We are the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 3:16), "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" We have been made "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4) and have therefore in Christ a participation in the trinitarian life of God.—But this is all said of the believing Christian, not just for any man.

The fathers, following the example of Holy Scripture, have stressed the dignity of being a child of God. Thus St. Augustine says, "That is why God became man that man may become God."¹⁷ Classical theology does not just speak of an unheard-of dignity but even of the "divine dignity in which man participates because of being made a member of Christ."¹⁸

But Adam's descendants do not possess the fruits of the incarnation and Redemption *ab origine* in such a way that they cannot lose them. Rather Christ earned these fruits through His historical work of salvation, they were offered to man in Original Sin, also in history and they are applied in the process of justification.¹⁹ It is a fundamental truth in the New Testament that the grace of being a child of God must be "accepted" by a man in the faith. It is only to those who received the *Logos* to whom He "gave...power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name" (Jn. 1:12).

In the fathers, too, the "participation in the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4) is the foundation for an inner "familial relationship" between God and man.²⁰ Classical theology has been very careful in explaining exactly what this relationship means.

¹⁷ "*Factus est Deus homo, ut homo fieret Deus*" (Serm. 13 de temp.).

¹⁸ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums* [*The Mysteries of Christianity*] [= *Mysterien*] (Freiburg i. Br. 1951), collected writings II, pp. 312ff.

¹⁹ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, op. cit. VI/2, no. 1326-1342.

²⁰ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Mysterien*, op. cit. p. 315.

At the centre are the terms God's image and likeness—just as in the Encyclical. Unfortunately the Pope in the Encyclical does not use any further scholastic distinctions to make these central concepts clearer, *e.g.*, nature and grace, actual and sanctifying grace, created and uncreated grace, *etc.* They are mocked by modern "immanence theology" as being representative of an unreliable "dualism." They do, however, show up the decisive point very clearly.

The decisive point is this: What does the participation of man as image and likeness of God in the divine nature mean?

According to classical teaching there are two extremes to be avoided in the way and manner of the participation of man in the divine nature:²¹

a) It may not be understood in the *pantheistic* sense of a changing of the substance of the soul into the divinity. The infinite distance between Creator and creature remains intact (D. 433, 510, 1225).

b) It may also not be understood merely as a *moral* participation with God which consists in the imitation of the moral perfections of God, analogous to the sinner's being a child of the devil (Jn. 8:44).

c) Positively it is a *physical* participation of man in God. This consists in an *accidental* union which happens by a created gift of God making the soul like to God and uniting it in a way which goes beyond all created power. Man, who by nature is a *vestigium Dei*, his body being the embodiment of a divine idea, is an *imago Dei*, his spirit being an image of the divine Spirit. He becomes a *similitudo Dei*, *i.e.*, a higher, supernatural degree of likeness to God through sanctifying grace.

With this background the differences in what the Pope teaches about the Redemption can be clearly seen:

The participation of man in the divine nature is a physical one in the Encyclical also. It consists, however, not in an acci-

²¹ Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.* p. 296.—Concerning "sanctifying grace" this is only dealt with in *Dominum et Vivificantem*.

dental but in a *substantial* union. The participation in the divine nature is not sanctifying grace (*gratia creata*) which makes the natural image of God in man a supernatural likeness of the uncreated beauty of God, changing it according to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19), making it like God and so uniting it with God according to its quality (=accidentally). It is rather God Himself (*gratia increata*) who unites Himself in the act of Creation immediately and substantially with His created image and makes it thereby a consubstantial likeness and in this way creates the substance of man as His image and likeness "on an equal footing." Christ's being and "being in Christ" of every man are thus substantially identical. Is that not a pantheistic misinterpretation of man's being a child of God?

Since in the Encyclical God's image and likeness constitute man's nature, being God's child is something you cannot lose. Man finds himself basically redeemed. The grace of being God's child is therefore not given to the individual due to his faith and baptism, that is, in the course of history in the process of justification. Being God's child is said to belong indeed *ab origine* to man's nature.

Thus the centre of the Pope's theory of God's inviolable covenant of grace with man *ab origine* should now be clear and we can now see why the Father gives over His Son for the restoration of God's objectively required justice so that He can perform satisfaction to the faithfulness of the Father to this covenant for the sins of men.

7.5 God's wonderful covenant with man

God's giving of Himself to man is the foundation of a holy community of love. We read (*DiM* 7.5):

The cross of Christ on Calvary stands beside the path of that *admirabile commercium*, of that wonderful self-communication of God to man, which also includes the call to man to share in the divine life by giving himself, and with himself

the whole visible world, to God, and like an adopted son to become a sharer in the truth and love which is in God and proceeds from God.

Christ's cross on Calvary which stands "beside" that *admirabile commercium* is therefore just a "wayside cross" only a sign of that more profound inviolable union of God and man.

That *commercium* is understood significantly as an "invitation" to man to answer God's giving of Himself by the giving of his own self. The acceptance of this invitation can obviously be ignored without man's ontological relationship of being a child of God being lost. Man would then not reach the "fullness" of life which proceeds from God in this life (cf. *DiM* 7.3).

The Pope uses the concept of adoptive son this time to describe the relationship of being a child taking it from the letters of St. Paul and the Church's teaching on grace (Rom. 8:15 & 23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). In the Latin text it says literally, Man participates in God's life in the manner of an adoptive son (*more adoptivi filii consors*).

In the New Testament adoptive sonship is the same as being a child of God (cf. Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:5ff.; Jn. 1:12; I Jn. 3:1 & 2 & 9).

The essential has already been said in this matter (cf. above *DiM* 7.4). We will just go over the controversial point.

According to Church teaching man becomes an adoptive child of God through justification. This process is described by the Council of Trent: Man is taken from the state in which he is born as a son of the First Adam by the Second Adam Jesus Christ our Saviour and put into a state of grace and adoption as a son of God (D 796). This removal (translation) from the state of Original Sin to the state of an adoptive son of God takes place due to the faith and the bath of rebirth (D 796ff.). In the New Testament the adoptive sonship is understood in the sense of an analogical generation (Jn. 1:13; 3:3ff.). The

example is of course the eternal generation of Christ's sonship.²²

The concept of adoptive sonship from Scripture and Church teaching has another specific meaning in the Encyclical: Here adoptive sonship means the adoption of every man as the created image of God in the act of Creation to whom the Father has given Himself *actu uno* as a gift and therefore makes in His likeness as an adoptive son.

As the Pope made his exegesis of the Old and New Testament finally become part of his theology of the covenant so it happens for the third time in the Paschal mystery (*DiM 7.5*):

It is precisely beside the path of man's eternal election to the dignity of being an adopted child of God that there stands in history the cross of Christ (*Ita plane secundum viam aeternae hominis destinationis ad filii Dei adoptivi dignitatem eminet in historia crux Christi*), the only-begotten Son, who, as "light from light, true God from true God," came to give the final witness to the wonderful covenant of God with humanity, of God with man—every human being. This covenant, as old as man—it goes back to the very mystery of Creation—and afterwards many times renewed with one single chosen people, is equally the new and definitive covenant, which was established there on Calvary, and is not limited to a single people, to Israel, but is open to each and every individual.

The cross of Christ stands once again just "beside the path," this time "beside the path of man's eternal election to the dignity of being an adopted child." This means in effect the predestination of the whole of humanity to this dignity in the act of Creation. Because the dignity of an adoptive son belongs to the nature of man as God's image and likeness it is also inviolable.

The following review of the Pope's theology of the covenant is as it were the theological key to the teaching of universal salvation which summarises all preceding statements. With a

²² *Ibid.* pp. 71 ff.

few words the Pope announces his new teaching:

According to it the cross is the "last witness" (*novissimum testimonium*) of the eternal, wonderful covenant of grace which God has made with Adam, the whole of humanity, with "every man" *actu uno* at the Creation. This covenant with Adam and humanity, which contains the eternal election and inviolable adoptive sonship of every man "is as it were the new and eternal covenant which was made on Calvary." The covenant with Adam is thus substantially identical with the new and everlasting covenant of Calvary. The cross of Christ is just "the last witness" to this covenant which since Adam is the continual and intact foundation of the whole history of salvation and humanity. The double bond which since the Creation binds God as Creator and Father with man, His image and likeness, has never been broken, not even by Original Sin, because it is indissoluble due to the Father's giving of Himself to man and His absolute faithfulness to His fatherhood.²³

Holy Scripture, however, says nothing about such a wonderful covenant of grace with man. The Encyclical is a closed presentation of the Pope's theory of universal salvation. It has, however, no foundation in Holy Scripture nor in the Church's teaching.

7.6 The last word of God's covenant and the new faith

Finally the Encyclical turns to the glorious side of the Paschal mystery (*DiM* 7.6):

What else, then, does the cross of Christ say to us, the cross that in a sense is the final word of His messianic message and mission? And yet this is not yet the word of God of the covenant: that will be pronounced at the dawn when first the women and then the Apostles come to the tomb of the crucified Christ, see the tomb empty and for the first time hear the message, "He is risen." They will repeat this message

²³ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 24-32.

to the others and will be witnesses to the risen Christ. Yet, even in this glorification of the Son of God, the cross remains, that cross which—through all the messianic testimony of the Son of Man, who suffered death upon it—speaks and never ceases to speak of God the Father, who is absolutely faithful to His eternal love for man, since He “so loved the world”—therefore man in the world—that “he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).

The cross is therefore “in a sense” the last word of the Messiah, but not of God’s covenant. The last word of God’s covenant is the Resurrection. Why this strange split in Christ’s work of Redemption?

When the cross is “a word of the Messiah” then surely the Resurrection also! As Christ’s death on the cross is the meritorious cause of our Redemption so Christ’s resurrection is the victorious perfection of the work of Redemption. Cross and Resurrection form together the completeness of the work of Redemption and are presented in Holy Scripture as one thing (cf. Rom. 4:25).²⁴

The Encyclical does describe insistently how the cross in the glorification of the Son of God “never ceases to speak of the Father.” But there is no mention of the continuation of the Risen One’s work of Redemption. It is simply cut off by the Encyclical taking away as it were this “last word” and declaring the Resurrection to be simply the “last word of God’s covenant...who is absolutely faithful to His love for man.” In this way the Resurrection is transposed into the Pope’s new theology of the covenant: The Resurrection is thus made a witness of God’s covenant for His indissoluble covenant of grace with man *ab origine* with everything which this covenant includes. The “last word of God’s covenant” is thus the universal giving of grace which is manifested in Christ’s resur-

²⁴ Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Dogmatik, op. cit.* V/2, no. 1278.

rection!

Whereas, in the New Testament and Church teaching, the Resurrection is the objective completion of Christ's work of Redemption: the sealing of it and its formal and solemn ratification. In the Resurrection Christ reveals the power of His divinity which is the condition for His power of redeeming.

The Resurrection is the pledge of the eternally valid effectiveness of Christ's work of Redemption. For this is transformed through the Resurrection into an eternal state of living presentation before God. The Resurrection is Christ's perfection as an intermediary between God and man who as high priest and glorified victim continues for ever His rôle as intercessor and saviour. It is the Risen One Himself who applies the fruits of His merited reparation to each individual, frees him from the hopeless state of Original Sin and every personal sin because of his faith and penance, justifies him and reconciles him to God.

The Resurrection is finally the example of the effects which Christ has earned through His work of Redemption. The Risen One's heavenly life which comes from Christ's death shows the redeemed believer that he too can and should enjoy a similar heavenly life of body and soul because of the death of Christ.²⁵

The revelation of the Paschal mystery corresponds on man's side to faith. This time the Encyclical uses the full quotation (as in text above) from the Gospel according to St. John with the condition of faith (3, 16) but gives straight away what should be understood by faith (*DiM* 7.6):

Believing in the crucified Son means "seeing the Father," (cf. Jn. 14:9) means believing that love is present in the world and that this love is more powerful than any kind of evil in which individuals, humanity, or the world are involved. Believing in this love means believing in mercy. For mercy is an indispensable dimension of love; it is as it were love's second

²⁵ *Ibid.*

name and, at the same time, the specific manner in which love is revealed and effected *vis-à-vis* the reality of the evil that is in the world, affecting and besieging man, insinuating itself even into his heart (*animum*) and capable of causing him to “perish in Gehenna” (Mt. 10:28).

According to this “faith” means to believe everything which the Pope has said so far about divine mercy and the Redemption. This “faith” is naturally not the same as the faith of the New Testament.²⁶

The last sentence of the quoted text reaches its climax with a quotation threatening Hell. The quotation is the impressive conclusion of the whole article. At the same time it begs the question: How can we reconcile “perishing in Hell” with the carefully developed theory of universal salvation? The expectation that this question will be answered in the next article which deals fundamentally with the problem of evil in the world is however disappointed. There is no more mention of Gehenna. This quotation from Scripture is not taken up. It is just there as a stylistic feature.

8. The Paschal mystery and the reality of evil*

After presenting the cross and Resurrection as a sign of God’s indissoluble covenant of grace with man (*DiM* 7), the Pope builds his vision of the history of salvation on this foundation, dressed up in biblical and traditional language, concerning the Paschal mystery considering the reality of evil in the world (*DiM* 8).

8.1 The cross: “Sign of the power of evil against the Son of God”

The Pope begins once again with the sorrowful side of the

²⁶ Cf. Part I, pp. 108-118.

* Article title in English translation, “Love More Powerful Than Death, More Powerful Than Sin.”

Paschal mystery.

The Encyclical says about the person of the Crucified (*DiM* 8.1):

The cross of Christ on Calvary is also a sign of the power of evil against the very Son of God (*Praeterea Christi crux in Calvariae loco testimonium pariter de mali potentia contra ipsum Filium Dei*), against the one who, alone among all the sons of men, was by His nature absolutely innocent and free from sin, and whose coming into the world was untainted by the disobedience of Adam and the inheritance of Original Sin.

If the cross of Christ on Calvary was up till now “the witness of the wonderful covenant of God with man” (cf. *DiM* 7.5), now it is “also a sign of the power of evil against the very Son of God.”

The cross as witness of the universal giving of grace is the fundamental presupposition for the consideration of the cross as witness of the power of evil. This last is the key to the covenant of grace *ab origine*.

The Pope begins his consideration in the middle of the conflict between good and evil. Holy Scripture understands the phrase “power of evil” as something personal. Thus Satan and the Son of God stand in terrible confrontation. To how this battle ends the Encyclical says: “Look to the Cross”!

“The cross is the sign of the power of evil against the very Son of God” (*contra ipsum Filium Dei*).

The cross as a proof (*testimonium*) of the might of Satan against the Son of God is a terrible sight! A consequence which was certainly not foreseen by the author. It is however completely in harmony with what has previously been said: A Messiah who in His Passion expects mercy and release from men, who pleads in vain for the Father’s mercy (cf. *DiM* 7.2 & 3), is now on the cross the proof of Satan’s power against Him!

This is modern “Christology from below”! The external-experimental, human-historical event controls the way things

are viewed. But already for the "high priests together with the scribes and elders" Christ on the cross was a "proof" of the falseness of His claims (cf. Mt. 27:39-44). But the cross, for the Jews a scandal and for the pagans foolishness is grace and wisdom of God which can only be understood by the revelation of God (cf. I Cor. 1:18-29).

The Lord Himself, looking ahead to His Passion, gives the definitive answer to what the Encyclical says, "The prince of this world cometh, *and in me he hath not anything*" (Jn. 14:30).

The cross is therefore not at all a sign of the power of Satan against the very Son of God.

The power of Satan, so the Encyclical goes on, shows itself against Him who alone by His nature was absolutely free from sin, "was untainted by the disobedience of Adam and the inheritance of Original Sin." With these words the relationship of the cross to Original Sin is stated.

From what the Encyclical says it follows that apart from Jesus Christ all other men are by their nature not free from the disobedience of Adam, from Original Sin and from personal sin. Does this clear statement mean a contradiction to what has been so positively affirmed about the thesis of universal salvation? Not at all. Because this says that all other men—just like the Immaculate²⁷—"from grace" enter existence free from Original Sin as redeemed and justified (cf. *DiM* 7.4). What is said in the quoted text is formulated from the point of view of universal salvation with no shadow of contradiction and must be understood in this way. The problem of the Encyclical is that man has an indissoluble union in grace with God—in spite of his sins.

Seen from the point of view of classical theology one would expect that, in an article which fundamentally deals with the theme of evil in the world with reference to the Paschal mystery (*DiM* 8), Original Sin would be looked at first. For, according to the Church's teaching, Original Sin is the presup-

²⁷ Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 13.3.

position for the Redemption through the cross. But in the Encyclical Original Sin has very little to do with it. The “inheritance of Original Sin” is only mentioned once in the quoted text and then not even with direct reference to man but to Christ. The reason is obvious: In a theology which is founded on the axiom of universal salvation man is essentially saved. That is why there can be nobody *in statu naturae lapsae* who would have to be redeemed by the cross of Christ and “brought into a state of grace and being an adopted son of God” (cf. D 796ff.). Which is why the sacrifice of the cross must necessarily undergo a change of meaning through the thesis of universal Redemption.

– The Encyclical has this to say about the sacrifice of the cross (*DiM* 8.1):

And here, precisely in Him, in Christ, justice is done to sin at the price of His sacrifice, of His obedience “even unto death” (Phil. 2:8). He who was without sin, “God made him sin for our sake” (*Eum qui non noverat peccatum, “pro nobis peccatum fecit”*) (II Cor. 5:21). Justice is also brought to bear upon death, which from the beginning of man’s history had been allied to sin (*sociata cum peccato est*). Death has justice done to it at the price of the death of the one who was without sin and who alone was able—by means of his own death—to inflict death upon death (cf. I Cor. 15:54).

The text seems to reflect the traditional teaching of the sacrifice of the Cross as a reparative offering made in our place.²⁸ But it must be understood in the context of the Encyclical:

According to this, the cross of Christ is first and foremost “the sign of the wonderful covenant of God” with universally redeemed humanity which can never be broken and is substantially identical with the “new and definitive covenant of Calvary” (cf. *DiM* 7.5).

²⁸ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 217ff.

This means that in the Pope's teaching of universal salvation there is absolutely no historical work of Redemption of Christ in the sense of the New Testament since man is saved ab origine. This fundamental novelty must be clearly understood if what the Encyclical says about the sacrifice of the cross is to be properly understood.

In the quoted text the sacrifice of the cross is thus not the work of Redemption which has saved man in Original Sin from his hopeless state and reconciled him with God—in the sense of traditional belief. The cross is on the contrary first of all the witness to the universal giving of grace to man who has an indissoluble covenant of grace with God *ab origine*. In the sense of this covenant of grace Christ's sacrifice on the cross is not a "redemptive sacrifice" in the sense of Holy Scripture but only a sacrifice of reparation for the sins of man who has been universally redeemed *a priori*.

This specific reparative character of the sacrifice of the cross can be defined more precisely. The Pope's fundamental theory of the doctrine of Redemption is: The Father gave up the Son and "made him a sin for us" so that He may perform satisfaction for the faithfulness of the Father to His covenant of grace with universally redeemed man for the sins of man (cf. *DiM* 7.1). This constant faithfulness has an ontological reason: God as Creator and Father is bound physically and substantially, therefore indissolubly, by the act of Creation and giving of Himself to man, His image and likeness. For the Father's giving of Himself to man in the act of Creation is part of man's nature (cf. 7.4). But because of His holiness and justice God has to require satisfaction for man's sins. That is why the Father makes the son "a sin for us" and hands Him over in our place to His reparative death. The sacrifice of the cross is therefore *only* a sacrifice of reparation. Its specific character of reparation consists *only* of being satisfaction for the Father's faithfulness to His covenant of grace and for the inviolable dignity of being a son which He gave to man along with grace, even though and because man still sins. Christ dies therefore on the

cross not for a sinner in need of Redemption but for a man who possesses an inviolable supernatural dignity of being a son.

The character of reparation of the sacrifice of the cross can be defined more clearly by comparing it with traditional teaching: In the Church's teaching Redemption by the sacrifice of the cross means negatively being freed from sin and positively being reconciled with God which includes the whole riches of God's covenant of grace. In the Encyclical the positive side is obviously missing. Man has already a covenant of grace with God (cf. *DiM* 7). Thus the negative side which is left is also reinterpreted. The sacrifice of the cross is not to free man from Original Sin and his personal sins but only a reparation for God's offended holiness and justice. The Father's love for man is shown by His making the Son "a sin for us" and letting Him be punished for us in our place.

This specific character of reparation of the sacrifice of the cross has another aspect which we find in the quoted text where the whole argumentation is based on the sentence, "The cross of Christ on Calvary is also a sign of the power of evil against the very Son of God." This statement is continued, "and precisely in Him" justice is done to sin and death. According to this the cross as a sacrifice of reparation is also a "witness of Satan's might."

It thus follows quite logically that it is Satan's power which forces Christ to be crucified. The Father appears as the one who, out of faithfulness to His covenant of grace with man, "makes for us a sin" the Son who begs for mercy and is handed over—*horribile est dictu*—to the power of Satan as a reparation for our sins. Then the Son would have had to submit Himself to the power of Satan out of obedience to the Father, the Father would have had to accept the sacrifice of one driven by the power of Satan to death on the cross as reparation. This consequence is not so clearly visible in the quoted text because it is dressed up in biblical language.

Thus we must continue to ask the urgent question about

the power of evil against the very Son of God—this time as a diabolical power in the atoning sacrifice of the Son. For the believing Christian it can only be answered by looking in Holy Scripture itself.

In the Gospels the confrontation of the Son of God with the power of evil is a central theme of the messianic mission of Christ: For “the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (I Jn. 3:8).

The open conflict begins immediately at the beginning of the messianic ministry of Christ—with the Temptation. The power of evil *in persona* against the Son of God *in persona* is shown to be completely powerless (cf. Mt. 4:1-11). Before His Passion Christ declares, “For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing. But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I” (Jn. 14:30ff.). In these clear words of our Lord the cross is neither a proof of the power of Satan against the very Son of God nor of the power of Satan in the work of Redemption. Rather the cross is the proof of the Son’s love for the Father and His obedience in fulfilling His commands.

What does the power of Satan actually have to do with the final fulfilment of these commands—in Gethsemane, in the Passion, on the cross? Christ Himself says to the band in the Garden, “but this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Lk. 22:53). The obvious proof for the “power of darkness” seems to be given by the Passion that follows.

Jesus describes the character of this “power of darkness” against the Son of God before Pilate, the representative of the pagan Roman world power, before His Passion, “Thou shouldst not have any power against me unless it were given thee from above” (Jn. 19:11). The power from above is God. Thus it is God Himself who hands over His Son to this power and “delivered him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). Rome’s power is a real historical power but it is given by God, dependent, permitted. Pilate is but the instrument in the hand of divine providence

when he delivers the Son of God over to be crucified in his own name.²⁹

But the fate of Christ is "not decided by human will but by divine power."³⁰ The sacrifice of the cross is decided only by the the inner workings of the divine will, as it is greatly emphasised in the New Testament and the Church's teaching.

What the Father does in "making for us a sin" the Son and handing Him over to the power of evil would be actually an arbitrary and unjust thing to do if the Son Himself had not freely and in perfect love to the Father and us men fulfilled the Father's will and taken on the punishment of suffering as reparation for our sins.³¹

This inner decision of the Son's loving and free self-giving decides also the character of His obedience, "unto death on the cross" (Phil. 2:8). It is man's sin that Christ brings to the cross and for which He does reparation. But that is no reason why the sacrifice of the cross is a proof of the power of evil against Christ. For by using all his power and aiming at the destruction of the Son of God, Satan, as the simple tool of divine providence, due to the loving obedience of the Son even unto death, prepares his own defeat. In this way the great humiliation of Christ on the cross becomes in reality His greatest triumph over the power of evil. The absolutely free obedience unto death is the most radical defeat of sin. In the quoted text there is a reference to Phil. 2:8 but this is just a quotation in the context of the Encyclical and therefore hides the fact that in the context of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians (Phil. 2:6ff.) it is precisely the Redeemer's free loving giving of himself which determines the character of the sacrifice of the cross.

The sacrifice of the cross cannot be seen merely in the context of the Father's act of salvation, for "all external acts of

²⁹ Hermann Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [*The Gospel According to John*] (Göttingen 1963), NTD IV, p. 237.

³⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [*Theology of the New Testament*] (Tübingen 1966, 6th edition), p. 396.

³¹ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, *op. cit.* VI/2, no. 1304.

God are common to all Three Persons": (D 428; 704), the work of Redemption included.³² But only the Son became man and performed the work of Redemption as a medium between God and man. Not only did the Father give the Son for us but also the Son "delivered himself for us" (Gal. 2:20). The Father's giving of the Son is related to the Son's giving of Himself. We must see both sides. The Son is not just a passive victim but also the Priest of the sacrifice Himself.

– Concerning the effect of the sacrifice of the cross in history the Encyclical says (*DiM* 8.1):

In this way the cross of Christ, on which the Son, consubstantial with the Father, renders full justice to God (*plenam retribuit Deo iustitiam*), is also a radical revelation of mercy, or rather of the love that goes against what constitutes the very root of evil in the history of man: against sin and death.

According to this the cross of Christ is the full satisfaction for the offended justice of the Father, *i.e.*, merely reparation. The Son did this once and for all in abundance on Calvary (cf. *DiM* 7.3). After the sacrifice of the cross is reduced to an act of reparation the cross of Christ confronted with evil in history remains merely a *function* of a "radical revelation" of merciful love which goes against the root of all evil.

Thus the Pope begins his presentation of the foundation of his consideration and sketches the scheme of his history of salvation. In a subtle formulation he shifts the points for his view of salvation: It is not the sacrifice of the cross itself which goes against the very root of evil but the radical revelation of love which is a result of the cross.

According to the Church's teaching it is nonetheless the sacrifice of the cross itself which not only goes against (*adversatur*) the root of all evil with the full force of its redeeming reality but rips out this root by the Redeemer wiping out Original

³² Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.* pp. 179ff.

Sin and all personal sins in the process of justification, reconciling the penitent sinner with God, putting him in a state of grace and of being an adoptive son and giving him a participation in the fullness of grace of the Redemption (D 793-800). Faith, baptism and Church are in this process necessary for salvation (*necessitas medii*). According to Scripture death is not only linked to sin from the beginning of man's history but "death is the wages of sin" (Rom 6:23), *i.e.*, a punishment.

With the background of the Church's teaching it becomes clear what the Encyclical completely leaves out when dealing with the confrontation of the sacrifice of the cross with evil in history because man is already *a priori* universally in a state of grace.

8.2 The cross of Christ and evil in the history of man

How the cross of Christ as revelation of merciful love goes against evil in history is described in the following text (*DiM* 8.2):

The cross is the most profound condescension of God to man and to what man (*Crux ergo humillima inclinatio Divinitatis est super hominem*)—especially in difficult and painful moments—looks on as his unhappy destiny. The cross is like a touch of eternal love upon the most painful wounds of man's earthly existence (*Crux autem quasi amoris aeterni contrectatio est vulnerum acerrime dolentium in terrena vita*); it is the total fulfilment of the messianic programme that Christ once formulated in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk. 4:18-21) and then repeated to the messengers sent by John the Baptist (Lk. 7:20-23). According to the words once written in the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 35:5; 61:1-3), this programme consisted in the revelation of merciful love for the poor, the suffering and prisoners, for the blind, the oppressed and sinners.

This humanly impressive presentation is not just a pious supposition but the Pope's dogmatic statement in an Encycli-

cal about the central object of the Christian religion.

Certainly the cross is the most profound condescension of God to what man looks on as his "unhappy destiny." But the cross says much more than what man himself considers as his misfortune: It reveals to him his true state before God as a sinner in absolute need of Redemption (Rom. 3:9ff.).

Certainly the cross is like a touch of love upon "wounds of man's earthly existence." But the sacrifice of the cross on Calvary is infinitely more: It heals the loss of his supernatural life and the wounds in his human nature left by Original Sin. The cross touches not only the most painful wounds of man but goes to his most inner being and makes him a "new Creation" (cf. II Cor. 5:17). Christ shed His blood not for our temporal well-being but for our eternal life.

Is this overlooked by the Pope? Not at all. He just has another theology of Redemption. According to this the cross is the "sign" of God's indissoluble covenant of grace with man (cf. *DiM* 7). If man is already *ab origine* in possession of the supernatural fruits of Redemption then the cross retains just the function of a sign of this state of salvation and the loving "touching" of the wounds of "man's earthly existence."

The consideration of the suffering in "man's earthly existence" culminates in the Encyclical's statement that the cross is "the total fulfilment of the messianic programme that Christ once formulated in the synagogue at Nazareth" (Lk. 4:18-21). It is, however, obvious that the total fulfilment of that programme would be the healing of all human needs and crimes, *i.e.*, the perfect restoration of an earthly paradise by the Messiah but not His death on the cross which put a definitive end to all Israel's messianic hopes. The aggressive refusal to believe and the synagogue's attempt to kill Christ because of what He claimed already show the road which leads to Calvary.³³ The cross is the "total fulfilment" of the refusal to believe.

³³ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, *op. cit.* p. 69.

With the announcement of the messianic programme the Pope began his consideration (*DiM* 3.1). Just as in the first interpretation, the requirement to believe, which in the biblical text is indissolubly linked to the preaching of this programme, is abandoned. In this way the messianic programme is brought down to the level of the earthly life of man (cf. above *DiM* 3.8).

Certainly the revelation of God's merciful love found its final fulfilment in the cross but not in the sense of an earthly expectation for this life but in the sense of the Redemption from sin and the reconciliation with God. The kingdom of God is not of this world in the Gospel. Christ is not Mohammed.

– The next point of view from where the Pope looks at the function of the cross in history is the passage from death to life in the Paschal mystery. Here is what it says (*DiM* 8.2):

In the Paschal mystery the limits of the many-sided evil in which man becomes a sharer during his earthly existence are surpassed: the cross of Christ, in fact, makes us understand (*perspiciamus*) the deepest roots of evil, which are fixed in sin and death; thus the cross becomes an eschatological sign. Only in the eschatological fulfilment and definitive renewal of the world will love conquer, in all the elect, the deepest sources of evil, bringing as its fully mature fruit the kingdom of life and holiness and glorious immortality. The foundation of this eschatological fulfilment is already contained in the cross of Christ and in His death (*Talis autem eschatologicae consummationis fundamentum in cruce iam Christi iacet ac morte*).

According to this the cross gives us simply the “knowledge” of “the deepest roots of evil” and the assertion that it will be overcome by love outside of history in the *Eschaton*.

But according to Scripture and Tradition the cross does not just let us “understand” the deepest roots of evil, it is rather the redemptive power which wipes out this root, *i.e.*, Original

Sin and personal sins in the justified person and gives to him that believes here and now eternal life. "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36). That is why the cross is not the "eschatological sign" in the sense meant by the Encyclical that love only at the end of time will overcome "the deepest roots of evil." Through the cross they are overcome already in the believer!

It is obvious that the Encyclical understands something else dogmatically by "the deepest sources" or the "deepest roots" of evil from what Scripture and Tradition does. And it is here a matter of nothing less than the central object of Redemption.

Classical theology has put this point firmly in its place in the traditional teaching on the Redemption. This says that the first and immediate object of the Redemption (according to Rom. 5:12ff.) is the removal of man's general sin, *i.e.*, Original Sin and linked to that the restoration of supernatural justice as it was in the beginning but was lost by Adam's sin. The centre or substance of original justice is sanctifying grace. Because Original Sin is only a substantial impediment to the attaining of eternal salvation in so far as it includes the loss of sanctifying grace, Christ by no means had to add the gifts of integrity to the immediate and whole restoration of justice and original glory which he gave to the justified person with sanctifying grace. And as we can see, these gifts—freedom from disordered concupiscence, bodily immortality, freedom from suffering and subtlety of knowledge—Christ did not and does not want to give us.³⁴

The deficiencies which remain are part of human nature. But they do not have, for the justified person however, a character of guilt or punishment but simply the character of a necessity of nature which God did not want to suspend. They are brought into the service of the Redemption. By the prac-

³⁴ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Dogmatik, op. cit.*, VI/2, no. 1327.

tise of virtue the justified person becomes like the Redeemer.³⁵ "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord" (Rom 14:8).

Viewed from the standpoint of classical theology the character of this "deepest evil" of the Pope's teaching can be defined more clearly:

If man *ab origine* is in a state of grace, sin and death are not symptoms of being in Original Sin but merely of being a man which will be overcome in "the eschatological fulfilment." In this sense the cross is the "eschatological sign...of the definitive renewal of the world."

– The third view in which the Pope sees the function of the cross in a history marked by sin and death is the resurrection of Christ. He says (*DiM* 8.2):

The fact that Christ "was raised the third day" (I Cor. 15:4), constitutes the final sign of the messianic mission, a sign that perfects the entire revelation of merciful love in a world that is subject to evil (*Postremeum officii messianici indicium, quod quidem revelationem cumulat misericordis amoris in mundo malis obnoxio*). At the same time it constitutes the sign (*Id eodem similiter tempore signum constituit*) that foretells "a new heaven and a new earth," (Apoc. 21:1) when God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away (Apoc. 21:4).

In the New Testament, however, the fact of the resurrection is more than just an "index" or "sign" that foretells a new heaven and a new earth. For Christ Himself the resurrection is the effective entrance into the state of glory as a reward for His humiliation in His suffering. For us the resurrection is not just the foretelling of a new world when history is over but the victorious climax of the work of Redemption which has brought forth a new Creation (Gal. 6:15) into the old order

³⁵ *Ibid.* no. 1328.

where everything was lost. Man participates in this here and now by faith and baptism (Rom. 6:3ff.). The Risen One is an example and pledge for this newly given supernatural reality in faith and for man's future bodily resurrection and the end of time (I Cor. 15:20ff.; Phil. 3:21).³⁶

The Pope's vision of the history of salvation which rests on the foundation that everyone is given grace is something completely new:

In this new history of salvation there is no man who was in a state of being lost and in enmity with God, who would then have to be redeemed by the cross from the vale of the shadow of death and brought to a state of being a child of God. Christ's Incarnation, cross and resurrection are not God's unique eschatological act of salvation which breaks in on the hopeless old age and puts man in a state where he must make a decision of faith; putting an end to the old age and bearing a new Creation of grace from the waters of baptism which will be fulfilled in the *eschaton*. In the Pope's new history of salvation man's Redemption has lost its historical character. It is no longer a true historical Redemption because man is already *a priori* redeemed and justified. That is why there is absolutely no mention of Original Sin, faith nor baptism in the Encyclical when the Pope talks about the confrontation of the cross with evil in history.

The new conception of the history of salvation leads necessarily to a new definition of the Church's mission.

8.3 Christ's messianic programme—The Church's programme

Christ's messianic message is next declared to be the Church's programme (*DiM* 8.3):

In the eschatological fulfilment mercy will be revealed as love, while in the temporal phase, in human history, which is

³⁶ *Ibid.* no. 1278.

at the same time the history of sin and death, love must be revealed above all as mercy and must also be actualised as mercy.

Christ's messianic programme, the programme of mercy, becomes the programme of His people, the programme of the Church. At its very centre there is always the cross, for it is in the cross that the revelation of merciful love attains its culmination. Until "the former things pass away" (cf. Apoc. 21:4), the cross will remain the point of reference for other words too of the Revelation of John, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me" (Apoc. 3:20). In a special way, God also reveals His mercy when He invites man to have "mercy" on His only Son, the Crucified One.

The Encyclical opposes time and the end of time and then gives them each the fitting form of love and mercy: in history marked by sin and death love reveals itself as mercy in the perfection, at the end of time mercy reveals itself as love. When this is applied to Christ's and the Church's programme we get:

Christ's messianic programme with its high point in the merciful love of the cross is also the programme of the Church.

The Pope has already dealt with Christ's messianic programme from the second chapter onwards from various historical points of view. One would expect him to simply say that this programme with which we are now familiar is now said to be the programme of the Church. But that is not the case. He goes to the centre of the missionary programme and describes it with the Lord's image from the Apocalypse 3:20: the Crucified One is standing at the door and asking for mercy.

In the quoted text it is emphasised: Yes, it is God Himself who invites man to have mercy on "his crucified Son" who is standing at the door and asking to be let in! This unusual explanation of Apoc. 3:20 is, however, just the logical consequence of the principle of the reciprocity of mercy and the understanding of the messianic mission of Christ and the

Church which is derived from it: The Messiah, who pleaded in vain for mercy from man and His Father (cf. 7.2 & 3) and whose cross is the proof of the power of evil against the very Son of God, (*DiM* 8.1) now stands as the "crucified Son" before man's door and asks for mercy and to be let in.

8.4 Reciprocal mercy between man and the Son of God

The Pope goes further with his exegesis of Apoc. 3:20 by continuing (*DiM* 8.4):

Christ, precisely as the Crucified One, is the Word that does not pass away (Mt. 24:35), and He is the one who stands at the door and knocks at the heart of every man (cf. Apoc. 3:20), without restricting his freedom, but instead seeking to draw from this very freedom love, which is not only an act of solidarity with the suffering Son of man, but also a kind of "mercy" shown by each one of us to the Son of the eternal Father. In the whole of this messianic programme of Christ, in the whole revelation of mercy through the cross, could man's dignity be more highly respected and ennobled, for, in obtaining mercy, he is in a sense the one who at the same time "shows mercy"?

The image from Apoc. 3:20 is once again a parable for the messianic programme of the loving mercy of Christ and the Church. The theologically decisive point is emphasised. Thus the Pope removes any remaining doubts:

Yes, it is the Word made flesh, who as the crucified Messiah stands before man's door and asks for mercy and to be let in. Yes, it is God made man Himself to whom man can and should show not only solidarity but also a "quite personal mercy." Accepting the crucified Redeemer is then a reciprocal act of mercy which man performs for God made man. The Encyclical also gives the reason why: Man's dignity is thereby "respected and ennobled." Is it divine?

The Pope's main idea of equality and reciprocity in mercy (cf. *DiM* 6.4; 7.2 & 3) is with cold logic applied here to the

relationship of man and the Man God and even to the work of Redemption itself. We must, however, remember that "Redemption" has a different meaning in the Encyclical: The sacrifice of the cross thanks to the Pope's theory of universal giving of grace is not a redemptive sacrifice in the sense of the traditional teaching of the Church, but only an atoning sacrifice for the sins which the Son performed because of the Father's faithfulness to his covenant of grace with man (cf. *DiM* 8.1).

It is only in appearance that something obvious is being said when we read that, when Christ asks to be let in, He does not restrict man's freedom but seeks "to draw from this very freedom love."

It is the clear teaching of the Church that the *Logos* who created man with free will does not, as crucified Redeemer, force anyone to accept Him. Only a free choice can be a moral choice. But from this free choice which accepts the Redeemer or not (cf. Jn. 1:10ff.), which gives obedient faith or not, depends salvation or damnation (Mk. 16:16).

In the Encyclical, however, the crucified Man-God does not just ask to be let in but also for "mercy." It is the Father Himself who "invites man to have 'mercy' on His only Son, the Crucified One" (*DiM* 8.3). And that is not something obvious but shows a fundamentally new understanding of the Redemption and therefore of the Church's mission.

The programme of the Church derived from how Christ acted is precisely the programme of Her mission. The central challenge of the mission is now no longer, "Convert and believe in the Gospel!" (Mk. 1:15), but, "Have mercy on Christ, the Crucified One!" Instead of believing in Christ we must now have mercy on Him. The Church's mission would therefore consist in begging man to have mercy on Christ the Crucified One as Christ Himself did. In the context of the Encyclical the new type of mission and conversion may be represented thus: By preaching the merciful love of the Father which is made visible in the Son, the missionary Church seeks to awaken "that creative power in man" which is based on his substance of being an adoptive son of God in full freedom to

loving mercy for the Crucified One (cf. *DiM* 7.3 & 4), so that man attains the fullness of divine life (cf. *DiM* 7.3). Thus the principle of reciprocity in mercy would thus be also the principle of the Church's mission. It is no longer a question of faith or baptism, Redemption or justification of sinners "because of faith in Jesus Christ" (cf. Rom. 3:21ff.), but of reciprocal mercy of universally redeemed man and Christ the Crucified One.

At the centre of the Pope's new teaching is Christ's image from Apoc. 3:20. But what does the New Testament really say?

The image of Christ standing before the door and knocking (Apoc. 3:20) comes from the letter to the community in Laodicea (Apoc. 3:14-22). There Christ, "who is called Amen" and the "beginning of the Creation" (Apoc. 3:14), is God—as in the Encyclical. But that is where the similarity ends.

The glorified Lord who rules the universe with God (Apoc. 3:21) turns to the Church in Laodicea with sharp criticism. Because they are lukewarm they will be rejected at the judgment just as one is disgusted by filthy water and spits it out of one's mouth. The call to conversion which is directed at the self-satisfied community in such a harsh way is in fact an expression of merciful love with which the Lord wants to shake these lukewarm Christians out of their apathy and bring them to their senses. Christ is the divine Lord and Judge of His community. His appearance to judge them is close at hand. That is the meaning of, "Be zealous therefore and do penance. Behold I stand at the gate, and knock." (Apoc. 3:19ff.). The image is a warning of the judgment; a last call to conversion and watchfulness. The judge is already at the door and is knocking! The image is also a source of consolation and promise for whoever takes the warning seriously and converts, "If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Apoc. 3:20).³⁷

³⁷ Eduard Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* [*The Revelation of St. John*] (Göttingen 1966), NTD XI, pp. 33ff.

The harsh threat of judgment at the Lord's *Parousia*, who is already standing at the door, His call to conversion and watchfulness, the promise of supping with Him if one converts are the New Testament's expressions of the merciful love of Christ for His community at Laodicea.

In the biblical context Christ's love for His own is completely different to how it is represented in the Encyclical: The Son of God stands at the door as judge not as a beggar. He does not ask man for mercy but threatens him with a harsh judgment. There is no reciprocity of mercy between the crucified Son of God and miserable man according to a principle of equality (cf. *DiM* 6.4) and no bowing down to "the dignity of man."

In Holy Scripture the Redemption alone is the sovereign eschatological act of God's salvation which has been expressed in infinite mercy even unto the death on the cross of the Son Himself (Phil. 2:6ff.), to save His creature, who has rebelled and therefore is now in sin's shadow of death, from his misery and to rejoice him with his divine life. It is the Gospel's good news that the Good Shepherd goes after the lost sheep, that the father receives his son with joy and prepares his celebratory meal. It is the Gospel's good news that all of heaven rejoices over the return of one sinner who believes, converts and does penance.

But the Pope's main idea of equality, of common experience and reciprocity of mercy: that the "man of every period" possesses an inviolable dignity of being God's adoptive son which is supposed to form the common experience of mercy with the father (cf. *DiM* 6.4), that the father remains united in constant faithfulness to his covenant of grace with man who is universally redeemed *ab origine* and therefore hands His son over to an atoning death in order to invite man to have mercy on His only Son, the Crucified One, is with the best will in the world not to be found anywhere in the New Testament and certainly not in Apoc. 3:14ff.

In the Encyclical the messianic programme of mutual mercy

between man and God made man is nothing less than a whole new understanding of the Church's mission based on the theory of the universal giving of grace. The radical opposition to Christ's mission command is obvious (cf. Mk. 16:15ff.).

8.5 "The easy law of the plan of salvation"

The messianic programme of mutual mercy is the easy law of the plan of salvation. This is what the Pope has to say (*DiM* 8.5):

In a word, is not this the position of Christ with regard to man when He says, "As you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40)? Do not the words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7) constitute, in a certain sense, a synthesis of the whole of the Good News, of the whole of the "wonderful exchange" (*admirabile commercium*) contained therein? This exchange is a law of the very plan of salvation, a law which is simple, strong and at the same time "easy." Demonstrating from the very start what the "human heart" is capable of ("to be merciful"), do not these words from the Sermon on the Mount reveal in the same perspective the deep mystery of God: that inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in which love, containing justice, sets in motion mercy, which in its turn reveals the perfection of justice?

The text is a masterpiece of the Pope's artistic skill. Apparently unpretentious and yet with the authority of an Encyclical, the reciprocal mercy between man and Christ, the Crucified One (cf. *DiM* 8.4) is with the added "justification" of biblical quotations raised to a general law and in the end founded on the Trinity. In the elusive form of a question the Pope makes Christ Himself as it were declare his main idea of equality and reciprocity in mercy an "easy law of the plan of salvation." In this way one of the Pope's favourite philosophical ideas is brought to the centre of the history of salvation by Christ Himself and made a decisive part of the plan of salva-

tion.

The three questions in the quoted text contain three theses which are meant to justify and deepen the principle of equality and reciprocity each time using Holy Scripture. The theses are:

- Christ's actions and words show according to Mt. 25:40 the equality and reciprocity of mercy between man and Christ the Crucified One.

- The words of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:7) are a synthesis of the whole Gospel, of the "wonderful exchange" which marks the "gentle law of the plan of salvation" announced by Christ Himself.

- The words of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:7) also reveal the inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The argumentation relies at each point on Holy Scripture. But is this done justly?

- The image from Apoc. 3:20 forms the theological centre of the messianic programme of reciprocal mercy: Christ stands before the door and asks for mercy (cf. *DiM* 8.3 & 4).

As further proof for this thesis Christ's words are used, "What you have done for the least of my brethren that you have done for me" (Mt. 25:40).

This quotation seems to justify the thesis: Christ, who in His whole life has shown mercy to man, now seems Himself to be in His brethren in need "personally" the receiver of man's mercy. At the same time using Mt. 25:40 the meeting of man and Christ, the Crucified One, takes place exclusively on the plane of merciful love. In the biblical parable of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46) mercy alone is the yardstick for judgment. Faith is not mentioned. This quotation seems to back up what the Pope is saying.

If man is *ab origine* saved then man's confrontation with the cross is not about the justification of sinners because of their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22) but only about reciprocal mercy. It only remains for Christ's messianic programme and that of the Church to heal the "wounds of man's earthly

existence" (cf. *DiM* 8.2).

That Mt. 25:40 should support the Encyclical's thesis, however, is only apparent. For just as Christ the Crucified One did not stand at man's door pleading for mercy in Apoc. 3:20 so neither in Mt. 25:40. In Apoc. 3:20 Christ threatens judgment at His *Parousia* and in Mt. 25:40 Christ is holding the Last Judgment at His *Parousia*. There is simply no equality and reciprocity in mercy between man and his divine Judge.

In the context of Holy Scripture Christ's words: "What you have done for the least of my brethren, that you have done for me" (Mt. 25:40) mean the works of mercy. They are what decides the Last Judgment. Christ puts Himself with His "least brethren." To the surprise of the just and the unjust alike the Judge declares that in the final reckoning He Himself was the recipient of these works of mercy.³⁸

The decisive point in this judgment is that Christ applies the works of mercy which have been shown or not shown to those in need to Himself. This happens without those concerned knowing. This application by Christ of the works of mercy to Himself is, however, no proof of the thesis of equality and reciprocity of mercy between man and Christ the Crucified One. The distance between man and his divine Judge remains quite clearly:

In the Son of man's judgment He is obviously not identical to His "brother in need." He is his "brother." There is no equality. There is also no reciprocity: for the mercy shown to the "brother" in need is not returned by him at all. It is repaid by the Son of Man by the merciful reception into the Kingdom of Heaven. The one who showed mercy to his fellow man receives the mercy of the divine judge. Mercy isn't given reciprocally from equal to equal but goes one way, from above downwards: from the Son of Man to the just and from the just to the man in need. The relation to the Son of man is of an

³⁸ Julius Schniewind, *op. cit.* pp. 251-254.—Karl Staab, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-140.

indirect, moral nature. In the Last Judgment what is important is the yardstick for human acts not equality and reciprocity between the divine judge and man.

By using Mt. 25:40 as support for its thesis the Encyclical makes a mistake about what is being discussed. This was supposed to be the confrontation of man with Christ the Crucified One in the missionary activity of the Church *i.e.*, in history and not at the Last Judgment. It shouldn't need to be discussed that in the New Testament what Christ wants in His mission is the challenge to believe. In this diacritic confrontation, the Son of God does not ask man for mercy but demands with divine authority Faith (Mk. 16:15ff.). It is through faith in Christ the Crucified One that man receives justification from God (cf. Rom. 3:22). Faith on the other hand proves itself by works of charity which then decide whether one enters Heaven or not.

– In the second of the Encyclical's theses there is once again the use of Christ's words in the preconceived idea of equality and reciprocity in mercy.

Mt. 25:40 is deliberately dealt with first. For that quotation seems more than most to justify the principle of equality and reciprocity in mercy if one forgets what the Faith says. Mt. 25:40 is thus the basis for the generalisation of the principle which is followed by the second thesis, once again using Christ's words:

The words from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7) is now "a synthesis of the whole of the Good News." This synthesis is to be understood Christologically as the "wonderful exchange" in the sense of Mt. 25:40, *i.e.*, as reciprocal mercy between merciful man and Christ who makes Himself a companion of those in need. That is how it can be said that this exchange marks the plan of salvation as an "easy law."

In the New Testament these words of Christ from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:7) are a beatitude of human behaviour which comes from the Gospel. An ethical postula-

tion is not the "whole Good News," nor the work of Redemption. The concrete sense of the beatitude is given by Jesus in the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt. 18:21-35): Because God in His mercy has forgiven us our huge debt we must also be merciful to those who owe us lesser debts. This is the same as in the Our Father, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." The *analogia entis* is clear. The idea of a mutual forgiving of sins between God and man would be absurd.

In the New Testament the "synthesis of the whole Gospel" is Christ Himself. According to Mk. 1:1 the Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Good News also includes the work of the Redeemer. But this is not in the New Testament the reciprocal mercy between the sinner in need of Redemption and his crucified Redeemer but very one-sidedly and exclusively the work of God's merciful condescension to man. That is why Mt. 5:7 is not proof for the Encyclical's second thesis either, that the Gospel is a synthesis of that "wonderful exchange" of reciprocal mercy between man and the Son of God. Which is why this "wonderful exchange" of reciprocal mercy is not the "easy law of the plan of salvation" either.

The Pope declares, however, using Mt. 5:7 that the "*admirabile commercium*" of reciprocal mercy between man and Christ the Crucified is the "easy law of the plan of salvation," the decisive law of the whole work of Redemption. From the point of view of traditional teaching this is an inexplicable thing to say.

But from the Encyclical's point of view it is quite logical. For in the Pope's theology the sacrifice of the cross is not a redemptive sacrifice in the sense of the New Testament because man is already in a state of grace. Man is *ab origine* in a covenant of grace with God which is substantially identical with the New Covenant of Calvary (cf. 7.5). The Son performs the necessary reparation on the cross due to the faithfulness of the Father to this covenant for the sins of men (cf.

7.1). The sacrifice on the cross is purely an atonement. The ontological reason for this constant faithfulness to the covenant of grace is the Father's giving of Himself to man in the act of Creation in the sense of a substantial union of God with man (cf. *DiM* 7.4 & 5).

On this pantheistic foundation of universal giving of grace that wonderful exchange of mutual mercy receives its specific theological character. The trinitarian foundation for this pantheistic concept is also briefly mentioned in the Encyclical:

– With the third thesis the text moves to a trinitarian statement. This is the thesis: The beatitude of the merciful (Mt. 5:7) does not just reveal “what the human heart is capable of” but at the same time also “the deep mystery of God: that inscrutable unity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

No exegete has yet come up with such a trinitarian interpretation of this beatitude from Mt. 5:7. The unity of God cannot consist in the divine Persons showing each other mercy. The English translation of this statement helps towards the confusion. It speaks of “unity.” The Latin text, however, says merely “link.” If we translate the text more literally the mystery of God reveals

the inscrutable link between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in which love which has embraced justice opens the way to mercy which in its turn reveals the perfection of justice (*inscrutabilem Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti coniunctionem, in qua amor iustitiam complexus aperit misericordiam viam, quae iustitiae vicissim reteggit perfectionem*).

Even with this more accurate translation this part of the Encyclical remains obscure. We can only see that the Pope has brought his conception of justice and mercy into the mystery of the triune God and wants us to know that he understands the mystery of God in the sense of an “economical teaching on the Trinity,” so that his ideas of justice and mercy in the acts of the trinitarian God in the history of salvation experience their highest actualisation. In this sense the Pope briefly

develops his thoughts concerning the inscrutable mystery of God (cf. *DiM* 8.6).

8.6 The Risen One is the peak of the trinitarian revelation of reciprocal mercy

The trinitarian revelation of reciprocal mercy is performed by the risen Christ. The Pope says (*DiM* 8.6):

The Paschal Mystery is Christ (*Mysterium proin paschale Christus ipse est*) at the summit of the revelation of the inscrutable mystery of God. It is precisely then that the words pronounced in the Upper Room are completely fulfilled, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). In fact, Christ, whom the Father "did not spare" (Rom. 8:32) for the sake of man and who in His passion and in the torment of the cross did not obtain human mercy, has revealed in His resurrection the fullness of the love that the Father has for Him and, in Him, for all people. "He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Mk. 12:27)!

In His resurrection Christ has revealed (*plane*) the God of merciful love, precisely because He accepted the cross as the way to the resurrection. And it is for this reason that—when we recall the cross of Christ, His passion and death—our faith and hope are centred on the Risen One: on that Christ who "on the evening of that day, the first day of the week,...stood among them" in the Upper Room, "where the disciples were,...breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Ghost. Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained'" (Jn. 20:19-23).

The text should be interpreted in the sense of an economical understanding of the Trinity; of a mutual link (*coniunctio*) of the divine Persons in the merciful plan of salvation.

Thus the Risen One is first the perfect revelation of the *Father's* merciful love for the Son and in Him for all men. It is this love of the Father which is given in like measure from all eternity to the Son and from the beginning of time to man

(cf. *DiM* 7.4). It is thus also the same love of the Father which embraces in like measure the Son and humanity. Man is drawn into the trinitarian activity of the divine Persons and the substantial self-giving of the Father because of his nature which by Creation constitutes him as *imago Dei*. With the sentence: The Father is “not a God of the dead, but of the living,” all men of course are meant for all are “living” *ab origine*.

The Risen One is thus the perfect revelation of the Son's merciful love for the Father and all men. For the Son “accepted the cross”—which the Father laid upon Him—“as the way to the resurrection” so that the Son could perform reparation for the faithfulness of the Father to His covenant of grace with man for the sins of man.

That is why, when we recall the cross of Christ, His Passion and death, our faith and hope are centred on the risen Son of God who on Easter day reveals the God of mercy through the communication of the *Holy Ghost* and the forgiveness of sins.

In this way the Risen One is the high point of the revelation of the mystery of God because He reveals the merciful love of God in the cooperation of the three divine Persons in the plan of salvation to give reciprocal mercy.

Thus the Pope anchors his main idea in the mystery of the Trinity and justifies it. The texts from Scripture which he quotes are not used in their original sense but are simply used to serve his own way of thinking. Thus the words spoken at the Last Supper, “Who has seen me has seen the Father” are nothing to do with Christ before His Passion but are applied to the Risen Lord. Who sees the Risen One sees the revelation of the faithfulness of the Father to His covenant of grace *ab origine*. He sees in the Risen One the Father as the Redeemer of all men! The communication of the Holy Ghost and the giving of the power to forgive sins do not mean in the context of the Encyclical the giving of priestly power to the disciples and therefore the institution of the sacrament of penance but a general giving of the Holy Ghost and the forgiveness through the Son because He “accepted the cross as the way to the resurrection”

as the victim for man's sins.

The Pope's theory of mercy being given to everyone as the "easy law of the plan of salvation" is thus closed.

8.7 The Risen One: the definitive revelation of mercy

With the sentence: the cross of Christ is "a radical revelation of mercy, or rather of the love that goes against what constitutes the very root of evil in the history of man: against sin and death" (*DiM* 8.1) the Pope had begun his consideration on the history of salvation. It finishes with the words (*DiM* 8.7):

Here is the Son of God (*Ecce Dei Filium*), who in His resurrection experienced in a radical way mercy shown to Himself, that is to say the love of the Father which is more powerful than death. And it is also the same Christ, the Son of God, who at the end of His messianic mission—and, in a certain sense, even beyond the end—reveals Himself as the inexhaustible source of mercy, of the same love that, in a subsequent perspective of the history of salvation in the Church, is to be everlastingly confirmed as more powerful than sin. The Paschal Christ is the definitive incarnation of mercy, its living sign: in the history of salvation and in eschatology. In the same spirit, the liturgy of Eastertide places on our lips the words of the Psalm: *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo* (cf. Ps. 89:2).

The closing answer to the problem of death and sin in the history of man is: Behold the risen Son of God! He reveals the merciful love of the Father which is stronger than death. And: The risen Son of God reveals Himself "as the inexhaustible source of mercy" which will always prove itself in the history of the Church as stronger than sin.

What does this say to the individual who is in danger of death and sin? The answer is:

"The Paschal Christ is the definitive incarnation of mercy, its living sign: in the history of salvation and in eschatology."

Thus merely a "sign"!—because man is saved *ab origine*.

But the resurrection is not just a "sign." It is certainly not a sign of the universal giving of grace but the perfection of Christ's historical work of Redemption whose fruits must be applied to the individual man who is in absolute need of Redemption. Faith is required. In Baptism the Christian is truly united with Christ's death and resurrection. That is why he is dead to sin and snatched from the power of death (cf. Rom 6). In the Risen One eternal life and fellowship with the Blessed Trinity are given to him. The resurrection of the Redeemer is a pledge of his own resurrection of the body to eternal glory at the end of time (I Cor. 15:1ff.).

8.8 Critical review of the main theme of equality and reciprocity in mercy

We can see what is special about the Encyclical's teaching of mercy if we look at traditional teaching:

The conception that the divine Persons are merciful to one another contradicts the very essence of God.

The idea of God's mercy is valid exclusively for the relationship between God and His creatures. Because the distance between Creator and creature is infinite God's mercy towards His creature is an infinite condescension. Any thought of equality and reciprocity must be excluded.

The divine mercy is "the benevolent goodness of God in so far as it removes His creatures' misery especially that of sinners." The passion of compassion which is normally associated with the conception of mercy is not present in God because He is a perfect being but only as the effect of mercy in that He dispels misery (*Summa Theologica* I, Q. 21, a. iii).³⁹ The idea that a creature could or should show mercy to God is absurd.

In the economy of grace in which man is raised to the participation in the divine nature God's condescension suffers no

³⁹ Cf. Ludwig Ott, *op. cit.* pp. 57ff.

lessening but rather an increase unto the infinite in divine love. For now it is God Himself who gives Himself to man in grace. God's mercy shows itself at its most generous when after the Fall He sends His Son to perform the Redemption (Lk. 1:78; Jn. 3:16; Tit. 3:4ff.).⁴⁰ The idea that the Redemption of sinful man by his divine redeemer is based on equality and reciprocity is quite simply incomprehensible.

Because the Son of God took a human nature in the Incarnation, the God Man can also have the passion of compassion.⁴¹ Jesus weeps at the tomb of Lazarus (Jn. 11:35) and over the city of Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41). The Gospels show insistently the mercy of Christ for all in need especially the contrite sinner (e.g., Lk. 10:30-37; 16:19ff.). Christ's mercy towards the contrite sinner is divine condescension. The idea of equality and reciprocity is unthinkable.

Jesus, because of His human nature, could also in His human life receive mercy. He neither called for man's mercy in His Passion, the work of Redemption nor did He want or expect deliverance from the hand of His enemies. But He did receive some human mercy even on the cross (cf. *DiM* 7.2 where it says the opposite). For His mother, His beloved disciple and the holy women (Jn. 19:25ff.) were also standing at the cross. This human compassionate mercy is, however, not a constitutive part of the work of Redemption, it is not the "easy law of the plan of salvation."

We must distinguish between God's mercy and man's mercy. But even human mercy is not based on the principle of equality and reciprocity. It is a form of charity which turns to the person in need for God's sake.⁴² The conception implies the bending down of someone stronger to a fellow human being in need without any expectation of a merciful repayment which

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Hieronymus Noldin, *Summa Theologiae moralis* (Heidelberg 1944, Editio 28), II, pp. 90ff.—Joseph Mausbach/Gustav Ermecke, *Katholische Moraltheologie* [*Catholic Moral Theology*] (Münster 1959, 11th edition), II, pp. 147ff.

at any rate generally cannot be given (cf. Lk. 10:25ff.). It is certain that the Christian can trust in the beatitude of the merciful and can expect to be rewarded for his works of mercy by the mercy of God.

The principle of equality and the common experience of reciprocity in mercy which runs through the whole plan of salvation in the Encyclical and therefore also through the relationship between God and man is only to be understood from the background of a pantheistic theory of a universal giving of grace. It is the logical consequence of the idea already mooted by Cardinal Wojtyła that love is only possible between equals.⁴³

9. The Mother of mercy

In Karl Lehmann's commentary this article is introduced thus, "The Pope brings all the threads of his theological design together into a brief sketch 'The Mother of mercy'."⁴⁴ This sketch is, however, not just the convergence of all the theological ideas that the Pope has put forward in his Encyclical but also the concentration on the central idea of the reciprocity of mercy. It is also, apart from its length, a good example of the Pope's poetic style regarding his command of Sacred Scripture and the way he thinks theologically.

9.1 The new Marian vision of mercy in the history of salvation

The previous article (8) ends with the verse from the psalm "I will sing the mercies of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 89:2). The Pope takes up this verse and continues (*DiM* 9.1):

These words of the Church at Easter reecho in the fullness of their prophetic content the words that Mary uttered dur-

⁴³ Karol Wojtyła, *Liebe und Verantwortung* [*Love and Responsibility*] (Munich 1979).

⁴⁴ [*Threatened Man and the Power of Mercy*. Pope John Paul's Encyclical on God's mercy] (Freiburg i. Br. 1981), p. 105.

ing her visit to Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah,

"His mercy is...from generation to generation" (Lk. 1:50). At the very moment of the Incarnation, these words open up a new perspective of the history of salvation. After the resurrection of Christ, this perspective is new on both the historical and the eschatological level. From that time onwards there is a succession of new generations of individuals in the immense human family, in ever-increasing dimensions; there is also a succession of new generations of the People of God, marked with the Sign of the Cross and of the resurrection and "sealed" (cf. II Cor. 1:21ff.) with the sign of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the absolute revelation of the mercy that Mary proclaimed on the threshold of her kinswoman's house, "His mercy is...from generation to generation" (Lk. 1:50).

The verse from the *Magnificat*, "His mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear him" (Lk. 1:50) is as it were the framework and main idea from the beginning (*DiM* 5.1) to the end (*DiM* 9.1) of the New Testament section of the Encyclical. But in the Encyclical's version, half the quotation is missing. The condition is missing, God's mercy is "to them that fear Him." It is in this typical abbreviation that Mary's words form the biblical foundation of the Pope's abbreviated "Mariology."

That is why God's mercy in the Pope's new vision of the history of salvation embraces all generations of the family of man and thereby the People of God. The generations of the People of God are marked with the Sign and "sealed" with the sign of the Paschal Mystery of Christ but that only means that they are in possession of the "absolute revelation of the mercy" (*consummatae revelationis istius misericordiae*) which embraces the whole of humanity with no exceptions *ab origine* in the covenant of grace. The human race is the invisible Church! This view is "a fruit of the Council" (cf. *DiM* 1.4) and the ever repeated teaching of the Pope.⁴⁵ This is the new part of

⁴⁵ Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, pp. 37-39;—Cf. Part I, pp. 48-78; Part II/1, pp. 65-86.

the “new (Marian) vision of the plan of salvation” of mercy.

Mary's words, “His mercy is from generation to generation” proclaim—as does the Paschal Mystery—divine mercy in the sense of a universal giving of grace!

9.2 Mary's part in the revelation of the universal giving of grace

Mary, by her words concerning God's mercy, has not only opened and declared (*pandere*) a new vision of the plan of salvation of mercy but also in a unique way has a part in the revelation of divine mercy. The Pope goes on (*DiM* 9.2):

Mary is also the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has. At the same time, still in an exceptional way, she made possible with the sacrifice of her heart her own participation in revealing God's mercy. This sacrifice is intimately linked with the cross of her Son, at the foot of which she was to stand on Calvary. Her sacrifice is a unique sharing in the revelation of mercy, that is, a sharing in the absolute fidelity of God to His own love, to the covenant that He willed from eternity and that He entered into in time with man, with the people, with humanity; it is a sharing in that revelation that was definitively fulfilled through the cross. *No one has experienced, to the same degree as the Mother of the Crucified One, the mystery of the cross, the overwhelming encounter of divine transcendent justice with love: that “kiss” given by mercy to justice (Ps. 85:11). No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the Redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son, together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive “fiat.”*

Thus the Pope also reads his main idea of the reciprocity of mercy into Mary's *Magnificat*. Mary knows what she is talking about: She has experienced mercy like no other and she has given mercy through the sacrifice of her maternal heart like no other. That is why she personally has a part in the

revelation of divine mercy.

The God of this mercy as has been emphasised is the God of the indissoluble covenant of grace with man *ab origine*. Mary's sharing in this revelation of divine mercy means the communication of the universal giving of grace! "No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery": She is the co-revealer of the universal giving of grace!

9.3 Mary's part in the decree of the Trinity

Because no one has experienced the mystery of the cross like the mother of the Crucified One and co-operated with it by the sacrifice of her maternal heart,

"Mary, then" continues the Pope (*DiM* 9.3),

is the one who *has the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God's mercy*. She knows its price, she knows how great it is. In this sense, we call her the *Mother of mercy*, our Lady of mercy, or Mother of divine mercy; in each one of these titles there is a deep theological meaning, for they express the special preparation of her soul, of her whole personality, so that she was able to perceive, through the complex events, first of Israel, then of every individual and of the whole of humanity, that mercy of which "from generation to generation" (Lk. 1:50) people become sharers according to the eternal design of the most Holy Trinity.

According to the text Mary, because of the participation in the design of the Blessed Trinity which was given to her, possessed the capability of knowing (*dispicere*) in the history of man the universal giving of grace of God's mercy "from generation to generation."

The knowledge of universal salvation is said to come to Mary directly from the design of the trinitarian God.—All this the Pope gets from half a verse of the *Magnificat*.

9.4 Mary's participation in the messianic mission of her Son

Mary does not just have a unique part in the revelation of her Son but also in His messianic mission (*DiM* 9.4):

The above titles which we attribute to the Mother of God speak of her principally, however, as the Mother of the Crucified and Risen One; as the One who, having obtained mercy in an exceptional way, in an equally exceptional way “merits” that mercy throughout her earthly life and, particularly, at the foot of the cross of her Son; and finally as the one who, through her hidden and at the same time incomparable sharing in the messianic mission of her Son, was called in a special way to bring close to people that love which He had come to reveal: the love that finds its most concrete expression *vis-à-vis* the suffering, the poor, those deprived of their own freedom, the blind, the oppressed and sinners, just as Christ spoke of them in the words of the prophecy of Isaiah, first in the synagogue at Nazareth (cf. Lk. 4:18) and then in response to the question of the messengers of John the Baptist (cf. Lk. 7:22).

The easy law of reciprocal mercy runs through the whole of Mary's life. The messianic programme of Christ and the Church is also Mary's programme. This programme has already been analysed in some detail (cf. *DiM* 3.8).

9.5 The maternal revelation of divine mercy

What is special about Mary's participation in the announcement of the messianic revelation of mercy is dealt with by the Encyclical in the following way (*DiM* 9.5):

It was precisely this “merciful” love, which is manifested above all in contact with moral and physical evil, that the heart of her who was the Mother of the Crucified and Risen One shared in singularly and exceptionally—that Mary shared in. In her and through her, this love continues to be revealed

in the history of the Church and of humanity. This revelation is especially fruitful because in the Mother of God it is based upon the unique tact of her maternal heart, on her particular sensitivity, on her particular fitness to reach all those who most easily accept the merciful love of a mother. This is one of the great life-giving mysteries of Christianity, a mystery intimately connected with the mystery of the Incarnation.

Not only in Christ but also in the mother of Christ God's mercy is revealed in the history of the Church and humanity. In the mother of Christ the revelation of divine mercy is brought closer to man in a motherly way. There is, therefore in Mary a motherly revelation of the God who is full of mercy.

This motherly revelation is similarly based on the law of the reciprocity of mercy and the universal giving of grace *ab origine*.

9.6 The motherhood of Mary in the economy of grace

The pious Marian considerations in the Encyclical end with a long quotation from *Gaudium et Spes* (62) whose basic content summed up is (*DiM* 9.6):

The motherhood of Mary in the order of grace lasts without interruption from the *Fiat* of the Annunciation to the end of the pilgrimage of the brethren of her son.

The new Marian vision of the Pope's history of salvation is based on Mary's words, "His mercy is from generation to generation." But this is only half of Mary's words of praise. The whole verse reads:

And his mercy is from generation unto generations,
to them that fear him (Lk. 1:50).

The Encyclical which elsewhere does quote the full verse (e.g., *DiM* 5.1) suppresses however the decisive condition in this fundamental presentation of the Mother of divine mercy. His mercy is for "them that fear him." This condition in the

biblical text contradicts a general giving of divine mercy simply to all and sundry, it contradicts the Encyclical's theory of the universal giving of grace. The complete verse of the *Magnificat* (Lk. 1:50) takes away the biblical foundation of the Pope's vision of the history of salvation.

CHAPTER VI

A PICTURE OF OUR GENERATION*

As he did in *Redemptor Hominis*, following the basic theological part of *Dives in Misericordia*, the Pope gives a picture of our generation (*DiM* 10-12) to whom his Gospel of mercy is directed (*DiM* 13-15).

This picture is taken from the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and is necessarily only a sketch. Because the theme of our study is the Pope's theology we limit ourselves to a brief look at the main ideas contained in the last few chapters of the Encyclical, quoting the more important texts and a few extra remarks.

10. The generation of the historical change**

The theological framework in which the Pope considers our generation is divine mercy (*DiM* 10.1):

We have every right to believe that our generation too was included in the words of the Mother of God when she glorified that mercy shared in "from generation to generation" by those who allow themselves to be guided by the fear of God.

This time the Pope quotes the whole of the verse from the *Magnificat* without, however, drawing the logical conclusions from it (cf. *DiM* 9).

The first point of reference for our generation to be named

* The chapter title in the English translation is "Mercy...from Generation to Generation."

** The article title in the English translation is, "An Image of Our Generation."

is the most general (*DiM* 10.1):

In fact, all of us now living on earth are the generation that is aware of the approach of the third millennium and that profoundly feels the change that is occurring in history.

The approach of the third millennium holds a significant place in the Pope's conception of the history of salvation (cf. *RH* 1.1-2).¹

The Encyclical first mentions the privileges then the difficulties which mark our generation:

This present generation is privileged by the great advances "in the field of science and technology and in that of social and cultural life." Thereby man "has acquired deeper knowledge of the laws of social behaviour."

The general progress has also marked modern man's consciousness (*DiM* 10.2):

He has seen the obstacles and distances between individuals and nations dissolve or shrink through an increased sense of what is universal, through a clearer awareness of the unity of the human race, through the acceptance of mutual dependence in authentic solidarity, and through the desire and possibility of making contact with one's brothers and sisters beyond artificial geographic divisions and national or racial limits.

The most obvious sign of the mentality of our generation is thus the clear consciousness of the unity of the human family and of a general brotherhood of man which goes beyond any "artificial borders."

The Pope considers the historical development from the point of view of "progress" which has been achieved by the growing exchange of material, intellectual and cultural riches of the various peoples.

But precisely this "great progress" brings also great difficul-

¹ Cf. Part II/1, pp. 49-61.

ties with it.

The main difficulty he sees in the fact that this progress at the moment is still very often the "privilege of the industrialised nations." But he does not deny (*DiM* 10.2):

that the prospect of enabling every people and every country to benefit from it has long ceased to be a mere utopia when there is a real political desire for it.

The Pope sees "progress" as a process of growth with imminent difficulties "which is the same for all growth." It is a question of "The picture of the world today also containing shadows and imbalances."

The pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (10) has discovered the deeper context: it sees these imbalances in the context of every "imbalance" which "lies in the heart of man." Man feels on the one hand his created shortcomings and on the other the longing for a higher life to which he is called (*DiM* 10.3):

"And so he feels himself divided, and the result is a host of discords in social life" (*GS* 10).

The Pope sees a growing number who in the present development of the world "are asking the most fundamental of all questions" about man's being and the meaning of life (cf. *DiM* 10.4). But the "tensions and threats" in the world have become more manifest since the Second Vatican Council (cf. *DiM* 10.5).

Here are a few remarks about how the Encyclical sees the world:

The general striving after "One World" has already been influencing consciousness and also contemporary politics long before the Second Vatican Council. That is why the highest Magisterium, Catholic social teaching and moral theology have already taken this into account. The Catholic way of looking at it may be seen in the classical theology textbook from

Mausbach-Ermecke,

The tendency to legally organise men and their organisations of united peoples in states even as far as making a world state organisation is growing every day stronger due to the growing national and international interdependence in all social areas. The Church does not just take note of this but supports it.

At the same time it accepts the fact of the unity of the family of man in which all men are brothers and sisters by nature and because of their calling to grace and as such should live together and as people and states have the right to their own culture and independence. The universal community of the family of man is once again ordered towards the new universal family of the children of God in Christ, the Church. Thus Christ is "the principle of life of human society" (Pius XII) through His Church. Because Christ is the love of God made man such an order proceeds from love.²

The unity of man in true solidarity and universal brotherhood in a "world State" beyond all "artificial borders" like race, nation and religion is, however, the declared aim of the liberal-enlightened, Freemasonic efforts.³ These ideas and not what the Church believes mark the consciousness of our generation. The Pope describes the general striving after unity with the usual categories of progress and thus draws a realistic picture of the spiritual profile of our age.

At important points, however, clearly defined borders and critical objections from the classical teaching of the Church are missing. It should be clearly said that quite successful "one World" efforts of a political and socialist and liberal internationalism uproot man culturally and thereby destroy him. Man is by nature a cultural creature.⁴ Man as a brother or sister

² Cf. Joseph Mausbach/Gustav Ermecke, *Katholische Moraltheologie* (Münster/Westf. 1961), III, pp. 136ff.

³ Cf. Johannes Tothdranz, *Die kommende "Diktatur der Humanität"* [*The Coming Dictatorship of Humanity*] (Durach 1990), Vol. I-III.

⁴ Johannes Dörmann, *Die Eine Kirche in allen Kulturen—Das Problem*

“beyond artificial geographic divisions and national or racial limits” (*ultra arte factas partitiones geographicas vel fines nationum aut stirpium*) is an abstract idea and so the presuppositions for the desired unity remain a similarly abstract and rootless humanity which is controlled by a world democracy just as abstract and lacking in any history.

The expansion of scientific and technical developments of western civilisation throughout the world cannot be understood adequately with evolutionist categories of progress nor simply declared a “privilege of the industrialised countries” which could be enjoyed by all countries as long as a real political desire for it existed.

The problem “in all these developments” are by no means just “difficulties” or “imbalances” which are a symptom “of all growth” and in the end seated in “man’s heart” (cf. *DiM* 10.3). Rather the reality is a global cultural change which is destroying whole races, peoples and cultures in their spiritual and religious foundations. One of the main causes is the decline in culture brought about by modern science and civilisation in the rest of the world. From this cultural decay comes necessarily a global change in culture which is above every individual and causes crises of whole continents.⁵

The question is, will embracing the modern world which is ruled by the spirit of the Enlightenment open the way for it to becoming Christian?

der Indigenisation [*The One Church in All Cultures—The Problem of Inculturation*]. In: *Weisheit Gottes—Weisheit der Welt. Festschrift für Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger* [*God’s Wisdom—the World’s Wisdom. A Testimonial for Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger*] (60), (St. Ottilien 1987), II, pp. 1039-1058.

⁵ Johannes Dörmann, *Die Eine Kirche und die vielen Kulturen* [*The One Church and the many cultures*]. In: Josef Schreiner (pub.), *Die Kirche im Wandel der Gesellschaft* [*The Church in a Changing Society*] (Würzburg 1970), pp. 240-257.—The series of articles: *Die Eine Kirche in allen Völkern und Kulturen* [*The One Church in All Nations and Cultures*] I-XII. In: *Pastoralblatt für die Diözesen Aachen, Berlin, etc.* [*Diocesan newsletter for Aachen, Berlin etc.*] 8 (1985) and *Theologisches* 4 (1985)-8 (1985).

11. Sources of uneasiness

For the Pope "existential fear" is a further sign of our present generation. Even in modern philosophy and psychology "fear" is a basic component of human existence.⁶ The Pope says "existential fear" is empirically caused and nourished by a feeling of being under threat. He refers to his Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* which has already mentioned this threat (RH 15-17). He therefore summarises:

Man's increasing feeling of being under threat is born of the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, of the consequences of a materialist civilisation which "places things above persons," of the means invented by this type of society making it easier to fall victim to the abuse of power by others. Finally he says (*DiM* 11.2):

Man rightly fears falling victim to an oppression that will deprive him of his interior freedom, of the possibility of expressing the truth of which he is convinced, of the faith that he professes, of the ability to obey the voice of conscience that tells him the right path to follow.

This point of view is stressed once more: for greater than the threat to physical life is the threat to (*DiM* 11.3): "what is essentially human, what is intimately bound up with the dignity of the person and his or her right to truth and freedom."

Thus the Encyclical comes to the sensitive heart of man's existentially being threatened. This is the threat to the dignity of the person with his right to freedom of conscience and religion (cf. also *DiM* 11.5).

To the threats from without come the reproaches from within: For the threats from without take place "against a background of gigantic remorse." The cause of this is that in the "various socio-economic systems" of the human family there is consumerism and pleasure on the one hand and misery and

⁶ See H. Rombach and J.B. Metz, article *Angst*, in *LThK*, I, col. 556-559.

hunger on the other. Thus the North-South divide is addressed. Concerning this the Pope's worried commentary says, the "contemporary economics and materialistic civilisation" which is built on very shaky foundations "does not allow the human family to break free from such radically unjust situations" (*DiM* 11.4).

This generalising moral verdict on "contemporary economics" and the demand for a new world economic order⁷ contained in it could, in that it gives no concrete suggestions to remedy the situation, sound rather moralising and unwittingly open the door to revolutionary ideas.⁸

This picture of the modern world in which there is so much physical and moral suffering and in which "at the same time human freedom, conscience and religion" are also threatened explains "the uneasiness felt by contemporary man" (*DiM* 11.5).

The Pope does not stop at describing this uneasiness. He also inquires into the causes and shows the way for the future: Although there is no lack of people who have discovered the causes of this uneasiness and fought against it using technology, wealth and power, the uneasiness in the heart of man is not quelled by these measures. This uneasiness, as the Second Vatican Council says, concerns (*DiM* 11.5):

the fundamental problems of all human existence. It is linked with the very sense of man's existence in the world, and is an uneasiness for the future of man and all humanity; it demands decisive solutions, which now seem to be forcing themselves upon the human race.

⁷ In more detail *Redemptor Hominis* 16. See Part II/1, pp. 196-203.

⁸ Franz Josef Micha, *Hilfe für Entwicklungsländer—ein Problem*. [*Help for the Developing Lands—a Problem*]. In: *Politisch-Soziale Korrespondenz* [*Social Political Correspondence*] [= *PSK*] 8 (Bonn 1959), No. 3, pp. 8-11.—Johannes Dörmann, *Politische Aspekte der Entwicklungshilfe* [*Political Aspects of Development Aid*]. In: *PSK* 8 (1959), No. 5, pp. 7-10. Also, *Vorschläge zum Problem der Entwicklungshilfe*. In: *PSK* 8 (1959), No. 9, pp. 7-11.

So far the Pope has concentrated on two things: the threat to freedom of opinion, conscience and religion which is closely linked to "the dignity of the person and his right to truth and freedom" and the "inequality amongst people and nations."

If we join to these demands for freedom and equality the demand made already in the previous article for universal brotherhood in one humanity (cf. *DiM* 10.2) then the spiritual profile which the Encyclical draws of the driving forces of our contemporary world become clear: The unity of humanity in liberty, equality and fraternity beyond all "artificial borders."

Thus the Pope has drawn a picture of the main characteristics of the general consciousness which incontrovertibly marks the present generation in western civilisation and which are being spread over the whole world by the modern means of communication and international politics. However, he does not just describe the spiritual and political profile but uses the jargon of modern history of freedom and integrates it significantly into his own concept.

The Encyclical broadens its scope by asking about the "ethical character" of the problems at the root of all tensions.

12. The ethical character of the tensions and struggles*

The new found sense of justice in the modern world is another important sign for the Pope of the consciousness of the modern generation.

The Church's teaching has obviously contributed much to a sense of social justice. But it can hardly be disputed that the "sense of justice which has been reawakened in the modern world" comes mainly from the spirit "of this world" and bears the marks of revolutionary *égalité*, socialism and liberalism on its forehead.

How does the Encyclical describe the newly awakened sense of justice?

* Title of article in English translation, "Is Justice Enough?"

It highlights the fact that the "modern world's sense of justice" emphasises that which goes against justice in relationships between individuals, social groups and "classes," between individual peoples and states. Thus begins the Pope's ethical consideration (*DiM* 12.1):

This deep and varied trend, at the basis of which the contemporary human conscience has placed justice, gives proof of the ethical character of the tensions and struggles pervading the world.

Justice is the universal category in which the Encyclical understands and considers the ethical character of the worldwide tensions and struggles.

The Pope welcomes unreservedly the reawakening of the consciousness for justice in the modern world and at the same time points out that the Church shares with man the burning desire for a just life in every area and gives thought to the various aspects of justice herself. The proof of this is Catholic social teaching according to whose principles proceed the education and formation of human consciences in the spirit of justice (*DiM* 12.2). The Pope is therefore considering "social justice" without, however, using this term.

One expects the Encyclical to present the reawakened sense of justice in some concrete way, to show its historical sources and to criticise the systems of communism, socialism and liberalism where they disagree with Catholic social teaching. But that does not happen, rather the Pope goes his own way, following his own aims.

He criticises social reality in a general way. We cannot after all overlook the fact that these programmes which started off with justice have often gone other ways in practise. Although justice was always quoted it was the negative forces which somehow got the upper hand and decided what was done. This contradicts the very meaning of justice (*DiM* 12.3):

which by its nature tends to establish equality and harmony

between the parties in conflict.

Thus the Pope defines the essence of justice. Thence he goes to Sacred Scripture to show immediately the boundaries of his definition (*DiM* 12.3): Christ challenged the Jews who were faithful to the law which was expressed by the phrase, "Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" (Mt. 5:38). This form of justice which in those days had already distorted the true notion is the present day model. From this the Pope says (*DiM* 12.3):

The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, that it can lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions.

Thus the Pope's definition of justice becomes clearer: the word's root meaning aims at "equality and harmony between the parties in conflict." Justice in the bitter style of "an eye for an eye" needs complementing with love in man's living together. This aspect does not detract from justice but just shows the necessity of "drawing from the powers of the spirit which condition the very order of justice, powers which are still more profound" (*DiM* 12.3).

Whether the additional characterisation of justice as "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" really defines the content of what justice was then and is now or not remains unclear. The Pope develops a more precise definition of justice later on (*DiM* 14). Here what is important to him is saying that justice must be complemented by love.

Simply to say that justice is at the root of all tensions and struggles in our day is obviously not enough. Therefore the Pope in a sort of appendix completes his picture of our generation with a list of other ethical deficiencies (*DiM* 12.5):

Moreover, one cannot fail to be worried by the decline of

many fundamental values, which constitute an unquestionable good not only for Christian morality but simply for human morality, for moral culture: these values include respect for human life from the moment of conception, respect for marriage in its indissoluble unity, and respect for the stability of the family. Moral permissiveness strikes especially at this most sensitive sphere of life and society. Hand in hand with this go the crisis of truth in human relationships, lack of responsibility for what one says, the purely utilitarian relationship between individual and individual, the loss of a sense of the authentic common good and the ease with which this good is alienated. Finally, there is the "desacralisation" that often turns into "dehumanisation": the individual and the society for whom nothing is "sacred" suffer moral decay, in spite of appearances.

It is amazing how the Pope presents fundamental Christian values "simply" and "unquestionably" as "human morality" and "moral culture," when it is obvious that the varying forms of morality are conditioned by the different religions and philosophies and that, for example, the indissolubility of marriage in no way belongs to a general "moral culture" of man. This is specific to the Catholic sacrament of marriage.

It is equally amazing that the Pope only looks at the ethical character and does not consider the religious character of the tensions and struggles throughout the world based on the consciousness of our generation. Does religion play no significant rôle in our generation and is, therefore, the declaration of freedom of religion the solution to these tensions?

The religious character of the tensions in the consciousness of our generation would make us consider the religious situation of peoples and cultures and therefore the New Testament view of the world and history. From the point of view of the New Testament religious tensions are the most important. The "world," since and because of Christ, is in a state of crisis. In Christ God has already given His judgment on the world. Even in the modern world it is a question of belief or unbelief, of man's eternal salvation or damnation. This diacritic mission

of Christ and His disciples is continued by the Church in a great historical "judgment" (cf. Jn. 16:7ff.). The proclamation of the Kingdom of God is the beginning of the divine crisis in the history of man; It is the character and mission of the Church in the history of salvation to cause this crisis. In this sense the Church is and remains a constant source of crisis in the world.

Viewed from the mission of the Church we get the points of view for the evangelisation of peoples and cultures, for the problems of a world-wide culture change, for conflicts with the spiritual values of the modern world and its slogans of "liberty, equality and fraternity."⁹—Has the salt lost its savour?

⁹ Cf. Johannes Dörmann, [*The One Church and the Many Cultures*]. In: Josef Schreiner (pub.), [*The Church in a Changing Society*] (Würzburg 1970), pp. 140-257.—Johannes Dörmann, *Metamorphose der griechisch-römischen Kultur durch das Evangelium*. [*Metamorphosis of Graeco-Roman Culture by the Gospel*] In: *Begegnung der Kulturen in Ost und West. Festschrift für Hyogmyon Kwon* [*Meeting of Cultures in East and West. Testimonial for Hyogmyon Kwon*] (60). (1967), pp. 109-131.—Christian Gnllka, *Chrësis. Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur* [*The Method of the Fathers of the Church in the Context of Ancient Cultures*], Vols. I & II (Basel 1984; 1993).

CHAPTER VII

GOD'S MERCY IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION

In the last part of the Encyclical (*DiM* 13-15) the Pope gives a brief sketch of what he intends to say (*DiM* VII). The theme is to be:

In connection with this picture of our generation (= *DiM* VI), a picture which cannot fail to cause profound anxiety, there come to mind once more those words which, by reason of the Incarnation of the Son of God, resounded in Mary's *Magnificat*, and which sing of "mercy from generation to generation." The Church of our time, constantly pondering the eloquence of these inspired words, and applying them to the sufferings of the great human family, must become more particularly and profoundly conscious of the need to bear witness in her whole mission to God's mercy, following in the footsteps of the tradition of the Old and New Covenant, and above all of Jesus Christ Himself and His Apostles.

The Pope once again begins with Mary's *Magnificat* "by reason of the Incarnation." Once again he only quotes half of the verse—deliberately—and thereby shows already how he understands the mercy of God. Since, according to his teaching, the Son of God formally united Himself with the whole of humanity in the Incarnation (cf. *RH* 13; 14) God's mercy also embraces the whole of humanity, our generation included, with no conditions. The "inspired words" of Mary which "the Church ponders in her heart" announce thus the new teaching of the universal giving of grace (cf. *DiM* 1.4).

The Pope's call to the Church seems to contradict this when he asks her to become "more profoundly conscious" of her mission from the sources of revelation and tradition. But

the new understanding of her mission is not to be found in these sources.

This is how the Encyclical is set out in its last section:

The Church must bear witness to the mercy of God revealed in Christ, in the whole of His mission as Messiah, professing it in the first place as a salvific truth of faith and as necessary for a life in harmony with faith, and then seeking to introduce it and to make it incarnate in the lives both of her faithful and as far as possible in the lives of all people of good will. Finally, the Church—professing mercy and remaining always faithful to it—has the right and the duty to call upon the mercy of God, imploring it in the face of all the manifestations of physical and moral evil, before all the threats that cloud the whole horizon of the life of humanity today.

The Encyclical, therefore, considers the Church's mission in the world, which is threatened from all sides, in a threefold way: The Church must profess the truth of God's mercy in agreement with Christ's messianic mission and the faith (*DiM* 13), she must try to realise this in the lives of the faithful and of all men (*DiM* 14) and she must call upon the mercy of God in prayer for the whole of humanity (*DiM* 15).

13. The Church professes and proclaims God's mercy

In his introductory words the Pope has emphasised that his teaching on mercy agrees with revelation and the whole of tradition. Thus he now begins with the fundamental statement (*DiM* 13.1):

The Church must profess and proclaim God's mercy in all its truth, as it has been handed down to us by revelation. We have sought, in the foregoing pages of the present document, to give at least an outline of this truth, which finds such rich expression in the whole of Sacred Scripture and in Sacred Tradition.

The text suggests to the reader that the truth contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition is identical with that contained in the Encyclical and is faithfully reproduced "in this document." The truth is that this is not the case. Rather it is obvious that the whole of revelation and tradition undergo a fundamental reinterpretation by the theological principles of "this document." The Pope hijacks Scripture and tradition for his own completely new ideas.

Therefore it is not the authentic but a reinterpreted revelation of divine mercy which the Encyclical says is the contents of the Church's mission and which the Pope gives to the Church as the truth of Sacred Scripture and Tradition in the following articles (*DiM* 13-15). This takes place according to the general principle: *accommodata renovatio Ecclesiae ad intra et ad extra*: the new teaching is brought into the Church's Faith in order to make it agree with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.¹

The Pope begins with a general view of the various areas of Church life (*DiM* 13.1-3): The Church takes the truth about mercy which is contained in the Encyclical and puts them in the readings of the Liturgy and expresses them in the various forms of personal and communal piety (*DiM* 13.1). The Church professes and lives this truth of God's mercy "by constantly contemplating Christ, concentrating on Him, on His life and on His Gospel, on His cross and resurrection, on His whole mystery" by looking on Him who said, "Who has seen me has seen the Father" (*DiM* 13.2). The Church is living authentically "when she brings people close to the sources of the Saviour's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser." She herself approaches these sources of mercy by constantly meditating on the word of God, by celebrating the Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation (*DiM* 13.3).

That could also be understood in the traditional sense. The generality of the statement means it could be understood in

¹ For the *accommodata renovatio* see in more detail Part I pp. 15-46.

any way. But there can be no doubt in which sense this document's pious representation of the Church's faith and life is to be understood. The ambiguous character of the text can be seen in a more detailed analysis of the following paragraphs (*DiM* 13.4-8) in which the Pope goes into more detail. He speaks more about the Sacrament of Reconciliation by applying the theological principles of this document to the inner process of penance. In his own words (*DiM* 13.4):

It is precisely because sin exists in the world, which "God so loved...that he gave his only Son," (Jn. 3:16) that God, who "is love," (I Jn. 4:8) cannot reveal Himself otherwise than as mercy. This corresponds not only to the most profound truth of that love which God is, but also to the whole interior truth of man and of the world which is man's temporary homeland.

No, God does not have to, He can do otherwise! Only if God clings to His indissoluble covenant of grace with man *ab origine must* He reveal Himself as mercy *because* there is sin in the world. Only with the presupposition that man is created out of the same love which the Father has for His crucified Son as the inviolable image and likeness of God (cf. *DiM* 7.4) is the sacrifice of the cross a necessary satisfaction which the Son must perform for the faithfulness of the Father to His fatherhood for the sins of men. Then this mercy is representative of the deepest truth of God in His constant faithfulness to Himself and to His covenant of mercy. Then this mercy is representative of the inner truth of man's dignity of being a son which he cannot lose.

The Encyclical's thesis which joins sin in the world to God's love even unto the giving up of His Son and therefore produces this *must* of mercy is simply the logical consequence of the axiom of the universal giving of grace *ab origine*.

From the point of view of the Church's teaching on the Redemption we must say this about the quoted text: Just as God was absolutely free from any exterior force or inner obli-

gation to create the world,² so He was also not obliged to redeem it.³ Just as God's goodness did not necessitate the Creation,⁴ so God's love did not necessitate the Redemption.⁵ For "the Redemption is a completely free act of divine love and divine mercy (*libertas contradictionis*). If the raising of man to the state of the supernatural order is a free gift of divine love then even more so the restoration of the supernatural covenant of life with God which was destroyed by mortal sin."⁶ The Incarnation and the sacrifice of the cross are the absolutely free response of God's love to man's sin.

Even with the presupposition of God's free decision to give supernatural grace, the Incarnation was not absolutely necessary after the commission of sin. St. Anselm of Canterbury teaches: If God decided from all eternity in spite of Him foreseeing Original Sin to create man and give him sanctifying grace then it was also due to a freely taken decision that the necessity of redeeming man after sin was committed came about (*necessitas consequens*).⁷ This did not, however, need to be the Incarnation and the sacrifice of the cross.⁸

St. Thomas teaches, with St. Augustine, "that God due to His omnipotence could have redeemed man by many other means (*libertas specificationis*) (*Summa Theologica* III, Q. 1, a. ii). It would be making God's omnipotence, wisdom and mercy less if we thought the Incarnation was the only way in which God could have redeemed man. Without going against justice God can give pardon and grace to the penitent sinner without any satisfaction or with inadequate satisfaction." Only if we presupposed that "God required an adequate satisfaction would the Incarnation have been necessary" (hypothetic

² Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 81.

³ *Ibid.* p. 176-177.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 81.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 176-177.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 177.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 176ff.

necessity).⁹

The question is, can the Encyclical's thesis be interpreted in the sense of a hypothetic necessity?

The problem is as follows: If the Father created man as His inviolable image and likeness out of the same love which He has for His crucified Son then He cannot reveal His love for man in any other way than by giving His Son up when sin is committed. If the Father is joined to His adoptive sons (cf. *DiM* 7.4 & 5) by an indissoluble ontological bond because of His giving Himself to man then He cannot do otherwise than reveal Himself as mercy given that sin is in the world. The reasoning is in itself watertight but the premises contradict authentic revelation.

The Pope's thesis implies an infinite love of God for man with no conditions attached, a mercy that is infinite and with no boundaries. That is precisely what the following text explains (*DiM* 13.5):

Mercy in itself, as a perfection of the infinite God, is also infinite. Also infinite therefore and inexhaustible is the Father's readiness to receive the prodigal children who return to His home. Infinite are the readiness and power of forgiveness which flow continually from the marvellous value of the sacrifice of the Son. No human sin can prevail over this power or even limit it. On the part of man only a lack of good will can limit it, a lack of readiness to be converted and to repent, in other words, persistence in obstinacy, opposing grace and truth, especially in the face of the witness of the cross and resurrection of Christ.

The text seems to reproduce the message of the Gospel at first sight. Unconditioned trust in the mercy of the Father and in the sacrifice of the Son is a Christian's firm belief. For the Redeemer came to save what was lost. That is why the greatest sinner, if he does penance, is received by the Father with the

⁹ *Ibid.*

joy of the Gospel just like the Prodigal Son.

But the text must be understood from the Encyclical's premises. That is why we must remember: As the necessity of the Redemption does not follow necessarily from the perfect love of God (see above) so the unconditioned infiniteness of His mercy does not follow from the perfection of the infinite God. There is no real Prodigal Son in the Encyclical for there he never really lost his (supernatural) dignity of being a son (*DiM* 6.2 & 3) because "this basic value of man can never be destroyed" (cf. *DiM* 14.12). That is why—in spite of the impressive formulation—the "infinite mercy of God" in the Encyclical is not the same as divine mercy in Holy Scripture.

In the Encyclical God's mercy is universally given unconditionally "from generation to generation" to all because it is "as a perfection of the infinite God itself infinite." In Sacred Scripture, however, mercy is for all "them that fear him (God)" (Lk. 1:50).

The Encyclical ignores God's sovereign freedom even in mercy. In the biblical history of salvation God's "infinite mercy" is revealed also in His sovereign freedom. That can be seen in the Old Testament especially in the free choice of Israel as the chosen people of God from all the peoples of the world (Ex. 19:4ff.). In the New Testament the followers of Christ and the new chosen people of God (I Pet. 2:9ff.).

St. Paul comments on God's freedom in mercy also in the 9th chapter of his letter to the Romans. God can give and refuse His grace and mercy in absolute freedom how and to whom He will. "He says to Moses, 'I give grace to whom I will and I have mercy on whom I will have mercy'" (Rom. 9:15). or, "God has mercy on whom He will and leaves in his hardness of heart whom He will" (Rom. 9:18).

Certainly Christ is the incarnation of the merciful love of God. But Christ did not leave out of His picture of God the image of the angry judge (Mt. 22:7 & 13). In Romans we read (Rom. 1:18), "God's wrath will be revealed from Heaven over the godlessness and injustice of men who by their injus-

tice oppress God's truth." In Holy Scripture sinful man is shown to be completely dependent on God's Redemption (Rom 3:9ff.), who requires Faith for him to be justified. There is no inner or exterior obligation for God to give an unconditioned mercy. God only gives His mercy to the contrite sinner. That is what the Good news of the Gospel says. We simply cannot remove from our revealed image of God what does not suit the concept of an unconditioned mercy for all.

Similarly, because God's mercy is "infinite" it does not remain unaffected by man's sins like some divine fate so that it can only be restricted or rejected by an *a priori* redeemed and justified man if he does not want it. In Sacred Scripture God is not so trapped by His infinite merciful love that He passively leaves the limitation or rejection of His mercy to man alone and must put up with what man decides. In Jesus' parable the merciful master has the full freedom to withdraw his mercy from the unmerciful servant and gives him up to the torturers full of wrath (Mt. 18:23-34). Also in the Gospel we hear about eternal damnation with which God can punish (Mt. 25:48). God is infinite love and mercy but nonetheless not a beggar who is dependent on the reciprocal mercy of man.

Since the power of divine mercy can only be "limited" by man's stubbornness and lack of willingness to convert, so continues the Encyclical, the Church therefore preaches conversion. Using these premises conversion is defined as follows (*DiM* 13.6):

Therefore, the Church professes and proclaims conversion. Conversion to God always consists in discovering His mercy, that is, in discovering that love which is patient and kind (cf. I Cor. 13:4) as only the Creator and Father can be; the love to which the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 1:3) is faithful to the uttermost consequences in the history of His covenant with man: even to the cross and to the death and resurrection of the Son. Conversion to God is always the fruit of the "rediscovery" of this Father, who is rich in mercy.

Once again this text only superficially *appears* to present the Church's teaching. In reality the Church is said to preach conversion on the basis of the universal giving of grace: For conversion is, as the reference to "the history of His covenant" shows, the discovery of the mercy of the God who is joined and remains indissolubly united to man in eternal faithfulness to His covenant of grace *ab origine*. What conversion means in this context has already been shown in the parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. *DiM* 5.6; 6.1-5).

The Pope continues with his teaching on conversion (*DiM* 13.7):

Authentic knowledge of the God of mercy, the God of tender love, is a constant and inexhaustible source of conversion, not only as a momentary interior act but also as a permanent attitude, as a state of mind. Those who come to know God in this way, who "see" Him in this way, can live only in a state of being continually converted to Him. They live, therefore, *in statu conversionis*; and it is this state of conversion which marks out the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every man and woman on earth *in statu viatoris*. It is obvious that the Church professes the mercy of God, revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, not only by the word of Her teaching but above all through the deepest pulsation of the life of the whole People of God. By means of this testimony of life, the Church fulfils the mission proper to the People of God, the mission which is a sharing in and, in a sense, a continuation of the messianic mission of Christ Himself.

The state of perpetual conversion is called "the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every (!) man and woman on earth" as if it were obvious. The text then clearly presupposes the universal giving of grace.

But when "authentic knowledge of God" is the source of conversion then the preaching and accepting of the true faith is the absolute condition for conversion. Abstraction is, however, made of conversion to the God of Jesus Christ in an

obediential act of faith. "Conversion" is simply generalised. It is simply the state of "every man and woman *in statu viatoris*."

Thence the Pope comes to the problem of Christian ecumenism. He sees the Church's ecumenical task in the framework of divine mercy of all and conversion as the following text shows (*DiM* 13.8):

The contemporary Church is profoundly conscious that only on the basis of the mercy of God will she be able to carry out the tasks that derive from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and, in the first place, the ecumenical task which aims at uniting all those who confess Christ. As she makes many efforts in this direction, the Church confesses with humility that only that love which is more powerful than the weakness of human divisions can definitively bring about that unity which Christ implored from the Father and which the Spirit never ceases to beseech for us "with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26).

The Second Vatican Council has thus brought about a fundamental ecumenical change in the purpose of the Church, a conversion as it were: From now on the Church relies on God's mercy and on the humble confession that only love can lead to unity. This new dogmatic statement signifies the ecumenical change in the conciliar Church. *Dives in Misericordia* does not talk about religious ecumenism in any greater detail. That has already been done in *Redemptor Hominis*. The principles are valid "in a similar way" (cf. *RH* 6.1).

Actually it is obvious that the Church's ecumenical task is first of all a question of truth and faith. That is why until the Second Vatican Council the central point of the Catholic Church's ecumenical efforts was the struggle for the unity of faith. The "humble confession" of the conciliar Church is nothing less than the giving up of a position that previously was thought to be impossible to give up.

This was clearly defined before the Second Vatican Council by Pius XI in his Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (1928). It may

be summarised as follows:

Since there is only one true religion which was revealed by God there is only one way for non-Christians to truth and life: the Way of conversion to the religion and Church of Jesus Christ.

Since there is only one Church which was founded by Jesus Christ there is only one way for non-Catholics: conversion and return to the Catholic Church. The full Catholic Faith without any restrictions or omissions is the bond of unity. Love on its own cannot bring separated Christians together.¹⁰

The difference between the Church's teaching before and after the Council, between the Encyclicals of Pius XI and John Paul II could hardly be greater.¹¹

14. The Church seeks to put mercy into practise

At the beginning of his great concept of equality and reciprocity in mercy as the formative principle of a "culture of love" for the whole of humanity, the Pope places the fifth beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount (*DiM* 14.1):

Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called "to practise mercy" towards others: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7). The Church sees in these words a call to action, and she tries to practise mercy.

The practise of the beatitude begins in each case with the individual (*DiM* 14.1):

Man attains to the merciful love of God, His mercy, to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love towards his neighbour.

This "evangelical process" is more than just a one-off con-

¹⁰ For *Mortalium Animos* and the Church's position after Vatican II see Part I, pp. 1-19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

version but a way of life, a sign of the Christian calling. Merciful love shows itself as "unifying and also elevating power" "which, by its essence, is a creative love" (*DiM* 14.2)

Reciprocity also belongs to the essence of this creative power (*DiM* 14.2):

"In reciprocal relationships between persons merciful love is never a unilateral act or process." The giver always becomes one who receives.

The Pope quotes Christ as the authority for this principle (*DiM* 14.3):

In this sense Christ crucified is for us the loftiest model, inspiration and encouragement. When we base ourselves on this disquieting model, we are able with all humility to show mercy to others, knowing that Christ accepts it as if it were shown to Himself (cf. Mt. 25-40). On the basis of this model, we must also continually purify all our actions and all our intentions in which mercy is understood and practised in a unilateral way, as a good done to others. An act of merciful love is only really such when we are deeply convinced at the moment that we perform it that we are at the same time receiving mercy from the people who are accepting it from us. If this bilateral and reciprocal quality is absent, our actions are not yet true acts of mercy, nor has there yet been fully completed in us that conversion to which Christ has shown us the way by His words and example, even to the cross, nor are we yet sharing fully in the magnificent source of merciful love that has been revealed to us by Him.

The principle of reciprocity in mercy whose theological heart is the relationship between Christ and man has already been dealt with in some detail (cf. *DiM* 5-9).

Before the Pope develops his theories for society from this principle he rejects in an unusually vehement way the views of those who do not accept his theory in a threefold crescendo (*DiM* 14.4):

Thus, the way which Christ showed to us in the Sermon

on the Mount with the beatitude regarding those who are merciful is much richer than what we sometimes find in ordinary human opinions about mercy. These opinions see mercy as a unilateral act or process, presupposing and maintaining a certain distance between the one practising mercy and the one benefiting from it, between the one who does good and the one who receives it.

This false opinion which does not take reciprocity into account is also presumptuous. For (*DiM* 14.4):

Hence the attempt to free interpersonal and social relationships from mercy and to base them solely on justice.

This opinion which separates mercy from social relationships and bases them alone on justice is not only presumptuous but also contradicts the whole of revelation. For (*DiM* 14.4):

However, such opinions about mercy fail to see the fundamental link between mercy and justice spoken of by the whole biblical tradition, and above all by the messianic mission of Jesus Christ.

According to this there is a fundamental link between mercy and justice. This is described in more detail (*DiM* 14.4):

True mercy is, so to speak, the most profound source of justice. If justice is in itself suitable for "arbitration" between people concerning the reciprocal distribution of objective goods in an equitable manner, love and only love (including that kindly love that we call "mercy") is capable of restoring man to Himself.

This definition of the bond of love between mercy and justice is further strengthened by the addition of the definition of equality. The Pope finally gives the following definition (*DiM* 14.5):

Mercy that is truly Christian is also, in a certain sense, the most perfect incarnation of "equality" between people, and therefore also the most perfect incarnation of justice as well, insofar as justice aims at the same result in its own sphere. However, the equality brought by justice is limited to the realm of objective and extrinsic goods, while love and mercy bring it about that people meet one another in that value which is man himself, with the dignity that is proper to him.

According to this we may thus define mercy and justice and their mutual relationship in the Encyclical as follows:

– Mercy is the "most profound source of justice" (cf. *DiM* 14.4).

– Christian mercy in the most perfect incarnation of equality between men in the realm of dignity.

– Justice is the most perfect incarnation of equality between men in the realm of extrinsic goods.

According to this the fundamental structure of mercy and justice is equality. The difference is of a merely modal nature.

What is peculiar to the Pope's position is seen when one compares it with traditional theology:

– In classical Catholic moral theology mercy is love of neighbour due to compassion.¹² The one giving help descends to his neighbour suffering want, in order to relieve him of his suffering. Christian mercy is not only natural compassion but love itself which turns to him in need out of the love of God.

¹² Hieronymus Noldin, *Summa Theologia Moralis* (Heidelberg 1944, Editio 28), II, p. 90: "*De natura misericordiae. 1. Actus caritatis erga proximum in miseria constituto est opus misericordiae seu eleemosyna generatim sumpta. 2. Misericordia est virtus moralis, qua homo ex commiseratione inclinatur ad sublevandam alienam miseram. A caritate igitur eo differt, quod haec proximo universim vult et procurat bonum ex benevolentia, misericordia autem ei, qui in miseria est, ex compassione. Miseria enim proximi naturaliter movet ad compassionem et compassio ad sublevandam miseriam.*"

¹³ Joseph Mausbach/Gustav Ermecke, *Katholische Moraltheologie* [*Catholic Moral Theology*] (Münster 1959, 11th ed.), II, p. 147.

It is seldom properly understood by non-Christians. Compassion is condemned by some (Stoics, Nietzsche), overdone by others (Schopenhauer influenced by Buddhism).¹³ Christian mercy, therefore, implies neither a perfect equality nor a perfect reciprocity. But already Cardinal Wojtyla held the opinion that love can only exist between equals.¹⁴

– Justice is defined in classical Catholic moral theology as “the lasting direction and inclination of the will to respect the rights of others, to give to the other what is his due.” As cardinal virtue it is “the fundamental characteristic of all social thinking with the inner intention to respect one’s neighbour as someone with rights and the behaviour which results from this.” According to scholastic canonists justice proper falls into three categories:

a) commutative (*iustitia commutativa*); this governs the relationships of individuals (citizens) between one another (*relatio partis ad partem*);

b) distributive (*iustitia distributiva*); this governs what the government does with regard to the citizenry distributing the common goods to individuals (*relatio totius ad partes*);

c) legal (*iustitia legalis* or *generalis*); this governs the duties of the individual towards society, subordinates towards the State and Church (*relatio partis ad totum*). This also includes social justice (*iustitia socialis*) or justice for the common good.¹⁵

The Pope makes no distinction within justice itself, he makes only a modal separation from mercy. Justice is, according to his definition, simply the most perfect equality between men in the realm of exterior goods. His principle is not “everyone his due” but “to all the same.”

The Pope notes that through “equality created by love the differences between men” are by no means removed. Rather

¹⁴ Karol Wojtyla, *Liebe und Verantwortung. Eine ethische Studie [Love and Responsibility: An Ethical Study]* (Munich 1979). Original in Polish, Lublin 1960; Revised edition, Cracow 1962. Fundamental theses of this work reappear often in *Dives in Misericordia*

¹⁵ Joseph Mausbach/Gustav Ermecke, *op. cit.*, III, p. 11.

by exchanging the rôles of giving and receiving men make each other richer and by this "unite people in a more profound manner" (*DiM* 14.5). This close bond leads to the desired aim: to mutual brotherhood of all men in one Family of Man (*DiM* 14.6):

Thus, mercy becomes an indispensable element for shaping mutual relationships between people, in a spirit of deepest respect for what is human, and in a spirit of mutual brotherhood.

The principle of equality and reciprocity in mercy is therefore the shaping element in the creation of a social order of universal brotherhood.

Thus the Pope has given the principle of a social order that represents the ideal of a perfectly communistic family of man in universal brotherhood and equality in the realm of man's dignity and property. Perhaps he would also like to imply that the idea of "communism"—although the Encyclical does not mention it—was also godfather to the early Christian communities who as we read in Acts (Acts 2:44ff.), "And all they that believed, were together, and had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need." Though St. Paul still had to take collections in his communities to support his brothers in the faith in Jerusalem.

The Encyclical applies the principle step by step to the concrete reality. It begins with the closest circle of human relations:

Reciprocal, merciful love must be present above all amongst those who are close to one another: amongst friends, spouses, parents and children but also in education and in pastoral care (*DiM* 14.6).

The principle of equality and brotherhood in reciprocal mercy is not just for the small circle but also has a wider application: for a human culture of love (*DiM* 14.7).

The aim of a "culture of love" (Paul VI) in the social, cul-

tural, economical and political arena is only to be achieved if the principle of justice is completed and corrected by the spirit of merciful love (*DiM* 14.7):

Certainly, the Second Vatican Council also leads us in this direction, when it speaks repeatedly of the need to make the world more human, (cf. *GS* 40) and says that the realisation of this task is precisely the mission of the Church in the modern world. Society can become ever more human only if we introduce into the many-sided setting of interpersonal and social relationships, not merely justice, but also that "merciful love" which constitutes the messianic message of the Gospel.

According to this the Church's mission consists of realising merciful love by the principle of reciprocity and perfect equality in the realms of man's dignity and property in order to "make the world more human."

The Pope adds a new element to all this: reciprocal pardon. Man's world can only become "more human" when we bring to all human relationships "the element of pardon." "A world from which forgiveness was eliminated would be nothing but a world of cold and unfeeling justice" in whose name only the rights of the strong would be respected (*DiM* 14.8).

That is why it is one of the Church's most important tasks "to proclaim and to introduce into life the mystery of mercy, supremely revealed in Jesus Christ" (*DiM* 14.9). But in order for there to be no misunderstanding regarding the universal human character of this mystery, the Pope continues (*DiM* 14.9):

Not only for the Church herself as the community of believers but also in a certain sense for all humanity, this mystery is the source of a life different from the life which can be built by man, who is exposed to the oppressive forces of the threefold concupiscence active within him (cf. I Jn. 2:16). It is precisely in the name of this mystery that Christ teaches us to forgive always. How often we repeat the words of the prayer

which He Himself taught us, asking "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," (Mt. 6:12)...The consciousness of being trespassers against each other goes hand in hand with the call to fraternal solidarity...If we were to ignore this lesson, what would remain of any "humanist" programme of life and education?

The idea of constant forgiveness is specific to the Gospel. In the Encyclical it is made a general premise: Together with merciful love it is made a "source of life" for "all men" a general principle of "brotherly solidarity."

In order to preclude any misunderstanding about continual forgiveness, it is said later in the Encyclical (*DiM* 14.10): Even when Christ requires us to forgive "everyone every time" (Mt. 18:22) "it is obvious that such a generous requirement of forgiveness does not cancel out the objective requirements of justice" (*DiM* 14.10).

Earlier it was said that mercy is the most profound source of justice, now the requirement to forgive adds a new dimension to this relationship. Now (*DiM* 14.11):

the fundamental structure of justice always enters into the sphere of mercy. Mercy, however, has the power to confer on justice a new content, which is expressed most simply and fully in forgiveness." However, "fulfilment of the conditions of justice is especially indispensable in order that love may reveal its own nature.

The Encyclical justifies this by quoting from Scripture the parable of the Prodigal Son again (*DiM* 14.11):

In analysing the parable of the Prodigal Son, we have already called attention to the fact that he who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential value of the person, a point which cannot be lost and the affirmation of which, or its rediscovery, is a source of the greatest joy (cf. Lk. 15:32).

Thus the Pope exposes the dogmatic heart of his whole concept of universal giving of grace. Then the dignity of the "value of the person" is the inviolable image of God which each man has. That is why the Encyclical does not just apply this to the Church but to "all men of good will" (cf. introduction to Ch. VII).

In conclusion the Pope calls upon Christ, the whole of Tradition and the last Council to justify his theories (*DiM* 14.13):

The basis of the Church's mission, in all the spheres spoken of in the numerous pronouncements of the most recent Council and in the centuries-old experience of the apostolate, is none other than "drawing from the wells of the Saviour" (cf. Is. 12:3).

This happens in a spirit of evangelical poverty: "Ye have freely received, give freely" (Mt. 10:8). By this it is even clearer "that God is rich in mercy" (*DiM* 14.13).

Critical Review:

The Pope's thoughts may be summarised thus: The principle of equality and reciprocity in mercy do not only determine the "easy law of the plan of salvation," but also that of the new world order.

The "culture of love" in *Dives in Misericordia* is the Pope's answer to the picture of our present threatened generation. This picture has the spiritual profile of the successful ideas of the liberal enlightenment. Our generation's consciousness is marked with the ideas of the unity of the human race and liberty, equality and fraternity "beyond all artificial borders."

These influential ideas and powers of our generation are taken up by the Pope into the mission of the Church of today filled with the ideas of equality and reciprocity in mercy and with the aim to make the world ever "more human" and thereby to create a culture of love for man.

The theological foundation of this "culture of love" is the

axiom of the universal giving of grace. All the main ideas in our generation's consciousness are made theologically more profound and in this are changed in their very roots and transformed:

If all men are the adoptive sons of God then all humanity is an anonymous Christendom; then there is already latently present the unity of man in grace; then the general brotherhood of man consists in the brotherhood of the adoptive sons of God; then freedom of opinion, conscience and religion is anchored in the untouchable basic value of human dignity; then justice is the most perfect incarnation of equality of all in the realms of dignity and goods; then all can draw "freely" from the "source of life" which the Encyclical has opened for all. There is absolutely no mention of a requirement of faith or baptism in the Church's messianic mission of today. The declared aim is just to "make the world more human" (cf. *DiM* 14.7). All that is left of the substance of Christ's mission is this "*humanum*" adapted to the world. But without the conversion to the Father of Jesus Christ, without faith in Jesus Christ, without the reception of baptism any "*humanum*" remains but a utopia.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH'S CRY FOR GOD'S MERCY IN OUR AGE*

Chapter VIII is the grand finale in which the Encyclical's *leitmotifs* sound out once more and are taken up into the prayer of the Church. While all around the present generation is threatened in a terrible way the prayer of the Church becomes a "cry for God's mercy."

15. The Church calls on the divine mercy

The Encyclical takes up the themes of Chapter VII and turns to the closing theme (*DiM* 15.1):

The Church proclaims the truth of God's mercy revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, and she professes it in various ways. Furthermore, she seeks to practise mercy towards people through people, and she sees in this an indispensable condition for solicitude for a better and "more human" world, today and tomorrow. However,...never...can the Church forget the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it. These "loud cries" (cf. Heb. 5:7) should be the mark of the Church of our times, cries uttered to God to implore His mercy, the certain manifestations of which she professes and proclaims...in Jesus crucified and risen.

In a continual repetition the Pope describes the Paschal mystery as the "perfect revelation of mercy" as "love which is stronger than death and sin and every evil" which "lifts man up when he falls into the abyss and frees him from the greatest

* Title in the English translation, "The Prayer of the Church in Our Times."

threats" (*DiM* 15.1). But this revelation of mercy has in the mission of the Church still only the aim, "to make the world more human" (cf. *DiM* 14.7). Thus divine mercy in the work of the Redemption is brought down to the level of something purely natural to make a more human world.

Considering the inhumanities committed in the world today the "solicitude for a better and "more human" world, today and tomorrow" (*DiM* 15.1) is great, very great.

But Christ's work of Redemption is much more: It is primarily the infinite glorification of God in time and eternity.¹ For it is the Redemption of the world and justification of the sinner who is in absolute need of Redemption "through God due to faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe in Him" (cf. Rom. 3:22ff.). To communicate *this* mercy of God to man is in the first place the "Church's messianic mission."

Christ's duty to mission for His Church is not, "Go unto the whole world and make it more human. Preach to man his great dignity of being an adoptive son which he hath from always and cannot lose."

Rather the duty to mission which Christ gave His Church until the end of time, including today's Church is, "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Who believes and is baptised will be saved who does not believe will be damned" (Mk. 16:15ff.).

The difference between these two missions shows clearly the difference between Christ's Church in the Gospel and the Church in the Encyclical. The Encyclical mentions at no point the necessity of faith, baptism and the Church for salvation. The reason is obvious: If man is saved *ab origine* then all the messianic mission has to do is "to make the world more human."

To complete this understanding of what mission is the last article of the Encyclical adds the prayer: Considering how our generation is threatened the Church must not forget "the prayer

¹ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 185.

that is a cry for the mercy of God" and "these 'loud cries' (cf. Heb. 5:7) should be the mark of the Church of our times" (*DiM* 15.1). It is a cry for mercy not just in the Church's name but "also in the name of all the men and women of our time" (*DiM* 15.2). This prayer of the Church for mercy in the name of the whole of humanity must also be understood in the sense of "this document" (*DiM* 15.3):

Everything that I have said in the present document on mercy should therefore be continually transformed into an ardent prayer: into a cry that implores mercy according to the needs of man in the modern world. May this cry be full of that truth about mercy which has found such rich expression in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, as also in the authentic life of faith of countless generations of the People of God.

Once again the reader is told that the teaching of "this document" is nothing but "the full truth" which has been expressed so fully in Sacred Scripture and the Church's Tradition. But this identity simply does not exist:

Already as Archbishop of Cracow Cardinal Wojtyla made clear in his book *Sources of Renewal* (1972) that the Second Vatican Council was a second Pentecost that the Church was enriched in its faith regarding the Church and Christ's mysteries.² He repeats the same in *Sign of Contradiction* (1979).³

² Karol Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*. A study of how to put the Second Vatican Council into practise (first published in Polish, Cracow 1972), pp. 14ff. On p. 19 we read, "Putting the Second Vatican Council into practise, that is, the conciliar renewal, must begin with the principle of the enrichment of the faith." This "enrichment is simply the more perfect participation in divine truth" (p. 19). The enrichment of faith is thus to be understood in the sense of *fides quae* as well as *fides qua*: "This enrichment which I consider to be the basic requirement for the Second Vatican Council to be put into practise is to be understood in two ways: as an enrichment of the content of the faith which is contained in the Council's teaching and as an enrichment—which proceeds from this content—of the whole existence of the believer who

In *Redemptor Hominis* he announces as Pope the new "full universal consciousness of the Church" (*RH* 11.1) as well as the new "more perfect knowledge of the mystery of Christ," which was made known to Christendom at the opening of the Council (*RH* 11.3).⁴ At the beginning of the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* he calls "the deepening and manifold enrichment of knowledge of the Church" and the "opening to Christ" a "fruit of the Council" (*DiM* 1.4). This enrichment of the faith means in fact the new teaching of universal salvation just as it is presented in "this document." This new teaching is neither to be found in Holy Scripture nor has it ever been expressed "in the authentic life of faith of countless generations of the People of God."

In "this document" there is by no means a development of the previous faith of the Church but from an alteration based on the principle of the "double revelation" there follows an alteration of Scripture and the Church's Tradition based on the principle of universal salvation.

This new view of universal giving of grace is presented to today's man in an urgent way at the end of the Encyclical. Then it is said that the deeply felt hurtful rejection of love of God by today's man leads to an "attitude of petition." What this petition means is described as follows (*DiM* 15.4):

At the same time it is love of people, of all men and women without any exception or division: without difference of race, culture, language, or world outlook, without distinction be-

belongs to the Church. This enrichment in the objective sense which represents a new stage on the way of the Church to the "fullness of divine truth" is at the same time an enrichment in the subjective, human and existential sense" (p. 22). Concretely this enrichment means a more perfect knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the Church, *i.e.*, all men are saved and justified and the Church of the living God unites all men. Humanity is the invisible Church.

³ Cf. Part I.

⁴ Cf. Part II/1.

tween friends and enemies. This is love for people—it desires every true good for each individual and for every human community, every family, every nation, every social group, for young people, without exception. This is love, or rather an anxious solicitude to ensure for each individual every true good and to remove and drive away every sort of evil.

This universal, unconditioned and limitless love “for all men without exception or division” beyond all boundaries of race, culture, language and religion marks the Pope’s personal behaviour strongly and very visibly. It is one of the most noticeable external signs of his pontificate.

The Pope himself reveals the most profound impulse of his actions when he asks his contemporaries who do not share his faith for understanding for his actions (*DiM* 15.5):

And, if any of our contemporaries do not share the faith and hope which lead me, as a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God (cf. I Cor. 4:1) to implore God’s mercy for humanity in this hour of history, let them at least try to understand the reason for my concern. It is dictated by love for man, for all that is human and which, according to the intuitions of many of our contemporaries, is threatened by an immense danger. The mystery of Christ, which reveals to us the great vocation of man and which led me to emphasise in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* his incomparable dignity, also obliges me to proclaim mercy as God’s merciful love, revealed in that same mystery of Christ.

The Pope’s care comes therefore from his limitless love “for man” and “for all that is human.” This all inclusive love for man has a theological source: It comes from the consciousness of “the incomparable dignity of man” which “Christ has preached to us through his revelation of the Father and His merciful love” (cf. *DiM* 1.2). It is in this mystery of universal salvation which the Pope’s universal love of man is founded.

That is how it differs from the love of neighbour in the New Testament: It preaches to man his incomparable dignity

as an adoptive son of God, his inviolable dignity as the image and likeness of God. It announces to man the Father's mercy who has given him an inviolable value of being man *ab origine*. But it ignores for this reason man's true nature. It hides his true nature of being in Original Sin, his absolute need of redemption and the necessity of faith and baptism (*necessitas medii*) for salvation. It does not tell man that when one is confronted with Christ, the Crucified and Risen One one must make a choice, that faith in the Redeemer and baptism are required from him, that accepting or rejecting faith and baptism means eternal salvation or damnation (Mk. 16:15ff.). From this theological source came the Church's care for man before the last council and drove her to mission the world.

The last cry of the Church for mercy for our threatened generation contains the prayer (*DiM* 15.6):

that the Love which is in the Father may once again be revealed at this stage of history, and that, through the work of the Son and Holy Ghost, it may be shown to be present in our modern world and to be more powerful than evil: more powerful than sin and death.

What does this prayer for the Father's love, the presence of the Son and the Holy Ghost to be revealed "once again" mean? This is explained in the final cadence of the Encyclical (*DiM* 15.7):

In continuing the great task of implementing the Second Vatican Council, in which we can rightly see a new phase of the self-realisation of the Church—in keeping with the epoch in which it has been our destiny to live—the Church herself must be constantly guided by the full consciousness that in this work it is not permissible for her, for any reason, to withdraw into herself. The reason for her existence is, in fact, to reveal God, that Father who allows us to "see" Him in Christ (cf. Jn. 14:9). No matter how strong the resistance of human history may be, no matter how marked the diversity of contemporary civilisation, no matter how great the denial

of God in the human world, so much the greater must be the Church's closeness to that mystery which, hidden for centuries in God, was then truly shared with man, in time, through Jesus Christ.

Even this last sentence in the Encyclical is in itself ambiguous. But in the sense of "this document" it is quite clear. The "mystery which, hidden for centuries in God, was then truly (*revera*) shared with man, in time, through Jesus Christ" it is the mystery of the universal giving of grace.

Doubtless the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council represent "a new phase of the self-realisation of the Church." These changes, however, are in no way a continuous development of the old faith of the Church. Rather the self-realisation of the Church since the Council has for its foundation, according to the Pope, a new understanding of revelation which she received from the Holy Ghost at the last Council. She has undergone an unusual "enrichment of the faith": the revelation of the universal giving of grace.

It is the clear teaching of Sacred Scripture and Tradition that the general revelation was closed with Christ and the twelve Apostles (D 2021).

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to the
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OF RELIGIONS
IN ASSISI

Part II, Volume 3

The "Trinitarian Trilogy"

*Redemptor Hominis, Dives in Misericordia,
Dominum et Vivificantem*

Fr. Johannes Dörmann



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PROLOGUE¹

KEY TO THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN PAUL II

1. As Bishop and as Pope: theologian of Vatican II

In his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, John Paul II says that in his inaugural Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* he was writing what he had long believed.² This is the case not just for his first Encyclical but for the whole of his “Trinitarian trilogy.” In the theology of the Bishop Karol Wojtyła, which has a quite personal character, the foundation is laid for what Pope John Paul II developed in the “Trinitarian trilogy” and preached to the whole Church. If anyone really wants to understand the Pope, he must first study the works of the Bishop of Krakow in which a lot is more clearly expressed than it is later in the Pope’s Encyclicals.

The roots of Karol Wojtyła’s theology are in Vatican II. The “teaching of the Council” is the basis of the Pope’s theology.

¹ See Johannes Dörmann, Prologue to the “Trinitarian trilogy,” *Der theologische Weg Johannes Pauls II. zum Weltgebetstag der Religionen in Assisi* [Pope John Paul II’s Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religions in Assisi] (Senden, 1990ff.), II/1, 11–42; hereafter, [*Theological Journey*]. [English translation Angelus Press, 1994–98. 3 vols.]

In the footnotes, when a passage has been translated from the German, rather than from a published English version, its translated English title will be enclosed in brackets, and used in subsequent references.

² *Die Schwelle der Hoffnung überschreiten* (Hamburg, 1994), English. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York, 1994).

Karol Wojtyla put forward the "teaching of the Council" in his book *Sources of Renewal: Study of the Putting into Practice of the Second Vatican Council*.³ The Archbishop wrote the book for a planned pastoral Synod of his diocese (p. iv).⁴ It is a remarkable scholarly achievement: The Cardinal draws "the teaching of the Council," facet by facet, out of the documents of Vatican II and presents them as one great theological concept. I am not sure that any other bishop would have even dared to try.

It is only possible here to give a brief sketch of this concept, show one or two of the main points, and develop the most important key concepts. The vital question, whether each of the interpretations given by the Cardinal is faithful to the quoted conciliar texts, can not be dealt with here. That would need an additional analysis of the numerous Council documents.

In this prologue, then, we shall deal only with the "teaching of the Council" as Cardinal Wojtyla took it from the Council documents and presented it in *Sources of Renewal*. It is well known that Msgr. Wojtyla himself as a Father of the Council was deeply involved in the formulation of the Council documents. He had close contacts with leading Council theologians⁵ and therefore understood better than anyone the intentions behind the texts which were later to be interpreted.

³ Karol Wojtyla, *Quellen der Erneuerung: Studie zur Verwirklichung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1981), German translation from the revised Italian translation, Vatican City, 1979. (Original in Polish, Cracow 1972).

American translation by P. S. Falla: *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980). Hereafter, *Sources of Renewal*.

In the Prologue only the first two dogmatic parts will be looked at, *i.e.*, not the third part.

⁴ Page numbers for citations to *Sources of Renewal* will be identified within in-text parentheses throughout the Prologue.

He considers himself to be an “authentic witness of the Council” (p. 11). He is of course convinced that his interpretation faithfully reflects the sense of the Council texts. He fully identifies himself with the “teaching of the Council” which he himself has drawn out of the Council documents. One might say that what he considers to be the “teaching of the Council” and the general theological viewpoint of the Council taken from the texts of Vatican II *is* the theology of Karol Wojtyła. He, as bishop and Pope, is thoroughly a theologian of Vatican II.⁶

Since John Paul II in the “Trinitarian trilogy,” based on his “teaching of the Council,” presents and interprets the traditional faith in a new way and this is the heart of his teaching as Pope,⁷ *Sources of Renewal* is a valuable key to the understanding of the three Encyclicals. In order to be able to follow the change of meaning of the whole *depositum fidei* on the basis of the “teaching of the Council,” it’s useful to know what is said in *Sources of Renewal*.

2. The mystery of the Council⁸

Fundamental for the understanding of Karol Wojtyła’s theology is his view of Vatican II as a whole.

The Cardinal calls the Council a “mystery.” As an “authentic witness of the Council” who knows the “mystery,” he has the duty to introduce the People of God to this “mystery

⁵ John Paul II gives in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, the names Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac (p. 159).

⁶ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/3.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, II/1, 13f.

⁸ Ivan Pojavnik hits the nail on the head with the title of his book *Das Mysterium des Konzils* [*The Mystery of the Council*] (Meckenheim, 1996).

of the Council." He calls this "introduction" an "initiation." It results in a "participation in the mystery" (p. 11).

This curious choice of words is to be understood according to the Cardinal's specific understanding of the Council:

According to this, the Holy Ghost spoke directly to the Council Fathers at Vatican II. They accepted the Word of the Holy Ghost, interpreted it with human words and announced it to the world (pp. 9ff.). As the "word of the Holy Spirit" the message of the Council has the direct character of revelation.

In this sense, Vatican II is a "second Pentecost," a second apostolic Upper Room.⁹ Just as the Holy Ghost came down upon Mary and the Apostles in the Cenacle, so He descended on the Council Fathers at this "second Pentecost" in order to introduce the Council bishops to the "full" or "whole" truth as promised by Christ. The "full" truth in the Cardinal's terminology means an "enrichment of the faith" which the old faith of the Church underwent through the word of the Holy Ghost at Vatican II and which is expressed by the term the "teaching of the Council."

Thus this "second Pentecost" means the rebirth of the Church based on the "teaching of the Council." Since the "teaching of the Council" contains everything "that the Spirit says to the Churches with respect to the present phase of the history of salvation" (cf. *DeV* 26.1), Vatican II is a self-sufficient new basis for the faith and the preaching of it to the Church.

Thus Cardinal Wojtyla from his own viewpoint gives Vatican II a unique dogmatic value in the history of the Councils of the Church.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 22.6 and the commentary of Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 249ff. Regarding the Church of the "second Pentecost" and the "second apostolic Cenacle," see also Pojavnik, pp. 77, 98, 241.

Since the identity of the Catholic Church essentially consists in the identity of the faith, one might ask, is the “teaching of the Council,” as Cardinal Wojtyla takes it from the Council documents, essentially the same as the “teaching of the Church”? Which is as much as to ask, is the “Church of Vatican II” identical with the Church before the Council? That, however, depends on what the “enrichment of the faith” means dogmatically.

3. “Enrichment of the Faith” as principle and requirement

Cardinal Wojtyla himself asks at the beginning of his book what this key phrase “enrichment of the faith” means:

The implementation of Vatican II, or the process of Conciliar renewal, must be based on the principle of the enrichment of faith. This principle is at the same time a postulate, and should first be clarified in this double aspect. (as principle and postulate for the putting into practice of the Council.) The clarification resides to some extent in the very fact of the Council, its essential purpose. (p. 15)

The Cardinal gives at the same time a general description of the “principle of enrichment of faith”:

The enrichment of faith is nothing else than increasingly full participation in divine truth. (p. 15)

He stresses straight away the great importance of this principle for the Church:

¹⁰ *E.g., Dominum et Vivificantem* 26, 27. For Pojavnik Vatican II is the most important Council in history and John Paul II the “most creative Pope in the history of the Church” (p. 181).

Nothing determines more effectively the process of the Church's self-realization than the reality of faith and its gradual enrichment. (pp. 15,16)

These three quoted texts contain three important statements about the "enrichment of faith."

a) The "principle of enrichment of the faith" is, as an enrichment of the *faith, natura sua a dogmatic* principle. As the "ever more perfect participation in the divine truth," it is at the same time an *historico-dynamic* principle. As a principle which above all determines the gradual enrichment of the faith or progress of the self-realisation of the Church, it is an *ecclesiological* principle.

b) The "enrichment of faith" is at the same time a "requirement." This means that the dogmatic principle of the "enrichment of faith" is to be realised in a pastoral way in the Church's life of faith.

c) The "enrichment of faith" as dogmatic principle and pastoral requirement is in a certain way identical with the fact and aim of the Council itself. That means that Vatican II was primarily a *dogmatic* Council with the aim of an "enrichment of the faith" in the teaching and life of the Church.

This definition of the enrichment of faith is made even more precise by the Cardinal's conclusion:

To sum up, the enrichment of faith which we regard as the fundamental pre-requisite for the realization of Vatican II is to be understood in two ways: as an enrichment of the content of faith in accordance with the Council's teaching, but also, originating from that content, an enrichment of the whole existence of the believing member of the Church. This enrichment of faith in the objective sense, constituting a new stage in the Church's advance towards the "fulness of divine truth," is at the same time an enrichment in the subjective, human, existential sense, and it is from the latter that

realization of the Council is most to be hoped for. The "pastoral" Council has opened a new chapter of the Church's pastoral activity, interpreting that phrase in its widest sense. (p. 18)

The definition of "enrichment of faith" thus includes the objective content of the faith and the subjective act of faith. Along with the objective faith, the subjective faith also underwent an enrichment and found its expression in the "teaching of the Council." Among the new elements which make a decisive mark on the believer since Vatican II, Cardinal Wojtyla stresses particularly what has been learnt from the "Declaration of Religious Liberty" as well as the readiness for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue (cf. pp. 23-38).

From the point of view of classic theology there are three things to be said:

1. Christianity is a religion of revelation which is based finally and objectively on God speaking to Man and Man accepting God's word.

There had been a substantial growth in the imparting of the truths of revelation to man until revelation reached its high point and conclusion in Christ. Public revelation ended with Christ and the Apostles. We are not to expect a further public revelation in the future. That is why there can be no "enrichment of faith" as a substantial enrichment of the objective content of the faith through Vatican II.

2. There may of course be a progress or an enrichment in the understanding and thus also in the Church's presentation of revealed truths, *i.e.*, in the *public* faith of the Church. That is what we mean when we talk about an *accidental* development of dogma. The principles of freedom of religion and of ecumenism are, however, something completely new in the understanding of faith in the Church.

3. He says: The enrichment of faith is contained "in the teaching of the Council"—so not "in the teaching of the

Church"! This latter is "enriched." Which is to say that the teaching of the Church up till now is not identical with the teaching of the Council.¹¹

The difference may be defined clearly by what has been said so far:

The "enrichment of the faith" as a dogmatic principle means the enrichment of the faith hitherto and of the Church by a new revelation of the Holy Ghost which was received by the Fathers at the Council who announced it to the world "in the teaching of the Council." The enrichment of the faith itself came about then immediately through the word of the Holy Ghost. The "teaching of the Council" is thus essentially the traditional teaching of the Church plus the word of the Holy Ghost.

When the Cardinal stresses that the "enrichment of faith as principle and requirement is identical to the fact and aim of the last Council," this means: it is the aim of Vatican II to "enrich" and to replace the previous teaching of the Church which was the foundation of the faith of the preconciliar Church by the "teaching of the Council." Thus the dogmatic and pastoral nucleus of the phrase "renewal of the Church through the Council" is exposed.

One might ask: Precisely which elements of faith, expressed in the "teaching of the Council," have "enriched" the old faith of the Church?

¹¹ Cf. Neuner-Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung* [The Faith of the Church in the Documents of the Magisterium] (Regensburg, 1965), pp. 29ff. and Ludwig Ott, *Grundriß der katholischen Dogmatik*; English version: *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1974), p. 7f. The question as to whether the traditional definition of Revelation does full justice to the circumstances cannot be discussed here nor in the commentary on *DeV*.

4. Cardinal Wojtyla's interpretation of the "teaching of the Council"

Cardinal Wojtyla presents his "teaching of the Council" taken from the Council documents as part of one great theological concept in *Sources of Renewal*.

Vatican II was known to be an ecclesiological Council. From the Cardinal's point of view the Church "managed to define her own essence in the Second Vatican Council."¹² This new definition of its own essence means that the traditional "knowledge about the Church" underwent an "enrichment of the faith." And this was the fundamental discovery of the Council which as a consequence then enriched all other truths of the faith. That is why it is the Council's ecclesiology which the Cardinal uses as a point of departure and reference for his study. That is what is meant by the sentence:

The way towards the enrichment of faith rediscovered by Vatican II passes through the mind and consciousness of the Church. (p. 35)

How the Cardinal sees and deals with his theological overview is described in the following passage:

The truth concerning the Church comes near the end of the Christian Creed. The Church as an object of faith, as objective revealed reality, presupposes the reality of God and the Holy Trinity, of creation, revelation and redemption. The Church derives from these realities in which it finds its explanation, and therefore it is mentioned after them in the Creed. This too is the order of reality which should be expressed in the Church's mind. (p. 38)

¹² *Zeichen des Widerspruchs [Sign of Contradiction]* (1979), p. 28.

The “order of reality” of the Creed which is expressed by the order in which the articles follow one another provides thus the plan of the study, *Sources of Renewal* (pp. 45-154).

It has actually always been obvious that the “truth about the Church” at the end of the Creed is based on the preceding articles. What is new about Cardinal Wojtyła’s view is, however, that the old “truth about the Church” undergoes an “enrichment in the faith” at the Council in the sense that all men in a mysterious way belong to the Church.¹³ The Cardinal doesn’t just put this new “knowledge about the Church” alongside the old truths contained in the articles of the Creed, rather he binds both truths together “organically” in such a way that they permeate each other.

The Cardinal calls this process of mutual permeation of old and new truths of faith “mutual integration of the faith.” This is how he describes it:

The truth concerning the Church is not simply added to the other truths in our Creed, but is closely and organically connected with them: the truths of faith are not only inter-related but interpenetrate one another. It is impossible to conceive the reality of the Church without considering all the truths that surround it in the Creed. (p. 38)

Accordingly the truth about the Church and the other truths of the Creed mutually permeate each other. Since the truth about the Church underwent an enrichment of the faith at the Council in the sense that the Church in a mysterious way contains all mankind, this truth permeates all the other articles of the Creed so that in the Cardinal’s study, the “teaching of the Council” seems to be a self-contained theology of universal Redemption.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26ff., 35.

4.1. Knowledge about the Creation (pp. 45-52)

This is how Cardinal Wojtyla presents the relationship between the first article of the Creed with the Church:

That consciousness is in organic union with the consciousness of the existence of God as Creator of the world, to which corresponds the consciousness of the work of creation. (p. 45)

The organic relationship is defined in the following way:

Awareness of the fact of creation is the basis of awareness of the Church. (p. 52)

From this comes the universal extent of the Church which somehow embraces the whole visible creation.

All religions are brought to the knowledge of the Creation and the Creator as follows:

The Council affirms first of all that the truth concerning creation and the Creator is common to almost all religions, hence the religious eloquence of created things. (p. 50)

According to this, the belief in the Creation and the Creator is the common property of both the Church and all other religions. This means a generalisation of the first article of the Christian Creed as a purported universal phenomenon in the

¹⁴ Following his discussion of the "principle of enrichment of faith" the Cardinal next deals in detail with the "principle of reciprocal integration of the faith." This principle is also applied in the following articles where the Cardinal's theology is discussed. In order that the reader can see how the Cardinal himself practises the principle, in this Prologue we shall look at the theory of the principle only after the discussion of the Cardinal's theology.

history of religions! It is also the way in which a common point of reference is available for interreligious dialogue.

The “enrichment of faith” which the old faith of the Church underwent regarding other religions in the “teaching of the Council” can be defined thus: The belief in a Creator God and a Creation is not only Biblical but “the common patrimony so to say of all religions.” So all religions have a common foundation, a common root, through this belief. It is stated right at the beginning that all religions have, therefore, something fundamentally in common with regard to their belief in God.¹⁵

Of course, the Christian Creed professes that God is the Creator of the world and all men. But a Creator God is not, simply for this reason, the “common property” of all religions. It is a dogma of the Church that “God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty by the light of natural reason from created things” (cf. Dz. 1806), but already St. Paul complains that man’s godlessness has suppressed the truth and replaced the true God with false ones (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).

In the study of religion, everyone knows that the God of the Bible and monotheism are not the common patrimony of all religions but signify rather the crossing of an “absolute cultural threshold.”¹⁶ The recognition of a Creator was not even achieved in classical antiquity.¹⁷ The monism of the Eastern

¹⁵ Cf. [*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*]. There the Pope says to Messori, “You speak of many religions. Instead I will attempt to show the *common fundamental element* and the *common root* of these religions” (p. 77). The Pope doesn’t just believe that there is a common root of all religions in the natural but also in a supernatural order. On p. 81 he says, “In another passage the Council says that the Holy Spirit works effectively even outside the visible structure of the Church (cf. LG 13) making use of these *semina Verbi*, that constitute a kind of *common soteriological root present in all religions*.” According to this, all religions would be in their root *semina Verbi*, i.e., Christian, and thus legitimate ways of salvation.

religions is in direct conflict with the Biblical concept of God. The "confession of one God" of the Bible again "corresponds to a singular understanding of man and of human life."¹⁸

This profligate mixing up of elements from religious and Biblical history and the proposition of a nonexistent common patrimony signify already a fundamental diversion on John Paul II's way to the Assisi God of all religions.¹⁹

4.2. "Revelation of the Trinity and knowledge of salvation" (pp. 53-65)

First we must ask the question, did the old faith of the Church in the blessed Trinity really undergo an "enrichment" at the Council? The title of this chapter shows already that Cardinal Wojtyła does not intend to develop a new "imminent teaching on the Trinity" but is only concerned with the relationship of the revelation of the Trinity to the salvation of man. This applies to John Paul II's whole "Trinitarian trilogy."

A fundamental passage describes the relationship of the Trinity to man's salvation in the following way:

It will be seen that God's revelation of himself and his will that man should be saved constitute a single act on his

¹⁶ Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur* [*Primitive Man and Late Culture*] (Bonn, 1956), p. 18.

¹⁷ Cf. Werner Foerster, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* [hereafter *ThWNT*] (Stuttgart, 1949ff.), III, 999ff.

¹⁸ Fritz Maass, *Was ist Christentum?* [*What Is Christianity?*] (Tübingen, 1982), pp. 17, 20.

¹⁹ Cf. Johannes Dörmann, *Die eine Wahrheit. Zeit* [*The One Truth and the Many Religions. Assisi: Beginning of a New Age*] In: *Respondeo* Eine theologische Schriftenreihe (A theological series), ed. by Johannes Böckmann, vol. 8 (Abensberg, 1988); hereafter, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*]. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, pp. 77-83.

part, to which mankind—the human family in the Church—responds with knowledge of God in the mystery of his inner being and also knowledge of salvation. This is brought about by knowledge of God's "mysterious design" ("hidden counsel of God"), revealed to man at the same time as his revelation of himself. God revealed himself not only in order that all men should know him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead, but also in order that through the Son—the Word of God made flesh—they might, in the Holy Spirit, have access to the Father and become sharers in the divine nature, that is in the Godhead itself. The work of salvation signifies a particular union with God, or rather a communion which is mysterious and at the same time profoundly real. This is the realism of grace in which God, in his superabundant love, adopts man as his son and lives with him as a friend. (pp. 54,55)

The text is very descriptive and therefore needs a precise interpretation. According to the literal sense of the words, the revelation of Himself and God's will to redeem mankind are one and the same act. The question is, whether the universal salvific will of God is to be understood in the sense of an effective, absolute application of salvation to all men. That seems to be the case, since, in correspondence to God's salvific act, there is on man's side not the requirement of a faithful and obedient acceptance of this offer of divine grace, but only the "knowledge" (!) of salvation and that only "in the Church." Of course, this knowledge can only be "in the Church" since only she knows the "hidden counsel of God." This knowledge, however, has undergone an "enrichment of faith" at Vatican II which consists in the Trinity not only revealing itself to "all men" but at the same time communicating itself similarly to all men and giving them a participation in the divine nature. If this self-revelation and self-communication of the Trinity happen *actu uno*, without the subjective conditions on man's side such as penance, faith and baptism even being men-

tioned, this "reality of grace" of the fulness of the divine love can only mean universal salvation.

This interpretation is supported by what is said about the decisive point elsewhere. For example:

The mission of the divine Persons to mankind is not only a revelation but also a work of salvation by which mankind becomes the People of God. (p. 206)

This is clearly the thesis of universal salvation. Thus the formulation of the quoted passages becomes wholly clear.

Thus "in the Council's teaching the Trinitarian consciousness of the Church is united to the consciousness of salvation." (p. 65)

We must still answer the question, how the knowledge of the Trinity and of salvation of man is linked to the "knowledge of the Church." Here is what he says:

The enrichment of faith in the Holy Trinity, expressed in the teaching of Vatican II, is linked to the reality of the mission of the divine Persons. This mission, addressed to man, constitutes the divine reality of the Church; thanks to it the Church bears in itself the consciousness of salvation and seeks to impart it to every human being, to the whole human family. (p. 59).

If the mission of the divine Persons is an act of salvation which is aimed at man pure and simple and which "makes the human race the people of God," then the "divine reality of the Church" contains in a hidden way the whole human race. This "reality" the Cardinal even calls the "basic dimension of the Church" (pp. 133ff.). Thus it can be said: Humanity is the invisible Church. This "enrichment of faith," which the Council "has made known," is fundamental for the understanding of the Vatican II church. It "represents in a certain

way the high point of knowledge of the Church" (cf. p. 55). Because, however, only the visible Church of Vatican II bears this knowledge within her, her efforts are concentrated on "letting her 'knowledge' (!) about the divine reality of the universal salvation of all men permeate the whole human family."

The efforts of the Church of the Council are no longer, as was still the case in the Decree *Ad Gentes* (cf. arts. 7, 8), missionary, aiming at manifesting the state of perdition of mankind since Original Sin, trying to convert the nations and to rescue them from their perdition by the two conditions necessary for salvation, faith and baptism, but to announce to men their unity in God and thus universal salvation for all. Effectively, and precisely because of the concept of God, that is the end of the old "particularism" which divided men into saved and lost.

The new "knowledge about the Church" is not only to be found in John Paul II's "Trinitarian trilogy"²⁰ but also in the document from the Congregation for the Faith concerning the "Church as a communion" formulated as follows:

The concept "communion" is found in "the heart of the Church's self knowledge" and signifies the mystery of the personal union of every (*sic!*) man with the divine Trinity and with other men and has its origin in the faith being aimed at the eschatological fulfilment in the heavenly Church which at the same time, however, is also partially and temporarily realised in the Church on earth.²¹

Cardinal Wojtyla doesn't omit to draw in even the non-Christian religions at least briefly. If the Trinity's communica-

²⁰ Cf. my commentary, *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/3.

²¹ Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning various aspects of the Church as *Communio*, art. 1.3; in *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), June 19, 1992, p. 7.

tion of itself to all men is a "divine reality," then it is also understandable that the revelation of the blessed Trinity is an answer to "what the hearts and minds of even the adherents of non-Christian religions are looking for" (p. 64).

We can formulate the Cardinal's thesis in this way: God's self-revelation and the Trinity's unconditional communication of itself to all men, which occurs *actu uno* and which has its foundation in the fulness of God's love, is the "enrichment of faith" which the old faith of the Church underwent in the "teaching of the Council." The knowledge of the personal union of every man with the divine Trinity is at the same time, due the principle of mutual permeation, the foundation of the new "knowledge of the Church," which includes the whole human race in its invisible "divine reality."

4.3. "Jesus Christ and the knowledge of the Redemption" (pp. 66-112)

Following the "order of reality" in the Creed, the Cardinal now turns his attention to "Jesus Christ and knowledge of the Redemption."

The fundamental point of departure for his whole soteriology is given right at the start:

The enrichment of our faith to which Vatican II shows the way on the basis of awareness of the Church finds its pivotal point in Jesus Christ. (p.66)

The enriched "knowledge about the Church" is thus the point of departure for the meditation on "Jesus Christ and the knowledge of the Redemption."

So Cardinal Wojtyla is faced with the question: What does Redemption mean if mankind already participates in the divine nature and the invisible Church through the Trinity's self-communication to all men?²²

First he gives a general description of the Redemption:

Redemption is the work of Christ, the Son of God made man; it is the essence of the mission of the second Person of the Trinity whereby God entered visibly into human history and made it a history of salvation. The work of redemption is, as Christ himself said (cf. Jn. 16:7), the explicit condition of the "mission" of the Holy Spirit, his descent on the day of Pentecost and his continual visitation of the souls of men and the Church. All this is recalled in the "trinitarian" texts of Vatican II that we have already quoted. (p. 66)

The passage says three things about the Redemption:

1. The Redemption is the work of Christ, the Son of God made man.

2. At the Incarnation of the second divine Person, God visibly entered man's history and made it the history of salvation.

3. The work of Redemption is the condition needed for the sending of the Holy Ghost.

The Encyclical seems to repeat traditional teaching. Since the general formulation of the first statement contains nothing specific we will go on to the second which concerns the history of salvation and then the third which deals with the Pentecost event.

We are not concerned here with a far reaching discussion of the definition of the history of salvation²³ but only with what Cardinal Wojtyła understands by the term.

The Cardinal justifies his claim for the identity of the history of man and the history of salvation in this passage by the Incarnation alone and gives no further explanation. Nonetheless, it is easy to see the justification and sense of his thesis

²³ Concerning the Redemption in *Dives in Misericordia*, see Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/2, 91-158.

from the context here and elsewhere in other passages: Since, according to the teaching of the Cardinal, all men already participate in the divine nature by the Trinity's communication of itself and "the Son of God has united himself to all men by his Incarnation,"²⁴ the human race united to Christ by grace is also the object of the one history of salvation and mankind. The traditional difference between profane history and the history of salvation, which implies a difference between redeemed and unredeemed, between Church and world, no longer has any object. Nature and grace are the same thing.

The Cardinal's thesis of the identity of the history of mankind and of salvation because of the Incarnation necessarily alters the traditional sense of the great salvific works of the Redemption: the Incarnation, the Easter mystery, and the Pentecost event.

The Cardinal has this to say about the Incarnation:

The incarnation of the Son of God was the beginning of redemption, which in due time fulfilled the essential purpose of the incarnation. Accordingly the restoration of man's value, the elevation of the human nature of each one of us to supernatural dignity is accomplished through participation in redemption. (p. 78)

²³ Cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* [hereafter *LThK*] (Freiburg i. Br., 1960), V, cols. 148-157. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* [hereafter *RGG*] (Tübingen, 1959), III/187-189. Joseph Ratzinger, in his inaugural lecture in Tübingen, "Heilsgeschichte und Eschatologie" ["History of Salvation and Eschatology"], Jan. 19, 1967, says forcefully that "the theology of the Resurrection contains the whole history of salvation"; in *Theologie im Wandel* [*Changing Theology*], celebratory brochure for the 150th anniversary of the Catholic theology department at the University of Tübingen 1812-1967 (1967), pp. 68-89.

²⁴ [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 121.

According to this passage, the Incarnation is not only the beginning but also "according to its inner aim" the completion of the Redemption.

In order to understand this passage it is necessary to know the meaning of the word "completion."

If man through the Incarnation participates in the "completion" of the Redemption, then the raising of man's nature to a supernatural dignity is likewise "completed" through the Incarnation. In other words: The universal salvation of mankind because of the Trinity's communication of itself to all men is "completed" by the event in the history of salvation known as the Incarnation. This happens practically because "the Son of God has (formally) united himself to all men by His Incarnation."²⁵ The "Redemption" by the Incarnation is thus the "completion" of the history of salvation, the completion of universal granting of grace by universal salvation.

Cardinal Wojtyła has this to say about the Easter mystery:

The work of redemption is universal: it extends and fructifies more widely than men realize. All of us are involved in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. (p. 79)

If "all men" have been assumed into the Easter mystery of Jesus Christ, that means, as in the case of the Incarnation, an unconditional universal salvation. According to Rom. 6:1ff. there are, however, conditions for the acceptance of man into the Easter mystery: there it is through faith and baptism that men are accepted into the death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and redeemed.

The third point in the quoted passage that we are now going to consider is the relationship of the Redemption to the

²⁵ Concerning the teaching of the Fathers on the material and formal union of the Son with mankind through the Incarnation, see Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, I, 70ff.

mission of the Holy Ghost, His descent at Pentecost, and His continual coming to the human soul and the Church. This point is now defined in more detail by Cardinal Wojtyla:

The work of redemption is identified with the paschal mystery of the Redeemer, followed not only by the descent of the Holy Spirit of the historic day of Pentecost but also by the descent throughout time. It is he who endows men directly with supernatural light and strength, and his work is universal in its scope. (pp. 74,75)

It is obvious that the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost follows the Paschal mystery and that this latter is the necessary condition for the sending of the Holy Ghost. This relationship in the history of salvation is more precisely defined in the quoted passage of the Encyclical by a dogmatical statement: The work of Redemption is identical to the Easter mystery of the Redeemer which is then followed by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

If the work of Redemption is identical to the Easter mystery of the Redeemer then Pentecost no longer belongs immediately to the work of Redemption itself. This is what the quoted passage underlines when it says that the descent and self-communication of the Holy Ghost "follows" the work of Redemption.

The separation of the Easter mystery as the work of Christ's Redemption from the communication of the Holy Ghost is a fundamental point in the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, which is a consequence of the Pope's teaching on the Trinity and Redemption. Since this point is going to be dealt with at length in the commentary on the Encyclical, we can content ourselves here with a short presentation of the conflict with traditional teaching:

According to this, the work of Redemption is not simply identical with the Easter mystery. Rather each individual ac-

tion of Christ from His Incarnation to the sending of the Holy Ghost by the Resurrected Lord has its own value for our salvation. The "*mysteria vitae Christi*" are what make up the whole work of Redemption. In His sacrificial death on the Cross, however, the redemptive action of Christ reached its high point. The sacrifice of the Cross implies the condition of man being far from God due to Original Sin. Through his sacrificial death Christ freed Adam's descendants from the powers of darkness and reconciled them to God. Objectively the Redemption is universal but subjectively it needs the individual's acceptance. This takes place in the process of justification based on faith and baptism (Dz. 792-799). There is no mention of that from the Cardinal.

The reconciliation with God includes the gift of sanctifying grace, the acceptance of Sonship, and the communication of the Holy Ghost. The sending of the Holy Ghost, from the Father and the Son, belongs, therefore, to the organic whole of the work of Redemption. As the eternal High Priest, Christ applies the fruits of his work of Redemption to the faithful, the most precious of these being the communication of the Holy Ghost.

According to the New Testament, Pentecost is the birth of the Church (Acts 2:1ff.). The sending of the Holy Ghost is not made simply to mankind but to the Church founded by Christ. There are conditions! St. Peter names them clearly in his sermon at Pentecost: conversion, faith in Christ, and Baptism (cf. Acts 2:21; 38ff.). The Church is the visible community of the saved faithful who stand ready as missionaries for the non-believers who are subjectively not redeemed.

The Church has always taught that the Holy Ghost works beyond the visible borders of the Church. But this work of salvation happens "in ways that He knows" (*Ad Gentes* 7), and universal salvation is not one of these.

The thesis of universal salvation is, however, visible in one or two phrases of the quoted passage of the Encyclical: there the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost is not just for the Church but for mankind as such. It talks about a "continual self-communication [of the Holy Ghost] to souls" and His "continual coming into the soul of man and into the Church." The work of the Holy Ghost, like Christ's work of Redemption, has a "universal extension." The universal sending of the Holy Ghost takes place, therefore, substantially not only to the Church but also to all mankind. There is only a difference in modality.

It is obvious that the "Redemption" and God's great acts in the Cardinal's history of salvation do not have their traditional meaning.

We may sum up Cardinal Wojtyla's teaching thus: The "enrichment of faith" which "the knowledge about the Church" has undergone at the Council also enriches the "knowledge about Jesus Christ and the Redemption" in the teaching of the Council. The universal giving of grace through the Trinity's communication of itself to all men is completed by a universal Redemption and the self-communication of the Holy Ghost to mankind.

4.4. "Knowledge about the Church as the People of God" (pp. 112-154)

Cardinal Wojtyla has this to say about the special relationship of the "People of God" to the process of the "enrichment of faith":

Thanks to Vatican II, the ancient biblical concept of the People of God has become one of the main elements in the historic process of the enrichment of faith that is associated with the Council. However, the self-awareness of the

Church as the People of God presupposes all that has been the object of our study up to this point. (p. 112)

The shortest summary of the Cardinal's analysis hitherto is his significant formulation:

The mission of the divine Persons to mankind is not only a revelation but also a work of salvation by which mankind becomes the People of God. (p. 206)

In other words: Mankind *is* the Church as People of God. That becomes quite clear when the Cardinal describes in detail *how* God makes mankind into the People of God and *where* the border with the visible Church is:

We must, however, take note that at the very foundation of the revealed truth concerning the People of God we constantly find the interpersonal relationship of God to man and man to God in its most authentic biblical form. God converts human beings into his People by choosing, calling and leading to himself each individual separately in the unique way appropriate to him. While the reality of the People of God is, in God's design and its realization, no less primary than the calling of an individual human being, for each individual it is equally primary that he is a person and that he enters into communion with other men. God alone has knowledge of the bond which unites human beings in the communion of his People. Vatican II teaches that this bond is more far-reaching than the "Church" community as such, although at the same time it constitutes the fundamental dimension of the Church. This also explains how the consciousness of the Church as the People of God is both *ad intra* and *ad extra*. While declaring all this, Vatican II recognizes that there is a difference between belonging to the People of God and being "related" to it: in other words, there are distinct graduations in the bond which constitutes God's communion with mankind. (pp. 131-32)

According to this, the interpersonal relationship between God and man "in its true Biblical sense" forms the "basis for the revealed reality of the People of God,"²⁶ thus of mankind. It has already been shown that the blurring of the distinction between the Biblical relationship of God and man contradicts the facts of religious history.

Using the basis of a generalised relationship of God and man the Cardinal describes how God creates the "reality of the People of God": Each(!) man is chosen by God, called and each in a unique way is led to God. That is the thesis of an unconditional predestination of all men to grace and glory.

That's how a universally redeemed mankind is the People of God. By what bond all men are united together in the community of the People of God, only God knows.

The border between this invisible community of the People of God and the visible "community of the Church" is also described:

Mankind as the People of God is the "basic dimension of the Church." That is why the Church as the People of God includes all men in and outside her visible boundaries. The boundaries of the "invisible community" of the People of God are thus wider than those of the visible "community of the Church." The relationship between the two communities is understood as a "certain degree of union" "which makes up the community of God with mankind."

From this "teaching of the Council" we get a new definition of the essence and extension of the Church²⁷ which is taken up by the official document of the Congregation for the Faith concerning "the Church as a Communion":

²⁶ [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 121.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

The community of the Church is at the same time visible and invisible. In her invisible reality she is the community of each[!] man with the Father through the Son in the Holy Ghost as well as with other men in the common participation in the divine nature, in the suffering of Christ, in the same faith, in the same spirit. In the Church on earth there is an inner relationship between the invisible community and the visible community in the teaching of the Apostles, in the sacraments, and in the hierarchical order. By these divine gifts of a clearly visible reality, Christ accepts in history in various ways his prophetic, priestly, and royal office for the salvation of mankind. This relationship between the invisible elements of the community of the Church is constitutive for the Church as a sacrament.²⁸

The mysterious bond which makes all men the People of God also includes of course the members of all religions. This is what he says:

The awareness of what links together the followers of various religions, including non-Christian ones, gives a sense of unity and a disposition to overcome resistance on both sides.... (p. 311)

In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* John Paul II says with a rare clarity in what consists not only the "feeling of unity" but also the reality of the unity of many religions: They all have a "common root" and "in all religions there are so-called *semina Verbi*" even "a common soteriological root."²⁹ According to this, all religions would be a sort of anonymous Christianity and legitimate ways of salvation.

This way of judging things is in keeping with the new ecumenical attitude which is based on the knowledge of a uni-

²⁸ Cf. Letter to Bishops, art. 1.4, note 16.

²⁹ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, pp. 81ff.

versal giving of grace and universal salvation. It is described as follows:

Thus the ecumenical attitude is rooted in faith in the fatherhood of God embracing the universe and the redemption of Christ, which is offered to all men without exception. The true ecumenical attitude is an expression of that faith: it springs from it and testifies to its enrichment. At the same time it is the expression of a profound love for man and respect for his inner liberty—that “responsible liberty” which corresponds to an inward conviction concerning truth, “especially in the religious sphere,” as the Concil states in its Declaration on Religious Liberty. (p. 313)

We may sum up the Cardinal’s teaching thus: The enrichment of faith which the traditional faith underwent in the teaching of the Council is the “knowledge of the Church as the People of God” which invisibly embraces the whole of humanity and visibly the Church as an institution.³⁰ The new knowledge of the Church influences subjective faith in the sense of ecumenism and religious freedom.³¹

4.5. Historical and eschatological awareness of the Church as the People of God (pp. 155-200)

If, according to Cardinal Wojtyła’s teaching, the human race is the People of God and through the Incarnation human history has become the history of salvation, then there is a close link, indeed an “elementary identity,” of world history and the history of salvation and this “reality” of “identity”

³⁰ Concerning John Paul II’s theory of universal salvation, see in detail Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/3.

³¹ Concerning Wojtyła’s book in general and the subjective act of faith in particular, see the keen analysis of Wigand Siebel, *Saka-Informationen*, May and June 1993.

which also defines the “historical and eschatological awareness of the Church as the People of God.” That is what the following passage teaches expressly:

In this way there is a profound connection and even a kind of elementary identity between the principal vectors of the history and evolution of the world, on the one hand, and the history of salvation on the other. The plan of salvation sinks its roots into the most real aspirations and purposes of human beings and humanity. Redemption is constantly directed towards man and humanity in the world, and the Church encounters the world against the background of those aspirations and purposes. In the same way the history of the world runs in the channel of the history of salvation, which in a sense regards it as its own. And, conversely, the true conquest of man and humanity, authentic victories in the history of the world, are also the “substratum” of the kingdom of God on earth. (p. 176)

From the “elementary identity” of the history of salvation and world history, of the People of God and humanity follows naturally a similar “identity” of the kingdom of God on earth and “world development,” which is heading towards its already recognisable eschatological completion due to the energetic work of mankind. We are expressly invited to take part in this work:

“We have been warned, of course, that it profits man nothing if he gains the world and loses or forfeits himself. Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectation of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows, foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come” (*Gaudium et Spes* 39). (p. 188).

If we can already see the vivid image of the world to come in the "growing body of the new family of man," then the historical process of development is to be understood in the sense of an interior evolution and eschatology which should influence our awareness of the Church.

With his theory of "elementary identity" of the two substantially different worlds the Cardinal has said goodbye to the traditional "dualism" of nature and the supernatural, of humanity and People of God, of the world and the kingdom of God.

Teilhard de Chardin's theory of evolution which is known to have influenced the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* obviously also has had a large influence on the theology of Cardinal Wojtyła.

We may sum up the Cardinal's teaching as follows: The "enrichment of faith" which the traditional faith of the Church underwent at the Council is a new knowledge "of the historical and eschatological reality of the People of God." This "reality" is the "elementary identity" of the human race and the People of God, of the history of the world and the history of salvation, of nature and grace. It is matched by a new "historical and eschatological awareness of the Church as the People of God."

4.6. The main theses of the "teaching of the Council" in the Cardinal's interpretation

The "teaching of the Council" in the Cardinal's interpretation may be summed up as follows:

1. Knowledge of the Creation is the foundation of knowledge of the Church. God as Creator of the world is the God of all religions.

2. The self-revelation of the Trinitarian God is *actu uno* also the self-communication of the Trinity to all men. This is the thesis of a universal giving of grace.

3. Through the Incarnation, God made the history of mankind the history of salvation by (formally) uniting His Son with every man. This is the thesis of an unconditional universal salvation.

The Redemption then is no longer a saving from a state of Original Sin; it is no longer the transition of man from the state of Original Sin, which Adam's descendants were in, into a state of grace which is the state of the children of God; objectively and subjectively it is universal.

4. The sending of the divine Persons to mankind makes the human race the People of God. Thus mankind is the People of God. That is why there is an invisible and a visible Church, the Church as a sacrament is constitutive for the intimate relationship between the visible and invisible community.

5. Corresponding to the historical and eschatological existence of the People of God, *i.e.*, the elementary unity of mankind and People of God, history of man and history of salvation, world development and kingdom of God, is an (interior) "historical and eschatological awareness of the Church as the People of God."

6. Since all religions have the *semina Verbi* as a common soteriological root, all religions are an anonymous Christianity and legitimate ways of salvation.

Resumé: In Cardinal Wojtyła's study the "enrichment of faith" which the Traditional faith underwent at Vatican II plays a central rôle in the thesis of universal salvation. This thesis which enriches the knowledge about the Church and the other truths of the Creed is what is truly new in the "teaching of the Council." To put together the "teaching of the Council" derived from the Council documents as a closed theological system is what the Cardinal has achieved.

5. The problem of the identity of the faith and the Church

It is obvious that the “teaching of the Council” in *Sources of Renewal* is not the same thing as the traditional teaching of the Church. The teaching of universal salvation is an “enrichment of the faith” which means a substantial change of the traditional faith which has no sufficient basis in Biblical Revelation or the Church’s dogmatic teaching.

Of course, Cardinal Wojtyla knows the traditional teaching of the Church. Of course he knows that his teaching of universal salvation taken from the Council documents is a *novum* in the faith of the Church and which the Church, until Vatican II, had discovered neither in Sacred Scripture nor Tradition. Thus the Cardinal is confronted with the problem of continuity of the faith and identity with the Church and therefore two decisive questions:

1) How on earth can the substantial “enrichment of faith” which in reality is a completely new revelation be legitimised?

2) How is the traditional teaching of the Church to be brought into harmony with the new teaching of the Council?

The Cardinal’s answer to 1) is glibly given: The “enrichment of faith” took place through the word of the Holy Ghost which the Council Fathers recognised at Vatican II and to which they gave human expression in the “teaching of the Council.” The Cardinal legitimises thus the substantial enrichment of faith not through the teaching authority of the Council—which *per se* can only keep and define the old faith but not announce a new revelation—but through the “word of the Holy Ghost.” The word of the Holy Ghost, coupled with the teaching authority of an Ecumenical Council, gives the seal of being authentic.

According to classical teaching, the teaching authority of the whole teaching body constituted by Christ is most clear in the decisions of a general Council.³² The question is, however,

whether such a teaching authority was legitimately invoked at Vatican II.

The last ecumenical Council expressly denied invoking its highest infallible teaching authority. Cardinal Wojtyła's theological evaluation of Vatican II as some sort of dogmatic "SuperCouncil" is in simple contradiction with the historical reality and truth. The historical self-evaluation of the so-called "Pastoral Council" was far more modest. The subsequent changing into a dogmatic SuperCouncil in order to legitimise and impose a new "teaching of the Council" is more than a questionable undertaking.

When the historical truth is made known, the theological claims which Cardinal Wojtyła makes for Vatican II are shown to have no foundation.

In 2) Cardinal Wojtyła doesn't try to harmonise the teaching of the Council which has enriched the deposit of faith, with the traditional teaching of the Church using the traditional principle of the development of dogma. His answer is: The harmonisation of Church teaching up till now with the new teaching of the Council happens through the principle of "reciprocal integration of the faith." The Cardinal himself discovered this principle and has already used it in his discussion of the "teaching of the Council" (cf. note 11).

The principle of "reciprocal integration of the faith"—as the Cardinal stresses—is of fundamental importance "for the Church's whole activity and self-realization, and also for the thoughts and actions of every Catholic, his consciousness and general attitude" (pp. 39,40).

This is what he says about the principle:

It is two sided, "since it is a relationship of reciprocity which exists between the deposit of revealed truth and the conciliar awareness of the Church."

³² Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 299.

This formulation is absolutely unacceptable! For in reality there is absolutely no reciprocal relationship between the deposit of revealed truth and the "conciliar awareness of the Church" but between the deposit of revealed truth and the new "teaching of the Council."

It is precisely not just a question of "conciliar awareness" but the dogmas of the Church.

The most detailed definition of the principle of integration is on page forty:

It must be seen therefore that the post-Conciliar integration of faith is not a mechanical addition, by the magisterium of the Council, to all that was hitherto comprised in the Church's teaching; nor is it what would be called in strict scholastic language a *juxtaposition*, since the incorporation of the thought of Vatican II in all the Church's previous formulations has already taken place on the basis of the historical succession of documents. Integration means something more: an organic cohesion expressing itself simultaneously in the thought and action of the Church as a community of believers. It expresses itself, that is, in such a way that on the one hand we can rediscover and, as it were, re-read the magisterium of the last Council in the whole previous magisterium of the Church, while on the other we can rediscover and re-read the whole preceding magisterium in that of the last Council. It would seem that the principle of integration, thus conceived and applied, is indirectly the principle of the Church's identity, dating back to its first beginnings in Christ and the Apostles. This principle of identity operated in the Council and must continue to do so, integrating the whole patrimony of faith with and in the consciousness of the Church. (p. 40)

The principle of "reciprocal integration of faith" thus has two poles: the previous teaching of the Church and the new "teaching of the Council."

The previous teaching is not abandoned. It is and remains "truth," but the new teaching is the "more perfect" or the "fulness of truth." It contains the universal aspect of the Redemption. That means: The Redemption is to be understood not only as objectively but also subjectively universal.

The relationship of the two truths to one another is defined as a harmonising "reciprocal penetration" or "reciprocal integration of faith" (pp. 38ff.). This consists concretely in us integrating the teaching of the Council—and that is principally the teaching of universal salvation—into the whole of the conciliar teaching of the Church, *i.e.*, "reading into it" for it is not actually present there. Through the principle of "reciprocal integration of faith" the new teaching is attached to the old and anchored in the tradition of the Magisterium. In this way the indispensable continuity and identity of the traditional faith of the Church is supposed to remain intact and the new "teaching of the Council" helped to break through.

The reading of the "teaching of the Council" into the previous teaching of the Church leads, however, in reality to a profound change of meaning for the whole of traditional faith in the sense of the theory of universal salvation, and, because it is "only" the extension of the objective universality of Redemption to a subjective one, it leads to a bewildering ambiguity of numerous texts. After this sublime change of meaning there is no difficulty in "recognising the whole of earlier teaching in the teaching of the last Council."

We learn—probably to many people's surprise!—that this principle of reciprocal integration of faith was already active at the Council and thus the implanting of conciliar thinking into the Church's earlier ways of teaching "had already taken place as the documents were being formulated." That means: The conciliar documents are already the product of an "enrichment of faith" and "mutual integration of faith." The im-

planting of universal salvation into the earlier teaching of the Church had therefore already taken place as the documents were being formulated. And this synthesis is the "teaching of the Council."

Thus the *post-conciliar* reciprocal integration of faith consists simply in reading the "teaching of the Council" into the whole of the Church's deposit of the faith and implanting it into the awareness of the faithful. This purpose is also served by the study *Sources of Renewal* in which the "principle of reciprocal integration of faith" is realised in the presentation of the teaching of the Council.

The Cardinal's reference to Christ and the Apostles brings the "principle of the integration of faith" into the bright light of history. The reference can only mean the unique process of the "integration of faith" of the Old Testament into the New. It is well known that the Old Testament as a whole is considered to be a promise which is fulfilled in Christ. In this way the Old Testament is "integrated" into the New. It is to this unique process which the "reciprocal integration of faith" of the traditional teaching of the Church into the "teaching of the Council" is compared. Doubtless the public demonstration of the theory of universal salvation opened a new age for religions in the "Assisi event." Assisi is indeed the "beginning of a new age"!³³

Such a claim is—as actually happens—only to be legitimised with the thesis of a new revelation of the Holy Ghost.

Of course Cardinal Wojtyla knows that according to traditional understanding, the identity of the Church also consists in the identity of the faith. His solution to the problem of identity is as follows:

³³ Cf. Dörmann, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*].

In what follows we shall constantly endeavour to apply this principle, which is indispensable for the Church's progress along the road of self-realization. In judgments passed on the work necessary for Council and on the Church's activity in the post-Conciliar period, undue emphasis was laid on divisions and differences between so-called integralists and progressives, while too little was said about the fact that both groups, in their responsibility towards the Church, must be unswervingly guided by the principle and demands of its identity, and that they must both therefore respect the principle of integration which is a precondition of the Church's identity. (pp. 40,41)

According to this, the identity of the faith is, for Cardinal Wojtyła too, an indispensable principle and requirement for the postconciliar "self-realisation of the Church." The identity of faith and Church stands or falls, however, on the understanding of the conciliar (substantial) "enrichment of faith" through the "principle of reciprocal integration of faith."

Thus Cardinal Wojtyła says clearly: It is not traditional dogma which is the *norma normans* for the identity of faith and Church but the "principle of reciprocal integration of faith."

That is why the Cardinal writes to the critics of the conciliar self-realisation of the Church that they must remember their responsibility for the unity of the Church and respect the "principle of integration as a prerequisite for that identity [of the Church]."

Thus all objections against the teaching of the Council and against its postconciliar putting into practice from the point of view of an untouchable *depositum fidei* are rejected out of hand. They lack the necessary "respect" for the "teaching of the Council." The critics of the conciliar renewal who are attached to traditional dogma have obviously still not un-

derstood either the "principle of the enrichment of faith" nor the "principle of the integration of faith."

6. Dogmatic macro-mutation of the Church through Vatican II

It must have occurred to anyone who has followed the all-embracing process of the conciliar "self-realisation of the Church" with his eyes open that this process of change must also have a theological concept behind it. Already in 1972 Cardinal Wojtyla, using the Council documents, showed what it was in the Polish first edition of *Sources of Renewal*.

According to this, Vatican II is an eminently dogmatic council: The teaching of the Church up to now underwent a substantial "enrichment of faith" through the word of the Holy Ghost. It consisted principally in the revelation of a new knowledge of the Church in the sense of universal salvation.

From this new understanding of the faith, the traditional faith is "read anew" according to the principle of the integration of faith and changed in the sense of the theory of universal salvation. The result is the "teaching of the Council."

In place of the previous "teaching of the Church" comes the new "teaching of the Council." That means: The Council is a "Second Pentecost," the birth of the new Church of Vatican II.

Vatican II is in a very specific sense an eminently pastoral council. Its pastorage consists in imposing the new "teaching of the Council" in the "Church of a new Advent" by every means available.³⁴

Thus it is clear that all the talk about a "pastoral council" is just a cover for the reality. The eagerly propagated concept of a "pastoral council" suggested that traditional dogma

³⁴ Concerning the "new Advent," see *Redemptor Hominis* 1.2 and my commentary on it, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 49-57.

would remain untouched at Vatican II and that, based on the untouchable *depositum fidei*, nothing more than an *aggiornamento* would bring the Church up to date to cope with its present needs.

But on the contrary, the Council—as Cardinal Wojtyła sees it—goes to the dogmatic roots of the traditional faith. Thus the “putting into practice of the Council,” as Cardinal Wojtyła understands it, means nothing less than a determined and all-embracing change of “revelation” of the preconciliar Church according to the “principle of the enrichment of faith” and “integration of faith.” As Pope, he has set about these changes with might and main. Only he who understands that can also understand the process of the conciliar “self-realisation of the Church” and the Pontificate of John Paul II.

A handbook in theory with an introduction for the praxis for this determined change of the faith and with it the whole preconciliar Church on an enormous scale is Karol Wojtyła's *Sources of Renewal* with the subtitle *Study of the Putting into Practice of the Second Vatican Council*. As Pope, Karol Wojtyła wrote in his Trinitarian trilogy what he has believed for a long time.³⁵ The hermeneutical key to the understanding of the Trinitarian trilogy is the “principle of the enrichment of faith” and the “integration of faith.”

³⁵ This is true not only for *Redemptor Hominis* (thus in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p. 48).

FOREWORD

On January 25, 1986, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls, John Paul II solemnly announced the "united prayer of all religions" for peace. At Pentecost, May 18, 1986 he promulgated the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*. Just five months later, on October 27, 1986, the prayer meeting at Assisi took place. The Encyclical, therefore, lies in the middle of the road announced to Assisi. After *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* it is the third great milestone on the road to the prayer meeting of all religions.

The Pope himself gave a brief introduction to *Dominum et Vivificantem* in his midday address on Whitsunday 1986. The Encyclical forms, together with the two Encyclicals *Dives in Misericordia* and *Redemptor Hominis*, which deal with the Father and the Son, a Trinitarian trilogy. The Pope recommended them to the careful reading of the faithful so that "an ever more living honour may be given to third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to whom Christ Himself, 'before he ascended into Heaven, gave the task of leading His Church to the fulness of Truth.'"¹

This "fulness of Truth" to which the Holy Ghost is supposed to have led the Church at Vatican II is in *Dominum et Vivificantem*, as it was in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*, universal salvation. Five months after the completion of the "Trinitarian trilogy" this "fulness of Truth" was

¹ Cf. Elmar Bordfeld, *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), May 30, 1986, p. 1. The "fulness of truth" in Jn. 16:13 means the truths of divine revelation in their completeness (cf. R. Bultmann, *ThWNT* [Kittel], I, 245-248). Cardinal Wojtyła understands by the term "fulness of truth" an "enrichment of faith" which Vatican II brought about (cf. Prologue).

paraded for all to see in a worldwide interreligious act at the world day of prayer of the religions in Assisi.²

The extraordinary novelty of this shocked a lot of Christians at the time.³ In the meantime the "Assisi event" has become the model of interreligious prayer for peace at every level.

On an international level there were especially the yearly big follow-up meetings which, following the example of Assisi, announced the new truth to the "faithful" of all religions.⁴ The tenth anniversary of the first meeting at Assisi was celebrated by the community of Sant' Egidio in Autumn 1996, as one could expect, in Rome.⁵

The "Assisi event" became similarly an example for the numerous prayer meetings for peace at a local level. Reviewing "ten years since the prayer for peace in Assisi," an article in the pastoral newsletter for the dioceses of Aachen, Berlin, Essen, Hamburg, Hildesheim, Cologne and Osnabrück stressed especially the exemplary character for local prayer for peace and laid down principles for the imitation of the great example.⁶ Especially emphasised at Assisi was among other things the equality of all those who took part. This is what they said: "The event was staged in such a way that the equality of all the participants was visible. They all sat on the same level and had the same possibility to add their religion's contribution to the

² Dörmann, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*], *Respondeo* 8, pp. 126-182.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 126. See also *Katolische Nachrichten Agentur* (Catholic News Agency, hereafter, *KNA*), Dec. 23, 1986, and April 15, 1987.

⁴ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/2, 9-14.

⁵ See Walter Hoeres, "Heimeliges Utopia" ["Cosy Utopia"], *Theologisches*, Dec./Jan. 1996/97, cols. pp. 545-550.

⁶ Werner Wanzura and Andreas Gorzewski, "Zehn Jahre Friedensgebet in Assisi" ["Ten Years of Prayer for Peace in Assisi"], *Pastoralblatt für die Diözesen Aachen, etc.*, Dec. 1996, pp. 367-373.

prayer for peace whether it was a worldwide religion with a hundred million followers or simply one of the tribal religions.”⁷

In Germany, too, there have been many interreligious prayer meetings for peace according to the papal example.⁸ One telling example at the diocesan level is the “third prayer meeting of religions,” of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Bahai, and Moslems in Osnabrück. The approving description of the common religious event together with a theological interpretation in the Osnabrück *Church Herald* of February 4, 1996, is also significant in its way for the adaptation of the great example to local reality and for the change of general consciousness since Assisi. That is why the remarkable report in the church newspaper should be repeated here unabridged:

“We all have only one God. This faith makes us free from all false idols....Since all religions are answerable to one God, no one religion stands above any other. All are equal because they are all loved by God in the same way.” These were the introductory words of the Protestant professor of theology Dr. Horst-Georg Pöhlmann to the third prayer meeting of religions in the Concert Hall of Osnabrück University. It’s not a question of “religious stew or a new super-religion,” he said in front of around 100 men and women from different religions, “but to confess ourselves for God in whom we all believe, if also in very different ways. Every religion prays in its own way.”

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

⁸ *Ibid.* Concerning the prayer for peace in Cologne, it says on p. 372: “And so invitations for the international prayer for peace on the tenth anniversary of Assisi in Cologne went out to the Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic Church, the Jewish synagogue in Cologne as well as the Islamic Council, the ‘Central Council for Moslems in Germany,’ the ‘Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institution for Religion,’ and one Bosnian and one Arab mosque.”

A choir of eight young men, for example, together with Rabbi Marc Stern, sang songs for the Jewish feast of Chanukah, a festival of light in memory of the consecration of the Temple after an attack. This included the text from David's psalm (Ps. 29): "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me."

Two Buddhists gave an introductory meditation on their religion and the life of Buddha, in a play of light and syllables on the way to a new consciousness. They wished that all suffering would disappear and all men would reach their greatest happiness. A Catholic man and woman presented St. Francis of Assisi and his thought and then the way presented by St. Paul (I Cor. 13) "which overcomes all"—the way of love: "...Charity never faileth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away... And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." Unity was also the concern of the Bahai who include in their religion the protection of many religions. "Lord, our God, enlarge our heart with the sign of thy unity." The aim is to lead those who are astray, to bring healing to the suffering, and to save life."

Imam Ilyas Öztürk from the Turkish-Moslem community in Osnabrück quoted from the 49th sura of the Koran: "The faithful are brethren. Thus make peace between your two brethren" (verse 10) and "Oh, ye people, We made you from a male and female being and We made you groups and tribes so that you get to know each other" (verse 13).

From the organisers Aloys Lögering from the episcopal vicariate general expressed his hope that this prayer meeting of religions may in future take place every year.

The traditional point of view with regard to this "theology" of interreligious prayer has this to say:

Of course there is "only one God." But this one and sole God is not the God of all religions but the one, triune God of Christianity. The triune God of Christian revelation is not at the same time the God of Mohammed and the Bahá'í lláh Bahai who both vigorously deny the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God. The salvation of all men cannot be at the same time a personal God and an impersonal Nirvana. The idea: "All religions believe in the same God, if also in quite different ways" eliminates from the definition of God the search for truth and in the dialogue between religions takes away any reasonable foundation. The principle of contradiction must also be valid for religions.

The one and only God is necessarily also the only true God with an unmistakable identity. He revealed himself as a Trinity through Christ and thereby made us free "from all false gods." The one true God when He reveals himself to men does not speak with forked tongue.

In spite of the avowal to the contrary, the "third prayer meeting of religions" in Osnabrück was truly a "religious stew" of unscrupulously manipulated texts: with an unbelievable manipulation of I Cor. 13, St. Paul, the greatest missionary of the Church, becomes the announcer of the "unity and equality" of all religions. Likewise in the passage from sura 49 where it talks of the "faithful who are brethren," not the "brethren" of all religions but the brethren in the Islamic faith. Similarly in the common singing by Jews and Christians of psalms there remains the decisive Jewish rejection of the Christian Messiah. In spite of the claimed unity in diversity of all religions, the way of salvation according to Buddha is essentially distinct from the imitation of Christ, the teaching of Bahai is irreconcilable with the teaching of the Incarnation of God.

In spite of all the contradictions and oppositions in what the religions say about God and salvation, the interreligious

events at all levels since the pioneering "Assisi event" have so fundamentally changed the general consciousness of the Church that critics of interreligious prayer are written off as "fundamentalists."⁹ In the missions newspaper *Continents*, published by twenty four religious orders, the well known picture from the prayer meeting in Assisi (1986) with the Pope in the middle of the various religious leaders has become a "Sign of unity."¹⁰ The accompanying caption says: "Leading representatives of the great world religions, of the Church and the natural religions meet since 1986 every year in Assisi to pray for the peace of the world. Catholic fundamentalists see in this a betrayal of the teaching of the sole sanctifying Church."¹¹

With determination, Rome has planned that these interreligious prayer meetings are to form a brilliant high point in the Jubilee year 2000. The Pope sees in the Jubilee year a "marvellous opportunity" to intensify the interreligious dialogue and to add a new symbolic dimension to the meeting of all religions. This is what it says in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*:

In this context we may consider how, in order to prepare to intensify the dialogue with the Jews and Moslems, we can

⁹ Barbara Albrecht writes in the magazine *Katholische Bildung* [*Catholic Formation*], 12 (1994), p. 481:

"The Pope is similarly the voice of one crying in the wilderness with regard to the violation of the dignity of man by his efforts to bring peace among religions—we only need to think of the prayer meetings (defamed as being heretical by the fundamentalists) for peace with representatives from the other Christian denominations and the non-Christian religions in 1986 and 1993 in Assisi or the first visit of a Pope to the Roman synagogue, his contacts with high ranking representatives of Judaism, his personal efforts for the bringing together of Christians and non-Christians."

¹⁰ 1/1995, p. 17.

prepare the historic meetings in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Mount Sinai, places of the greatest symbolic value as well as the meetings between the representatives of the great world religions¹²—*Quo vadis, Ecclesia!*¹³

Doubtless, the first task of the Vicar of Christ is to lead men to God. But is the “theological journey of John Paul II to the world day of prayer of religions in Assisi” which leads from there to the symbolic places of all great world religions really leading mankind to the one God and Father of Jesus Christ? If anything is clear, it is this: The God of all religions announced at Assisi is not the God of the Bible. This is a question of the First Commandment!

In the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* the Pope decided that the last three years before the Jubilee year 2000 should be dedicated to the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Father.¹⁴ The second millennium should end with the

¹¹ The theme of the whole brochure is significantly “many religions—one God.” The way the theme is handled is also typical of the “Assisi event”: the elimination of questions of truth from the definition of God. Cf. my own treatment of the same theme in the above named work [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*]. The difference in the wording of the two examples is indicative of the difference between the way the subject is dealt with as well as the title itself. The question of truth of a religion must be eliminated in order to replace the true God of Biblical revelation by the hypothesis of one God for all religions. If everything is true then nothing is true! Similarly the subtitle in “*Kontinente*”—linking the question of truth with religious wars!—describes precisely the change of understanding which has taken place over the years: “It was a long way from the Crusades and the Conquistadors to the peaceful partnership with the faithful of other religions....First heathens, then heretics, now partners.”

¹² *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), Nov. 25, 1994, p. 16.

¹³ Nov. 10, 1994, no. 53.

¹⁴ The *KNA* gives a short, clear summary of the content and planning of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Nov. 17, 1994, pp. 1ff.

praise of the Blessed Trinity. This is what he has to say in his address to priests on Maundy Thursday 1997:

The trilogy of Encyclicals will accompany us on this journey which I, through the grace of God, was able to announce at the beginning of my pontificate: *Redemptor Hominis*, *Dominum et Vivificantem* and *Dives in Misericordia* and which, dear brothers, I once again recommend to your meditation during the next three years.¹⁵

Thus the Pope has given our commentary on his “Trinitarian trilogy” new impetus.

¹⁵ *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), March 28, 1997, p. 7.

ENCYCLICAL

DOMINUM ET VIVIFICANTEM

BY POPE JOHN PAUL II

CONCERNING THE HOLY GHOST IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH¹

1. Presentation and method

The Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* forms the final part of the Pope's "Trinitarian trilogy." With 67 articles, the Encyclical is substantially longer than *Redemptor Hominis* (22 articles) and *Dives in Misericordia* (15 articles). It won't be possible, considering the size of the Encyclical, within the framework of this study to write out the whole text. As, however, it is the aim of my book to understand the Pope clearly and make him understood, the whole concept and construction, the way he uses language and argues his points in the Encyclical must be presented in as close a form as possible to

¹ AAS, vol. LXXVIII, Sept. 2, 1986, no. 9, pp. 809-900. The German translation is taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 30, 1986, documents section, pp. 9-20. Likewise in *Der Apostolische Stuhl [The Holy See]* 1986 (Bachem, Cologne), pp. 1347-1389. Unlike the Latin original, the German is divided into rough sections by titles and some subtitles. The emphases in the papal text have not been followed, neither have all notes been included. [The English translation of the Encyclical has been taken directly from the Vatican website without any alterations. This means that the term "Holy Spirit" is used throughout whereas in the rest of the work I have used the traditional form "Holy Ghost." Similarly, Scripture quotations in the text are taken from the Douai Rheims translation revised by Bishop Challoner whereas the Encyclical passages use the Jerusalem Bible translation. Translator's note.]

the original. That is why I follow the text closely and quote it wherever possible; and when this is not done, I will refer closely to the content of the text which, then, is not written out.

Not only the length, however, but also the Encyclical's "to a large extent complicated and muddled layout" is the source of complaint. This is how one sharp commentary puts it: "Even the titles given to various sections are imprecise. This is particularly true for the subparagraphs, most of which can mutually be applied to one another, both in title and in content. There is almost no system at all and therefore no clarity in construction."²

Hans Urs von Balthasar, however, sees the matter quite differently in his commentary on *Dominum et Vivificantem* under the title *Let Yourself Be Moved by the Spirit*. He turns the obvious confusion of the presentation into something positive but only confirms the deficiencies when, at the end of his "preview" to the Encyclical, he says:

May this short preview help the reader find the common thread which runs through this long document, which repeats many thoughts, via long quotations from the Council, especially from *Gaudium et Spes*, interrupts the flow of thought and in its spiralling upward circles perhaps could give the impression of missing the point. The reader should not forget that the whole document is dealing with the inscrutable mystery of the Triune God whose boundaries are unsearchable and which thus are obviously inaccessible to the normal ways of human thought. The horn of plenty emptied out here is a sign of the fulness of God's gifts so that, like in a kaleidoscope, there are always new aspects and facets, an overlapping of individual elements and new and varied images.³

² Wigand Siebel, *Saka-Informationen* (Nov. 1986), p. 10.

It is not my purpose to excuse the weaknesses of the Encyclical using "the inscrutable mystery of the Triune God," but rather to examine the text itself, together with its hardly recognisable but nonetheless existing system. It is the peculiar individuality of the theology and the Pope's powerfully poetic language which give the impression that in fact there is no system nor clarity. Hans Urs von Balthasar praises the language of the Encyclical in his commentary as "refreshing the heart";⁴ it is notwithstanding a burden on the intelligibility.

Wigand Siebel justifiably criticises the lack of precision and the capriciousness of the titles of the articles and subparagraphs. But these are due to the translator and only serve to show that they too have not grasped the system in the process of thought in the Encyclical. The Latin original has no such titles.

Despite the general impression, with some penetration one can in the end in fact find a unity of thought and composition in the Encyclical:

The whole Encyclical is the determined development of a vast concept divided into three parts. Each part has its own theme within the context of the whole. The themes of the individual parts are dealt with in a logical order, article after article, step by step. This takes place in the Pope's well known circular way of thinking which goes round the individual themes and therefore continually uses the same texts to give explanations. This circular way of thinking leads to continual repetition which does, however, help to emphasise the main ideas and to illuminate the changing object from all possible sides.

³ *Laßt euch vom Geist bewegen* [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*] (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder, 1986), pp. 139ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

In order to show the Encyclical's inner system and unity of thought, I will follow the Pope's plan, but will give a short summary to each of the Encyclical's three parts as a sort of introduction to the themes which are dealt with. I will also divide up the whole into sections. The titles and the short introductions to the individual articles are meant to make the process of thought and composition in the Encyclical clear. In this way, my analysis will be an accompanying commentary on the Encyclical.

Hans Urs von Balthasar's commentary does things in a different way. As a defender of "universal salvation of the world" and "Redemption from Hell"⁵ himself, von Balthasar clearly recognised the Pope's teaching of anthropocentric universal salvation and its consequences and approved them.⁶

The Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* has an "Introduction" (arts. 1-2) and a "Conclusion" (art. 67).

The main section is divided into three parts. In the official English translation the titles for the three parts are:

Part I: The Spirit of the Father and of the Son, given to the Church (arts. 3-26)

(In the commentary: The Spirit of the Father and of the Son, a gift to the Church and mankind.)

Part II: The Spirit who convinces the world concerning sin (arts. 27-48)

Part III: The Spirit who gives life (arts. 49-66). (In the commentary: the life-giving spirit in relation to the third millennium.)

⁵ Cf. Herbert Vorgrimler's contribution on Hans Urs von Balthasar in *Bilanz der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert. Bahnbrechende Theologen [State of Theology in the 20th Century: Pioneering Theologians]*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler and Robert vander Gucht (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 1970), esp. pp. 135-139.

⁶ [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*], pp. 131ff.

2. Title—address—salutation

The title of the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* is from the Creed of Constantinople (381). The Encyclical is dedicated to the Holy Ghost "in the life of the Church and in the world." Church and world are the two aspects under which the Pope considers the one work of the Holy Ghost. The coordination of Church and world is already a subtle hint that the Holy Ghost is not only given to the Church but also to the world. Nonetheless the Encyclical is not addressed to the whole of mankind but to the "Venerable Brothers [in the episcopal office], Beloved Sons, and Daughters." Because the triune God communicates himself to man as such, the Encyclical is also a message to the whole human race.

INTRODUCTION¹

In the "Introduction" (*DeV*1-2) the Pope gives the sources which he used to write the Encyclical (*DeV*1) and the motives which moved him to write it (*DeV*2). The motives also give at the same time the points of departure which give the Pope's theology its special character.

1. The sources of the Church's faith in the Holy Ghost (*DeV*1)

Like every big treatment of a theme, the Encyclical begins with a list of sources (*DeV*1.1):

Here it says the Church confesses her faith in the Holy Ghost as He who is "the Lord and giver of life" as the two Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381) formulated and announced it.

The first source of her faith in the Holy Ghost is, however, Jesus Christ Himself. According to His word (Jn. 7:37ff.; 4:14; 3:5) we have been given both a new life and the Holy Ghost (cf. *DeV*1.2).

The Encyclical gives a short summary of the faith taken from Scripture and Tradition:

The Church, therefore, instructed by the words of Christ, and drawing on the experience of Pentecost and her own apostolic history, has proclaimed since the earliest centuries her faith in the Holy Spirit, as the giver of life, the one in whom the inscrutable Triune God communicates himself to human beings, constituting in them the source of eternal life. (*DeV*1.3)

¹ The Introduction both in the Latin original and the English translation has no titles.

This passage is already an example of the principles which we have already dealt with in the Prologue, that of the "enrichment of faith" and "mutual integration of faith" which is the source of the so lamented ambiguity of much of what he says.² The use of both principles as the source of faith, Scripture and Tradition, is to be shown right at the beginning of the quoted passage to be exemplary for the whole Encyclical.

The passage may easily be understood in the traditional sense but also in the sense of the universal Redemption. Both are possible.

If we read the passage in the traditional sense, then the Pope is talking about the uninterrupted preaching of the faith of the Church, of the objective universality of the Redemption. In this sense, the Church, from the very beginning, has in fact declared that the "Triune God communicates Himself to human beings, constituting in them the source of eternal life." From the beginning, the Church has taught that the God-man Jesus Christ, by His vicarious satisfaction and the merits of His Redemption, principally and objectively completed the universal reconciliation of the whole human race with God. In this case the quoted passage would make no mention of the subjective side of the Redemption and the justification of the individual.

If we read the passage in the sense of the theory of universal Redemption, however, without changing any of the words, it is talking, not just about the objective but at the same time also the subjective universality of the Redemption. Then the passage says: From the beginning the Church announces her faith that the triune God communicates Himself to "man" as such (all men) and thus "constituting in them the source of eternal life." The objective universality implies the subjective universality of the Redemption. That means: Man is not only

² See Prologue.

objectively redeemed but also subjectively justified. Cardinal Wojtyła already said as much in *Sign of Contradiction*, saying concisely and clearly: "All men from the beginning and till the end of the world have been justified and redeemed by Christ through His Cross."³ This happens "whether or not man knows this, whether or not he accepts it."⁴ Later, as Pope, the Cardinal taught this theory in his dogmatic Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*.⁵

Thus we may understand not only the quoted passage but the whole Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* in this sense of universal Redemption.

The difference between this and the traditional teaching of the Church is fundamental even if it only consists in the subjective conditions in the process of justification being silently omitted, and the change of meaning from the traditional understanding of the Redemption to universal Redemption in the quoted passage is done without the slightest change in the actual words used.

In spite of the discrepancy between the old and new teaching, it is maintained throughout the Encyclical that the Church confesses "her faith from the beginning" and has kept the indispensable continuity and identity of the faith.

Thus we are faced with a double problem:

How can we reconcile the traditional truth of the Redemption with the new truth of universal Redemption without a dogmatic break in Tradition? And: Considering the discrepancy between the old and new teaching, how can the identity and continuity of the faith be maintained without a break in the Tradition?

³ [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 103.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵ Cf. *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/2.

Cardinal Wojtyła already gave the solution in *Sources of Renewal*.⁶

There the relationship of the old teaching to the new teaching of universal Redemption was explained by an “enrichment of faith” which the old faith of the Church underwent at Vatican II. The relationship between the two teachings is understood as a relationship between an imperfect to a more perfect knowledge, from the traditional truth of the Church to the “fulness of truth” of the teaching of the Council. The “fulness of truth” of the mystery of the Redemption is universal salvation!

The problem of the identity and continuity of the faith even in the traditional sense would be solved by the definition of the relationship between “truth” and “the fulness of truth” if the “fulness of truth” were developed from the traditional truth. That is, however, not the case and would anyway obviously be impossible.

To solve the problem Cardinal Wojtyła conceived the “principle of reciprocal integration of the faith” or of “mutual penetration.”

To show how this principle is used, let's take a concrete example from the quoted passage:

When it is said that the faith of the Church has “enriched her own actual apostolic history,” this means not only the well-known process of the accidental development of dogma but especially the “enrichment of faith” in the sense of universal Redemption. This was given to the Council Fathers at Vatican II through the word of the Holy Ghost. It is now “integrated” into the old faith of the Church through “reciprocal integration of the faith” and vice versa. That means: The relationship of the old teaching to the new is not to be taken exclusively “disjunctively”; neither is it to be understood in the

⁶ See Prologue.

scholastic sense of a "*iuxtapositio*," but "integratively" as a relationship of "mutual penetration." The pre-conciliar teaching on the Redemption is not denied but presupposed as such until Vatican II. It is the truth but not the "fulness of the truth." The fulness of truth is universal Redemption. It is only by being "integrated" into the thesis of universal salvation that the teaching on the Redemption reaches the "fulness of truth" and undergoes a change of meaning via "mutual penetration hardly noticeable in the actual words used."

From the "principle of reciprocal integration" of the old faith into the new and vice versa we get a disturbing ambiguity of phrase through reference to the one or the other truth, as we have seen in the quoted passage.

The "principle of reciprocal integration" was conceived by Cardinal Wojtyła himself to join the substantial "enrichment of faith" of the Council, *i.e.*, the new teaching of universal salvation, to the old teaching of the Redemption and to restore the indispensable continuity and identity of the old faith with the new.

In reality, "reciprocal integration of faith" means "transformation" of the old truth into the new truth of universal salvation with the aim of "integrating" the Church's whole heritage of the faith into the post-conciliar process of transformation and helping the new "teaching of the Council" to break through. The Pope is convinced that the identity and continuity of the Church's teaching remains intact through the "principle of reciprocal integration of faith." He never tires of emphasising how his theology agrees with the Church's traditional belief and claiming her authority for his own theology.

The principle of "reciprocal integration of faith" can, however, only artificially cover the contradiction between the old and new teaching, not take it away. The Church has by no manner of means preached that the triune God communi-

cates Himself to men as such thereby "constituting in them the source of eternal life" from the very beginning but only since Vatican II. And this good news of universal salvation is in blatant opposition to the Church's traditional teaching on salvation and cannot be reconciled with it even by the "principle of reciprocal integration of faith."

Thus we may sum up: The Pope presents the new knowledge of the "fulness of faith" about the Redemption *viz.* that the triune God communicates Himself through the Holy Ghost to all men right at the beginning of his Encyclical and therefore makes it clear that *Dominum et Vivificantem*, just like *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* previously, is based on the axiom of universal salvation and therefore develops their new teaching about the Holy Ghost.

2. The motive for writing

Dominum et Vivificantem (DeV2)

The Pope in his introduction gives no less than six reasons which moved him to write the Encyclical and which at the same time show his theological standpoint.

2.1. The teaching of the Council needs a new Pneumatology

The teaching on the Holy Ghost taken from Scripture and Tradition (cf. DeV1) needs a new pneumatology as a necessary complement to the Christology and especially the Eclesiology of the last Council. Here is what the Pope says:

This faith, uninterruptedly professed by the Church, needs to be constantly reawakened and deepened in the consciousness of the People of God. In the course of the last hundred years this has been done several times: by Leo XIII, who published the Encyclical Epistle *Divinum Illud Munus* (1897) entirely devoted to the Holy Spirit; by Pius XII, who

in the Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis* (1943) spoke of the Holy Spirit as the vital principle of the Church, in which he works in union with the Head of the Mystical Body, Christ; at the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council which brought out the need for a new study of the doctrine on the Holy Spirit, as Paul VI emphasised: "The Christology and particularly the ecclesiology of the Council must be succeeded by a new study of and devotion to the Holy Spirit, precisely as the indispensable complement to the teaching of the Council" (General audience of 6.6.73). (*DeV*2.1)

When he says: "This faith, uninterruptedly professed by the Church," he means the "integrated" faith, in which the old and new teaching mutually penetrate one another, that is, the faith which has already been described (*DeV*1) and which can be understood in two ways.

The Pope knows, of course, that Leo XIII and Pius XII in no way taught an unconditional self-communication of the Trinity through the Holy Ghost to all men. That is not claimed. If one reads the quoted passage carefully, then both Encyclicals are only quoted in so far as they give an example of the deepening of the faith in the Holy Ghost in the "consciousness of the people of God."

It is only since Vatican II which, according to Cardinal Wojtyla's interpretation, teaches the "enrichment of faith" of universal salvation, that a new pneumatology is necessary as a complement to the "Christology and particularly the ecclesiology of the Council." This is provided by *Dominum et Vivificantem*.

2.2. The common inheritance of Rome and the Eastern Churches: reason for a new consideration of the Holy Ghost

The Introduction to the Encyclical continues by referring to the help and stimulus to a new study of the Holy Ghost

which it calls the common inheritance of Rome and the Eastern Churches who are said to have preserved the riches of the teaching of the Fathers on the Holy Ghost. The 1,600th anniversary of the Council of Constantinople (381) was, therefore, celebrated both in Rome and Constantinople. Their common consideration of the topic had the following result:

The Holy Ghost was then better seen, through a meditation on the mystery of the Church, as the one who points out the ways leading to the union of Christians, indeed as the supreme source of this unity, which comes from God himself and to which St. Paul gave a particular expression in the words which are frequently used to begin the Eucharistic liturgy: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (Missal p. 324, cf. II Cor. 13:13). (*DeV* 2.2)

The second, ecumenical motive for writing the Encyclical is thus to promote the unity of Christians.

The shared meditation on the Church with the Orthodox, according to the passage, has shown that the Holy Ghost is not only the one who is the way to the unity of Christians but also the one who already is the source of this unity Himself. Already in *Redemptor Hominis* (RH 11) John Paul II taught the "ontological" unity of all Christians in Christ.⁷ Unity in Christ implies, of course, unity in the Holy Ghost.

More than this "ontological" unity in the Holy Ghost, there is for the Pope also a unity of faith between the Eastern

⁷ Cf. concerning the unity of all Christians: Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 92-98. The member of the German bishops' conference responsible for ecumenism, Msgr. Scheele, made the following comment in relation to the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*: Various people "are of the opinion that there is a deep-reaching difference between separated Christians. John Paul II, however, speaks expressly of the unity in Christ" (*Deutsche Tagespost*, June 3, 1995, p. 4).

Churches and the Roman Church. That is the Pope's firm conviction which led him to say at the end of the traditional retreat week in the Vatican in 1995: "We really want to get even closer to our Eastern, Byzantine, and Russian brethren for we are firmly convinced that we share the same faith. Both traditions are very rich and useful for the Church, but the faith is the same."⁸

For the Pope, then, there is not only a unity in the Holy Ghost in the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches but also in the faith. He sees in the two Churches, two traditions which are rich and useful for the Church. Thus the Pope creates a dogmatic basis for dialogue with the Eastern Churches in which it can be but a question of clearing up minor points. The differences in the teaching on the Trinity (*Filioque*) and in the teaching dogmatically fixed at the First Vatican Council concerning the Papacy (Dz. 1823ff.) are obviously for the Pope himself "*une chose négligeable*."

2.3. The completion of the "Trinitarian trilogy" and the Council

Two further motives for writing the Encyclical on the Holy Ghost are the completion of the "Trinitarian trilogy" and the teaching of the Council on the Church.

As far as the "Trinitarian trilogy" is concerned, from the outset there was a definite plan of how the divine Persons were to be dealt with and so after the appearance of *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* there was a need for *Dominum et Vivificantem* to complete the series. The three Encyclicals form a theological unity.

Concerning the relationship of *Dominum et Vivificantem* to the two previous Encyclicals, the Pope continues:

⁸ *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), March 17, 1995, p. 3.

Following the quoted Trinitarian blessing (*DeV* 2.2): "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all," he goes on:

In a certain sense, my previous Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* took their origin and inspiration from this exhortation, celebrating as they do the event of our salvation accomplished in the Son, sent by the Father into the world "that the world might be saved through him" (Jn. 3:17) and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). From this exhortation now comes the present Encyclical on the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; with the Father and the Son he is adored and glorified: a divine Person, he is at the centre of the Christian faith and is the source and dynamic power of the Church's renewal (*Lumen Gentium*, 4). (*DeV* 2.3)

The three Encyclicals have the same source of inspiration but they don't have the same theological point of departure.⁹

The Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* are based on the principle of revelation from *Gaudium et Spes* 22: "Christ the new Adam...fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling and he does this in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love" (*sic DiM* 1.2).

The Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* is based on the first part of this principle of revelation: on the truth of man whom Christ reveals to himself (cf. *DiM* 1.2).

The Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* is based on the second part of the principle: on the truth of man which reveals

⁹ Cf. concerning the theological point of departure in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*, see Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. II/1-II/2.

Christ "in the revelation of the Father and his [merciful] love" (cf. *DiM* 1.2).

The mutual relationship between the two Encyclicals corresponds to the theological principle of "double revelation" and forms an organic unity. Both Encyclicals "emphasise the event of our salvation" and have *per se* an "anthropocentric character."

It is obvious that the Encyclical on the Holy Ghost could not have been based on the same theological principle of knowledge since this is based *per se* on the relationship between the Son and the Father with man. The dogmatic point of departure whence the Pope draws his relationship of the Holy Ghost with man in *Dominum et Vivificantem* is the procession of the Holy Ghost within the Trinity and the Redemption performed by Christ. That is why Hans Urs von Balthasar is right in saying that the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* is "the completion of a Trinity-based plan."¹⁰

The three Encyclicals as a "Trinitarian trilogy" form a theological unity. They deal with the Son, Father, and Holy Ghost but not in the sense of a detailed development of an "immanent" but an "economic teaching on the Trinity" with a soteriological relationship of the individual divine Persons to the "event of salvation." Since all three Encyclicals teach universal salvation, it is a "Trinitarian trilogy of universal salvation."¹¹

The theological foundation for this was already laid by the Pope in his first Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*. Hans Urs von Balthasar describes its theological kernel very well in his commentary on *Dominum et Vivificantem*:

¹⁰ [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*], p. 131.

¹¹ Thus Wigand Siebel, "Erlösung durch das Geheimnis der Menschwerdung?" ["Redemption through the Mystery of the Incarnation?"], *Saka-Informationen*, 11 (Nov. 11, 1986), 1.

The individual man "is the way of the Church," man who has fundamentally been redeemed by Christ and fundamentally assumed by the Spirit (*RH* 14), who through the Church is to learn what meaning and what consequences this "already-reached" has for himself. Redemption and giving of the Spirit are universal but the Church as "sacrament" has to lead man to the heart of this event.¹²

That is the pregnant description of the anthropocentric thesis of universal salvation in *Redemptor Hominis* but also a confirmation of my commentary of the first Encyclical in vol. II/1.

The Pope never tires of emphasising that his theology is rooted in the teaching of the Council, especially in its ecclesiology. That is the fourth motive for writing the Encyclical on the Holy Ghost.

Vatican II, so he says in *Redemptor Hominis*, made a tremendous effort to "form a full and universal consciousness of the Church" (cf. *RH* 11. 1). In *Dominum et Vivificantem*, too, he refers to the ecclesiology of the Council which on its side calls for a deeper study of the mystery of the Trinity:

The Encyclical has been drawn from the heart of the heritage of the Council. For the Conciliar texts, thanks to their teaching on the Church in herself and the Church in the world, move us to penetrate ever deeper into the Trinitarian mystery of God himself, through the Gospels, the Fathers and the liturgy: to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 2.3)

The teaching of what Cardinal Wojtyła in *Sources of Renewal* calls the teaching of the Council is presented in this passage:¹³ from the Council's understanding of the Church,

¹² [*Let Yourself Be Moved by the Spirit*], p. 134.

which it considers to embrace all mankind as the invisible Church, he proceeds to the thesis of the Trinity's self-communication to all men, for there he says: "The mission of the divine Persons is not only a revelation but also an act of salvation which makes mankind the People of God."¹⁴

No-one, however, comes to this "knowledge" through the Gospel or the Fathers but rather on the way of the new liturgy.

2.4. A new discovery of God in the heart of today's man

A fifth motive for writing the Encyclical on the Holy Ghost is "a new discovery of God" in the heart of today's man. This needs to be preached to mankind. The new discovery of God in the heart of man is of course nothing other than the discovery of universal salvation. It is the Pope's conviction that the new discovery of universal salvation represents the timely answer to "certain deep desires" of today's man. This is what he says:

In this way the Church is also responding to certain deep desires which she believes she can discern in people's hearts today: a fresh discovery of God in his transcendent reality as the infinite Spirit, just as Jesus presents him to the Samaritan woman; the need to adore him "in spirit and truth" (cf. Jn. 4:24); the hope of finding in him the secret of love and the power of a "new creation" (cf. Rom. 8:22; Gal. 6:15): yes, precisely the giver of life. (*DeV* 2.4)

This "new discovery of God" in the heart of today's man is a bit of wishful thinking which the Pope is projecting into the hearts of modern man due to his theory of universal salvation. It was probably also this new discovery which made him visi-

¹³ Cf. Prologue.

¹⁴ [*Sources of Renewal*], p. 182.

bly express it at the interreligious prayer meeting in Assisi (1986) (cf. *DeV* 65-66).

The knowledge that God in His transcendental reality is infinite spirit and all-present belongs to the fundamental truths of the faith from the penny catechism. This passage, however, understands by the transcendental reality of God not only the omnipresence of the Creator in His creation but beyond that something unimaginably new: *viz.* the omnipresence of God by grace in the hearts of all men. The "new discovery of God" is nothing but the discovery of the universal giving of grace in the Holy Ghost.

This "new discovery of God" is, however, according to the passage, not so new at all. Jesus is supposed to have announced it already to the Samaritan woman. Since then the Church had to wait until Vatican II for its rediscovery.

But the "new discovery of God" is even for the Pope personally not so new. As he says in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, it goes back to a deep experience of his "early youth" and led the young Karol Wojtyła from Jacob's well directly to the mysticism of St. John of the Cross. Even then he became "a true worshipper of God" who experienced "the Church as a communion of salvation" and he confesses: "In this Church I found my place and my calling."¹⁵

The experience of "the Church as communion of salvation," her "spiritual and mystical dimension" which he was reminded of at the Council, is of course the new knowledge that the whole human race is the invisible Church. Karol Wojtyła goes further as Pope when he says: "This mystery is greater than the visible structure of the Church and her organisation. Structure and organisation are at the service of the mystery."¹⁶ The mystery itself is universal salvation.

¹⁵ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p. 142.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

2.5. The mission of the Church on the road to the third millennium

The Pope has the Jubilee year of 2000 in view in *Dominum et Vivificantem*. It forms the historical framework of the “new advent” in which the Church together with the whole human family approaches the end of the second millennium. You can’t help thinking of the pilgrimage of all religions to the “mystical mountain” in Assisi which has a symbolic character. In this framework the Church is called to preach the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. It is also the final reason for writing the Encyclical on the Holy Ghost:

The Church feels herself called to this mission of proclaiming the Spirit, while together with the human family she approaches the end of the second Millennium after Christ. Against the background of a heaven and earth which will “pass away,” she knows well that “the words which will not pass away” (Mt. 24:35) acquire a particular eloquence. They are the words of Christ about the Holy Ghost, the inexhaustible source of the “water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14), as truth and saving grace. Upon these words she wishes to reflect, to these words she wishes to call the attention of believers and of all people, as she prepares to celebrate—as will be said later on—the great Jubilee which will mark the passage from the second to the third Christian Millennium. (*DeV* 2.5)

Already in *Redemptor Hominis* (*RH* 1.2) the Pope showed the framework of the “Trilogy” concerning the history of salvation.¹⁷ This framework is the “new advent” in which the Church since Vatican II together with the whole human family approaches the year 2000 and awaits the “new coming of

¹⁷ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 43-45.

the Lord" (*RH* 20.6). The expectation of the Jubilee year goes through the whole of the "Trinitarian trilogy."

From the very beginning, John Paul II has considered it the greatest task of his pontificate to lead the Catholic Church into the third millennium. In the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* he announced the proximate preparations and expressed the meaning for his pontificate with the following words (art. 23): "In fact, preparing for the Year 2000 has become as it were a hermeneutical key of my Pontificate." At the same time he communicated the concrete form of his vision of the Jubilee year. He recommends for the last three years of preparation for the holy year a Trinitarian direction: 1997 to "Christ," 1998 to the "Holy Ghost," 1999 to the "Father." For the holy year itself he suggests: a Eucharistic Congress in Rome; a meeting for all Christians; an historical meeting for Christians, Jews, and Moslems in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and on Mount Sinai; a papal tour (if possible) "on the journey of the People of God of the Old Testament...from the sites of Abraham and Moses, via Egypt and Mount Sinai to Damascus," the place of the conversion of the Apostle Paul.¹⁸ Beyond that he also wants "Meetings elsewhere with the leaders of the great world religions" (art. 53). The harvest from the "Assisi event" is to be gathered in in the Jubilee year.

There is hardly a single papal utterance over the last few years in which the millennium is not explicitly mentioned. There must be an authentic explanation for this remarkable fact. This was actually given by the Pope himself as he left the Gemelli clinic. How deeply subjective the reason for this *topos* of papal history of salvation is founded is explained—in some ways in a shocking way—in the following speech of John Paul II on May 29, 1995:

¹⁸ Cf. *KNA* 39, no. 46 (Nov. 17, 1994), pp. 1ff.

And I would like to express my thanks, through Mary, for this gift of suffering which once again is linked to Mary's month of May. I want to give thanks for this gift. I have understood that this gift was necessary. The Pope had to visit the Gemelli clinic, he had to be away from this window for four Sundays and he had to suffer: As he suffered thirteen years ago, so also this year.

I have been thinking, I have been considering it all during my stay in hospital. And once again I found the great figure of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski next to me (yesterday was the 13th anniversary of his death). At the beginning of my pontificate he said to me: "If the Lord has called you, you must lead the Church into the third millennium." He himself led the Church in Poland into the second Christian millennium.

That's what Cardinal Wyszynski said to me. And I have understood that I must lead the Church into the third millennium through prayer and various other undertakings but I have seen that that is not enough: the Church must be led by suffering, through the assassination attempt thirteen years ago and through this new sacrifice. Why now, why this year, why in this year of the Family? Precisely because the family is being threatened and attacked. Thus the Pope must be attacked, the Pope must suffer so that each family and the world can see there is a, if I may say, higher Gospel: the Gospel of suffering through which we must prepare the future, the third millennium of families, of every family and all families.

I would like to weave these considerations into my first meeting with you, dear Romans and Pilgrims, at the end of this month of May because I must thank—and I do thank—the Blessed Virgin for this gift of suffering. I realise that it was necessary to have this argument for the powerful of this world. I have to meet these representatives of the world and talk with them. Using what arguments? I am left with this proof of suffering. And I would like to say to you: Realise,

understand why the Pope was in hospital again, why he had to suffer. Realise, think about it!¹⁹

2.6. The will of God is the salvation of the whole world

The introduction to the Encyclical finishes with a sentence from *Lumen Gentium* (LG 15), with which the Pope intends to sum up his considerations:

Their main purpose is to develop in the Church the awareness that “she is compelled by the Holy Spirit to do her part towards the full realisation of the will of God, who has established Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world. (DeV 2.6)”

Doubtless it is the Good News of the New Testament that God from all eternity has willed Christ to be the source of salvation for the whole world—but not in the sense of an unconditional subjective universality, universal salvation.

¹⁹ *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), June 3, 1994, p. 1.

CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND THE SON, A GIFT TO THE CHURCH AND MANKIND¹

Plan and layout of the first part of the Encyclical

The first part of the Encyclical represents a carefully composed unity. Based on the final discourse in St. John's Gospel the Pope uses the Scriptures to give a general picture of the revelation of the Paraclete and reaches his climax in the scriptural revelation of the Trinity. According to this, the triune God is, in the Holy Ghost, substantial love from which proceed, according to God's eternal plan of salvation, the work of Creation and Redemption. In a new point of departure the Encyclical presents the relationship between the Holy Ghost and the Messiah and Church.

There are five sections to this part.

The first section (*DeV* 3-7) is an exegesis of all the Paraclete passages in Jesus' final discourse in St. John which give a general picture of the revelation of the Paraclete.

The second section (*DeV* 8-10) draws out the revelation of the Trinity from verses of the final discourse. The triune God who in Himself is love, is also, in the Holy Ghost, the source of every gift to creatures.

The third section (*DeV* 11-14) is based on the previous two sections and shows the "logic" of the plan of salvation of the triune God. Its realisation in history takes place—as in traditional dogma—from three points of view: the Creation, Sin, and Redemption. Characteristic for the way the Encycli-

¹ In the English translation: "The Spirit of the Father and of the Son, Given to the Church."

cal does things is the the way this is related to the Joannine final discourse of Jesus.

The fourth section (*DeV 15-24*) describes in a new exegetical way the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Messiah in the promises of the Old and New Testaments.

The fifth section (*DeV 25-26*) considers the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Church and in particular the Church of Vatican II.

1. The Paraclete in Jesus' final discourse (*DeV 3-7*)²

The first part of the Encyclical is a scriptural exegesis of the Holy Ghost. The fundamental text is the Joannine final discourse of Jesus with the promise and revelation of the Paraclete.

1.1. General definition of the Paraclete in the Encyclical (*DeV 3*)

The Pope leads the reader into the Upper Room and describes in, for the style of the Encyclical, a characteristic way the situation in which the word of Scripture is spoken:

When the time for Jesus to leave this world had almost come, he told the Apostles of "another Counselor" (ἄλλον παράκλητον, Jn. 14:16). The evangelist John, who was present, writes that, during the Last Supper before the day of his Passion and Death, Jesus addressed the Apostles with these words: "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son....I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 14:13.16ff.). (*DeV 3.1*)

² In the English translation: "Jesus' Promise and Revelation at the Last Supper."

The Pope interprets the promise of the Paraclete in the following way:

It is precisely this Spirit of truth whom Jesus calls the Paraclete—and *parakletos* means “counselor,” and also “intercessor,” or “advocate.” And he says that the Paraclete is “another” Counselor, the second one, since he, Jesus himself, is the first Counselor (cf. I Jn. 2:1), being the first bearer and giver of the Good News. The Holy Spirit comes after him and because of him, in order to continue in the world, through the Church, the work of the Good News of salvation. Concerning this continuation of his own work by the Holy Spirit Jesus speaks more than once during the same farewell discourse, preparing the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room for his departure, namely for his Passion and Death on the Cross. (*DeV* 3.2)

The Pope first explains the meaning of the word “Paraclete” and then formulates right at the beginning of his exegesis a general definition of the Paraclete. The definition forms the framework for the rest of his exegesis of the references to the Paraclete in St. John’s Gospel.

The general definition of the Paraclete is based on Jn. 14:13,16ff.

First the quotation of Scripture itself must be looked at critically: The Pope doesn’t quote Jn. 14:16ff. completely but stops after the first words. The whole passage says:

And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever. The spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but you shall know him; because he shall abide with you, and shall be in you.

If the Encyclical doesn’t quote the full passage from Jn. 14:16ff. but stops after the first few words even though there

is still more said about the "Spirit of Truth" which is essential for the definition of the Paraclete, this can only be for the reason that precisely *this* important aspect of the definition of the Paraclete is deliberately omitted. The full passage from Jn. 14:16ff. is difficult to reconcile with the theory of universal salvation. The full passage shows clearly that the Father doesn't indiscriminately give the "Spirit of Truth" to all men but only to the disciples because they know, love, and believe in Christ, but not to the whole world because it has no capability of receiving him.

This separation and discrimination is of fundamental importance for the whole Joannine final discourse of Jesus. The sending of "another Paraclete" implies the distinction of faith and unbelief, of the disciples and the "world." This separation is constitutive for the essence and effect of the "counselor." The "Spirit of Truth" is only given to the disciples as an "advocate" in order to give them support in their fight for the revealed truth in their expected conflict with the world.

The effects of the Paraclete have a kerygmatic and judgmental character in the whole Joannine final discourse of Jesus. The judgmental character comes from the discerning, necessary requirement for salvation given by Christ which is the faith. By not quoting the whole passage from Jn. 14:16ff. and making the incomplete quotation the foundation of his exegesis, the Pope departs from the necessary judgmental element of the Joannine definition of the Paraclete. The Pope does this deliberately for the purpose of his whole exegesis in the Encyclical.

This can be seen already in the general definition of the "first" and "second counselor" in the quoted passage from the Encyclical (*DeV* 3.1):

"He, Jesus himself, is the first Counselor (cf. I Jn. 2:1), being the first bearer and giver of the Good News. The Holy Spirit (*i.e.*, the second counselor) comes after him and be-

cause of him, in order to continue in the world, through the Church, the work of the Good News of salvation.”

Based on Jn. 14:16ff. it is possible to talk of a “first” and “second counselor” even though this phraseology doesn’t occur in St. John. But does the general definition of the “first” and “second counselor” in the Encyclical correspond to the definition of the Paraclete in Jesus’ final discourse?

Let’s have a look first at the definition of the “first counselor” in the Encyclical. There it says (*DeV*3.1):

“He, Jesus himself, is the first Counselor (cf. I Jn. 2:1), being the first bearer and giver of the Good News.”

We ought to say to this that I Jn. 2:1 is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus Christ calls himself the “Paraclete” directly, but this is in no way proof for the interior action of Jesus as the “first counselor.” This is seen from the following passage in I Jn. 2:1ff.:

My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate (*parákleton*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

This is not the historical but the *glorified* Christ who is the Paraclete. Jesus Christ is called the Paraclete because after his glorification He stands before the throne of the Father in Heaven until the end of time and intercedes on behalf of us sinners. I Jn. 2:1 is a very weak passage to quote for Jesus’ interior action as the “first counselor.”

But the changing of the earthly with the glorified Paraclete apart, we can see straight away that the definition of the “first counselor” in the Encyclical is not the same as the Joannine definition of the Paraclete.

Of course Jesus Christ is the first bearer and giver of the Good News. But Jesus is not for that reason the “first counse-

lor” because He is the first bearer and giver of the Good News, but because He has supported His disciples during their earthly life in all situations and conflicts with the world. In the Encyclical’s definition the specific element of being a counselor at the judgment is taken out, surely an element of the definition of the Paraclete, the “advocate,” which is most essential.

Furthermore, the Encyclical implies, next to the first, a second bringer of the Good News which is not present in St. John. There only Jesus Christ, the Son sent by the Father, brought the Good News.

As far as the general definition of the “second counselor” in the text of the Encyclical is concerned, this is taken from the first and also needs to be critically examined:

Of course it can be said that the the Holy Ghost came after and through Jesus Christ “in order to continue in the world, through the Church (*per ecclesiam*), the work of the Good News of salvation.” But that is not the whole definition of the Paraclete given by St. John in his Gospel. He says that the Holy Ghost is the “second counselor” because He continues Jesus’ interior Paraclete-effectiveness after His ascent to the Father as a support of the Church; by keeping the Good News of Jesus free from error and closely bound to His word and deeds, He opens the understanding of the disciples and victoriously defends them in their conflicts with the world.

The definition of the “second counselor” in the Encyclical leaves out the specific judgmental element from the definition of the Paraclete. Leaving out an essential element in the general definition is a serious fault. Moreover the definition: the Holy Ghost comes “in order to continue in the world, through the Church, the work of the Good News of salvation” is a bit fluid. The “work of the Good News of salvation” may be understood in a variety of ways, even, without any difficulty, in the sense of universal salvation.

After the Pope has taken his general definition of the “first” and “second counselor” from the “announcement and promise” of the Paraclete in Jn. 14:13,16ff. and thereby sketched the definition background for his following exegesis of the individual references to the Paraclete in Jesus’ final discourse, he shows the way his further exegesis is to go:

The words to which we will make reference here are found in the Gospel of John. Each one adds a new element to that prediction and promise. And at the same time they are intimately interwoven, not only from the viewpoint of the events themselves but also from the viewpoint of the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which perhaps in no passage of Sacred Scripture finds so emphatic an expression as here. (*DeV* 3.3)

The Pope then quotes and interprets the words of Jesus about the Spirit-Paraclete from the final discourse one after the other and in this way puts together pieces of a mosaic to form a complete picture (*DeV* 4-7) and goes from there to the mystery of the Trinity (*DeV* 8-10).

1.2. The action of the Paraclete (*DeV* 4.7)

The Pope sketches a complete picture of the working of the Paraclete using individual passages from scripture and his exegesis of them. We give a rough outline of the train of thought in the Encyclical which seems essentially to repeat well-known traditional interpretations. Our question is, however: Has the judgmental element, and thereby the requirement of faith necessary for salvation, silently been removed from the complete picture of the action of the Paraclete?

Here follows a short summary of the text of the Encyclical. The Pope begins his exegesis with a text from Scripture:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (Jn. 14, 26). (*DeV4*)

The interpretation of this text:

The Holy Spirit, then, will ensure that in the Church there will always continue the same truth which the Apostles heard from their Master. (*DeV4*)

In the transmission of this truth the Apostles are said to be “in a special way associated with the Holy Spirit” as Jesus had promised:

When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning (Jn. 15:26). (*DeV5.1*)

According to this verse there is said to be a “special association” between the Apostles and the Holy Ghost when they transmit the Good News in a twofold witness for Christ: the testimony of the Holy Ghost and the testimony of the Apostles as eyewitnesses. The latter find in the testimony of the Spirit of truth a strong support (cf. *DeV5.2*).

The Encyclical describes the twofold testimony, that of the Holy Ghost and that of the Apostles, in the following way:

The supreme and most complete revelation of God to humanity is Jesus Christ himself, and the witness of the Spirit inspires, guarantees and convalidates the faithful transmission of this revelation in the preaching and writing of the Apostles (*Dei Verbum* 11, 12), while the witness of the

Apostles ensures its human expression in the Church and in the history of humanity. (*DeV*5.3)

The Encyclical is unclear in its formulation. The passage, ought, however, to be understood so that the testimonies of the Holy Ghost and Apostles form from the beginning a unity in the sense that the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which guarantees the faithful transmission of God's revelation in Christ, has found its "human expression in the Church and in the history of humanity" in the preaching and writings of the Apostles.

The Pope himself confirms the double testimony of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles by quoting the example of another Scripture passage:

This is also seen from the strict correlation of content and intention with the just-mentioned prediction and promise, a correlation found in the next words of the text of John: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (Jn. 16:12ff.). (*DeV*6.1)

In his further considerations, the Pope links his guide into the "whole truth" with the imminent emptying of Christ through His passion and death, to the "*scandalon crucis*" but also to all that which Christ "did and taught" (Acts 1:1). (Cf. *DeV*6.2).

From there, the Pope comes to the discriminating point of his exegesis, to the faith in the *Mysterium Christi*:

For the mystery of Christ taken as a whole demands faith, since it is faith that adequately introduces man into the

reality of the revealed mystery. The "guiding into all the truth" is therefore achieved in faith and through faith: and this is the work of the Spirit of truth and the result of his action in man. Here the Holy Spirit is to be man's supreme guide and the light of the human spirit. This holds true for the Apostles, the eyewitnesses, who must now bring to all people the proclamation of what Christ did and taught, and especially the proclamation of his Cross and Resurrection. Taking a longer view, this also holds true for all the generations of disciples and confessors of the Master. Since they will have to accept with faith and confess with candour the mystery of God at work in human history, the revealed mystery which explains the definitive meaning of that history. (*DeV* 6.3)

Faith here means the "adequate introduction" of the human spirit under the leadership of the Holy Ghost into "all the truth" of the *Mysterium Christi*.

This impressively described faith of Christ's disciples is, nonetheless, not the faith necessary for salvation which Christ in a special way required not only from his future disciples but from all men, which the Church's mission until Vatican II has always required for salvation and which, according to what Christ says, means the separation of mankind into believers and non-believers, into saved and lost (cf. Mk. 16:15ff.).

Based on his exegesis of the words about the Paraclete so far in the final discourse, the Pope now asks about an "intimate bond" between Christ and the "other comforter" in the order of salvation and defines that bond in the following way:

Between the Holy Spirit and Christ there thus subsists, in the economy of salvation, an intimate bond, whereby the Spirit works in human history as "another Counselor," permanently ensuring the transmission and spreading of the Good News revealed by Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, in the Holy Spirit-Paraclete, who in the mystery and action of the

Church unceasingly continues the historical presence on earth of the Redeemer and his saving work, the glory of Christ shines forth, as the following words of John attest: "He [the Spirit of truth] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:14). (*DeV7.1*)

The word "take" in Jn. 16:14 is supposed to show the Trinitarian unity of God as the source of the intimate bond of the Holy Ghost with Jesus Christ:

How intimately this mission is linked with the mission of Christ, how fully it draws from this mission of Christ, consolidating and developing in history its salvific results, is expressed by the verb "take": "He will take what is mine and declare it to you." As if to explain the words "he will take" by clearly expressing the divine and Trinitarian unity of the source, Jesus adds: "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:15). By the very fact of taking what is "mine," he will draw from "what is the Father's." (*DeV7.1*)

This passage from Jn. 16:13-15, here adduced for evidence of the Trinitarian unity, is also a classic text in traditional teaching on the Trinity.

In the light of this "taking" we must also explain what Jesus says in Jn. 16:7ff.:

"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (Jn. 16:7ff.). It will be necessary to return to these words in a separate reflection. (*DeV7.1*)

The "separate reflection" on Jn. 16:7ff. is in fact the whole second part of the Encyclical.

Before we began our study of the action of the Paraclete in the Encyclical's presentation, we asked: Is the judgmental element and thus the faith necessary for salvation silently ignored in the general picture of the working of the Paraclete? This question can only be adequately answered by comparing it with the original picture of the working of the Paraclete in the final discourse as it appears in St. John.

Only when the complete picture of the action of the Paraclete in the Encyclical is put into the context of scientific exegesis can we see the contours and what is special about the Pope's exegesis. That is why we would like to give a short summary of what is taught about the Paraclete in the New Testament as scientific exegesis sees it.³

The word "Paraclete"—Intercessor, Counselor, in the singular also Comforter—occurs in the New Testament only in St. John: once in I Jn. 2:1ff. and four times in Jesus' final discourse (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

The only passage in which Christ himself is called the "Paraclete" is I Jn. 2:1. There the word Paraclete means Christ risen to God who by his propitiatory death intercedes before the throne of God until the Parousia for sinful Christians. This idea is basic to Christianity even though the word "Paraclete" only occurs once in this particular passage.

The four other passages are in Jesus' final discourse and deal with an *interior* working Paraclete.

Reference is made in Jn. 14:16 to Jesus Himself: He promises "another Paraclete" whom the Father will give. In this way Jesus sees Himself as a Paraclete. The use of the phrase "another Paraclete" shows that the Evangelist understands by the word "Paraclete" primarily Jesus in His earthly work without specifically calling Him by this title anywhere else in his Gospel. What is meant, however, is that Jesus

³ Cf. Johannes Behm, *ThWNT* (Kittel), V, 798-812.

Christ Himself during His life on earth was the disciples' Paraclete because He gave His counsel by His teaching and in His conflicts with the faithless world.

In this rôle Jesus, after His Ascension to His Father, is replaced by "another Paraclete," the Holy Ghost. The essence and working of the "other Paraclete" are described in more detail in Jesus' final discourse:

The Spirit-Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth. He is to come after Jesus' Ascension to continue His work and remain for ever with and in the disciples (Jn.14:16ff., 26; 16:7, 13ff.). Sent by the Father and Jesus to the disciples (Jn.14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), He teaches with supreme authority but strictly with reference to Jesus and His Good News. He will preserve, complete and perfect Jesus' work and lead the disciples in all truth (Jn.14:26, 15:26, 16:13ff.). The presupposition for His coming is the faith of the disciples in Jesus and their love for Him. The world cannot receive Him because, without faith or love, it has no means to receive Him (14:17). Rather His witness for Jesus (15:26), as opposed to the world, will become an accusation before God's judgment: He accuses the world concerning sin, justice, and judgment, *i.e.*, He proves that the world is on the side of sin and Jesus on the side of right and victory (16:8-11). The working of the Spirit-Paraclete has a kerygmatic and at the same time a judgmental character.⁴

If we compare the Encyclical's exegesis with the evidence in the New Testament, we find a fundamental difference which is especially notable in what the Encyclical does *not* say:

In St. John's final discourse the coming and working of the Spirit-Paraclete has a decisive presupposition which de-

⁴ Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, *ThWNT*, II, 470-474, and Hermann Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes [The Gospel according to John]* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 194-221.

finer everything: the faith of the disciples in Jesus and their love for Him. That is why the world cannot receive the Holy Ghost because it does not believe in Jesus but hates Him and His disciples (Jn. 15:18ff.). The promise of the sending of the Spirit-Paraclete in the Biblical text is valid only for the disciples and the Church in her conflict with the world. The difference and separation of the community of disciples from the world, of faith from unbelief, is deliberately washed over in the text of the Encyclical. This is shown right at the beginning of the text by the selective reproduction of the text of Jn. 14:16ff. (cf. *DeV*3.1).

The Pope also speaks of faith. But his is a faith "of the disciples and confessors of the Master" which "adequately introduces man into the revealed mystery of Christ" (*DeV*6.3). That is not the justifying obedience to faith necessary for salvation required in the Gospel from all men and which effects the separation of faithful community of disciples from unbelieving "world." The general requirement of the faith as a presupposition for the coming and working of the Spirit-Paraclete has so far not been mentioned in the Encyclical.

The reason for this lacuna is the thesis of universal salvation. The adequate introduction of Christ's disciples into "all truth" of the mystery of Christ by faith is for the Pope, of course, the introduction into the mystery of universal salvation which was revealed to the Church at Vatican II. The knowledge of universal salvation doesn't make the Church's mission superfluous but it does fundamentally change its character:

According to this, the task of the Vatican II Church is to preach the mystery of universal salvation to all men. The relationship of the Church to non-Christian mankind is not a relationship which is decided by a faith necessary for salvation which discerns between salvation and damnation, but a relationship of consciousness. The knowledge of universal salva-

tion of which the Church was first made expressly aware at Vatican II is what must be preached to non-Christian mankind.⁵ This happens, as everyone nowadays can clearly see, by mutual exchange of spiritual goods in interreligious dialogue.⁶

As a result we can say: In the Encyclical's exegesis the working of the Spirit-Paraclete has only a kerygmatic but no judgmental character. The element of judgment based on a faith necessary for salvation is deliberately removed and appears only at the end of the discussion as a quotation: The Paraclete will "convince the world concerning sin, and justice, and judgment" (cf. Jn. 16:7ff.). But for the interpretation of this passage the reader is referred to an explanation to come (cf. *DeV* 7.2). The whole second part of the Encyclical deals with it. But even there, there is no mention of a judgmental element in Jn. 16:7ff.

2. The revelation of the Trinity in the work of the Redemption (*DeV* 8-10)⁷

After the Pope has defined "Paraclete," given a general picture of the working of the Paraclete, shown the "intimate bond" between the Holy Ghost and Christ in the order of salvation, and briefly named the Trinitarian unity as the source of that "bond," he now shows how the missions of the divine persons proceed out of the source of the Trinitarian unity to the work of Redemption. That is, he sketches the principle of his economical teaching on the Trinity.

⁵ Article by Herbert Vorgrimler on Henri de Lubac in *Bilanz der Theologie*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler and Robert Vander Gucht (Freiburg, 1970), pp. 199-214 and Dörmann, [*Theological Journey*], 1, 92-95.

⁶ Dörmann, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*] in review *Respondeo* 8.

⁷ In the English translation: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

2.1. The Father alone sends the Son and the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 8.1)

First the Pope makes clear that Jesus in His final discourse clearly speaks from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as three Persons. At the same time Jesus reveals “the bonds which unite the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to one another”:

Thus “the Holy Spirit...proceeds from the Father” (Jn. 15:26) and the Father “gives” the Spirit (Jn. 14:16). The Father “sends” the Spirit in the name of the Son (Jn. 14: 26), the Spirit “bears witness” to the Son (Jn. 15:26). The Son asks the Father to send the Spirit-Counselor (Jn. 14:16), but likewise affirms and promises, in relation to his own “departure” through the Cross: “If I go, I will send him to you” (Jn. 16:7). (*DeV* 8.1)

From this the Pope concludes:

Thus, the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the power of his Fatherhood, as he has sent the Son (cf. Jn. 3:16ff., 34; 6: 57; 17:3, 18, 23); but at the same time he sends him in the power of the Redemption accomplished by Christ—and in this sense Holy Spirit is sent also by the Son: “I will send him to you.” (*DeV* 8.1)

In this sentence the Pope formulates the principle of his economical teaching on the Trinity.

The formula contains three theses about the sending of the Holy Ghost:

1. The Father sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of his Fatherhood, as he also sent the Son.

2. The Father sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of the Redemption performed by Christ.

3. In like manner, the Son sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of the Redemption performed by Christ.

According to this, the threefold sending of the Holy Ghost has a twofold source or basis: the eternal Fatherhood of the Father (=inner Trinitarian) and the Redemption effected by Christ in time (=soteriological).

We may say this about the Encyclical's theses:

1) As in the classic teaching on the Trinity the Pope's also says that the exterior (*missio ad extra*) mission of the divine Persons is in a certain way a continuation of its eternal procession in time. Corresponding to sending is the eternal begetting, to being sent the eternally begotten. The idea of sending thus includes the eternal procession of the divine Persons so that the temporal sending reflects the eternal order of origin of the divine Persons.⁸

The Pope's formula: the Father sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of his Fatherhood as He also sent the Son is based on the inner Trinitarian processions. That is why we may ask: Does this formula mean that the Father is the unique source of both?

It is the traditional teaching of the Church that the Father is the origin without origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost. In this way, one can say that the Father, by virtue of his Fatherhood, sends the Son and the Holy Ghost. But the Encyclical's thesis says and means something else. Since there is no mention of a *missio ad extra* of the Holy Ghost by the Son, thus a sending of the Father and the Son (*Filioque*), the Encyclical's thesis says covertly but unambiguously that the Father alone, by virtue of his Fatherhood, sends the Holy Ghost.

One can't say either "the Father sends the Holy Ghost in the power of his (eternal) Fatherhood as he also sent the Son." If the Father's Fatherhood were the unique principle of origin

⁸ Cf. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 62ff., 73.

for the Holy Ghost as it is the Son's then the Father would have in consequence two Sons whom he had sent.

The Pope justifies his thesis using the quoted passages of Scripture. A look at Jn. 15:26, however, shows that he only quotes parts of the verse in order to eliminate a reference to the Son. This is the full verse:

But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.

According to the Biblical text the Holy Ghost does not proceed uniquely from the Father. The Son too sends him from the Father. Thus the sending of the Holy Ghost is not from the Father alone but from the Father and the Son.⁹

It is Catholic teaching that the Son alone is begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost, however, proceeds from the Father and the Son. As the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son, this procession of the Holy Ghost has a singular principle of origin.¹⁰ That is why the temporal "*missio ad extra*" of the Holy Ghost is not uniquely from the Father but from the Father *and* the Son as a single principle.¹¹

In contrast, the Encyclical's formulation must mean that if the Father alone "in the power of his Fatherhood" sends the Son and the Holy Ghost then the Father is the unique inner Trinitarian origin of both the Son and the Holy Ghost.

This thesis is the Pope's firm conviction and fundamental for his teaching on the Trinity. It is not an isolated phrase in the Encyclical but unambiguously repeated in other explana-

⁹ Cf. Eduard Schick, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes [The Gospel according to John]* (Würzburg, 1956), pp. 141ff.

¹⁰ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 62, 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

tions of the Pope. These unambiguous passages will be examined shortly because of the significance of what they prove.

The thesis: The Father alone is the origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost incidentally doesn't just contradict the "*Filioque*" of the "teaching on the persons of the Trinity" of the Western Church but also the "*ex Patre per Filium*" of the "organic teaching of the Trinity" of the orthodox Greek Fathers.¹²

The difference between these two orthodox professions of faith is not substantial but concerns only the way of understanding and presenting the truth. Misunderstandings could occur but there is no opposition in the matter itself.

On the other hand the Pope's theory, that the Father is the unique origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost, is simply the teaching of Photius. It is, therefore, in contradiction to both traditions. "If Photius had a precursor in this point it was the old Greek heretics."¹³

The Greek Orthodox Church has taught clearly that the Holy Ghost proceeds uniquely from the Father only since the 9th century. The Synod in Constantinople in 879 under the Patriarch Photius rejected the "*Filioque*" of the Latins as being heretical. In response the Roman Church frequently solemnly confirmed the "*Filioque*" and rejected the Photian heresy.¹⁴

That was the dogmatic situation until Vatican II. Then Paul VI and Athenagoras I and their successors decided to meet. In 1965 the excommunications between Rome and Constantinople were lifted. The repeated meetings between the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarchs demonstrated the in-

¹² Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Gotteslehre [Theology]*, Gesammelte Schriften [Collected Works], ed. Josef Höfer, IV (Freiburg, 1948), 376ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 62.

tion, as John Paul II said, "to confine the old excommunications to oblivion and to set out on the road to the restoration of full unity."¹⁵

The great dogmatist Matthias Joseph Scheeben considers the Photian schism as "the greatest and most stubborn" of all the Church's schisms because Photius' heresy "makes a schism in God himself."¹⁶ It separates the procession or origin of the Holy Ghost from the Father from the Son.

The controversy about the "*Filioque*" has set the tone for relations between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church until the present day. The Patriarch Dimitrios, the successor of Athenagoras, has openly said that there are very deep differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church and that it will take a long time before these are overcome.¹⁷ The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I and other Orthodox Metropolitans spoke in a similarly critical vein after the last visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Rome.¹⁸

John Paul II sees things differently. As he said at the visit to Rome of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I on June 29, 1995 in the presence of his important guest, he considers the dispute about the "*Filioque*" to be a "misunderstanding." In reality there is "full harmony." Meanwhile the Holy Father emphasised that on the side of the Catholic Church there is the firm intention "to explain the traditional teaching of the *Filioque* as it occurs in the Latin Credo and

¹⁵ Common declaration of Pope John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I on June 29, 1995; in *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), July 7, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁶ Scheeben, [*Theology*], [Collected Works], IV, 378ff.

¹⁷ Cf. J. P. M. van der Ploeg, "Zur ökumenischen Enzyklika von Johannes Paul II 'Ut unum sint,'" ["Concerning John Paul II's Ecumenical Encyclical"] of May 5, 1995; in *Theologisches*, Sept. 1995, col. 408.

¹⁸ Cf. *KNA*, July 4, 1996 and *30 Days*, no. 4 (1996).

that in such a way that the full harmony may be shown between it and what was taught at the ecumenical Council (of Constantinople in 381) in its Creed: The Father is the source of the whole Trinity, the unique origin of both the Son and the Holy Ghost."¹⁹

Did the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople, as the Pope says, really say: The Father is the unique origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost?

The *Filioque* is not just "present in the liturgical version of the Latin Creed" but is rather a fundamental dogma of the Roman Church. That is why the firm intention of the Pope to explain the "*Filioque*" clause is the central point in the dialogue with the Orthodox.

The reason for the controversy about the *Filioque* lies in the article of the Creed about the Holy Ghost from the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) from whence also the title of the Encyclical comes.

After the Council of Nicea clearly showed the divinity of the Son, the Council of Constantinople set about defining the divinity of the Holy Ghost which was being denied by the heretical Macedonians. Whilst the Nicene Council simply confessed: "We believe in the Holy Ghost," the Council of Constantinople went further to explain clearly the divinity of the Holy Ghost.²⁰

This is the original text in Latin:

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, ex Patre procedentem, cum Patre et Filio adorandum et conglorificandum, qui locutus est per Prophetas. (Dz. 86)

¹⁹ Sermon of John Paul II on June 29, 1995; in *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), July 7, 1995, pp. 1, 7.

²⁰ Cf. Scheeben, [*Theology*], [Collected Works] IV, 363-377.

All the additions are a confession of the equal divinity of the Holy Ghost. The clause "*ex Patre procedentem*" expresses the Holy Ghost's equality in divinity with the Father. It in no way means that the Holy Ghost proceeds alone from the Father.

The "*Filioque*" is similarly an additional explanation for "*ex Patre procedentem*" which does not occur in the Creed of the Council of Constantinople but was added by the Latin Church later, first at the Synod of Braga (675) after the teaching had been spread by the formulae of various synods in Spain from the middle of the 5th century (1st Synod of Toledo 445). From Spain the new form of the Creed found its way into the liturgy and then reached Gaul.²¹

The agreement of the *Filioque* in the dogma of the Roman Church with the Creed of the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) was surely brought to light by the controversy which raged for centuries. The Council had merely said that the Holy Ghost "proceeds from the Father" but did not mean that the Father is the "unique origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost."²² That is precisely what John Paul II says it meant.

But the full harmony with the Roman *Filioque* is to be demonstrated precisely through this pretended confession of the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople, according to the firm intention of the Holy Father. This task was taken up by the "Papal council for the promotion of the unity of Christians" who published the explanation asked for by the Pope in *L'Osservatore Romano* as their contribution to ecumenical dialogue.²³

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 383. Short overview of the history of the *Filioque*: J. Gill, "Artikel Filioque" ["The *Filioque* Article"]; in *LThK* (Freiburg, 1960), vol. 4, cols. 126-128.

²² Scheeben, [*Theology*], [Collected Works] IV, 363-377.

The “explanation” of the Papal Council emphasised in advance the “conciliar, ecumenical, normative and unchangeable validity” of the Creed of the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381. That is the “expression of the common faith of the Church and all Christians” which no Creed of any particular liturgical tradition—not even the Latin!—may contradict.²⁴

After this normative declaration, the Papal Council simply adopts the inapplicable thesis of the Pope: The first ecumenical Constantinople Council is said to have professed that the Father is the unique source of both the Son and the Holy Ghost and they then use this Papal supposition as the foundation for their “explanation.”

“This Creed (*i.e.*, of Constantinople 381) based on Jn. 15:26 professes the Spirit (τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς εκπορευόμενον—who takes his origin from the Father). The Father alone is the origin without origin (αρχὴ ἀναρχος) of both other persons of the Trinity, the unique origin (πηγὴ) of both the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost has his origin from the Father alone (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς) in a fundamental (principal), original and immediate way.”²⁵

Not only do they import the Photian heresy which they pass off as the teaching of the first ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) but they have no shame in simply adding the Greek word μόνου (alone) to the text of the Council itself (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς). One can't but think of the addition

²³ The declaration of the Papal Council was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), May 24, 1996, pp. 11-13. See the criticism of Wigand Siebel, “Änderung des Credo zu Gunsten der ‘Orthodoxie?’” [“Changing the Creed to Please the Orthodox?”]; in *Theologisches*, June 1996, cols. 234-240.

²⁴ *L'Osservatore Romano* (German ed.), May 24, 1996, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Instead of *patérov* it should say *patròn*.

of “alone” by Luther to faith “alone,” and Scripture “alone.” Now it is the Father “alone”!

One can consider the Pope’s thesis “the Father alone” as an *hors d’oeuvre* to the dialogue with the Orthodox. That is the key to what is said in *DeV* 2.2 concerning the Holy Father’s conviction that the Roman and the Orthodox Churches are bound by the same faith. In what consists the “full harmony” of the century-old conflict about the “from the Father alone” and the “*Filioque*” after the “explanation” of the Papal Council for the promotion of the unity of Christians” remains the Pope’s secret.

Thus we may sum up: The Pope professes the Photian teaching that the Father is the unique source of the Son and the Holy Ghost. That explains the order of the *missiones ad extra* in the Encyclical: The Father alone by virtue of his (eternal) Fatherhood has sent the Holy Ghost as He sent the Son. Thus the “schism” which Photius’ heresy “brought into God Himself” (cf. supra Scheeben) continues in the sending of the divine Persons *ad extra*. The sending of the Holy Ghost doesn’t happen *a Patre Filioque* but alone from the Father and thus—parallel to one another—“separated” from the Son.

Significant for the relationship of John Paul II to the dogmatic truth and for his thought aimed at harmony and unity is the fact that in the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* Photius’ teaching and the *Filioque* of the Roman Church sit happily next to one another (e.g., *DeV* 10.1; 34).

2) The “schism” which the Photian heresy brings into God Himself and from there into the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost is logically continued in the Encyclical in the work of the Redemption. If from the Father alone both the Son and Holy Ghost are sent for the work of the Redemption, this sending side by side is then constitutive for the Redemption. In this way he breaks the organic unity of the *a Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto*, which is reflected in the Church’s

teaching on the work of the Redemption. We can see numerous examples of this in the text of the Encyclical.

The Pope's first thesis is the presupposition for the adequate understanding of the second thesis which is: At the same time the Father sends the Holy Ghost "by virtue of the Redemption worked by Christ."

According to this, there is a twofold sending of the Holy Ghost by the Father: i) Alone the Father sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of or in the power of His (eternal) Fatherhood. ii) At the same time the Father sends the Holy Ghost "in the power of the Redemption worked by Christ."

The twofold sending of the Holy Ghost by the Father has, therefore, a twofold reason: The eternal Fatherhood and the Redemption performed by Christ. The sending of the Holy Ghost by the Father by virtue of the Redemption doesn't occur by virtue of the eternal Fatherhood of the Father but has its own reason in the Redemption performed by Christ. This statement is completed by the third thesis.

3) The third thesis is: "In this sense—thus 'in the power of the Redemption performed by Christ'—the Holy Ghost is also sent by the Son." The sending of the Holy Ghost by the Son doesn't take place, therefore, because of His eternal Sonship but because of the Redemption performed by Christ. The sending of the Holy Ghost by the Son then has its reason alone in the Redemption performed by Christ. We may sum up:

According to the Encyclical's formulation of the Trinitarian procession there is absolutely no sending of the Holy Ghost by the Son by virtue of His eternal Sonship—which would contradict the Photian heresy—but only a sending of the Holy Ghost through the Son "in the power of the Redemption performed by Christ." But even in this case the sending of the Holy Ghost consequently takes place parallel from both the Father and the Son.

In this way a double "schism" is brought into the relationship of the *missio ad extra* of the Holy Ghost and the Redemption performed by Christ: a) In so far as the Redemption appears as a separate reason for the sending of the Holy Ghost, it is separated from an immediate relationship with the Trinitarian processions and the sendings *ad extra*. b) The sending of the Holy Ghost by virtue of the Redemption is not *a Patre Filioque* but parallel from the Father and the Son.

In contrast, traditional teaching says that the work of the Redemption is an immediate result of the sendings of the divine Persons *ad extra*. In this way the inner Trinitarian relationship *a Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto* is also constitutive for the work of the Redemption.

To sum up the teaching of the Encyclical: By virtue of the inner Trinitarian origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost from the Father alone, the Father alone in the power of His eternal Fatherhood sends the Holy Ghost as He sent the Son.

This thesis brings a "schism" not only in the inner nature of the Trinitarian God Himself, in so far as it separates the procession of the Holy Ghost from that of the Son, but also in the resulting sendings of the divine Persons for the work of Redemption.

By making the "Redemption performed by Christ" a separate reason for the sending of the Holy Ghost through the Father and through the Son, the Encyclical has separated the Redemption from the inner Trinitarian processions *a Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto* and the resulting *missiones ad extra*.

In the traditional teaching of the Church the sending of the divine Persons forms an organic inseparable unity with Christ's work of Redemption. This unity is founded in the essence of the triune God and in the inner Trinitarian processions *a Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto*, whence come the *missiones ad extra* and represents a single principle of Redemption. This unity is dissolved in the Encyclical: The

Redemption doesn't proceed immediately and organically from the inner Trinitarian relationships. Rather the Redemption performed by Christ appears separately as an independent reason for the sending of the Holy Ghost through the Father and at the same time through the Son.

The Pope makes the relationship of the "Redemption performed by Christ" to the sending of the Holy Ghost the special object of his exegesis.

2.2. The sending of the Holy Ghost in the power of the Redemption performed by Christ (*DeV* 8.2)

After the Pope has made the Redemption performed by Christ a special reason for the sending of the Holy Ghost from both the Father and the Son, from this Photian point of departure comes the development of the second part of his formulation of the Trinitarian sending: The Father sends the Holy Ghost "in the power of the Redemption performed by Christ" and in this sense the Holy Ghost is also sent by the Son.

The Encyclical has this to say about the relationship of the "Redemption performed by Christ" to the sending of the Spirit:

While all the other promises made in the Upper Room foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit after Christ's departure, the one contained in the text of John 16:7ff. also includes and clearly emphasises the relationship of interdependence which could be called causal between the manifestation of each: "If I go, I will send him to you." The Holy Spirit will come insofar as Christ will depart through the Cross: he will come not only afterwards, but because of the Redemption accomplished by Christ, through the will and action of the Father. (*DeV* 8.2)

The passage says three things about the relationship of the Redemption to the coming or sending of the Holy Ghost.

1) The Holy Ghost comes or is sent by virtue of the Redemption accomplished by the death of Christ on the Cross. The death on the Cross is thus the Redemption. The sending of the Holy Ghost is separate from this which occurs by virtue of the Redemption. This sounds like traditional Catholicism but it isn't. Why? The answer is contained in the following two statements of the Encyclical which define the relationship of the Redemption and the sending of the Spirit more closely.

2) The Encyclical defines the obvious historical sequence of Redemption through the death of Christ on the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost as a "relationship of interdependence which could be called causal."

The Church's teaching is similarly that the death of Christ on the Cross is the work of Redemption (*de fide*) and the presupposition in the history of salvation for the sending of the Holy Ghost. But if we look into the deeper, inner relationship between Redemption and the sending of the Spirit, it is more than just a "relationship of interdependence which could be called causal." For "the God-man brought not only His humanity and His own divine person with Him into the human race but also the Holy Ghost which proceeded from Him — not only through His merit but also through the hypostatic union."²⁶

The deeper relationship of Christ's redemptive sacrifice to the sending of the Spirit is none other than the one which exists between the Son and the Holy Ghost by virtue of the inner Trinitarian processions and the *missiones ad extra*, i.e., a *Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto*. This relationship remains in the work of Redemption and links the Redemption through

²⁶ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Die Mystereien des Christentums* [*The Mysteries of Christianity*], [Collected Works] II (Freiburg, 1950), 469.

Christ's sacrifice on the Cross with the sending of the Holy Ghost by virtue of the *Filioque* in an indivisible unity.

There can, however, be no such relationship in the Encyclical because of the Photian formulation of the Trinity, since this formulation excludes a sending of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*) and in this way brings a "schism" into the relationship between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sending of the Spirit. Since, according to the Pope's formulation of the sending, the Father alone sends both the Son and the Holy Ghost, the work of Redemption of the Son and the Holy Ghost are separated and only join together in the accomplishment of the actual act of Redemption.

This again has consequences for the definition of the Redemption itself. What does the Encyclical mean by the term Redemption?

In so far as the Encyclical equates the Redemption with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and, on the other hand, separates the coming of the Holy Ghost from it and defines the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross to the sending of the Spirit as simply a "relationship of interdependence which could be called causal," it separates the organic unity of Redemption and sending of the Holy Ghost. The communication of the Holy Ghost, however, is part of the Redemption itself! The Encyclical's definition of the Redemption means: Redemption through the Cross, after which follows the communication of the Holy Ghost. In this way the Photian "schism" is brought into the definition of the Redemption.

The Encyclical's special definition of the Redemption is more obvious when compared to the traditional teaching:

According to this, the sacrifice of the Cross is the work of Redemption, but the Redemption does not just bring about the removal of sin but also the reconciliation with God, *i.e.*, the giving of sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost. A consti-

tutive part of the Redemption through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is thus *per se* the communication of the Holy Ghost as the most precious fruit of the Redemption. Sacrificial Redemption and communication of the Holy Ghost form one indivisible organic unity. This is based on the unity of the divine essence and on the inner Trinitarian processions of the Son from the Father through begetting and of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son by spiration. From the inner Trinitarian processions come the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost in such a way that in Christ's work of Redemption, the communication of the Holy Ghost too proceeds as the most precious fruit of the Redemption immediately from the sending of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son.

One more thing: From the Encyclical's concept of the Redemption, it naturally follows that there is no co-working of the Holy Ghost in the work of the Redemption but only the sending of the Holy Ghost which follows thereafter by virtue of Christ's Redemption which has then simply a "relationship of interdependence which could be called causal." The final formulation in the quoted passage: The Holy Ghost will come "because of the Redemption accomplished by Christ, through the will and action of the Father" brings the Father also into consideration and shows the relationship in the economy of salvation of the three divine Persons in the Redemption in a single phrase. Of course, Redemption is to be understood in the sense of the Encyclical. Certainly Christ accomplished the Redemption according to the will of the Father. But did He accomplish the Redemption "through the action of the Father" *per patrem*? Shouldn't it be: The Father accomplished the Redemption through the Son, "*per Christum*"? If we look at the whole way the Pope argues his case we can say the decisive teaching of the Encyclical is:

The Father is the unique origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is the teaching of Photius who brought a

“schism” into God Himself and from thence into the Redemption. This is shown first in the Encyclical in the thesis on the *missiones ad extra*: Only the Father in the power of His Fatherhood sends the Holy Ghost as He sent the Son. The direct relationship of the missions to the Redemption is dissolved in so far as Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross appears as a separate reason for the sending of the Holy Ghost both from the Father and the Son. The “schism” continues in the concept of the Redemption which equates the Redemption with Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross but differentiates it from the communication of the Holy Ghost and defines the relationship between the sacrifice of the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost as simply a “relationship of interdependence which could be called causal.”

The special features of the Encyclical’s teaching can be more clearly seen in the light of the classic teaching of the Church:

According to this, all God’s external activities are common to the three divine Persons, even the Redemption. Because the Holy Ghost proceeds within the Trinity from the Father and the Son as a single principle, the sending of the Holy Ghost occurs from the Father and the Son as from a single principle. The *missiones ad extra* reflect the processions within the Trinity. These are constitutive for the work of the Redemption and form *a Patre Filioque in Spiritu Sancto* in the work of the Redemption an indivisible unity. In this way the communication of the Holy Ghost is an immediate fruit of the Redemption which was earned and given with the Redemption through the Sacrifice of the Cross. It proceeds directly and organically from Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, who communicates and sends the Holy Ghost *a Patre Filioque*. This “Trinitarian Relationship” between Christ and the Holy Ghost in the work of the Redemption is more than a “relationship of interdependence which could be called caus-

al” between the Redemption through Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

2.3. Climax of the revelation of the Trinity and the participation of man in the divine life by baptism (*DeV* 9-10)

The Pope believes he has reached the climax of the revelation of the Trinity in his exegesis of the final discourse and continues:

Thus in the farewell discourse at the Last Supper, we can say that the highest point of the revelation of the Trinity is reached. At the same time, we are on the threshold of definitive events and final words which in the end will be translated into the great missionary mandate addressed to the Apostles and through them to the Church: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,” a mandate which contains, in a certain sense, the Trinitarian formula of baptism: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). The formula reflects the intimate mystery of God, of the divine life, which is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the divine unity of the Trinity. The farewell discourse can be read as a special preparation for this Trinitarian formula, in which is expressed the life-giving power of the Sacrament which brings about sharing in the life of the Triune God, for it gives sanctifying grace as a supernatural gift to man. Through grace, man is called and made “capable” of sharing in the inscrutable life of God. (*DeV* 9.1)

The “missionary mandate” to the Apostles and the Church doesn’t contain “in a certain sense” but in a very clear way the “Trinitarian formula of baptism.” Christ’s command to baptize is made very seriously and decisively, requiring all peoples and all men of faith to receive baptism. Even more

decisively than in Mt. 28:19 is the way Mk. 16:16 expresses it: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

If the Biblical account of Jesus' final discourse is to be read as a special preparation of His command to mission, one could expect that the faith which in the final discourse represents the fundamental presupposition for the reception or the impossibility of reception of the Holy Ghost would at least be mentioned when talking about baptism. That is, however, not the case. The Encyclical simply takes up the Trinitarian baptismal formula and the participation in the life of the triune God which is expressed in it.

The omission of the requirement of faith necessary for salvation should not, however, surprise us since from the beginning of the exegesis of the final discourse it has been left out (cf. *DeV*3-7).

One should mention that the universal salvation thesis does not nullify baptism but gives it a new character: In the context of universal salvation, baptism shows and effects the transition from the hidden to the revealed grace of God.

It should be emphasised that in the quoted passage there has been a correction of the pantheistic formulation of the previous Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*. It is only now in *Dominum et Vivificantem* that "sanctifying grace" is mentioned. This is kept up for the greater part of the Encyclical.

2.4. The Trinitarian God exists through the Holy Ghost *ad intra* and *ad extra* as a gift (*DeV*10.1 -2)

From baptism as a participation of man in the triune life of God the Encyclical comes to the inner Trinitarian life of God Himself, in order from there to show the deepest reason for the self-communication of God to man. This is what it says about the Trinitarian life of God:

In his intimate life, God is love, the essential love shared by the three divine Persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Therefore he “searches even the depths of God” (I Cor. 2:1), as uncreated Love-Gift. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift. (*DeV* 10.1)

One would expect that the Pope would now present the inner life of God also from his Photian understanding of the Trinity (cf. *DeV* 8). That is, however, not the case. In the expression: The Holy Ghost is “the Spirit of the Father and the Son” in the context of the life of God within the Trinity it can only be talking about the Roman “*Filioque*.” That needn't surprise us since the Pope is convinced that there is “full harmony” between the Eastern and Western understanding of the Trinity and indeed both traditions are represented in the Encyclical (see *DeV* 34).

In Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost is called both the spirit of the Father and of the Son.

The Church's traditional teaching on the Trinity interprets the way Scripture expresses itself according to the Processions within the Trinity (*de fide*): According to this, the Son proceeds from the Father by being begotten, the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single principle by one spiration.

Classical speculation explains the procession of the Holy Ghost from the mutual love of the Father and the Son. That is why the Fathers call the Holy Ghost “Love” and thus following Scripture also “Gift.” Because the Holy Ghost appears as a gift in His relationship to the Father and the Son within the

Trinity, He can also be considered as God's "absolutely free gift" to creatures, as the highest gift and source of all other gifts *ad extra*.²⁷

The Encyclical, however, does not go into the question according to the processions within the Trinity but only speaks of the inner life of God as "being-love" and from the mutual love of the divine Persons; all three Persons are obviously meant. By the exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons the triune God Himself becomes completely gift in the Holy Ghost.

The main theses of the passage from the Encyclical may be summed up thus:

Because God in His inner life is substantial love which is common to the three divine Persons, the Holy Ghost is not only "gift" in His eternal relationship to the Father and the Son, but the whole divinity exists in itself through the Holy Ghost as "gift."

Thus the Pope gives the basic reason for all God's works *ad extra*. The Encyclical now explains this as follows:

At the same time, the Holy Spirit, being consubstantial with the Father and the Son in divinity, is love and uncreated gift from which derives as from its source (*fons vivus*) all giving of gifts vis-à-vis creatures (created gift): the gift of existence to all things through creation; the gift of grace to human beings through the whole economy of salvation. As the Apostle Paul writes: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5). (*DeV* 10.2)

After the Encyclical has shown that the triune God is substantial love in His inner life and through the Holy Ghost "exists as gift" (*DeV* 10.1), departing from the divine consub-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 90ff.

stantiality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son, it goes on to explain God's works *ad extra*. Thus the Encyclical doesn't give traditional teaching regarding the processions within the Trinity which explains the procession of the third divine Person from the mutual love of the Father and the Son and therefore understands the Holy Ghost as gift both *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

That means two things:

The procession of the divine Person of the Holy Ghost as gift cannot be explained either *ad intra* nor *ad extra* simply from the divine consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son. The procession—and thus also the mission—of the Holy Ghost presupposes the Persons of the Father and the Son. The subject of the processions within the Trinity (in the active and passive sense) is the divine Persons, not the divine nature or substance (*de fide*).

If the Holy Ghost, because of His consubstantiality with the Father and the Son, is both love and gift from whom the gift of the Creation and grace for man “springs” (*emanat*) “as from a living spring,” then literally speaking, Creation and grace would be an “emanation” of the Holy Ghost. As we shall see in the following articles on the Creation and Redemption (*DeV* 11-14; 34), the expressions are carefully chosen.

In Christianity Creation is not an emanation, not even in the form of a “created gift” but *creatio ex nihilo*, which owes its existence to an absolutely sovereign, free act of the will of a supernal God.²⁸

The Creation similarly does not emanate especially from the Holy Ghost. Rather, according to Catholic teaching, the three divine Persons are a single common principle of the Creation (*de fide*). The Roman Synod in 382 expressed this faith

²⁸ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 79.

in a Trinitarian formula: "The Father made everything, visible and invisible, through the Son and his Holy Spirit" (Dz. 77).

Because the Creation of the world shows a peculiar similarity with the personal character of the first divine Person, it is preferably attributed (appropriated)—as it is in the Apostles' Creed—to the Father.²⁹

Since all external activities of God are common to the three divine Persons (*de fide*), this is also true for the gift of grace in the whole economy of salvation.

God's activities in the economy of salvation have received the Church's interpretation in the "economical teaching on the Trinity" of the Fathers. According to this, the economy of salvation is the common work of the three Persons of God which St. Athanasius formulated in a classic way: *a Patre per Filium in Spiritu Sancto*.

Even if the sanctification of man is appropriated in a special way to the Holy Ghost as the Lord and giver of life, nonetheless the fundamental dogma remains that all God's external activities are common to the three Persons. The important principle of appropriation, however, does not appear in the Encyclical.

It is with this short passage on God as gift through the Holy Ghost *ad intra* and *ad extra* that the Pope lays the foundation for his teaching of the Creation and Redemption.

3. Creation, sin, and Redemption (*DeV* 11-14)

Just as the traditional dogmatic studies turn their attention to the mystery of the Creation, sin, and Redemption after the teaching on God, so does the Encyclical. What is specific about the Pope's teaching is that he starts from Jesus' final discourse as the basis of his considerations and from there goes on to the Creation. Through the continual recourse to

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Jesus' final discourse as a point of reference, the whole presentation becomes somewhat complicated and difficult to follow. Nevertheless the following structure is still discernible: First there is a general consideration on the "divine logic" of the economy of salvation in the final discourse (*DeV 11*). Then follow articles on the Creation as the "first beginning" of God's communication of Himself (*DeV 12*), then sin (*DeV 13*), and then the Redemption as the "second beginning" of God's communication of Himself (*DeV 14*).

3.1. The divine logic of the economy of salvation in Christ's final discourse (*DeV 11*)

The Holy Ghost's giving of Himself *ad extra* is the point of departure for the pneumatological economy of salvation which the Pope discusses in four stages (*DeV 11-14*).

He begins with a general consideration on the divine plan of salvation in Christ's final discourse:

Christ's farewell discourse at the Last Supper stands in particular reference to this "giving" and "self-giving" of the Holy Spirit. In John's Gospel we have as it were the revelation of the most profound "logic" of the saving mystery contained in God's eternal plan, as an extension of the ineffable communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the divine "logic" which from the mystery of the Trinity leads to the mystery of the Redemption of the world in Jesus Christ. The Redemption accomplished by the Son in the dimensions of the earthly history of humanity—accomplished in his "departure" through the Cross and Resurrection—is at the same time, in its entire salvific power, transmitted to the Holy Spirit: the one who "will take what is mine" (Jn. 16:14). The words of the text of John indicate that, according to the divine plan, Christ's "departure" is an indispensable condition for the "sending" and the coming of the Holy

Spirit, but these words also say that what begins now is the new salvific self-giving of God, in the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 11)

That the “self-giving” of the Holy Ghost is the particular theme of the final discourse when it talks about the Paraclete is taken for granted.

In traditional theology also there is a “profound logic” of the divine saving mystery in that man, through the gift of grace, participates in the Trinitarian life of God and lives the divine action “from the mystery of the Trinity to the mystery of the Redemption of the world in Jesus Christ.” The question is, what does the Pope mean by these words?

The quoted passage only has the following to say about the Redemption: Through the Cross and Resurrection the Son of God has performed the Redemption. Everything else in the Encyclical is concerned with the relationship of the Redemption to the Holy Ghost. Herewith the Pope takes up the theme which he has just dealt with, this time from another point of view (*DeV* 8-10).

His theses are: 1. The Redemption is the “condition” for the sending of the Holy Ghost. 2. The Redemption is transmitted to the Holy Ghost in its full redeeming power. 3. With the Redemption, God begins “again” to communicate Himself in the Holy Ghost for our salvation. The proof for this is in Jn. 16:14: “he will take what is mine.”

Here is what must be said:

i) the thesis that the Redemption is the “condition” for the sending of the Holy Ghost corresponds quite literally to Jesus’ final discourse in St. John. But this “condition” is of course to be interpreted in the sense already given in the Encyclical: as a “relationship of interdependence which could be called causal.” Thus the inner relationship of the Redemption to the sending of the Spirit which is contained in the eternal relationship of the Son to the Holy Ghost is dissolved and the

unity of the Redemption and communication of the Holy Ghost in Christ's work of salvation separated. This separation is the presupposition for the second thesis.

ii) The second thesis is: The Redemption is transmitted to the Holy Ghost in all its redeeming power. Since, however, the Redemption through the sacrifice of the Cross, according to Church teaching, means not only the taking away of sin but also includes the communication of the Holy Ghost, the "full redeeming power" remains indivisible from the sacrifice of the Cross. The "full redeeming power" of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is, in traditional Catholic language, none other than Christ's merit of Redemption which the Redeemer Himself as the eternal High Priest applies to the justified and part of this, indeed, the most precious of all the fruits of the Redemption, is the communication of the Holy Ghost.³⁰ The "full redeeming power" of Christ's sacrifice of the Cross is thus not simply "transmitted" to the Holy Ghost who is Himself the "gift" of the Redeemer.

iii) When it is said that with the Redemption, God "begins" again to communicate Himself in the Holy Ghost, then the Redemption through the Cross of Christ is only the "beginning" which is then followed by a "renewed" communication of the Spirit.

The Encyclical describes it thus due to the relationship described in i) and ii) of the sacrifice of the Cross to the communication of the Holy Ghost.

Jn. 16:14 is in no way a proof for the Pope's thesis.

The passage is once again only partly quoted by the Encyclical and the interpretation given it departs far from the meaning of the words themselves. The full verse reads "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you." These words

³⁰ Cf. Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Erlösungslehre [Redemption]*, [Collected Works] VI/2 (Freiburg, 1954), 196ff.

in their context of the final discourse mean only that the "Counselor" will continue Jesus' preaching closely united to His words, not, however, that the Redemption represents the beginning of a "renewed"(!) communication of the Holy Ghost.

The general consideration of the "logic" of the divine salvific plan in Jesus' final discourse forms as it were the prelude to the main discussion of the history of salvation which—as it is traditionally—is dealt with under the three headings Creation, sin, and Redemption. In the Encyclical, however, none of these has its traditional meaning.

3.2. The Creation: First beginning of God's communication of Himself (*DeV* 12)

The Encyclical understands the words of Jesus' final discourse about the coming of the Holy Ghost as a "new" self-giving of God. A "new" presupposes an earlier self-giving of God. Thus the Pope differentiates between a first, original beginning of God's self-giving in the Creation and a second, new beginning of God's self-giving which is linked to the Redemption. In this way the link between the Creation of the world and the Redemption of the world is established.

This is what the Encyclical has to say about the "first beginning" of God's self-giving in the Creation:

It is a new beginning in relation to the first, original beginning of God's salvific self-giving, which is identified with the mystery of creation itself. Here is what we read in the very first words of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..., and the Spirit of God (*ruah Elohim*) was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1). This biblical concept of creation includes not only the call to existence of the very being of the cosmos, that is to say the giving of existence, but also the presence of the Spirit of God in creation, that is to say the beginning of

God's salvific self-communication to the things he creates. This is true first of all concerning man, who has been created in the image and likeness of God: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). "Let us make": can one hold that the plural which the Creator uses here in speaking of himself already in some way suggests the Trinitarian mystery, the presence of the Trinity in the work of the creation of man? The Christian reader, who already knows the revelation of this mystery, can discern a reflection of it also in these words. At any rate, the context of the Book of Genesis enables us to see in the creation of man the first beginning of God's salvific self-giving commensurate with the "image and likeness" of himself which he has granted to man. (*DeV*12)

The fundamental thesis of this passage concerning the "first beginning" is: The mystery of the Creation is "identified with the salvific self-giving of God." That is especially true for man, the "image and likeness" of God.

The thesis is supported by the first classic account of the Creation in the Old Testament in Genesis 1ff. and at the same time more clearly defined: The Biblical concept of the Creation doesn't just include the "gift of existence" but also the "beginning of God's salvific self-communication to the things He creates."

Looking critically at the Encyclical's exegesis of Gen. 1ff.:

The Biblical concept of the Creation according to the first account of the Creation in the Old Testament in Genesis 1:1-2, 4a (Source P) means the creation of the world from nothing by the word of God alone. Creating by a word reveals the Creator as a Person. Together with the idea of being a Creator is indivisibly bound the idea of being one and His sovereign might over history. The one personal God is absolutely superior and different in essence in relation to everything created, the one world and the one human race.³¹

The presence of God in Creation therefore is, according to the first Biblical account of Creation, in no way identical with "God's salvific self-communication."

The Encyclical sees especially in man made in the "image and likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26) "the first beginning of God's salvific self-communication to man." The concept of the Creation in Gen. 1:1ff., however, with its definitive differentiation of Creator and creature, also includes the creation of man and therefore excludes the identity of Creation and self-giving of God. Even man as the "image and likeness" of God is and remains a creature. One notes: The image and likeness of God in man is not lost according to the first account of the Creation in Genesis since source P contains no account of the Fall.

According to the first account of the Creation in Gen. 1:1-2, 4a one can say with the Encyclical that the Creation is the gift of existence but not that Creation is "God's salvific self-communication to the things He creates." Creation and self-communication are in no way identical but differ in their very substance. The thesis of their identity leads necessarily to pantheism.

The passage in Gen. 1:26 which says that the first man was created as "*imago Dei*" and "*similitudo Dei*" has always played a big rôle in Christian theology:

Already the Fathers of the Church see in Gen. 1:26 a supernatural giving of grace to man in paradise. Bound with this supernatural giving of grace is the self-communication of God. Precisely *when* the first man was raised to the supernatural state of grace the Council of Trent deliberately left undecided. Most theologians share St. Thomas's opinion that the first man was created in a state of grace. This temporal coincidence of the Creation of man and the self-communication of

³¹ Cf. Foerster, *ThWNT*, III, 999ff.

God to the first man means, however, not that Creation and self-communication of God are identical. Rather the qualitative difference between gift of existence and self-communication of God, between the natural *imago Dei* and the supernatural *similitudo Dei*, between nature and grace is clearly brought out.

Since Augustine, the general teaching of theologians is that irrational creation represents a trace (*vestigium*), rational creatures an image (*imago*) of God, and those creatures with sanctifying grace a likeness (*similitudo*) with the Trinity. In doing this, theologians try to stress clearly the pure createdness of the *imago Dei* and the absolute supernaturalness of the *similitudo Dei* (i.e., sanctifying grace) which is a supernatural *gratia creata* and draws the self-communication of God (*Gratia increata*) after it.³²

Since, according to Catholic teaching, the supernatural *similitudo Dei* does not belong to the nature of man in any way, it may also be lost. It was lost through Original Sin and can be lost through any serious sin.³³

It is easy to see that the Encyclical's thesis of the identity of the Creation and the salvific self-communication of God at the beginning does not correspond to traditional teaching but represents the point of departure for the theory of universal salvation and is in line with the first beginning of the Pope's theology of the Covenant. In it, at the beginning of the history of Creation and Salvation, stands the indissoluble covenant of grace which God made *in principio* with man.³⁴ A more detailed explanation of this important matter is given by the Encyclical when it deals with the first Fall in the following article.

³² Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 82ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

³⁴ Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 24-36; II/2, 115-135.

3.3. The intervention of sin (*DeV* 13)

John Paul II's meditation on the history of salvation in accordance with tradition considers, after the Creation, man's Original Sin. One would expect the Pope to continue his exegesis of the first account of Creation (source P) with the second account in Gen. 2:4-25 (source J) since this latter deals with Original Sin, our first parents, and the loss of Paradise. Traditional dogmatic studies move on after the Creation and the supernatural elevation of man to his fall from grace through Original Sin. What is special about the Encyclical is that its source is Jesus' final discourse and from this it creates a first original beginning of God's self-communication in the Creation (*DeV* 12) and a second new beginning of God's self-communication which is linked to the Redemption (*DeV* 14) and then puts the problem of sin in the middle between the two "beginnings" (*DeV* 13).

This is how the Pope presents this concept:

It seems then that even the words spoken by Jesus in the farewell discourse should be read again in the light of that "beginning," so long ago yet fundamental, which we know from Genesis. "If I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." Describing his "departure" as a condition for the "coming" of the Counselor, Christ links the new beginning of God's salvific self-communication in the Holy Spirit with the mystery of the Redemption. It is a new beginning, first of all because between the first beginning and the whole of human history—from the original fall onwards—sin has intervened, sin which is in contradiction to the presence of the Spirit of God in creation, and which is above all in contradiction to God's salvific self-communication to man. St. Paul writes that, precisely because of sin, "creation...was subjected to futility..., has been groaning in travail together until now" and

“waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19-22). (*DeV* 13)

At first sight the passage may be understood in the traditional sense. What is decisive, however, is what Redemption and first Fall mean in the Encyclical.

This is what it says about the Redemption: The second, new beginning of God's self-communication in the Holy Ghost is linked to the Redemption by the “condition” of the sacrifice of the Cross. In this phrase, we see once again the Encyclical's previous detailed description of the Redemption which separates the Redemption by the Cross from the self-communication of the Holy Ghost and interprets these consecutive events in the history of salvation as a “relationship of interdependence which could be called causal” (cf. *DeV* 8).

And what does the “first fall” mean? After the Encyclical has taught the identity of Creation and self-communication of God (cf. *DeV* 12) the question of “first fall” is the critical point in the Pope's consideration of the history of salvation.

About this, it says the second beginning is, therefore, a new beginning of the self-communication of the Holy Ghost because, since the first fall, “sin has intervened” between the first and the second beginning. But this “is in contradiction to the presence of the Spirit of God in creation, and which is above all in contradiction to God's salvific self-communication to man.”

This once again may at first sight be understood in the traditional sense, but what is decisive is what that “first fall” as sin's contradiction to the presence of God in Creation and in the heart of man actually means in the Encyclical.

After the Pope has taught the identity of Creation and self-communication of God and thereby introduced the thesis of the universal giving of grace to man *ab origine* at the beginning (cf. *DeV* 12), the “first fall” of our first parents can not

mean the loss of the self-communication of God to man. That is precisely what is expressed in the quoted passage.

One would naturally expect the Pope to say something clear about Original Sin at this point. But there is no mention of Original Sin in the traditional sense. The Church's unambiguously defined term of Original Sin means the loss of *iustitia originalis*, i.e., the supernatural gift of grace, the self-communication of God through grace to man and the "wounding" of human nature. As Original Sin this loss doesn't just affect our first parents but also all their descendants, the whole of humanity.

There is no mention of such a "loss" in the Encyclical. The "loss" of God's supernatural self-communication to man through grace would mean something else and indeed something more than what is said in the Encyclical that "sin has intervened" between the first and the second beginning of God's self-communication to man which means, and this is incontrovertible, a contradiction to the presence of God in creation and to God's salvific self-communication to man.

But the Encyclical does mention the special effect of the "first fall." It describes this using the words of St. Paul saying that since sin "creation...was subjected to futility" and has "been groaning in travail" until now and "waits for the revealing of the sons of God." Thus the Encyclical simply expresses its thesis of a universal giving of grace again, for:

A Creation which is subject to futility can be redeemed and not redeemed. Even after the Redemption through Christ the Creation is subject to futility. But the Creation which is groaning in travail and is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God already carries within it the sons of God.

On the other hand, the words of the letter to the Romans are spoken only to the redeemed children of God, to the Christian community. The Creation finds itself in travail because of the Christians redeemed by Christ and waits for

them to be revealed. The Encyclical, however, does not use these words of St. Paul in the sense the Apostle uses them. Rather it applies them in the context of its own consideration of the history of salvation to the time between the first and second beginning of the self-communication of God to man as such—and this is because in the Encyclical there is an identity between the Creation and the self-communication of God within a context of a universal giving of grace (cf. *DeV* 12).

Only when we know the Pope's conception of the Redemption is the quoted passage comprehensible:

According to this, man is *ab origine* in an indissoluble covenant of grace with the Father and in the inalienable possession of the *imago* and *similitudo Dei* (cf. *RH* 11.4; 13.3). Because of the unchangeable faithfulness of the Father to His indissoluble covenant of grace with man, He hands the Son over as the satisfaction for sin which nevertheless still occurs. Sin is in contradiction to God's presence in man *a principio* by grace but does not bring about its loss. The quoted passage in the Encyclical is in perfect harmony with the Pope's theology of the Covenant.³⁵

What is new about the Encyclical's pneumatological economy of salvation is seen clearer against the background of traditional teaching.

According to this, God didn't just give our first parents a natural existence but also supernatural sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost. But through Original Sin, the supernatural and praeternatural gifts were lost. Jesus Christ performed the Redemption through His sacrifice on the Cross by which He not only did satisfaction to God for sin but also earned the graces for salvation. By the application of Christ's redemptive suffering to individuals in the process of justification, nega-

³⁵ *Ibid.*

tively Original Sin and all other sins are taken away and positively sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are given. Original Sin is ordered towards the sacrifice of the Cross, but in the Encyclical the first beginning of the self-communication of God to man is ordered towards the second. This means, however, that mankind, in spite of the “intervention” of sin, is *a principio* in possession of an inalienable self-communication of God.

3.4. The second new beginning of the self-communication of God linked to the Redemption

Taking up St. Paul’s theme from the letter to the Romans on the creation’s eager waiting for the revelation of the Sons of God the Encyclical goes on to describe the second new beginning of the self-communication of God to man as the fulfilment of St. Paul’s words:

Therefore Jesus Christ says in the Upper Room “It is to your advantage I go away; ...if I go, I will send him to you” (Jn. 16:7). The “departure” of Christ through the Cross has the power of the Redemption—and this also means a new presence of the Spirit of God in creation: the new beginning of God’s self-communication to man in the Holy Spirit. “And that you are children is proven by the fact that God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son who cries: Abba, Father!” as the Apostle Paul writes in the Letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, as the words of the farewell discourse in the Upper Room bear witness. At the same time he is the Spirit of the Son: he is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as the Apostles and particularly Paul of Tarsus will testify (Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:11). With the sending of this Spirit “into our hearts,” there begins the fulfilment of that for which “creation waits with eager longing,” as we read in the Letter to the Romans. (*DeV* 14.1)

This passage too reflects the Pope's conception of the Trinity in the economy of salvation (cf. *DeV* 8).

According to the passage, the second new beginning is not simply the Redemption through the Cross but "God's self-communication to man in the Holy Spirit" which is linked to the Cross (cf. *DeV* 13). The Cross contains "power of the Redemption"; it is the "condition" for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Redemption through the Cross and the communication of the Holy Ghost are separate entities in the Encyclical. There is between them a relationship of "dependence" or "almost causality" which is often described. The traditional concept of the Redemption has a new meaning due to the Encyclical's concept of the Trinity in the economy of salvation.

That is why when the Encyclical says: The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and at the same time of the Son, it is not to be interpreted in the dogmatically correct sense of the "*Filioque*" but in the sense of the Pope's formulation of the Trinity in the economy of salvation: The Father sends the Holy Ghost by virtue of the Redemption accomplished by Christ—and the Holy Ghost is sent from the Son only in this sense (cf. *DeV* 8.1).

In the Encyclical, the second beginning is a "new beginning in relation to the first, original beginning of God's salvific self-giving, which is identified with the mystery of Creation itself" (*DeV* 12). Since the original self-giving of God was not lost by the "intervention" of sin (*DeV* 13) this second "new" self-communication of God in the Holy Ghost is but a "new mode" of the universal giving of grace. Thus the last sentence in the quoted passage means: Jesus goes and that is why the longing for the revelation of the Sons of God is beginning to be fulfilled; it is the gradual revelation of universal salvation (cf. *DeV* 12; 13).

The sadness of the Apostles which Christ's departure through His death on the Cross caused is now said to change into joy through the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. This is what it says:

The Holy Spirit comes at the price of Christ's "departure." While this "departure" caused the Apostles to be sorrowful (cf. Jn. 16:6), and this sorrow was to reach its culmination in the Passion and Death on Good Friday, "this sorrow will turn into joy" (cf. Jn. 16:20). For Christ will add to this redemptive "departure" the glory of his Resurrection and Ascension to the Father. Thus the sorrow with its underlying joy is, for the Apostles in the context of their Master's "departure," an "advantageous" departure, for thanks to it another "Counselor" will come (Jn. 16:7). At the price of the Cross which brings about the Redemption, in the power of the whole Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in order to remain from the day of Pentecost onwards with the Apostles, to remain with the Church and in the Church, and through her in the world. (*DeV* 14.2)

In this passage too the Holy Ghost doesn't come as Paraclete for the Church in order to help her in her conflict with an unbelieving world but only "to remain with the Church and in the Church, and through her in the world."

The Pope's pneumatological economy of salvation finishes with the resumé:

In this way there is definitively brought about that new beginning of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit through the work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man and of the world. (*DeV* 14.3)

4. Messiah and Holy Ghost in the Old and New Testament (*DeV* 15-24)³⁶

The “new beginning of the self-communication of the triune God in the Holy Ghost” is also said to mean the complete realisation of the sending of the Messiah, of Him therefore:

who has received the fulness of the Holy Spirit for the Chosen People of God and for the whole of humanity. (*DeV* 15.1)

The Encyclical first discusses this theme for the Old and then for the New Testament. It does this in detail and with well-known passages from Scripture. I have made do without quoting the long and repetitive passages word for word but will here content myself with a description of his train of thought.

4.1. Messiah and Holy Ghost in the prophecies in the Old Testament (*DeV* 15-17)

Messiah, literally the “anointed,” in Greek *Christos*, is, in the history of salvation, the name for the “one anointed by the Holy Ghost.” The word is already used in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. Here it is necessary to go back to the Prophet Isaiah especially (11:1-3) because it is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.

This is what the prophet says:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, (*sic*) the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of

³⁶ In the English translation: “The Messiah, Anointed with the Holy Spirit.”

knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be the fear of the Lord (Is. 11:1-3). (*DeV* 15.2)

This passage forms in a way the bridge between the old Biblical concept of the "Spirit" as "Breath" and the New Testament one of "Person and gift, as a gift for a person." At any rate this prophecy begins "the path towards the full revelation of the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Trinitarian mystery, a mystery which will finally be manifested in the New Covenant." (cf. 15.3).

The Messiah himself is this path:

He is the Anointed One in the sense that he possesses the fulness of the Spirit of God. He himself will also be the mediator in granting this Spirit to the whole People. (*DeV* 16.1)

The Anointed One is sent together with the Spirit of the Lord (Is. 61:1ff.) and is called the "chosen servant" (Is. 48:16).

He is also the suffering servant (*DeV* 16.3):

We know that the Servant of the Lord is revealed in the Book of Isaiah as the true Man of Sorrows: the Messiah who suffers for the sins of the world (Is. 53:5,6,8). And at the same time it is precisely he whose mission will bear for all humanity the true fruits of salvation: "He will bring forth justice to the nations..." (Is. 42:1); and he will become "a covenant to the people, a light to the nations..." (Is. 42:6); "that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Is. 49:6). (*DeV* 16.2)

All these quoted passages are to be read in the light of the Gospel, just as in turn the New Testament sheds light on the Old Testament passages:

The Prophet presents the Messiah as the one who comes in the Holy Spirit, the one who possesses the fulness of this Spirit in himself and at the same time for others, for Israel, for all the nations, for all humanity. The fulness of the Spirit of God is accompanied by many different gifts, the treasures of salvation, destined in a particular way for the poor and suffering, for all those who open their hearts to these gifts—sometimes through the painful experience of their own existence—but first of all through that interior availability which comes from faith, (*DeV* 16.4)

The Pope emphasises (*DeV* 17) that “the Spirit of the Lord” in the Old Testament is still not an independent Person. Rather in Isaiah, as in the whole Old Testament, “the personality of the Holy Spirit is completely hidden: in the revelation of the one God, as also in the foretelling of the future Messiah.”

4.2. Messiah and Holy Ghost in the New Testament (*DeV* 18-24)

Jesus began his Messianic activity with the revelation of Himself in the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-21). Jesus takes the words of the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 61:11): “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me” and expressly applies them to Himself: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Thus He declares that He is:

the Messiah, the one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as the gift of God himself, the one who possesses the fulness of this Spirit, the one who marks the “new beginning” of the gift which God makes to humanity in the Spirit. (*DeV* 18)

The "new beginning" marked by Jesus of the gift of God's self-communication to man in the Holy Ghost is of course to be understood in the sense of the Encyclical.

After the revelation of the Messiah by himself the Encyclical then goes on to the revelation by the Baptist. The Baptist's words are quoted one after the other (*DeV* 19.2-3) to show that Jesus is the Messiah anointed with the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 19.2):

John the Baptist is said to reveal him (Lk. 3:16) as the one "who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" and who not only "is 'coming' in the Holy Spirit but also as the one who 'brings' the Holy Spirit."

John is not only a prophet but also a messenger, the precursor of Christ. "At the sight of him arriving, John proclaims: 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'" (Jn. 1:29). Thus he gives witness to the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, for:

On the lips of John the Baptist, "Lamb of God" is an expression of truth about the Redeemer no less significant than the one used by Isaiah: Servant of the Lord (cf. *DeV* 19.2).

John's witness is confirmed by a witness on a higher plane after Jesus' baptism: that is, by the appearance of the Holy Ghost as a dove and by the Father's voice from heaven (*DeV* 19.3).

This Trinitarian appearance of God is said to reveal "another more profound dimension of the truth about Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. It is this: The Messiah is the beloved Son of the Father (cf. *DeV* 19.4).

The theophany at the Jordan is said to clarify "only in a fleeting way the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, whose entire activity will be carried out in the active presence of the Holy Spirit" (cf. *DeV* 20.1). In this "gradual revelation," Jesus Him-

self “by means of everything that He ‘did and taught’ (Acts 1:1) reveals His mystery step by step. Thus, after the return of the seventy-two disciples from the mission entrusted to them by the Master, He is said to rejoice in the Holy Ghost and say:

“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was your gracious will” (Lk. 10:21). Jesus rejoices at the fatherhood of God: He rejoices because it has been given to Him to reveal this fatherhood; He rejoices, finally, as at a particular outpouring of this divine fatherhood on the “little ones.” And the Evangelist describes all this as “rejoicing in the Holy Spirit.” (*DeV*20.1)

This “rejoicing” in a certain sense prompts Jesus to say still more (*DeV* 20.2): “All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him (Lk. 10:22).”

That which during the theophany at the Jordan came so to speak “from outside,” from on high, here comes “from within,” that is to say from the depths of who Jesus is. It is another revelation of the Father and the Son, united in the Holy Spirit. (*DeV*21.1)

In the magnificent confession of the fatherhood of God, Jesus of Nazareth also manifests himself, his divine “I”—for he is the Son “of the same substance,” and therefore “no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son,” that Son who “for us and for our salvation” became man by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin whose name was Mary.” (*DeV*21.2)

It is thanks to Luke’s narrative:

that we are brought closest to the truth contained in the discourse in the Upper Room. Jesus of Nazareth, "raised up" in the Holy Spirit, during this discourse and conversation presents himself as the one who brings the Spirit, as the one who is to bring him and "give" him to the Apostles and to the Church at the price of his own "departure" through the Cross. (*DeV*22.1)

The verb "bring" is here said to mean first of all "reveal." In the Old Testament, from the Book of Genesis onwards, the Spirit of God is the "breath" of God. In the Book of Isaiah, He is presented as a "gift" for the person of the Messiah. At the Jordan, Isaiah's proclamation is given a concrete form: Jesus of Nazareth is the one who comes in the Holy Spirit and who brings the Spirit as the gift proper to His own Person, in order to distribute that gift by means of this humanity: That is what is meant by what the Baptist says: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In the Gospel of Luke, the Holy Spirit is revealed as the "intimate source" of the life and messianic activity of Jesus Christ (*DeV*22.2).

In the farewell discourse, the Holy Spirit is revealed in a new and fuller way:

He is not only the gift to the person (the person of the Messiah), but is a Person-gift. Jesus foretells his coming as that of "another Counselor" who, being the Spirit of truth, will lead the Apostles and the Church "into all the truth." This will be accomplished by reason of the particular communion between the Holy Spirit and Christ: "He will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:14). This communion has its original source in the Father: "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:15). Coming from the Father the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father (cf. Jn. 14:26-15:26). The Holy Spirit is first sent as a gift for the Son who

was made man, in order to fulfill the messianic prophecies. After the "departure" of Christ the Son, the Joannine text says that the Holy Spirit "will come" directly (it is his new mission), to complete the work of the Son. Thus it will be he who brings to fulfillment the new era of the history of salvation. (*DeV* 22.3)

This passage has to be read twice in order to grasp the significance of what it says dogmatically.

The Holy Ghost is in no way a gift for the "Person of the Messiah" because He, due to the hypostatic union, is the Second Person of the divinity, from whom the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and* the Son.

As opposed to this, in the text of the Encyclical one can detect another relationship between the Holy Ghost and Christ. It is said to be a "particular communion" which has its origin in the Father. That is why the Holy Ghost, since he "comes" from the Father is also sent from the Father. According to this, the Holy Ghost "comes" not *a Patre Filioque* but alone from the Father and for this reason is sent alone from the Father and not from the Father and the Son as a single principle. The foundation for what the Encyclical says is obviously the Photian formulation of the Trinity (cf. *DeV* 8.1).

Therein lies also the explanation for the double sending of the Holy Ghost from the Father alone:

First the Father sends the Holy Ghost as a gift for the Son made man in order to fulfill the Messianic promises. According to this, the Son is not the one who, because of the hypostatic union, possesses and sends the Holy Ghost but He who only receives the Holy Ghost from the Father as a gift.

Then, after the death of Christ on the Cross, there is a "new" second sending of the Spirit (from the Father) in which the Holy Ghost comes directly in order to complete the work of the Son. If the Holy Ghost comes "directly" from the Father He is not sent from the Father *and* the Son together.

If the Holy Ghost comes to complete the work of the Son, then the work of Redemption through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is *in se* incomplete. This completion is only performed by the Holy Ghost who "brings to fulfilment the new era of the history of salvation."

The Encyclical now adds this exegetical consideration to its concept of the history of salvation:

We find ourselves on the threshold of the Paschal events. The new, definitive revelation of the Holy Spirit as a Person who is the gift is accomplished at this precise moment. The Paschal events—the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ—are also the time of the new coming of the Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete and the Spirit of truth. They are the time of the "new beginning" of the self-communication of the Triune God to humanity in the Holy Spirit through the work of Christ the Redeemer. This new beginning is the Redemption of the world: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn. 3:16). Already the "giving" of the Son, the gift of the Son, expresses the most profound essence of God who, as Love, is the inexhaustible source of the giving of gifts. The gift made by the Son completes the revelation and giving of the eternal love: the Holy Spirit, who in the inscrutable depths of the divinity is a Person-Gift, through the work of the Son, that is to say by means of the Paschal Mystery, is given to the Apostles and to the Church in a new way, and through them is given to humanity and the whole world. (*DeV* 23.1)

The most profound reason for God's self-communication is, as the Pope already said at the start of his discussion (cf. *DeV* 10), God Himself: In giving the Son and the Person of the Holy Ghost, the essence of God is seen to be love. It is also the source of the "new beginning" of the Redemption of the world.

The “new beginning” must be understood in the context of the “first beginning.” The first self-communication of God in the Holy Ghost to man is according to the Encyclical identical with the Creation (cf. *DeV* 12) and was not lost by the intervention of sin (cf. *DeV* 13). That is why the second “new beginning” means only that through the Paschal mystery the Holy Ghost was given to “the Apostles and to the Church, and through them is given to humanity(!) and the whole world(!)” in “a new way.” This “new way” of God’s self giving is the “mode of universal salvation.”

The definitive expression of this mystery is to be found on the day of the Resurrection. The risen Christ is said to send the Spirit of Truth to change us into His own risen image (cf. *DeV* 24.1).

In the Gospel it says:

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:19-22). (*DeV* 24.2)

All the details of this “key text” (Jn. 20:19-22) have their own eloquence in reference to the other words spoken in the same Upper Room. The Pope meditates on this key text using these other words. Especially at Easter it is the promise of the final discourse which is realised:

The Risen Christ, as it were beginning a new creation, “brings” to the Apostles the Holy Spirit. He brings him at

the price of his own "departure": he gives them this Spirit as it were through the wounds of his crucifixion. (*DeV* 24.3)

From this, the Encyclical examines the relationship between the Cross and the sending of the Spirit and thereby explains the meaning of it:

1) Thus there is established a close link between the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. There is no sending of the Holy Spirit (after original sin) without the Cross and the Resurrection: "If I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you" (Jn. 16:7). (*DeV* 24.4)

Of course there is (after Original Sin) no sending of the Holy Ghost without the Cross and the Resurrection.

But what is to be understood by the "close link" which is established between the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Ghost? If we take the words literally then we can see they are based on the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity: according to this, the sending of the Son and of the Holy Ghost are both from the Father alone. Both sendings, then, have in the Father their common origin; occur, however, parallel to one another; and then work together in the process of salvation so that from this working together a "close link" is established between the two sendings.

2) There is also established a close link between the mission of the Holy Spirit and that of the Son in the Redemption. The mission of the Son, in a certain sense, finds its "fulfilment" in the Redemption. The mission of the Holy Spirit "draws from" the Redemption: "He will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:15). The Redemption is totally carried out by the Son as the Anointed One, who came and acted in the power of the Holy Spirit, offering himself finally in sacrifice on the wood of the Cross. And this Redemption is, at the same time, constantly carried out

in human hearts and minds—in the history of the world—by the Holy Spirit, who is the “other Counselor.” (*DeV* 24.4)

This second passage makes the first one clear: This time it is clearly stated: The “close link” between the sending of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is “established” in the Redemption.

In traditional teaching, however, this close link is most certainly not formed only in the Redemption but is *a priori* present in the sending of the Holy Ghost *a Patre per Filium* or *a Patre Filioque* as a single principle of the Redemption.

The distinction “in the Redemption” is described in more detail: The sending of the Son is fulfilled in the Redemption by the offering of the Son on the Cross. The action of the Holy Ghost because of this Redemption is in the hearts of men in the history of the world and is distinct from this. In this way there is a sort of double aspect “in the Redemption”: an external and an internal. The exterior is Christ’s sacrifice of the Cross, the interior the working and self-communication of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men.

This is all based on the Photian understanding of the Trinity and thence on the Pope’s concept of the Redemption. It has already been shown in detail that the Encyclical identifies the Redemption with the Sacrifice of the Cross but the communication of the Holy Ghost is separated from this in so far as it sees the Redemption through Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost in a quasi causal relationship of “interdependence” (cf. *DeV* 8. 1-2).

5. The Holy Ghost and the Church (*DeV*25-26)³⁷

The last section of the the first part of the Encyclical (*DeV* 25-26) follows on organically from what has preceded. After the Pope has shown the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Messiah in the Old and New Testament he now deals with the the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Church of Christ. The presentation is entirely a creature of Vatican II. The foundation for his thesis is no longer passages from Holy Scripture but significant passages from the Council documents which the Pope first quotes one after the other and then interprets them.

5.1. The Church, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost (*DeV*25)

The Encyclical begins its discussion of the relationship between the Church and the Holy Ghost with the following quotation from *Lumen Gentium* 4:

Having accomplished the work that the Father had entrusted to the Son on earth (cf. Jn. 17:4), on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent to sanctify the Church forever, so that believers might have access to the Father through Christ in one Spirit (cf. Eph. 2:18). He is the Spirit of life, the fountain of water springing up to eternal life (cf. Jn. 4:14; 7:38ff.), the One through whom the Father restores life to those who are dead through sin, until one day he will raise in Christ their mortal bodies (cf. Rom. 8:10ff.). (*DeV*25.1)

The interpretation of the conciliar text is as follows:

³⁷ In the English translation: "The Holy Spirit and the Era of the Church."

In this way the Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church's birth on the day of Pentecost. This event constitutes the definitive manifestation of what had already been accomplished in the same Upper Room on Easter Sunday. The Risen Christ came and "brought" to the Apostles the Holy Spirit. He gave him to them, saying "Receive the Holy Spirit." What had then taken place inside the Upper Room, "the doors being shut," later, on the day of Pentecost is manifested also outside, in public. The doors of the Upper Room are opened and the Apostles go to the inhabitants and the pilgrims who had gathered in Jerusalem on the occasion of the feast, in order to bear witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way the prediction is fulfilled: "He will bear witness to me: and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning" (Jn. 15:26ff.). (DeV25.2)

One would have expected the Pope in his interpretation to mention what the Council says about the Father restoring through the Holy Ghost "life to those who are dead through sin." For here, the Council is obviously thinking about mankind in Original Sin *in statu naturae lapsae* and, therefore, is saying something which would contradict the Pope's theory of universal salvation. The Encyclical, however, passes over the problem in silence and presents instead an account of the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost.

But the Pope completes his account by bringing in another Council document which emphasises the universal working of the Holy Ghost in the world and which is distinguished from the working of the Holy Ghost in the Church:

We read in another document of the Second Vatican Council: "Doubtless, the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified. Yet on the day of Pentecost, he came down upon the disciples to remain with them for ever. On that day the Church was publicly revealed

to the multitude, and the Gospel began to spread among the nations by means of preaching" (*Ad Gentes* 4). (*DeV*25.3)

It is the traditional teaching of the Church that the Holy Ghost works even beyond the boundaries of the Church in the hearts of men in Original Sin and in certain circumstances can even bring about their salvation by ways known to God alone. But Catholic teaching is not the thesis of universal salvation which is based on the idea of a general subjective redemption of all men (cf. *DeV* 14). But in that case the relationship of the Church to a universally redeemed mankind is not a question of salvation or damnation, of redeemed or not redeemed, of saved or lost but simply a difference of awareness. The Vatican II church is only expressing explicitly what mankind already possesses unconsciously.³⁸

From this we get a new "universal awareness of the Church" (cf. *RH* 11. 1) and a new view of missionary activity. Hans Urs von Balthasar described both as being valid for the whole "Trinitarian trilogy" in his commentary on *Dominum et Vivificantem*: "The individual man 'is the way of the Church,' man who has fundamentally been redeemed by Christ and fundamentally assumed by the Spirit (*RH* 14), who through the Church is to experience what meaning and what consequences this 'already-reached' has for himself. Redemption and giving of the Spirit are universal, but the Church as 'sacrament' has to lead man to the heart of this event."³⁹

With the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost "the time of the Church" has begun. The Encyclical has the usual things to say about this. We will give a brief summary:

³⁸ Concerning Henri de Lubac, "Ausdrücklichkeit des Glaubens" ["The Clarity of the Faith"], see note 5.

³⁹ [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*], p. 134.

As the Acts of the Apostles shows, the Holy Ghost assumed the "leadership" in the minds of the first community. In the strength of the Holy Ghost they felt capable of fulfilling the mission entrusted to them. This is what the Holy Ghost does continually in the church. The gift of grace of the Holy Ghost continues to be transmitted in Episcopal Ordination. The bishops in turn by the Sacrament of Orders render the sacred ministers sharers in this spiritual gift and ensure that, in the sacrament of Confirmation, all Christians are strengthened by this gift. "And thus, in a certain way, the grace of Pentecost is perpetuated in the Church." (*DeV* 25.4)

The Encyclical describes the grace of Pentecost continually present in the Church with another passage from *Lumen Gentium*:

As the Council writes, "the Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (cf. I Cor. 3:16; 6:19). In them he prays and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons (cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15-16; 26). The Spirit guides the Church into the fulness of truth (cf. Jn. 16:13) and gives her a unity of fellowship and service. He furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic, and adorns her with the fruits of his grace (cf. Eph. 4:11-12; I Cor. 12:4; Gal. 5:22). By the power of the Gospel he makes the Church grow, perpetually renews her and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse." (*DeV* 25.5)

This picture of the presence and working of the Holy Ghost in the Church drawn with quotations from Scripture by *Lumen Gentium* now becomes the typical image used of the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Church of Vatican II in the Encyclical.

5.2. The Holy Ghost and the Church of Vatican II (*DeV* 26)

The Pope's viewpoint has given a special expression to the relationship of the Holy Ghost to its Spouse the Church at Vatican II:

These passages quoted from the Conciliar Constitution *Lumen Gentium* tell us that the era of the Church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit. They also tell us that this era, the era of the Church, continues. It continues down the centuries and generations. In our own century, when humanity is already close to the end of the second Millennium after Christ, this era of the Church expressed itself in a special way through the Second Vatican Council, as the Council of our century. For we know that it was in a special way an "ecclesiological" Council: a Council on the theme of the Church. At the same time, the teaching of this Council is essentially "pneumatological": it is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church. We can say that in its rich variety of teaching the Second Vatican Council contains precisely all that "the Spirit says to the Churches" (cf. Apoc. 2:29-3:6; 13; 22) with regard to the present phase of the history of salvation. (*DeV* 26.1)

According to this, the teaching of Vatican II is the new, sufficient foundation for the faith of the Church of today at the end of the second millennium. There is no need to go back beyond the Council. Indeed, the general way of thinking is one "may not" go back beyond the Council! For the Council is "in a certain way" a second Pentecost and the realisation of its teaching in the life of the Church the commandment of the hour. That is precisely what the Encyclical says:

Following the guidance of the Spirit of truth and bearing witness together with him, the Council has given a special

confirmation of the presence of the Holy Spirit—the Counselor. In a certain sense, the Council has made the Spirit newly “present” in our difficult age. In the light of this conviction one grasps more clearly the great importance of all the initiatives aimed at implementing the Second Vatican Council, its teaching and its pastoral and ecumenical thrust. In this sense also the subsequent Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops are to be carefully studied and evaluated, aiming as they do to ensure that the fruits of truth and love—the authentic fruits of the Holy Spirit—become a lasting treasure for the People of God in its earthly pilgrimage down the centuries. This work being done by the Church for the testing and bringing together of the salvific fruits of the Spirit bestowed in the Council is something indispensable. For this purpose one must learn how to “discern” them carefully from everything that may instead come originally from the “prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). This discernment in implementing the Council’s work is especially necessary in view of the fact that the Council opened itself widely to the contemporary world, as is clearly seen from the important Conciliar Constitutions *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium*. (DeV26.3)

Because Vatican II made the Holy Ghost newly “present” in our age, all Catholics are required to consider all the great initiatives for the putting into practice of the teaching of the Council, of the new pastoral and ecumenical thrust of the Church and its openness to the world as the working of the Holy Ghost.

Of course, the Pope himself says that it remains very important to “sift” and “discern” the fruits of the Council from what might come from the “prince of this world.” Already shortly after the Council, Paul VI spoke of a self-destruction of the Church. He had to acknowledge that since the Council the “smoke of Satan” had come into the Church. Cardinal Ratzinger thought it necessary to discern between the true

spirit and the “demon of the Council.”⁴⁰ Unperturbed by the signs of destruction visible to all, John Paul II spoke thirty years after the Council had ended of the “marvellous Spring” which Vatican II had brought in. Who here has the gift of discernment of spirits?

⁴⁰ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Zur Lage des Glaubens* [*The State of the Faith*] (Munich, Zurich, Vienna, 1985), pp. 25-40.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIRIT WHO CONVINCES THE WORLD CONCERNING SIN¹

Plan and layout of the second part of the Encyclical

The title is the theme of the whole second part of the Encyclical. The Pope has already announced in the first part that the theme will be considered in more detail (cf. *DeV* 7.2) and gave there a few exegetical and dogmatic principles.

The second part of the Encyclical demonstrates a well composed unity: the whole of the second part is based on the promise of the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. and the Pope's interpretation of it: the Paraclete will come into the world in order to convince the world concerning sin and to save it. The promise is literally confirmed and fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. But it also has a universal dimension in the conscience of every man and in the history of mankind.

This plan is divided into five sections:

Section 1 (*DeV* 27-29) with its exegesis of Jn. 16:7ff. lays the foundation for the whole of the second part.

Section 2 (*DeV* 30-32) gives the proof that Jesus' promise of the Paraclete is fulfilled principally and fundamentally in the events of Pentecost.

Section 3 (*DeV* 33-38) shows the universal significance of the promise of the Paraclete and the events of Pentecost: The Paraclete convinces the world concerning sin by revealing the full dimension of the "*mysterium iniquitatis*" in the history of mankind and God's economy of salvation.

¹ As in the official English translation.

Section 4 (*DeV* 39-41) is the counterbalance to the previous article and formulates the Holy Ghost's answer to the full dimension of sin, coming from the depths of the triune God.

Section 5 (*DeV* 42-45) describes the forgiveness of sin as the fruit of the redeeming work of salvation through the working of the Holy Ghost in man's conscience.

Section 6 (*DeV* 46-48) finishes off with the problem of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

The theme is presented according to the "integration of the faith" principle. By being integrated into the idea of universal salvation the Church's deposit of the faith undergoes a commensurate change of meaning.

We could say the second part of the Encyclical is the Pope's hamartology as a soteriology of the Holy Ghost.

The critical question for everyone who holds the theory of universal salvation is: How do you answer the problem of the subjective conditions for Redemption and Damnation? The Pope doesn't avoid the question. Rather, the second part of his Encyclical is the answer to this question.

In his commentary on *Dominum et Vivificantem* Hans Urs von Balthasar calls the second part of the Encyclical the "most original and for most people most surprising part."² One should judge his remarks very carefully, for he can give an insight into John Paul II's personal understanding of the faith. Von Balthasar is known to be particularly receptive to the idea of universal Redemption and the "problem of Hell."

² [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*], p. 136.

1. The Paraclete who convinces the world of sin, of justice,³ and of judgment, in the Encyclical's exegesis (*DeV* 27-29)

The Pope begins with the exegesis of the key text Jn. 16: 7ff.:

When Jesus during the discourse in the Upper Room foretells the coming of the Holy Spirit "at the price of" his own departure, and promises "I will send him to you," in the very same context he adds: "And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (cf. Jn. 16:7). (*DeV* 27.1)

The Pope says the context is significant, for :

Jesus links this foretelling of the Holy Spirit to the words indicating his "departure" through the Cross, and indeed emphasises the need for this departure: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you" (Jn. 16:7). (*DeV* 27.2)

Even more important is the explanation which Jesus is said to give for the words sin, justice, and judgment:

For he says this: "He will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of the world is judged" (Jn. 16:8-11). In the mind of Jesus, sin, righteousness and judgment have a very precise meaning, different from the meaning that one might be inclined to attribute to

³ I have used the traditional English translation for "*iustitia*"—"justice." Protestants and the official translation use the word "righteousness" which I find has unpleasant connotations. [Translator's note.]

these words independently of the speaker's explanation. This explanation also indicates how one is to understand the "convincing the world" which is proper to the action of the Holy Spirit. Both the meaning of the individual words and the fact that Jesus linked them together in the same phrase are important here. (*DeV* 27.3)

In this way the Pope from the very outset departs from other interpretations of the passage Jn. 16:7ff. His exegesis is said to follow "the mind of Jesus"; quite a high claim to make.

After this explanation we find out what Jesus Himself is supposed to understand by Jn. 16:7ff.:

"Sin," in this passage, means the incredulity that Jesus encountered among "his own," beginning with the people of his own town of Nazareth. Sin means the rejection of his mission, a rejection that will cause people to condemn him to death. When he speaks next of "righteousness," Jesus seems to have in mind that definitive justice, which the Father will restore to him when he grants him the glory of the Resurrection and Ascension into heaven: "I go to the Father." In its turn, and in the context of "sin" and "righteousness" thus understood, "judgment" means that the Spirit of truth will show the guilt of the "world" in condemning Jesus to death on the Cross. Nevertheless, Christ did not come into the world only to judge it and condemn it: he came to save it (cf. Jn. 3:17; 12:47). Convincing about sin and righteousness has as its purpose the salvation of the world, the salvation of men. Precisely this truth seems to be emphasised by the assertion that "judgment" concerns only the "prince of this world," Satan, the one who from the beginning has been exploiting the work of creation against salvation, against the covenant and the union of man with God: he is "already judged" from the start. If the Spirit-Counselor is to convince the world precisely concerning judgment, it is in order to continue in the world the salvific work of Christ. (*DeV* 27.4)

Since Jn. 16:7ff. represents the key text in the Pope's interpretation of the whole second part of the Encyclical, it needs to be carefully analysed.

The Pope's exegesis changes the literal meaning of Jn. 16:7ff. in three points:

1) Sin is in Jn. 16:7ff. the unbelief of "the world," not just the unbelief of "his own" who gave Christ over to the Cross but all men who do not believe in the Crucified one.

2) In Jn. 16:7ff. the Holy Ghost comes as the Paraclete for Christ's disciples to convince the world concerning sin, justice, and judgment. The idea of "judgment" is clearly part of what Scripture says here.

The Greek word *elégchein* can mean: accuse someone of sin and require that they repent. The *elégchein* of Jn. 16:7ff., however, means "condemn" since from the textual context there is no sign of the world repenting.⁴

In the textual context of the final discourse in St. John, the Holy Ghost comes as Paraclete for the disciples in order to convince the world concerning sin, justice, and judgment in a tremendous trial. In Jn. 16:7ff. it is clearly a case of the reality of a "world" which remains stubbornly in unbelief and hates Jesus, which "is seated in wickedness" (I Jn. 5:19), which is not capable at all of receiving the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:17) and which, because of its unbelief, has already been judged (cf. Jn. 3:18).

In the Encyclical's exegesis, however, the Holy Ghost comes in Jn. 16:7ff. not only as the Paraclete for the disciples but also for the "world." He does come to convince the "world" of sin but not in the Biblical sense of judging but "in order to save it."

⁴ Cf. Friedrich Büchsel, *elégcho*, *ThWNT*, II, 471ff. and Strathmann, [*The Gospel according to John*], pp. 215ff.

This little addition: "in order to save it" is not from Jn. 16:7ff. From the passage itself, however, it is clear that precisely the opposite is meant. It's obvious why this jarring addition has been put there: In the theology of universal salvation there can be no judgment which passes a sentence of damnation on man. That is why the "judgment" from the authentic Biblical passage has been taken out and something else added claiming to be "the mind of Jesus."

Although the Encyclical's independent addition "in order to save it" has no place in Jn. 16:7ff. and indeed goes completely against the literal sense of the passage itself, the Encyclical nonetheless tries to "justify" and "prove" it by Scripture.

Christ's words are to be the justification: "God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him" (cf. Jn. 3:17). But this passage is taken out of its context and is only used in a selective way:

Jesus Himself says in his talk with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-21) "God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him" (Jn. 3:17). But He continues how salvation and judgment of the world are to take place: "He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Jn. 3:18). Salvation and judgment are said to take place already based on faith or unbelief. Faith performs the separation of mankind into believers and unbelievers, into saved and already condemned.

The conviction of the sin of unbelief which means the loss of salvation for man is the sense of the judgment in Jn. 16:7ff.

Although the Biblical references are unambiguous the selective quotation of Jn. 3:17 in the Encyclical is first used to define and justify the mission of the Son and therefore also of the Holy Ghost ignoring the complete text of Scripture, *e.g.*, the omission of Jn. 3:18.

Because the Holy Ghost continues the mission of the Son, Jn. 3:17ff. is also valid for the Holy Ghost in Jn. 16:7ff. That is why Jn. 16:7ff. also means "convincing the world concerning sin and justice has for its aim the salvation of the world and mankind." Thereby judgment and faith are against this interpretation of the Scripture and silently taken out of Jn. 16:7ff.

3) Jn. 16:7ff. in no way emphasises the truth that the judgment is "only" for the prince of this world to the extent that the human race as a whole escapes the judgment. The "only" is once again a little addition of the Encyclical. The judgment is of course also for the unbelieving followers of Satan. Indeed the judgment is not "only" of the "prince of this world" but has already been passed on "this world" (Jn. 12:31).

The dividing line drawn by the judgment in Jn. 16:7ff. is most certainly not "only" between Satan and the world but between Satan together with the unbelieving world and the faithful disciples of Jesus. For those men who are stubborn in their unbelief are also part of the "world" whom the Paraclete convinces of the sin of unbelief. The man who believes in Jesus Christ no longer belongs to "this world" whose sin is unbelief, but to the community of believers who through faith belong to Christ and by this are freed from the bonds of Satan.

Of course the Holy Ghost comes also as Paraclete of the missionary Church in order to continue the saving work of Christ and to save souls; but that is not what Jn. 16:7ff. says, rather that is said elsewhere in different passages and other contexts.

As we read in Scripture the death on the Cross, the Resurrection and Judgment are all part of the apostolic missionary message, together with the challenge to believe in Jesus Christ and be baptized as Jesus gave in His missionary command:

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mk. 16:16).

God's salvific will *is* universal, but Scripture tells us that nonetheless not all will be saved. God's universal salvific will is not without conditions. God will not do without the faith necessary for salvation in which now already judgment and the separation of “world” and Christ's disciples takes place.

1.1. The economy of salvation delivers man from judgment (*DeV28*)

The Pope concentrates on the main point of his exegesis of Jn. 16:7ff.: “The Holy Ghost convinces the world concerning sin in order to save it” and gives it its definitive meaning:

Here we wish to concentrate our attention principally on this mission of the Holy Spirit, which is “to convince the world concerning sin,” but at the same time respecting the general context of Jesus' words in the Upper Room. The Holy Spirit, who takes from the Son the work of the Redemption of the world, by this very fact takes the task of the salvific “convincing of sin.” This convincing is in permanent reference to “righteousness”: that is to say to definitive salvation in God, to the fulfilment of the economy that has as its centre the crucified and glorified Christ. And this salvific economy of God in a certain sense removes man from “judgment,” that is from the damnation which has been inflicted on the Sin of Satan, “the prince of this world,” the one who because of his sin has become “the ruler of this world of darkness” (Eph. 6:12). And here we see that, through this reference to “judgment,” vast horizons open up for understanding “sin” and also “righteousness.” The Holy Spirit, by showing sin against the background of Christ's Cross in the economy of salvation (one could say “sin saved”), enables us to understand how his mission is also “to convince” of the sin that has already been definitively judged (“sin condemned”). (*DeV28.1*)

According to this, the Pope's resulting exegesis of Jn. 16:7ff. goes: the judgment is "only" (cf. *DeV27*) of Satan's sin (*i.e.*, sin definitively condemned) but not of man's sin (sin saved). Man is thus delivered from judgment and damnation in God's economy of salvation. This result does directly contradict the literal sense of Jn. 16:7ff. but it is what the Pope's theology is saying.⁵

The statement: God's economy of salvation delivers man from judgment and damnation, is the key to the teaching of universal salvation.

1.2. World and sin in the context of Vatican II (*DeV29*)

The change of meaning undergone by Jn. 16:7ff. in the Pope's exegesis is not enough for the author of the Encyclical. Now the Biblical passage's key expressions "world" and "sin" which have a specific meaning in St. John also undergo a deliberate change in meaning.

In order to give a new meaning to "world" the Pope first links the Upper Room to the Vatican II Church:

All the words uttered by the Redeemer in the Upper Room on the eve of his Passion become part of the era of the Church: first of all, the words about the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete and Spirit of truth. The words become part of it in an ever new way, in every generation, in every age. This is confirmed, as far as our own age is concerned, by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council as a whole, and especially in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Many passages of this document indicate clearly that the Council, by opening itself to the light of the Spirit of truth, is seen to be the authentic depository of the predictions and promises made by Christ to the Apostles and to the Church in the farewell discourse: in a particular way as the depository of

⁵ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/2, 91ff.

the predictions that the Holy Spirit would “convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” (DeV29.1)

The reason for going from the Upper Room to Vatican II is simply the intention to replace the Biblical concept of the “world” in Jn. 16:7ff. with that of the Council in *Gaudium et Spes* 2. This is done by quoting the Pastoral Constitution in DeV29.2:

“The Council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which that family lives. It gazes upon the world which is the theatre of man’s history, and carries the marks of his energies, his tragedies, and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker’s love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ. He was crucified and rose again to break the stranglehold of personified Evil, so that this world might be fashioned anew according to God’s design and reach its fulfilment.” (*Gaudium et Spes* No.2) This very rich text needs to be read in conjunction with the other passages in the Constitution that seek to show with all the realism of faith the situation of sin in the contemporary world and that also seek to explain its essence, beginning from different points of view.

The Pope doesn’t take his definition for “world” from the final discourse of Jesus but from the Pastoral Constitution of the Council. We learn, therefore, not what St. John understands by *kósmos* (Jn. 16:8) but what the Council understands by “world.” That is not exegesis but “eisegesis.”

Of course the Council can say what it understands by the term “world.” But one can’t suggest (cf. 29.1) that the term “world” in Jesus’ final discourse is identical with the term in *Gaudium et Spes*.

Jn. 16:7ff. in no way says that this *kósmov* is freed from sin and destined to be fashioned anew and reach its fulfilment, but that the Holy Ghost as Counselor of the disciples will convince this world of the sin of unbelief and judgment. The Holy Ghost is the Counselor of the Church which *natura sua* is missionary and has the task to preach the saving faith in Christ and to gather together from all peoples a new People of God of believers in Christ. It is not the missionary task of the Church to fashion this world anew which has had "the stranglehold of personified Evil broken" by Christ and bring it to fulfilment, but save "this world" which outside of Christ is "seated in wickedness" (I Jn. 5:18), full of the sin of unbelief and therefore has been judged.

The Church has no direct task as far as culture is concerned. But she is not inimical to culture.⁶ Her relationship to man's cultures is discriminatory and follows the *chrêsis*⁷ principle. "*Uti mundo, non servire mundo*" is St. Augustine's motto.

In his analysis of *Gaudium et Spes*, Joseph Ratzinger complains that the term "world" has remained in a "mostly pre-theological stage."⁸

After the Encyclical has brought the term "world" in Jn. 16:7ff. up to date and replaced it with the text from the Council, the term "sin" is put through a similar exegesis. This time the Pope doesn't quote the Council but gives his own ideas about what Jn. 16:7ff. means when it mentions sin:

⁶ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 275.

⁷ Christian Gnllka, *Chrêsis, Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur [The Method of the Fathers of the Church with Regard to Ancient Culture]*, vols. I-II (Basel, 1984; 1993).

⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Theologische Prinzipienlehre [Theological Principles]* (Munich, 1982), p. 397.

When on the eve of the Passover Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as the one who “will convince the world concerning sin,” on the one hand this statement must be given the widest possible meaning, insofar as it includes all the sin in the history of humanity. But on the other hand, when Jesus explains that this sin consists in the fact that “they do not believe in him,” this meaning seems to apply only to those who rejected the messianic mission of the Son of Man and condemned him to death on the Cross. But one can hardly fail to notice that this more “limited” and historically specified meaning of sin expands, until it assumes a universal dimension by reason of the universality of the Redemption, accomplished through the Cross. The revelation of the mystery of the Redemption opens the way to an understanding in which every sin wherever and whenever committed has a reference to the Cross of Christ—and therefore indirectly also to the sin of those who “have not believed in him,” and who condemned Jesus Christ to death on the Cross. (*DeV*29.3)

Of course the mystery of the Redemption reveals that every sin of man has a reference to the Cross of Christ. The Redeemer performed satisfaction for all the sins of man through his death on the Cross.

But in Jn. 16:7ff. it's not a question of the mystery of the Redemption in general but the specific promise of Jesus that the Paraclete will convince the world of the sin of unbelief.

This sin of unbelief is not applicable uniquely to Jesus' contemporaries who sentenced him to death because they didn't believe in him but simply to all “who *don't* believe in him” (*pisteúousin*). The original Greek doesn't use the past tense! The Encyclical changes the original text by applying the sin of unbelief uniquely to Jesus' contemporaries. The unbelief in Jn. 16:7ff. is obviously linked to the death on the Cross but most certainly does not have the limited meaning

of Jesus' contemporaries nor a "historically specified meaning."

In Jn. 16:7ff. the world's sin of unbelief is similarly not "indirectly" and quite generally related to the sins of mankind but the sins of the world are directly named: they are sins of unbelief! This unbelief is *the* sin of the world in Jn. 16:9, *i.e.*, of a disbelieving mankind as such, which considering God's revelation in Jesus Christ has universal meaning. This is the truth which the Paraclete reveals!

The universality of the Redemption through the Cross of Christ corresponds to the universality of a faith necessary for salvation. The Encyclical by its exegesis of Jn. 16:7ff. replaces the sin of unbelief with sin in general and thereby eliminates the specific, discriminatory meaning of a faith necessary for salvation from the Joannine text.

1.3. The Paraclete who convinces the world concerning sin, of justice, and of judgment according to Jn. 16:7-11

The Pope began his exegesis of Jn. 16:7-11 with the remark that he was aware of other interpretations of the passage but he himself was going to follow "the mind of Jesus" (cf. *DeV* 27.3). What is specific then to the Pope's exegesis becomes clearer when compared to the common exegesis of Catholic theologians.⁹

The whole passage Jn. 16:7-11 is as follows:

It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world concerning sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believed not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Fa-

⁹ Hermann Sasse, "kósmos," *ThWNT*, III, 894ff.

ther; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged.

Jesus' departure to the Father (Jn. 16:5) means his "exaltation" and is expedient for the disciples. For Jesus' "departure" is the condition for the sending of the Paraclete who will continue Jesus' work of revelation.

Jesus' words contain the image of a trial in which Christ's disciples and the "world" are bitter opponents. The disciples know their opponents from the time of Jesus' working in the world. The Lord described the relationship of Himself and His disciples to the "world" many times, for the last time in the final discourse.

The "world" (*kosmos*) is the stage on which the drama of the Redemption takes place. Because of His love the Father sends His Son into the world not to judge it but to save it (Jn. 3:16ff.; 12:47). The Son comes as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). He is the Light (Jn. 8:12), the life (Jn. 6:33), and the Saviour of the world (Jn. 4:42). But the world doesn't recognise Him (Jn. 1:10) and thus doesn't know God either (Jn. 17:25). The world which is seated in wickedness (I Jn. 5:18) does not believe in the Son and has only hate for Him (Jn. 7:7; 15, 18). Thus the sending of the Son, instead of saving the world becomes a judgment of it. The judgment of this world which doesn't believe in Christ and has rejected Him has already been pronounced. This judgment begins with Christ's death. The death on the Cross is the judgment of "this world" and the "prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31; 16:11).

The world appears as a collective person who is represented by the "prince of this world." He is the greatest opponent to the work of Redemption in the history of salvation. This becomes a struggle between Christ and the world. Christ's

victory is the consolation and certainty of the disciples (Jn. 16:33).

Faith in Jesus Christ brings the great separation between believers and the "world." The disciples and all who believe in Christ through their preaching do not belong to the "world." They are born of God and are hidden "in Jesus Christ." They participate in Christ's fate (Jn. 15:18ff.) but their victory is also assured: "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

The separation into disciples and world through the faith in Christ is a theme running throughout St. John. It is also the presupposition for the trial in which Jesus' disciples and the world face each other. As Advocate in this trial the Lord after His departure sends the Holy Ghost. The trial begins with the coming of the Holy Ghost and lasts for the whole of human history. In His speech for Christ's disciples the Paraclete "convinces" the "world." Everyone is familiar with the tense process in a court room, when one party is accused of its crime. It doesn't matter what sort of specious arguments it uses, step by step the opposing Counsel "convinces" it by incontrovertible facts. Thus the true state of things is clearly proven and the foundation laid for the Judge's sentence.

The disciples' Advocate "convinces the world" in three points: *in puncto* sin, justice, and judgment. On the other hand, it is not said that the objectively accused world is subjectively convinced of its guilt.

The sin of the "world" is its unbelief. Despite the clear revelation of the Father in the Son, the "world" refuses to believe in Jesus Christ. Indeed this unbelief turns to hate and this hate causes Jesus' condemnation and His death on the Cross (Jn. 15:22-25). The "world" is thus given over to the power of sin.

Justice is shown through God's salvific act by which the Crucified one did not remain in death but entered His glory through His Resurrection and Ascension. Proven guilty and justice to recognise it give the grounds for the sentence of condemnation.

The "judgment" of the unbelieving "world" and its "prince" means damnation. Judgment of both has already been passed by Jesus' death (Jn. 12:31). It is immanent in history: "He that doth not believe is already judged" (Jn. 3:18).

The judgment of the unbelieving world which begins with the death of Jesus Christ continues therefore uninterrupted throughout mankind's history. Man is permanently presented with the faith "*krisis*": the decision between the unbelieving "world" and the believing discipleship.

As seen in the Acts of the Apostles the Paraclete's arguments from the very beginning set the character for the Christian missionary preaching.

If we compare this with the exegesis in the Encyclical we find: the Pope, by his addition of "in order to save" to Jn. 16:7ff., changes the meaning of the passage to its opposite. The key quotations from Scripture in the passage "world" and "sin" are deprived of their original meaning and in this way made to fit for their further use later in the Encyclical. Between the original texts of Scripture and the Pope's treatment of them there is only left an external agreement. Thus the Encyclical distances itself from the literal sense of St. John and departs from the boundaries of any genuine exegesis.

Nonetheless, Jn. 16:7ff. and its distorted sense given it by the Pope remain the paradigm for the whole presentation of the second part of the Encyclical.

With this paradigm the Encyclical "returns once more to the events of Pentecost" in order to find the fulfilment of the promise of the Paraclete confirmed on the day of Pentecost (cf. *DeV*29.4).

2. Pentecost: the literal fulfilment of Jesus' promise of the Paraclete (*DeV* 30-32)¹⁰

Quoting St. Luke's account in the Acts (Acts 1:4-2, 41) the Encyclical shows that Jesus' promise of the Holy Ghost in the Upper Room and before Ascension were first fulfilled in a fundamental way on the day of Pentecost. First for the promise of the Holy Ghost in general (*DeV* 30) and then in a particular way for the promise of the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. "who will convince the world concerning sin in order to save it" (*DeV* 31-32).

2.1. Pentecost: The first and fundamental fulfilment of Jesus' promises of the Paraclete (*DeV* 30)

The Encyclical presents this thesis of the literal fulfilment of the promises of the Paraclete in Jesus' final discourse at the beginning in order to prove it point by point. The descent of the Holy Ghost on the disciples on the day of Pentecost is said to be the public fulfilment of Jesus' promises of the Paraclete, especially as announced in Jn. 16:7ff.:

Christ's prophecies in the farewell discourse found their most exact and direct confirmation on the day of Pentecost, in particular the prediction which we are dealing with: "The Counselor...will convince the world concerning sin." On that day, the promised Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles gathered in prayer together with Mary the Mother of Jesus, in the same Upper Room, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4), "thus bringing back to unity the scat-

¹⁰ In the English translation: "The Testimony of the Day of Pentecost."

tered races and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all the nations" (cf. *Iren. Adv. haer.* 111, 17, 2). (*DeV* 30.1)

The Encyclical completes the promises of the Paraclete in St. John with the promises of the Holy Ghost in Acts together with the disciples' commission to evangelisation:

The connection between Christ's prediction and this event is clear. We perceive here the first and fundamental fulfilment of the promise of the Paraclete. He comes, sent by the Father, "after" the departure of Christ, "at the price of" that departure. This is first a departure through the Cross, and later, forty days after the Resurrection, through his Ascension into heaven. Once more, at the moment of the Ascension, Jesus orders the Apostles "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father"; "but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit"; "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:4.5.8). (*DeV* 30.2)

The promise "you shall be witnesses" is also fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the Apostle Peter speaks for the first time:

These last words contain an echo or reminder of the prediction made in the Upper Room. And on the day of Pentecost this prediction is fulfilled with total accuracy. Acting under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who had been received by the Apostles while they were praying in the Upper Room, Peter comes forward and speaks before a multitude of people of different languages, gathered for the feast. He proclaims what he certainly would not have had the courage to say before: "Men of Israel,...Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst...this Jesus,

delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:22ff.). (*DeV*30.3)

But this first time Peter spoke was only the beginning of the missionary witness of the disciples:

Jesus had foretold and promised: "He will bear witness to me,...and you also are my witnesses." In the first discourse of Peter in Jerusalem this "witness" finds its clear beginning: it is the witness to Christ crucified and risen. The witness of the Spirit-Paraclete and of the Apostles. And in the very content of that first witness, the Spirit of truth, through the lips of Peter, "convinces the world concerning sin": first of all, concerning the sin which is the rejection of Christ even to his condemnation to death, to death on the Cross on Golgotha. Similar proclamations will be repeated, according to the text of the Acts of the Apostles, on other occasions and in various places. (*DeV*30.4)

The proof of the promise and fulfilment on the day of Pentecost reaches its climax in the key text of the Encyclical, Jn. 16:7ff.: the Paraclete will come "to convince the world concerning sin." This promise too was fulfilled the first time the Apostle Peter spoke.

Peter's discourse is in fact an example of a typically Christian missionary sermon. Through the mouth of the Apostle, the Holy Ghost as the Paraclete of the Church places the Crucified and Risen Christ before the Jews who have gathered together and in this way convinces the world concerning sin, no doubt with the aim of saving them. But this intention does not mean already salvation. Man is only saved if he does penance and believes in the Gospel (Mk. 1:15). That is why Peter

at the end of this discourse calls upon his listeners to convert and be baptized.

This call to conversion is by no means suppressed by the Encyclical but emphasised as the last point of Peter's discourse and then discussed at length (*DeV* 31-32).

2.2. Convince in order to save and the call to conversion (*DeV* 31)

The Pope claims that his thesis: the Counselor convinces the world of sin not to condemn it but to save it, is not only present in St. Peter's first discourse but is also confirmed in the Apostle's call to conversion and baptism which follows it.

The whole evidence for the promise and fulfilment on the day of Pentecost comes together in the paradigm of Jn. 16:7ff. In this way the Pope himself brings his own teaching on the Redemption into the spotlight:

Beginning from this initial witness at Pentecost and for all future time the action of the Spirit of truth who "convinces the world concerning the sin" of the rejection of Christ is linked inseparably with the witness to be borne to the Paschal Mystery: the mystery of the Crucified and Risen One. And in this link the same "convincing concerning sin" reveals its own salvific dimension. For it is a "convincing" that has as its purpose not merely the accusation of the world and still less its condemnation. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to judge it and condemn it but to save it. (Jn. 3:17; 12:47) This is emphasised in this first discourse, when Peter exclaims: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). And then, when those present ask Peter and the Apostles: "Brethren, what shall we do?" this is Peter's answer: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgive-

ness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37ff.). (*DeV*31.1)

The Apostle's challenge to conversion and baptism is clearly the condition for the forgiveness of sins and the reception of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Encyclical too. This is, however, traditional teaching and contradicts the theory of universal salvation.

If, even in the Encyclical, conversion is the condition for salvation of man we might well ask: has the Pope given up his theory of universal salvation?

The Pope answers this question with a subtle analysis which makes it clear what we are to understand by conviction of sin and at the same time conversion in the Encyclical and how this process occurs in man's conscience.

In relation to what was said in *DeV*31.1, the Pope continues:

In this way "convincing concerning sin" becomes at the same time a convincing concerning the remission of sins, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter in his discourse in Jerusalem calls people to conversion, as Jesus called his listeners to conversion at the beginning of his messianic activity (Mk. 1:15). Conversion requires convincing of sin; it includes the interior judgment of the conscience, and this, being a proof of the action of the Spirit of truth in man's inmost being, becomes at the same time a new beginning of the bestowal of grace and love: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:22). Thus in this "convincing concerning sin" we discover a double gift: the gift of the truth of conscience and the gift of the certainty of redemption. The Spirit of truth is the Counselor. (*DeV*31.2)

According to this passage, "convincing concerning sin" means: the Holy Ghost convinces each individual of the existence of sin and at the same time of its forgiveness. Forgiveness

also implies the granting of grace. This process is called conversion in the Encyclical.

We may, therefore, define the word "conversion" as it appears in the passage in the following way: Conversion occurs in man's conscience through the Holy Ghost; the latter convinces man of sin and its forgiveness and at the same time grants grace to him. Granting grace means: Man receives a "double grace" from the Paraclete in the process of the convincing concerning sin: "the gift of the truth of conscience" and "the gift of the certainty of redemption." This process is conversion.

Thus conversion is not a human act at all but a pure cognitive process of consciousness in man's conscience through the working of the Holy Ghost.¹¹ By "the gift of the certainty of redemption" the Encyclical means of course subjective redemption. That is nothing other than the knowledge of universal salvation.

Although the Encyclical expressly quotes the call to conversion in the Gospel and in St. Peter's discourse there is absolutely no agreement between what *it* says and the Biblical call to conversion.

In the New Testament, conversion means man's decisive turning away from sin and the faithful, obedient turning towards God without any restrictions.¹² This happens through the acceptance of faith in the Gospel (Mk. 1:15). Conversion is therefore an act of faith and an act of the will of man under the influence of grace.

The Encyclical sums up its interpretation of "convincing concerning sin" in apostolic preaching as follows:

¹¹ Concerning "conversion," see *Dives in Misericordia* 5, 6. There, using the example of the prodigal son, it is presented as a pure process of consciousness. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/2, 65-90.

¹² Joachim Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu [Jesus' Parables]* (Zürich, 1952), pp. 50-70, 108. Johannes Behm, "Metanoía," *ThWNT*, IV, 994-1001.

The convincing concerning sin, through the ministry of the apostolic kerygma in the early Church, is referred—under the impulse of the Spirit poured out at Pentecost—to the redemptive power of Christ crucified and risen. Thus the promise concerning the Holy Spirit made before Easter is fulfilled: “He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” When therefore, during the Pentecost event, Peter speaks of the sin of those who “have not believed” (Jn. 16:9) and have sent Jesus of Nazareth to an ignominious death, he bears witness to victory over sin: a victory achieved, in a certain sense, through the greatest sin that man could commit: the killing of Jesus, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father! Similarly, the death of the Son of God conquers human death: “I will be your death, O death” (cf. Hos. 13:14; I Cor. 15:55), as the sin of having crucified the Son of God “conquers” human sin! That sin which was committed in Jerusalem on Good Friday—and also every human sin. For the greatest sin on man’s part is matched, in the heart of the Redeemer, by the oblation of supreme love that conquers the evil of all the sins of man. On the basis of this certainty the Church in the Roman liturgy does not hesitate to repeat every year, at the Easter Vigil, “O happy fault!” in the deacon’s proclamation of the Resurrection when he sings the “*Exsultet.*” (DeV 31.3)

Of course the “convincing concerning sin” in the apostolic preaching is referred to the redemptive power of Christ crucified and risen. But in the Encyclical this referral is to be understood in the context of the Pope’s teaching on Redemption and conversion.

Naturally the Apostle Peter in his sermon at Pentecost bears witness to Christ’s victory over sin through the Cross. But then the Encyclical makes three incredible statements about the victory of the Cross:

St. Peter’s sermon witnesses that the victory over sin was “achieved” by the greatest sin: the killing of Jesus.

The greatest sin of man corresponds to the greatest love of the Redeemer, "that conquers the evil of all (!) the sins of man."

The Easter *Exultet* is based upon these two truths.

In reply one must say:

The victory over sin is in no wise, not even "in a certain way," achieved through the greatest sin of mankind but through Christ's obedience unto death on the Cross.¹³ For not all have a participation in Christ's victory but only those who believe and are born of God: "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (I Jn. 5: 4).

Of course the answer to the greatest sin of man is the love of the Crucified Redeemer. This love has mercy on even the greatest sinner who converts, it has also made satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, principally wiped out sin and in this sense also overcome it, but it doesn't "conquer" simply "the evil of *all* the sins of man." That is the universal salvation thesis! There is, however, opposition to the Redemption and subjective conditions from man's side. Even after Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, the "world" still exists and "is seated in wickedness" (I Jn. 5:19), which the Paraclete convinces of sin and judgment "because it does not believe"; in spite of Christ's sacrifice of the Cross there is still "death bringing sin" (I Jn. 5:16ff.) and an eternal damnation!

The Easter *Exultet* in the old liturgy does come in fact from the "certainty of redemption" but in the sense that Christ through His objective, universal work of salvation performed the Redemption whose fruits must be applied to the individual in the process of justification and to the believing Christian community in baptism. In the Encyclical the *Exultet* has for its basis the knowledge of the subjective Redemp-

¹³ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 184ff.

tion of all men, *i.e.*, the “ineffable truth” of universal salvation (cf. *DeV* 32).

2.3. God’s answer to man’s sin is the ineffable truth of universal salvation (*DeV* 32)

For the Pope, God’s answer to man’s sin is the “ineffable truth” of universal salvation which only the Holy Ghost can search from the depths of the mystery of God and convince man of:

However, no one but he himself, the Spirit of truth, can “convince the world,” man, or the human conscience of this ineffable truth. He is the Spirit who “searches even the depths of God” (cf. I Cor. 2:10). Faced with the mystery of sin, we have to search “the depths of God” to their very depth. It is not enough to search the human conscience, the intimate mystery of man, but we have to penetrate the inner mystery of God, those “depths of God” that are summarised thus: to the Father—in the Son—through the Holy Spirit. It is precisely the Holy Spirit who “searches” the “depths of God,” and from them draws God’s response to man’s sin.

With this response there closes the process of “convincing concerning sin,” as the event of Pentecost shows. (*DeV* 32.1)

With this answer of God to man’s sin ends the Pope’s proof that the promise of the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. was “literally and immediately fulfilled” in the events of Pentecost.

The Encyclical adds almost as an afterthought another two points: the relationship of every sin to the Cross and the knowledge of this relationship through faith alone (*DeV* 32.2):

By convincing the “world” of the sin of Golgotha as happened at Pentecost, the Holy Ghost “convinces of every sin, committed in any place and at any moment in human histo-

ry: for he demonstrates its relationship with the Cross of Christ." This relationship shows the universal dimension of sin and wickedness in the depths of the "*mysterium iniquitatis*."

This, however, is recognised by faith alone:

For sin, shown in relation to the cross of Christ, is at the same time identified in the full dimension of the "*mysterium pietatis*." Man is also absolutely ignorant of this dimension of sin apart from the Cross of Christ. And he cannot be "convinced" of this dimension either, except by the Holy Spirit: the one who "searches the depths of God." (*DeV* 32.3)

This afterthought is a prelude to the themes which the Pope deals with in the following paragraphs: the universal dimension of sin in man's history and God's economy of salvation (*DeV* 33-38) and the Holy Ghost's answer to man's sin from the depths of God (*DeV* 39-41).

3. The universal dimension of sin in the history of man and in God's economy of salvation (*DeV* 33-38)¹⁴

In the articles *DeV* 33-38 the Pope goes back to the theme of Original Sin which he had already talked about in a different context but this time it is in a more detailed way (*DeV* 12-14).

3.1. Original Sin: the rejection of the Word (*DeV* 33)

The universal dimension of sin in its relationship to the redeeming power of the Cross of Christ is shown already at the beginning of history:

¹⁴ In the English translation: "The Witness Concerning the Beginning: The Original Reality of Sin."

This is the dimension of sin that we find in the witness concerning the beginning, commented on in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 1-3). It is the sin that according to the revealed Word of God constitutes the principle and root of all the others. We find ourselves faced with the original reality of sin in human history and at the same time in the whole of the economy of salvation. It can be said that in this sin the "*mysterium iniquitatis*" has its beginning, but it can also be said that this is the sin concerning which the redemptive power of the "*mysterium pietatis*" becomes particularly clear and efficacious. This is expressed by St. Paul, when he contrasts the "disobedience" of the first Adam with the "obedience" of Christ, the second Adam: "Obedience unto death" (Phil. 2:8). (*DeV* 33.1)

The Encyclical describes Original Sin as the root of all other sins and draws the relationship to the "redemptive power of the mystery of our faith" by contrasting Adam's disobedience with Christ's obedience. That seems in line with traditional theology. But what is decisive is what the Pope understands by Adam's sin and the redemption through Christ.

In order to fully grasp the essence of Original Sin the Encyclical takes its analysis back to the Creation:

According to the witness concerning the beginning, sin in its original reality takes place in man's will—and conscience—first of all as "disobedience," that is, as opposition of the will of man to the will of God. This original disobedience presupposes a rejection, or at least a turning away from the truth contained in the Word of God, who creates the world. This Word is the same Word who was "in the beginning with God," who "was God," and without whom "nothing has been made of all that is," since "the world was made through him" (Jn. 1:1,2,3,10). He is the Word who is also the eternal law, the source of every law which regulates

the world and especially human acts. When therefore on the eve of his Passion Jesus Christ speaks of the sin of those who "do not believe in him," in these words of his, full of sorrow, there is as it were a distant echo of that sin which in its original form is obscurely inscribed in the mystery of creation. For the one who is speaking is not only the Son of Man but the one who is also "the first-born of all creation," "for in him all things were created...through him and for him" (Col. 1:15-18). In the light of this truth we can understand that the "disobedience" in the mystery of the beginning presupposes in a certain sense the same "non-faith," that same "they have not believed" which will be repeated in the Paschal Mystery. As we have said, it is a matter of a rejection or at least a turning away from the truth contained in the Word of the Father. The rejection expresses itself in practice as "disobedience," in an act committed as an effect of the temptation which comes from the "father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). Therefore, at the root of human sin is the lie which is a radical rejection of the truth contained in the Word of the Father, through whom is expressed the loving omnipotence of the Creator: the omnipotence and also the love "of God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth." (*DeV* 33.2)

The common protagonist in this unusual linking of the Original Sin of disobedience to the sin of non-faith in Christ in Jn. 16:7ff. is the Person of the Eternal Word: the first born of the Creation is also the Son of Man. Thence Original Sin is defined as "a rejection of the truth contained in the Word of the Father" and therefore expresses itself "in practice as 'disobedience.'"

In the Encyclical, however, not only the Father is the Creator who created the world through the Word but also the Holy Ghost out of whom, as from its source, the Creation proceeds (cf. *DeV* 10.2). We may, therefore, ask about the Holy Ghost "in the mystery of the Creation" (*DeV* 34) and

what relationship Original Sin has to the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 35).

3.2. The Holy Ghost in the mystery of the Creation (*DeV* 34)

In order to grasp the essence of Original Sin in relationship to the Holy Ghost, the Encyclical goes back to the Creation.

The Encyclical first makes a few fundamental statements about the Holy Ghost in the mystery of the Creation (*DeV* 34) in order to define the essence of Original Sin in relationship to the Holy Ghost in the “mystery of man” (*DeV* 35).

Concerning the Holy Ghost in “the mystery of the Creation” the Encyclical has already mentioned the identity of the Creation and the self-communication of God (cf. *DeV* 12). Now the Encyclical goes further in its consideration of the Holy Ghost:

“The Spirit of God,” who according to the Biblical description of creation “was moving over the face of the water,” (Gen. 1:2) signifies the same “Spirit who searches the depths of God”: searches the depths of the Father and of the Word-Son in the mystery of creation. Not only is he the direct witness of their mutual love from which creation derives, but he himself is this love. He himself, as love, is the eternal uncreated gift. In him is the source and the beginning of every giving of gifts to creatures. The witness concerning the beginning, which we find in the whole of Revelation, beginning with the Book of Genesis, is unanimous on this point. To create means to call into existence from nothing: therefore, to create means to give existence. And if the visible world is created for man, therefore the world is given to man (cf. Gen. 1:26, 28, 29). And at the same time that same man in his own humanity receives as a gift a special “image and likeness” to God. This means not

only rationality and freedom as constitutive properties of human nature, but also, from the very beginning, the capacity of having a personal relationship with God, as "I" and "you," and therefore the capacity of having a covenant, which will take place in God's salvific communication with man. Against the background of the "image and likeness" of God, "the gift of the Spirit" ultimately means a call to friendship, in which the transcendent "depths of God" become in some way opened to participation on the part of man. The Second Vatican Council teaches: "The invisible God out of the abundance of his love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that he may invite and take them into fellowship with himself" (*Dei Verbum* 2). (*DeV* 34)

In order to understand this jumbled statement about the Holy Ghost in the mystery of the Creation we must break it down into its individual elements and consider it in the light of traditional teaching.

The key word for all aspects of the quoted passage is "gift":

1) The Holy Ghost is not only the witness of the mutual love of the Father and the Son from which the Creation proceeds but He *is* this love and as such "eternal uncreated gift."

According to the Church's teaching, only the Holy Ghost as the third divine Person, proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and the Son, but in no way the Creation.

Church teaching distinguishes between the interior processions of God and the exterior activities of God which are common to all three divine Persons (*de fide*). Thus the three divine Persons are a unique common principle of the Creation (Dz. 254, 281, 284, 704).

This is an absolutely free external work of God.

In so far as the Encyclical claims that the Creation and the Holy Ghost both proceed from the mutual love of the Father

and the Son within the Trinity, it may not be reconciled with traditional teaching.

The Encyclical's thesis is, however, no *lapsus linguae* made in passing but the central statement of the passage. It confirms the thesis of the identity of the Creation and God's self-communication from the beginning of the Encyclical (cf. *DeV* 12). If, however, both the Holy Ghost and the Creation proceed from the mutual love of the Father and the Son, then not only is the Creation a necessary procession of the love of the Father and the Son within the Trinity but it is also an indissoluble unity with the Holy Ghost. This means a universal giving of grace from the beginning of Creation.

The thesis of the Encyclical is the fundamental statement of the Pope's pneumatological theory of the universal giving of grace.

From this fundamental thesis the specific meaning of the other three theses becomes clear.

2) If, according to the passage from the Encyclical, the Creation and the Holy Ghost both proceed from the mutual love of the Father and the Son within the Trinity, then also in the Holy Ghost is the "source and the beginning of every giving of gifts to creatures." That is why the Holy Ghost, who is uncreated gift, is the one who gives existence to all created things by calling them into being from nothing. The Holy Ghost, then, is the Creator of the world.

In Holy Scripture God's absolutely free act of Creation, which according to Church teaching is common to all three divine Persons, is ascribed sometimes to the Father and sometimes to the Son but usually, as in the Apostles' Creed, "appropriated" to the Father. The theological principle of appropriation, however, does not appear in the Encyclical.

3) According to the Encyclical the visible world was created by the Holy Ghost for man and given him as a gift. If the whole visible world was created for man and given him as a

gift then the whole cosmos is man's property. How should we understand that? It is said of Christ: "All things were created by him and in him" (Col. 1:17). Thus all things have been given us with Christ (Rom. 8:32).

According to Church teaching (*de fide*), however, the primary end of the Creation of the world is the glorification of God (Dz. 1783, 1805). The secondary end of the Creation is the giving of benefits to creatures, especially the sanctification of rational creatures. The two ends of Creation are indivisibly united; for the glorification of God by knowledge and love is what causes the sanctification of rational creatures.¹⁵ The first end may not be forgotten; otherwise an inadmissible anthropocentrism would result.

4) The Encyclical's particular teaching about man is that, when he was created, he "in his own humanity receives as a gift a special 'image and likeness' to God." This gift means three things: *a*) it is part of man's essence; *b*) this means "not only rationality and freedom as constitutive properties of human nature, but also, from the very beginning, the capacity of having a personal relationship with God" and "therefore the capacity of having a covenant" with Him; *c*) it is "the gift of the Spirit," the "call to friendship" with God and the participation in the divine life. Thus we can see clearly: From the fundamental principles of the Encyclical there is not only an omnipresence and universal effect of the Holy Ghost in the Creation but also the supernatural "gift of the Spirit" and the participation in the divine life.

Even if we assume, as the Encyclical does and also St. Thomas and his school, that the first man was created in a state of sanctifying grace,¹⁶ nonetheless Church teaching maintains that the supernatural giving to our first parents of

¹⁵ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 81ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

the “gift of the [Holy] Spirit” is not part of man’s “nature” and not even is it one of the “constitutive properties of human nature.” Rather, as something supernatural, it is a pure undeserved grace.¹⁷

The distinction between nature and the supernatural is not made in the Encyclical, rather they are treated as the same thing. That is precisely what results from the fundamental pneumatological principle: by saying that not only the Holy Ghost but also the Creation proceeds from the love of the Father and the Son within the Trinity, the Encyclical lays the dogmatic foundation for the universal giving of grace by the Holy Ghost.

What remains to be seen is: How does the Encyclical define Original Sin based on the foundation of a universal giving of grace through the Holy Ghost?

3.3. Original Sin: rejection of the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 35)

The Encyclical’s teaching on the Holy Ghost in the “mystery of Creation” (*DeV* 34) is the foundation for the definition of Original Sin in the “mystery of man”:

The Spirit, therefore, who “searches everything, even the depths of God,” knows from the beginning “the secrets of man” (cf. I Cor. 2:10ff.). For this reason he alone can fully “convince concerning the sin” that happened at the beginning, that sin which is the root of all other sins and the source of man’s sinfulness on earth, a source which never ceases to be active. The Spirit of truth knows the original reality of the sin caused in the will of man by the “father of lies,” he who already “has been judged” (Jn. 16: 11). The Holy Spirit therefore convinces the world concerning sin in connection with this “judgment,” but by constantly guiding toward the “righteousness” that has been revealed to man to-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 101ff.

gether with the Cross of Christ: through "obedience unto death" (cf. Phil. 2:8). (*DeV* 35.1)

This compact definition of Original Sin which was in the beginning must be read twice. We are obviously to distinguish between Satan's sin and man's Original Sin: Original Sin as such is Satan's sin. It precedes man's sin. *Man's* Original Sin according to the passage was "caused" in man's will by the father of lies. In this sense man's Original Sin is "the root of all other sins and the source of man's sinfulness on the earth which never dies."

That is why the Holy Ghost has a double activity: He convinces the world of Satan's sin which "already has been judged" and He convinces man at the same time "constantly" guiding him to the justice of the Cross of Christ.

The passage is a commentary on the thesis presented at the beginning (cf. *DeV* 28). The Holy Ghost convinces the world of the "definitively condemned sin of Satan" and at the same time the "saved sin of man" and in this way delivers man from judgment.

Looking at this from the point of view of traditional teaching we need to say:

The "original sin of man" which the Encyclical talks about is obviously completely different from the Church's teaching on Original Sin.

At the beginning of man's history there was no Original Sin but an Original Justice. By our first parents' sin this *iustitia originalis* was lost but was in a more wondrous way returned through the Redemption in the justification of man (*Dz.* 796, 799).

According to Catholic teaching Original Sin is not a never-ending source of sinfulness for man. Rather man is freed from the bonds of Satan through justification and born again

as a child of God. He is then in Christ a "new creation" (II Cor. 5:17). There is no mention of this in the Encyclical.

The sin of Satan is not the cause or "root" from out of which the "original sin of man" comes either. Original Sin is by no means "caused" by Satan in the will of man but was committed by our first parents, that is, by man himself. That is why our first parents had to bear the serious loss of the original gift of grace. Satan is not the *causer* of our first parents' sin but the *tempter*. If Original Sin were "caused" by Satan in the will of man then it would be Satan's sin in the end, who has already been judged, and not the sin of man who would have been delivered from the judgment by not being responsible (cf. *DeV*28).

If the Holy Ghost convinced the world of Satan's sin which had already been judged but at the same time led man "continually" to justice, then all men would by this means be redeemed and justified!

The Encyclical resumes its dogmatic analysis of Original Sin and defines its essence:

Only the Holy Spirit can convince concerning the sin of the human beginning, precisely he who is the love of the Father and of the Son, he who is gift, whereas the sin of the human beginning consists in untruthfulness and in the rejection of the gift and the love which determine the beginning of the world and of man. (*DeV*35.2)

If the Holy Ghost convinces concerning "the sin of the human beginning" then this convincing has a double meaning: The Holy Ghost convinces concerning Satan's sin and that of man.

The definition of the essence of the Original Sin of man is: It consists in a lie and in the rejection of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Because, however, according to the Encyclical's teaching the Creation proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost within the Trinity (cf. *DeV* 34) man was created in the image and likeness of God and the supernatural is part of man's nature, that rejection can not mean the loss of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

So what exactly does this rejection of the Holy Ghost mean? The Pope doesn't avoid the question but answers it in the following articles.

3.4. Sin from the beginning in the book of Genesis (*DeV* 36)

After analysing Original Sin in a dogmatic way the Pope next applies exegesis to Genesis 1-3.

Here is a general summary of the thoughts of the Encyclical which in many respects seem quite traditional:

According to Scripture and Tradition, Original Sin is understood to be disobedience in Genesis. That means the "simple and direct breaking of a commandment given by God."

But the roots are deeper: Man with reason and freedom is the "image of God." That's what gives man his greatness and dignity as a person. But he is and remains a creature, completely dependent on God. The boundary which this creature shouldn't cross was the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." That is also how God's prohibition was to be understood: The Creator forbade man to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge (cf. *DeV* 36.1).

Satan's suggestion: "As soon as you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God ['like gods'] knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5) leads to disobedience and the crossing of that impassable boundary (*DeV* 36.2):

“Disobedience” means precisely going beyond that limit, which remains impassable to the will and the freedom of man as a created being.

God, the Creator, is and remains the sole definitive source of moral order in the world. Man cannot decide by himself what is good and what is evil. The intimate truth of being is the reflection of the divine Word, “the eternal Son, consubstantial with the Father.”

But in the Encyclical the Holy Ghost too is Creator. The Encyclical draws the Holy Ghost into the picture by describing man’s conscience as a special gift of the Holy Ghost:

To man, created to the image of God, the Holy Spirit gives the gift of conscience, so that in this conscience the image may faithfully reflect its model, which is both Wisdom and eternal Law, the source of the moral order in man and in the world. (*DeV* 36.3)

That is why disobedience as the “original dimension of sin” means the rejection of the Holy Ghost as source of the moral order through man’s claim to become an independent and exclusive source for deciding what is good and evil.

The Encyclical sums up:

The Spirit who “searches the depths of God,” and who at the same time is for man the light of conscience and the source of the moral order, knows in all its fulness this dimension of the sin inscribed in the mystery of man’s beginning. And the Spirit does not cease “convincing the world of it” in connection with the Cross of Christ on Golgotha (*DeV* 36.3).

3.5. Breaking away from the participation in the life of God (*DeV*37)

The “disobedience in the beginning” doesn’t just hurt the moral order but also the original order of grace. In what way and how far? This is what the Encyclical says on this decisive point for the theory of universal giving of grace:

According to the witness of the beginning, God in creation has revealed himself as omnipotence, which is love. At the same time he has revealed to man that, as the “image and likeness” of his Creator, he is called to participate in truth and love. This participation means a life in union with God, who is “eternal life.” But man, under the influence of the “father of lies,” has separated himself from this participation. To what degree? Certainly not to the degree of the sin of a pure spirit, to the degree of the sin of Satan. The human spirit is incapable of reaching such a degree. In the very description given in Genesis it is easy to see the difference of degree between the “breath of evil” on the part of the one who “has sinned (or remains in sin) from the beginning” and already “has been judged,” and the evil of disobedience on the part of man. (*DeV*37.1)

According to this, man as the image and likeness of God participated in the life of God from the beginning. But through Original Sin man separated himself from this participation with God.

At first sight that sounds like the traditional teaching of the Church. What should be written plain and simple is: By Original Sin man lost the original state of grace and fellowship with God. Separation is not loss. The way the Encyclical formulates what it says implies, however, that, in spite of sin, the image and likeness of God as well as the self-communication of God to man remain (*DeV*13).

That's what explains the Pope's next question: How much has man separated himself from fellowship with God by Original Sin? The quoted passage says only that there is a difference to Satan's sin. The Pope describes this with a moral psychoanalysis:

Man's disobedience, nevertheless, always means a turning away from God, and in a certain sense the closing up of human freedom in his regard. It also means a certain opening of this freedom—of the human mind and will—to the one who is the "father of lies." This act of conscious choice is not only "disobedience" but also involves a certain consent to the motivation which was contained in the first temptation to sin and which is unceasingly renewed during the whole history of man on earth: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (*DeV* 37.2)

The passage doesn't repeat the idea that Satan "caused" Original Sin in man's will (cf. *DeV* 35.1) but speaks of a "first temptation to sin." That separation from God means the loss of the original state of grace is not said.

Instead the Pope goes further in his psychoanalysis, linking it to the dogmatic ideas which he had already expressed in *Sign of Contradiction*¹⁸:

Here we find ourselves at the very centre of what could be called the "anti-Word," that is to say the "anti-truth": For the truth about man becomes falsified: who man is and what are the impassable limits of his being and freedom. This "anti-truth" is possible because at the same time there is a complete falsification of the truth about who God is. God the Creator is placed in a state of suspicion, indeed of accusation, in the mind of the creature. For the first time in human

¹⁸ [*Sign of Contradiction*], pp. 38-39.

history there appears the perverse “genius of suspicion.” He seeks to “falsify” Good itself; the absolute Good, which precisely in the work of creation has manifested itself as the Good which gives in an inexpressible way: as *bonum diffusivum sui*, as creative love. Who can completely “convince concerning sin,” or concerning this motivation of man’s original disobedience, except the one who alone is the gift and the source of all giving of gifts, except the Spirit, who “searches the depths of God” and is the love of the Father and the Son? (*DeV*37.3)

Thus the Pope has exposed the metaphysical heart of the problem of Original Sin and the motivation of man’s original disobedience. It is the opposition of Word (Logos) and anti-Word (Satan), of Truth and lies, of absolute Good and Evil. So far, however, there is no mention that our first parents’ Original Sin caused the loss of *iustitia originalis* and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

3.6. Evil from the beginning in the history of man (*DeV*38)

The analysis of the essence of Original Sin forms the foundation for the discussion of its consequences in man’s history:

For in spite of all the witness of creation and of the salvific economy inherent in it, the spirit of darkness is capable of showing God as an enemy of his own creature, and in the first place as an enemy of man, as a source of danger and threat to man. In this way Satan manages to sow in man’s soul the seed of opposition to the one who “from the beginning” would be considered as man’s enemy—and not as Father. Man is challenged to become the adversary of God! (*DeV*38.1)

From this point of view the Encyclical describes the effects of Satan's lie "from the beginning" in the history of mankind:

The analysis of sin in its original dimension indicates that, through the influence of the "father of lies," throughout the history of humanity there will be a constant pressure on man to reject God, even to the point of hating him: "Love of self to the point of contempt for God," as St. Augustine puts it (*De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 28). (*DeV* 38.2)

Man will be inclined to see in God primarily a limitation of himself. That is why the atheistic ideologies seek to root out religion on the grounds that religion causes the radical "alienation" of man. Hence the idea in which the rejection of God has reached the point of declaring his "death." An absurdity! Such an ideology of the "death of God" means the "death of man."

What is peculiar to the Encyclical becomes clearer when it is compared to traditional teaching on sin.

In classic theology our first parents stand at the beginning of the history of man and salvation *in statu iustitiae originalis*. Man lived in friendship with God and possessed supernatural sanctifying grace, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and certain praeternatural gifts. This was all lost by our first parents for themselves and for their descendants by sin when they consented to Satan's temptation. From that point mankind has lived *in statu naturae lapsae* and in servitude to Satan from which only the Redemption through Christ and justification through the faith freed them.

That is what is missing in the Encyclical: In the various subtle analyses of Original Sin and its consequences in human history, the decisive point, the loss of *iustitia originalis*, is avoided in a plethora of words. That is no chance: Original Sin in the Encyclical is not the same as Original Sin in the

Church's teaching. There is no mention of the loss of original justice and fellowship with God. The difference between nature and the supernatural is missing. All that would contradict the Pope's theory of universal salvation which comes from the basic principle of the identity of the Creation and the self-communication of God as well as the indissoluble covenant of grace of the Father with man *ab origine*.¹⁹

4. The work of salvation of the redeeming love in Christ (*DeV* 39-41)²⁰

As in classic theology, the work of salvation of the Redemption is also in the Encyclical God's answer to Original Sin and its consequences. But the terms Original Sin and Redemption do not have their traditional meaning in the Encyclical. The original sin is not Original Sin and the "ineffable truth" of universal salvation (cf. *DeV* 32) is not the Redemption as it is taught in Revelation. Since according to the Pope's teaching the Father's covenant of grace with man *ab origine* is indissoluble, the Redemption through Christ in the Encyclical can only mean satisfaction for sin which is nonetheless committed and its forgiveness but not the giving of grace and the Holy Ghost since man already possesses this anyway since Creation (cf. *DeV* 12; 34).

The Pope develops his own teaching on Redemption under the particular aspect that the Holy Ghost "convinces the world concerning sin in order to save it." It could be called a pneumatological soteriology.

First the Encyclical deals with the objective work of Redemption (*DeV* 39-41) then the subjective Redemption in man's conscience (*DeV* 42-45).

¹⁹ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vol. I-II/2.

²⁰ In the English translation: "The Spirit Who Transforms Suffering into Salvific Love."

4.1. Convincing the world concerning sin means discovering God's suffering in the interior of the Trinity (*DeV* 39)

The Encyclical first repeats certain aspects of the mysterious power of evil in the sin which the Paraclete discovers and makes them the starting point for its considerations:

The Spirit who searches the depths of God was called by Jesus in his discourse in the Upper Room the Paraclete. For from the beginning the Spirit "is invoked" (*paraklein* = invoke) in order to "convince the world concerning sin." He is invoked in a definitive way through the Cross of Christ. Convincing concerning sin means showing the evil that sin contains, and this is equivalent to revealing the mystery of iniquity. It is not possible to grasp the evil of sin in all its sad reality without "searching the depths of God." From the very beginning, the obscure mystery of sin has appeared in the world against the background of a reference to the Creator of human freedom. Sin has appeared as an act of the will of the creature-man contrary to the will of God, to the salvific will of God; indeed, sin has appeared in opposition to the truth, on the basis of the lie which has now been definitively "judged": the lie that has placed in a state of accusation, a state of permanent suspicion, creative and salvific love itself. Man has followed the "father of lies," setting himself up in opposition to the Father of life and the Spirit of truth. (*DeV* 39.1)

This description of sin sees, quite Biblically, the specific evil of sin in the rebellion of man against his Creator through which man breaks off the relationship with God. It needs to be said, however:

In Jesus' final discourse there is no hint that the Paraclete was invoked "from the beginning" of human history and finally "in a definitive way through the Cross of Christ" simply

because the word Paraclete comes from the Greek *parakaleîn*. Such a progressive working of the Paraclete "from the beginning" is not to be deduced from Jesus' words at Jn. 16:7ff. There the Paraclete comes after Jesus has ascended to His Father as a Counselor for Christ's disciples and not for man from the beginning. As the disciples' Counselor He convinces the world concerning the sin of unbelief in Christ.

Realising that the Paraclete "convinces the world concerning sin" in so far as He discovers the wickedness directed against God in sin makes the Pope ask:

Therefore, will not "convincing concerning sin" also have to mean revealing suffering? Revealing the pain, unimaginable and inexpressible, which on account of sin the Book of Genesis in its anthropomorphic vision seems to glimpse in the "depths of God" and in a certain sense in the very heart of the ineffable Trinity? The Church, taking her inspiration from Revelation, believes and professes that sin is an offence against God. What corresponds, in the inscrutable intimacy of the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, to this "offence," this rejection of the Spirit who is love and gift? The concept of God as the necessarily most perfect being certainly excludes from God any pain deriving from deficiencies or wounds; but in the "depths of God" there is a Father's love that, faced with man's sin, in the language of the Bible reacts so deeply as to say: "I am sorry that I have made him." "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth....And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth....The Lord said: I am sorry that I have made them." But more often the Sacred Books speak to us of a Father who feels compassion for man, as though sharing his pain. In a word, this inscrutable and indescribable fatherly "pain" will bring about above all the wonderful economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ, so that through the *mysterium pietatis* love can reveal itself in the history of man as stronger than sin. So that the "gift" may prevail! (*DeV* 39.2)

The idea of a “pain” in the depths of God is an ancient and typical aspect of gnosticism; there are echoes of it in modern theologians such as Jakob Böhme, Hans Jonas, and others.

“The Pope calmly uses this word (God’s pain) which is today disputed by theologians,”²¹ and imports it as a new idea, completely at odds with the Joannine text into his paradigm “convincing concerning sin.” Now Jn. 16:7ff. doesn’t just mean the convincing concerning Satan’s sin and the original sin of man but also the discovery of suffering within God Himself.

According to the quoted passage, sin directed against God is in its depths an offence against God which causes in the heart of the Trinity and the Father an inexpressible pain from which the redeeming love in Jesus Christ proceeds.

The Encyclical remarks that this is an “anthropomorphic vision” of Scripture and that the definition of God excludes “any pain deriving from deficiencies or wounds.” But that doesn’t stop the Pope himself interpreting this in a very anthropomorphic way, seeing offence and sorrow in God and His pain as compassion for man, which he obviously does not understand as a deficiency in the most perfect Being. Thus the Encyclical can define the “Father’s pain” as the most profound reason for the work of redemption:

In a word, this inscrutable and indescribable fatherly “pain” will bring about above all the wonderful economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ, so that through the *mysteri-*

²¹ Thus Hans Urs von Balthasar, [*Let Yourselves Be Moved by the Spirit*], p. 148. Concerning the more modern tendencies to bring the crucifixion into the life of God within the Trinity, see Leo Scheffczyk, *Katholische Dogmatik. Der Gott der Offenbarung* [*Catholic Dogma: The God of Revelation*] (Aachen, 1996), II, 405ff.

um pietatis love can reveal itself in the history of man as stronger than sin.

According to Church teaching, it is by no means the “pain in the heart of the Trinity” or “of the Father” which brings about the work of salvation. An indescribable pain in God would have to be necessarily an infinite pain. Wouldn't that mean Hell in the heart of the Trinity?

God's absolute perfection excludes pain and suffering. God as the most perfect being, therefore, cannot have the emotion of compassion—God can't suffer—but only the effect of mercy, the taking away of need. God's mercy in the heart of the Trinity is not an “indescribable pain” but a benign goodness in so far as He takes away the need of His creatures, in particular the need created by sin.²²

The Holy Ghost too, according to the Encyclical, doesn't just reveal the indescribable pain in the heart of the Trinity and the Father as the most profound reason for “the wonderful economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ” but enters the suffering of Creation and, as the love of the Father and the Son, is also the source from which the historical work of salvation and all gifts proceed, as is made clear in the following passage from the Encyclical:

The Holy Spirit, who in the words of Jesus “convinces concerning sin,” is the love of the Father and the Son, and as such is the Trinitarian gift, and at the same time the eternal source of every divine giving of gifts to creatures. Precisely in him we can picture as personified and actualised in a transcendent way that mercy which the patristic and theological tradition following the line of the Old and New Testaments, attributes to God. In man, mercy includes sorrow and compassion for the misfortunes of one's neighbour. In

²² Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 30ff., 48ff.

God, the Spirit-Love expresses the consideration of human sin in a fresh outpouring of salvific love. From God, in the unity of the Father with the Son, the economy of salvation is born, the economy which fills the history of man with the gifts of the Redemption. Whereas sin, by rejecting love, has caused the "suffering" of man which in some way has affected the whole of creation, the Holy Spirit will enter into human and cosmic suffering with a new outpouring of love, which will redeem the world. And on the lips of Jesus the Redeemer, in whose humanity the "suffering" of God is concretised, there will be heard a word which manifests the eternal love full of mercy: "*Misereor*" ("I have compassion"). Thus, on the part of the Holy Spirit, "convincing of sin" becomes a manifestation before creation, which is "subjected to futility," and above all in the depth of human consciences, that sin is conquered through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who has become even "unto death" the obedient servant who, by making up for man's disobedience, accomplishes the redemption of the world. In this way the spirit of truth, the Paraclete, "convinces concerning sin." (*DeV* 39.3)

The fundamental thesis (*DeV* 39.2) that the work of Redemption proceeds from the pain in the heart of the Trinity and the Father is supposed to be "verified" as it were by the Redeemer Jesus Christ becoming man and "concretising" God's suffering. It is only consistent that the suffering within the Trinity is said to come from the Father and continue in the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost.

But the suffering of Christ is no proof for suffering in the heart of God, and the Cross of Christ is most certainly not the "full human expression" of the suffering within the Trinity (*sic DeV* 41.1) because God simply doesn't have this pain. The mythology of a suffering God comes from certain ancient mystery cults and gnostic heresies. It has nothing to do with the Christian Faith. That teaches that the Word, who is God and in His divinity as the most perfect being knows neither

pain nor suffering, became man precisely in order to take upon Himself, as true man, sin, suffering, and death and thereby bring about the Redemption. The reasoning that goes from suffering in the humanity of Jesus to suffering within the Trinity and vice versa is a false reasoning which even goes against the laws of logical syllogism.²³

By saying in *DeV* 39.2 that the “indefinable pain” of the Father “brings about the wonderful economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ,” the quoted passage from the Encyclical now says that it is the Son who brings about the Redemption of the world and the Holy Ghost who proceeds from the work of salvation.

The Encyclical then gives a triple reason for the redemptive work of salvation:

- 1) The pain of the Trinity, especially the Father.
- 2) The suffering of the Son, God's servant.
- 3) The love and mercy of the Holy Ghost.

The Father's work of salvation is to show that in mankind's history love is stronger than sin.

The Son's work of salvation performs the Redemption by doing satisfaction by his suffering for man's disobedience as the obedient servant of God.

The Holy Ghost's work of salvation consists in entering as “mercy in the form of a person” into the suffering of the whole of Creation. He fills the history of man with the gifts of the Redemption and convinces the world concerning sin by changing this conviction into a revelation of how sin has been overcome by the Lamb of God.

Thus the Encyclical gives each of the divine Persons their rôle in the work of salvation.

Furthermore the Encyclical distinguishes two aspects within the work of Redemption as such: Jesus Christ per-

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 160ff.

forms satisfaction for man's sins and the Holy Ghost enters into the suffering of mankind and gives the gifts of Redemption.

The relationship of both works to one another is described more closely: By convincing the world concerning sin, the Holy Ghost reveals how sin has been conquered by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Redemption as the conviction of sin by the Holy Ghost is completed in man's conscience as a pure act of knowledge and consciousness.

The difference to traditional teaching can be seen in the light of dogma:

Even in classic theology, God's external activities, which are common to all three Persons of the Trinity, are appropriated to individual Persons.²⁴ The principle of appropriation is, however, entirely absent from the Encyclical.

The thesis that the work of Redemption proceeds from an indescribable suffering within the Trinity, coming from the Father and communicated to the Son and the Holy Ghost, directly contradicts the traditional concept of God which excludes suffering from the essence of God.

The Encyclical's formula "the economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ" means nothing else but what, in classic theology, is understood as the soteriological meaning of Christ's sacrifice. The fundamental dogma is as follows: Christ has redeemed us by His sacrificial death on the Cross and reconciled us to God (Dz. 790, 938). Christ's redemptive sacrifice thus includes both aspects: negatively the satisfaction for sins and positively reconciliation with God, *i.e.*, especially the gift of sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost. This unity is broken in the Encyclical and moreover the special effect of the Holy Ghost in man's conscience reduced to a simple process of consciousness.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 72ff.

The quoted passage reflects the Pope's theory of universal salvation:

According to this, the sacrifice of the Cross means simple satisfaction for mankind's sins which Christ once and for all performed for the Father due to His faithfulness to the indissoluble covenant of grace with man which exists *ab origine*.²⁵ The Holy Ghost, who in the Encyclical has been united to all men from the beginning through the act of Creation (cf. *DeV* 12; 34), convinces the world concerning sin by pointing out the satisfaction through the sacrifice of the Cross and revealing to man that he has been redeemed, opening him to a "renewed giving of love."

4.2. The presence of the Holy Ghost in Christ's redeeming sacrifice (*DeV* 40)

The relationship between Christ's sacrifice of the Cross and the work of the Holy Ghost in the work of Redemption has already been thoroughly discussed at the beginning of the Encyclical (cf. *DeV* 8). The interpretation of this relationship was on the lines of the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity and could therefore be reduced to a relationship of dependence or of quasi causality (cf. *DeV* 8.2). The Pope now renews his consideration of the relationship of Christ's sacrifice and the Holy Ghost. Here not only a knowledge of the theory of universal salvation must be presupposed but also of the Pope's Photian idea of the Trinity.

The exegetical foundation for the consideration is Heb. 9: 13ff.:

The redemptive value of Christ's sacrifice is expressed in very significant words by the author of the Letter to the He-

²⁵ *Dives in Misericordia* 7.1. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, III/2, 91ff.

brews, who after recalling the sacrifices of the Old Covenant in which “the blood of goats and bulls...” purifies in “the flesh,” adds: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:13ff.) Though we are aware of other possible interpretations, our considerations on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the whole of Christ’s life lead us to see this text as an invitation to reflect on the presence of the same Spirit also in the redemptive sacrifice of the Incarnate Word. (*DeV* 40.1)

The Pope says in advance that he knows there are other interpretations of Heb. 9:13ff in ordinary exegesis but that he intends to go his own way in explaining Scripture. So once again it’s a case of the Pope’s personal exegesis.

This can be seen in his first interpretation of the passage:

To begin with we reflect on the first words dealing with this sacrifice, and then separately on the “purification of conscience” which it accomplishes. For it is a sacrifice offered “through the eternal Spirit,” that “derives” from it the power to “convince concerning sin.” It is the same Holy Spirit, whom, according to the promise made in the Upper Room, Jesus Christ “will bring” to the Apostles on the day of his Resurrection, when he presents himself to them with the wounds of the crucifixion, and whom “he will give” them “for the remission of sins”: “Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven” (Jn. 20:22ff.). (*DeV* 40.2)

The Pope first considers first Christ’s sacrifice itself (*DeV* 40-41) then, separate from that, the effects of the sacrifice, the purification of conscience (*DeV* 42-45).

The passage in Heb. 9:13-14 actually says: “For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being

sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost²⁶ offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

In the Pope's exegesis he is concerned only with Heb. 9:14 that is Christ's sacrifice. This is what he says about it:

For it is truly a sacrifice offered "through (the action of) the eternal Spirit," that "derives" from it the power to "convince concerning sin." (*DeV* 40.2)

Already at the beginning of his exegesis the Pope changes what Scripture says, as a comparison of the two passages shows:

In both cases there is a "true sacrifice." But while in Heb. 9:14 Christ "by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God" the Pope's exegesis turns it into a sacrifice "offered 'through the eternal Spirit'" who derives from it the power to "convince concerning sin." The Biblical active voice is changed to passive and the parenthesis (the action of) added. That means the changing of the subject from Christ to the Holy Ghost with the aim of ascribing Christ's sacrifice to the Holy Ghost. The change in subject becomes quite clear with the addition of the relative clause "that 'derives' from it the power to 'convince concerning sin.'" This clause can only refer to the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. Thus the change of subject is evident.

In Heb. 9:14 the eternal spirit of Christ does not mean the Holy Ghost and much less the Paraclete from Jn. 16:7ff. The Paraclete whom Jesus promises in Jn. 16:7ff. is not meant

²⁶ There are two texts in the Greek. The Douai Rheims translates as Holy Ghost. Prof. Dörmann is using a German translation which has the reading "eternal spirit." That is also the text that most modern translators adopt. [Translator's note.]

as a Counselor for Christ but for the disciples. Making the eternal spirit of Heb. 9:14 the same as the Holy Ghost and therefore the same Paraclete from Jn. 16:7ff. represents, however, what is peculiar to the Pope's process of thought. Strictly speaking, this would have unthinkable consequences: For if the sacrifice of the Cross "through the action of the Holy Ghost" had been performed by the Paraclete of Jesus Christ, then the sacrifice of the Cross would be the sacrifice of the Holy Ghost and Paraclete which would perform the forgiveness of sins.

The passage Heb. 9:14 has a completely different context and sense: Here the eternal spirit of Christ is neither the Holy Ghost nor the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. Rather the service of sacrifice of the old covenant is being compared in the Letter to the Hebrews as a shadow of the future and the High Priest Christ. The temporal worldly is compared to the eternal heavenly, the many insufficient sacrifices of the old covenant to the perfect sacrifice of the new covenant which Jesus Christ as the eternal High Priest has offered once and for all. He is the priest and victim at the same time. The infinite value of the sacrifice or blood of Christ is founded in the person of the High Priest himself. According to Heb. 1:2ff. he is the Son "whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high."

The eternal value of the blood of Christ which "makes purgation of sins" is explained in Heb. 9:14 by the relative clause "who by the eternal spirit offered himself unspotted unto God." So the Holy Ghost is not meant by "eternal spirit." Rather the relative clause characterises the sacrifice of Christ as his own supreme personal achievement. Christ offered himself "through the eternal spirit," means he offered

Himself by the power of His own divinity. His death is His own divine act. In opposition to the sacrifices of the Old Testament His sacrifice belongs to the eternal sphere. The eternal spirit through which Christ offers Himself as a sacrifice to God is His own as eternal Son and High Priest.²⁷ The eternal spirit of Christ is thus not identical with the Holy Ghost in this case nor to the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff whom Christ sends His disciples as a Counselor.

According to traditional Church teaching too the sacrifice of the Cross is the greatest personal act of Jesus Christ. He, the Son of God, offered Himself as the High Priest of the New Testament on the Cross to God. The soteriological meaning consists in Christ redeeming us from sin and reconciling us with God, *i.e.*, giving us sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost, by the power of His divinity through His sacrificial death on the Cross. The sacrifice of the Cross is the perfect redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The fruits of the Redemption too, which Christ merited by His Cross, are applied by Him as High Priest to the individual in the process of justification.²⁸

It is not the Biblical text but his quite personal exegesis of Heb. 9:14, linked to Jn. 16:7ff., which forms the Pope's foundation for the following detailed description of the relationship of the Holy Ghost to Christ's sacrifice:

The words of the Letter to the Hebrews now explain to us how Christ "offered himself without blemish to God," and how he did this "with an eternal Spirit." In the sacrifice of the Son of Man the Holy Spirit is present and active just as he acted in Jesus' conception, in his coming into the world, in his hidden life and in his public ministry. Accord-

²⁷ Hermann Strathmann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer [Epistle to the Hebrews]* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 122ff.

²⁸ Scheeben, [*Redemption*], [Collected Works] VI/2, 198-204.

ing to the Letter to the Hebrews, on the way to his "departure" through Gethsemani and Golgotha, the same Christ Jesus in his own humanity opened himself totally to this action of the Spirit-Paraclete, who from suffering enables eternal salvific love to spring forth. Therefore he "was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb. 5:7ff.). In this way this Letter shows how humanity, subjected to sin, in the descendants of the first Adam, in Jesus Christ became perfectly subjected to God and united to him, and at the same time full of compassion towards men. Thus there is a new humanity, which in Jesus Christ through the suffering of the Cross has returned to the love which was betrayed by Adam through sin. This new humanity is discovered precisely in the divine source of the original outpouring of gifts: in the Spirit, who "searches...the depths of God" and is himself love and gift. (*DeV* 40.3)

According to this, the Holy Ghost would be the Counselor of Jesus Christ from His conception to His death on the Cross and the Son of God made man would have fully "opened" Himself to His action of this spirit. The action then would be that of the God-man Jesus Christ but primarily that of the Paraclete in Christ, which—in analogy to the action of the Paraclete in the disciples—would have performed the Redemption. At the bottom of this relationship of the sacrifice of Christ to the Holy Ghost is the Pope's Photian understanding of the Trinity.

According to traditional teaching all God's exterior activities, including the Redemption, are common to the three divine Persons. The sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost reflect the order of the divine Persons within the Trinity. The Father sends the Son; Father and Son as a single common principle send the Holy Ghost. It is the order of origin and sending which therefore determine the relationship of Christ to the Holy Ghost. For this reason the incarnate Son is God

Himself and as Son possesses the Holy Ghost whom He sends from the Father. He Himself acts from the hypostatic union as the God-man with divine authority and doesn't need to "open" Himself to the action of his "Counselor" the Holy Ghost.

If mankind, as it says in the quoted passage from the Encyclical, is perfectly subject to God in Jesus Christ and has been united to God in Christ, then in the sense of universal salvation that means the formal uniting of mankind with God through grace. Then there is a "new mankind" as such.

This new mankind is further described: Adam betrayed it through sin—but didn't lose it!—but in Jesus Christ and through the Cross it returned to love. If mankind in this way has found itself again "in the divine source of the original outpouring of gifts" in the Holy Ghost then the whole of humanity has been subjectively and objectively redeemed.

The Encyclical goes further in its consideration of the relationship of the priestly sacrifice of Christ to the Holy Ghost:

The Son of God Jesus Christ, as man, in the ardent prayer of his Passion, enabled the Holy Spirit, who had already penetrated the inmost depths of his humanity, to transform that humanity into a perfect sacrifice through the act of his death as the victim of love on the Cross. He made this offering by himself. As the one priest, "he offered himself without blemish to God" (Heb. 9:14). In his humanity he was worthy to become this sacrifice, for he alone was "without blemish." But he offered it "through the eternal Spirit," which means that the Holy Spirit acted in a special way in this absolute self-giving of the Son of Man, in order to transform this suffering into redemptive love. (*DeV* 40.4)

According to traditional teaching, however, Jesus Christ, because of the hypostatic union, even as man is the consubstantial Son of God and eternal High Priest who offered Him-

self as a “perfect sacrifice” of infinite value. He didn’t need, as the Encyclical says, to “enable” the Holy Ghost to make Him a perfect sacrifice of love “in order to transform this suffering into redemptive love.”

4.3. The Holy Ghost: a burning fire from heaven in Christ’s sacrifice (*DeV* 41)

The relationship of the Holy Ghost to Christ’s sacrifice in the Encyclical reaches its climax in the analogy of the holocaust.

The analogy of Christ’s sacrifice to the holocaust of the Old Testament is since the time of the Fathers perhaps the most plastic and profound interpretation of the sacrifice of Redemption. According to it, the sacrifice of the Cross itself is the first act which finds its continuation and completion in the Resurrection and Glorification of Christ. This theological way of considering sacrifice is described by Matthias Joseph Scheeben as follows: “The whole life, the whole existence of Christ, therefore, is essentially according to the idea of God assumed into His great sacrificial cult. Through the entrance into His human nature He made the object His own which He was to offer and gave it through the bond with His own Person an infinite value; through His suffering and death, which by the way he already had before him throughout his life, He completed in the immolation of Himself; through His Resurrection and glorification He made it a holocaust and through his Ascension He took it up to heaven in the sight of his Father so that it would be the eternal guarantee of the most perfect worship.”²⁹

In the Encyclical, however, it is a question especially of the relationship of that holocaust to the Holy Ghost. Matthias Joseph Scheeben describes this relationship: “The idea of

²⁹ Scheeben, [*The Mysteries of Christianity*], [Collected Works] II, 360ff.

Christ's sacrifice has its deepest roots in the depths of the Trinity. As the Incarnation itself is to be the continuation and extension of the eternal begetting and only from this standpoint completely understood, so the sacrificial devotion of the God-man should be the perfect expression of the divine love which He as God in the breathing and pouring out of the Holy Ghost does."³⁰

Against this background the particular theological view of the Pope becomes clear.

The Encyclical uses the analogy of the holocaust in order, with its help, to present the relationship of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross to the Holy Ghost in three steps. It begins with a general introduction in which it links the idea of holocaust with God's suffering:

The Old Testament on several occasions speaks of "fire from heaven" which burnt the oblations presented by men. By analogy one can say that the Holy Spirit is the "fire from heaven" which works in the depth of the mystery of the Cross. Proceeding from the Father, he directs toward the Father the sacrifice of the Son, bringing it into the divine reality of the Trinitarian communion. If sin caused suffering, now the pain of God in Christ crucified acquires through the Holy Spirit its full human expression. Thus there is a paradoxical mystery of love: in Christ there suffers a God who has been rejected by his own creature: "They do not believe in me!" but at the same time, from the depth of this suffering—and indirectly from the depth of the very sin "of not having believed"—the Spirit draws a new measure of the gift made to man and to creation from the beginning. In the depth of the mystery of the Cross, love is at work, that love which brings man back again to share in the life that is in God himself. (*DeV* 41.1)

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 368ff.

In the analogy between the Old Testament holocaust and Christ's sacrifice of the Cross the Holy Ghost, according to the quoted passage, is the burning fire which takes the sacrificial victim to the Father and brings it into the Trinitarian community. At first sight one could understand this in its traditional sense. But in its formulation it reflects the Pope's Photian understanding of the Trinity (cf. *DeV* 8). According to this, the Father is the unique source of both the Son and the Holy Ghost and therefore the Holy Ghost proceeds alone from the Father. Thus the passage can mean: From the Father (that is, not from the Father and the Son) the Holy Ghost takes the Son's sacrifice to the Father by bringing it into the Trinitarian communion.

From the view point of the Roman *Filioque*, however, the Holy Ghost doesn't proceed from the Father alone but from the Father and the Son as a single principle and therefore Christ's sacrifice too proceeds from the Father and the Son who offers Himself in the Holy Ghost to the Father. In the analogy of the holocaust the Holy Ghost is also in Tradition the consuming fire in the sacrifice of the Cross but in the sense that the sacrificial devotion of the God-man is the most perfect expression of the divine love which He perfects as God in the breathing and pouring out of the Holy Ghost (cf. Scheeben, n.22).

Christ's sacrifice is therefore not taken to the Father through the Holy Ghost (*per Spiritum Sanctum*) but it already has *per se* through the Trinitarian relationship of the Son the direction to the Father: The Son offers Himself as the eternal High Priest to the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost. As it says in the doxology of the Mass: *Per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et gloria.*

When the Encyclical says that God's pain in the Crucified one has "acquired through the Holy Spirit its full human ex-

pression" it implies an actual pain in God Himself. Since there is no such pain in the heart of the Trinity, the suffering Christ is also not the full human expression of the suffering in the heart of the Trinity.

That is why the Holy Ghost doesn't draw "a new measure" for the gift "made to man from the beginning."

This gift of grace in the Encyclical also includes the inalienable self-communication of God in the act of Creation (cf. *DeV* 12; 34).

There is no such inalienable gift of grace "made to man from the beginning." The gift of grace which was made to man in the beginning is *iustitia originalis*. This was, however, already lost by man in the beginning through the sin of our first parents. It was restored in a marvellous way by the work of Redemption. According to Church teaching there is no gift of grace for mankind from the beginning, only according to the Pope's teaching of universal salvation. That is why in the Encyclical there is no mention of the loss of original justice and the Redemption related to it. Rather it is said that love is at work which brings man "renewed" to the participation in the life of God.

In the second step the Encyclical goes further in its analysis of the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross to the consuming fire of the Holy Ghost in the holocaust of the Redemption:

The Holy Spirit as Love and Gift comes down, in a certain sense, into the very heart of the sacrifice which is offered on the Cross. Referring here to the biblical tradition, we can say: He consumes this sacrifice with the fire of the love which unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion. And since the sacrifice of the Cross is an act proper to Christ, also in this sacrifice he "receives" the Holy Spirit. He receives the Holy Spirit in such a way that afterwards—and he alone with God the Father—can "give him"

to the Apostles, to the Church, to humanity. He alone "sends" the Spirit from the Father. He alone presents himself before the Apostles in the Upper Room, "breathes upon them" and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven," as John the Baptist had foretold: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." With those words of Jesus, the holy Spirit is revealed and at the same time made present as the Love that works in the depths of the Paschal Mystery, as the source of the salvific power of the Cross of Christ, and as the gift of new and eternal life. (*DeV* 41.2)

The passage makes two important points:

1) The Holy Ghost comes down into the very heart of the sacrifice of the Cross and consumes it with the fire of the love which unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion.

This sentence may be understood in the sense of Catholic teaching on the Trinity according to which the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as a single principle through a single spiration. The Holy Ghost as the divine breath of love of the Father and the Son is then also the consuming fire in the God-man's sacrifice of the Cross. But this statement is opposed by the second.

2) Because the sacrifice of the Cross is an act proper to Christ, He "receives" the Holy Ghost and in such a way that He can pass him on to mankind.³¹

In classic theology too Christ doesn't just give the Holy Ghost as God but also receives Him as man.

But in the passage from the Encyclical it is not a question of the sanctification of Christ's humanity but the sacrifice of the Cross as an act of Christ. As an act of Christ, however, the sacrifice of the Cross is a personal act of the God-man and

³¹ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 170.

eternal High Priest who by virtue of His own divinity redeemed us by His suffering, merited all supernatural graces, and gave us the Holy Ghost.

Christ therefore did not "receive" the Holy Ghost merely because of the sacrifice of the Cross in such a way that He could pass him on to man.

The relationship of the Holy Ghost to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross may be seen from the Catholic teaching on the Trinity:

The Holy Ghost who proceeds from the mutual love between the Father and the Son is sent *ad extra* by the Father and the Son as a single principle so that the Holy Ghost has always been united to the Son of God made man and is present within Him. Christ already "possesses" the Holy Ghost by virtue of the hypostatic union and after the completion of the sacrifice of redemption communicates Him Himself by virtue of His divinity to the justified.

The Pope closes his considerations on the relationship of Christ's sacrifice to the Holy Ghost with a reference to the Roman liturgy where he finds his ideas confirmed:

This truth about the Holy Spirit finds daily expression in the Roman liturgy, when before Communion the priest pronounces those significant words: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world...." And in the Third Eucharistic Prayer, referring to the same salvific plan, the priest asks God that the Holy Spirit may "make us an everlasting gift to you." (*DeV* 41.3)

But in these passages from Mass it is not the teaching from the Encyclical which should find its daily expression but the old teaching of the Church.

5. The working of Christ's work of Redemption in man's conscience (*DeV* 42-45)³²

After the Pope, using Heb. 9:13ff., has considered the sacrifice of Christ itself (*DeV* 39-41) he then goes on, as he said (*DeV* 40.2), to the effect of the sacrifice of the Cross in man: the "purification of conscience" (*DeV* 42-45).

The Encyclical understands by purification of conscience the forgiveness of sins. In this way the effect of the sacrifice of the Redemption is reduced to a forgiveness of sins whilst the Redemption in traditional teaching includes the two positive elements of the communication of sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost. The reason for this is the theory of universal salvation.

The simple truth of faith that the Blood of Christ purifies us from our sins (cf. Heb. 9:13ff.) is a specific problem in the Encyclical due to the theory of universal salvation and the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity. In the context of the Encyclical the question must be asked: How does the cleansing of consciences take place through the Blood of Christ if man is already from the beginning in an inalienable covenant of grace with God through the Creation? This question was already answered in the Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* in relation to Christ and the Father. Here it is done with regard to the Holy Ghost.

5.1. The presence of the Consoler in the hearts of all men (*DeV* 42)

The Encyclical takes up the theme of the previous article (*DeV* 41) and gives the principles for considering it further:

³² In the English translation: "The Blood That Purifies the Conscience."

We have said that, at the climax of the Paschal Mystery, the Holy Spirit is definitively revealed and made present in a new way. The Risen Christ says to the Apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit." Thus the Holy Spirit is revealed, for the words of Christ constitute the confirmation of what he had promised and foretold during the discourse in the Upper Room. And with this the Paraclete is also made present in a new way. In fact, he was already at work from the beginning in the mystery of creation and throughout the history of the Old Covenant of God with man. His action was fully confirmed by the sending of the Son of Man as the Messiah, who came in the power of the Holy Spirit. At the climax of Jesus' messianic mission, the Holy Spirit becomes present in the Paschal Mystery in all his divine subjectivity: as the one who is now to continue the salvific work rooted in the sacrifice of the Cross. Of course Jesus entrusts this work to humanity: to the Apostles, to the Church. Nevertheless, in these men and through them the Holy Spirit remains the transcendent principal agent of the accomplishment of this work in the human spirit and in the history of the world: the invisible and at the same time omnipresent Paraclete! The Spirit who "blows where he wills." (*DeV* 42.1)

The passage distinguishes a double action and presence of the Holy Ghost in man: a universal one from the beginning in the mystery of the Creation and a special one in the mystery of the Resurrection since Easter in the Apostles and the Church.

The universal presence and working has its foundation, as the Encyclical has already shown (cf. *DeV* 12; 34), in the identity of the Creation and the self-communication of God or the Holy Ghost.

The special action and presence is based on the work of the sacrifice of the Cross. It is the full confirmation and definitive revelation of the universal presence and action of the Holy Ghost. At Easter the Holy Ghost was made present "in a

new way." It is a new way of the Holy Ghost being present because He is already present in another way, *viz.* by a universal presence in the hearts of all men—despite sin—from the Creation.

In the quoted passage from the Encyclical it is said that Jesus gave the work of salvation and forgiveness of sins to the Apostles and the Church, but at the same time it is stressed that the Holy Ghost remains the "transcendent principal agent" beyond the boundaries of the Church in the realisation of this work in the spirit of man and in the history of the world. The key phrase underlines this: The Holy Ghost is "the invisible and at the same time omnipresent Paraclete." The Spirit who "blows where he wills." With this last sentence the Pope himself emphasises the decisive point once again: the effective omnipresence of the consoling Spirit in the hearts of all men.

The Pope links this thesis to the key text of Jn. 16:7ff. in order to show how the omnipresent consoling Spirit continues the work of forgiveness of sins:

The words of the Risen Christ on the "first day of the week" give particular emphasis to the presence of the Paraclete-Counselor as the one who "convinces the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment." For it is only in this relationship that it is possible to explain the words which Jesus directly relates to the "gift" of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. He says: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn. 20:22ff.). Jesus confers on the Apostles the power to forgive sins, so that they may pass it on to their successors in the Church. But this power granted to men presupposes and includes the saving action of the Holy Spirit. By becoming "the light of hearts," that is to say the light of consciences, the Holy Spirit "convinces concerning sin," which is to say, he makes man realise his own evil and at the same time directs him toward what is good.

Thanks to the multiplicity of the Spirit's gifts, by reason of which he is invoked as the "sevenfold one," every kind of human sin can be reached by God's saving power. In reality—as St. Bonaventure says—"by virtue of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit all evils are destroyed and all good things are produced." (*DeV* 42.2)

According to this, Jesus did give the power to forgive sins to the Church but the Holy Ghost's work of salvation goes beyond its borders. It has a transcendental, universal character which includes the authority to forgive sins through men but, because it is all inclusive, it goes beyond this.

The work of salvation of the omnipresent consoling Spirit has a universal character: It takes place in man's conscience in that the Holy Ghost, as the light of hearts, reveals sin, makes man realise the evil of sin, and draws him at the same time to what is good. If we look at the last sentences of this passage and of the previous paragraph (*DeV* 42.1-2) then what the Encyclical says is unambiguous: The invisible and at the same time omnipresent Consoler in the heart of all men overcomes all that is evil and produces all that is good.

But this means nothing less than the thesis of universal salvation through the redeeming work of salvation of the Holy Ghost in *Dominum et Vivificantem*.

Thus the Encyclical has formulated the premisses for the answer to the decisive question to anyone who holds the theory of universal salvation: the question as to the subjective conditions for Redemption, as to conversion and faith being necessary for salvation.

The Pope described the process of conversion in the meeting of man with God the Father in the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, in two articles on the parable of the prodigal son (*DiM* 5-6). Conversion by the working of the Holy Ghost has already been discussed in *Dominum et Vivificantem* (*DeV*

3.1). The Pope now takes up the question again with the premisses of universal salvation in order to answer it.

First he describes the problem clearly:

Thus the conversion of the human heart, which is an indispensable condition for the forgiveness of sins, is brought about by the influence of the Counselor. Without a true conversion, which implies inner contrition, and without a sincere and firm purpose of amendment, sins remain "unforgiven," in the words of Jesus, and with him in the Tradition of the Old and New Covenants. For the first words uttered by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, according to the Gospel of Mark, are these: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." A confirmation of this exhortation is the "convincing concerning sin" that the Holy Spirit undertakes in a new way by virtue of the Redemption accomplished by the Blood of the Son of Man. Hence the Letter to the Hebrews says that this "blood purifies the conscience." It therefore, so to speak, opens to the Holy Spirit the door into man's inmost being, namely into the sanctuary of human consciences. (*DeV* 42.3)

It is impossible to stress in a more decisive manner that conversion is the condition for the forgiveness of sins than is done in this passage. The first sentence already says the most important point: Conversion is the indispensable condition for the forgiveness of sins. In this way the Encyclical seems to contradict and correct the theory of an unconditional universal salvation taught in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*.

It is an old and obvious teaching of the Church that true conversion which includes the acceptance of faith, sincere contrition, and a resolution to amendment are the indispensable conditions for the forgiveness of sins. Is the Encyclical teaching nothing more than the truth of the penny catechism? It *seems* to be the same. But the formulated premisses

of universal salvation (cf. *DeV* 42.2) give the theological terms a new meaning.

If the Consoler, who is in all hearts, not only convinces man concerning sin in his conscience but also by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross *realiter* conquers evil then He conquers also the evil opposed to conversion and in this way brings about conversion.

According to the Encyclical this is a universal process which happens in every man's conscience. Thus the "dualism" of "world" and Church, of redeemed and unredeemed mankind is overcome by the invisible transcendent working of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men.

Thus the Encyclical has answered the question concerning the subjective conditions for Redemption in the sense of the theory of universal salvation: Conversion is definitely the indispensable condition for the forgiveness of sins but conversion is brought about by the invisible working of the Holy Ghost present in the hearts and consciences of all men. But what about faith?

In the quoted passage from the Encyclical it is said that the "convincing concerning sin" means a confirmation of the call: "Repent and believe in the Gospel!" (Mk. 1:15) but faith is only mentioned once and only in this quotation with no consequences drawn. Faith is absorbed into a special concept of conversion. There is no mention of the requirement of a faith in the Gospel necessary for salvation in what follows in the Encyclical although in Jn. 16:8ff. it is precisely the world's lack of faith of which the Paraclete convinces it. The discriminatory and judgmental element of faith which is the basis of the Christian existence is eliminated from the key passage Jn. 16:7ff. from the beginning.

5.2. The teaching of Vatican II and the Encyclical concerning conscience (*DeV* 43)

The words from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:14) "The blood which purifies consciences" lead the Pope to the centre of his exegesis. He completes his exegetic analysis with one from moral theology on conscience beginning with a sketch of the "Catholic teaching" of the Council which he exposes in four steps. Following what the Council says, the Encyclical first defines the essence of conscience:

The Second Vatican Council mentioned the Catholic teaching on conscience when it spoke about man's vocation and in particular about the dignity of the human person. It is precisely the conscience in particular which determines this dignity. For the conscience is "the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths." It "can...speak to his heart more specifically: do this, shun that." This capacity to command what is good and to forbid evil, placed in man by the Creator, is the main characteristic of the personal subject. But at the same time, "in the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience" (*GS* 16). The conscience therefore is not an independent and exclusive capacity to decide what is good and what is evil. Rather there is profoundly imprinted upon it a principle of obedience vis-à-vis the objective norm which establishes and conditions the correspondence of its decisions with the commands and prohibitions which are at the basis of human behaviour, as from the passage of the Book of Genesis which we have already considered (Gen. 2:9-17). Precisely in this sense the conscience is the "secret sanctuary" in which "God's voice echoes." The conscience is "the voice of God," even when man recognises in it nothing more than the principle of the moral order which it is not humanly possible to doubt, even without any direct reference to the Creator. It is precisely in reference to this

that the conscience always finds its foundation and justification. (*DeV* 43.1)

In the Pope's theology man's dignity consists principally in his inalienable dignity of being God's son which also includes the possession in the heart of all men of the omnipresent Holy Ghost who has given man his conscience (cf. *DeV* 36.2).

It is obvious, however, that the Catholic teaching on conscience has the Catholic faith as a presupposition. Already in other Christian denominations conscience has another meaning³³ and this is particularly true for non-Christian religions.

The Pope in his second step joins the Catholic teaching on conscience from the Council to the main idea of the Encyclical the "convincing concerning sin" through the Holy Ghost. By doing this his teaching gets its special character.

This link is made through a general consideration of the "convincing concerning sin" and a quotation from the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*:

The Gospel's "convincing concerning sin" under the influence of the Spirit of truth can be accomplished in man in no other way except through the conscience. If the conscience is upright, it serves "to resolve according to truth the moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships"; then "persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by the objective standards of moral conduct" (*GS* 16). (*DeV* 43.2)

"Convincing concerning sin" by an upright conscience also bears fruit which are described in a long quotation from the Pastoral Constitution:

³³ Cf. Ernst Wolf, *RGG* (Tübingen, 1958), II, 1550-1557.

A result of an upright conscience is, first of all, to call good and evil by their proper name, as we read in the same Pastoral Constitution: "whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons"; and having called by name the many different sins that are so frequent and widespread in our time, the Constitution adds: "All these things and others of their kind are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practise them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator" (GS 27). (*DeV* 43.3)

It can't be said that the Council and the Encyclical have not seen the terrible extent of man's sins. That is why we are anxious to see how the Encyclical judges this theologically. The fourth step of the consideration is an evaluation of these wicked deeds:

By calling by their proper name the sins that most dishonour man, and by showing that they are a moral evil that weighs negatively on any balance-sheet of human progress, the Council also describes all this as a stage in "a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness," which characterises "all of human life, whether individual or collective" (GS 13). The 1983 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on reconciliation and penance specified even more clearly the personal and social significance of human sin (AAS 77, 213ff.). (*DeV* 43.4)

Like the Pastoral Constitution, the Encyclical sees sin called by its proper name and that which most dishonours man (*DeV* 43.3) as a moral evil which “weighs negatively on any balance-sheet of human progress.”

One would have expected a different yardstick for measuring sin in an Encyclical than the “balance-sheet of human progress.” In some cases we are talking about sins crying out to Heaven for vengeance. Why is there no mention of the wrath of God which is waiting for people who do such things? For a theological judgment of the evil deeds mentioned one can read St. Paul’s letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:18-2:24). Why is there no mention when faced with such human wickedness of a judging God and Hell? Of course Holy Scripture preaches a God of love, but it does not leave the image of a judge out of its description of God. Doubtless, man as the creature and child of God has his dignity, but doesn’t he put it at risk when he murders, rapes, and abuses children before killing them?

5.3. Mankind’s sins are subjected to the healing power of the Redemption (*DeV* 44)

The negative “balance-sheet of human progress” of our era which the Council has described as “a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness” (cf. *DeV* 43.4), brings the Encyclical now to discuss its theological leitmotiv of “convincing the world concerning sin”:

In the Upper Room, on the eve of his Passion and again on the evening of Easter Day, Jesus Christ spoke of the Holy Spirit as the one who bears witness that in human history sin continues to exist. Yet sin has been subjected to the saving power of the Redemption. “Convincing the world concerning sin” does not end with the fact that sin is called by its right name and identified for what it is throughout its entire

range. In convincing the world concerning sin the Spirit of truth comes into contact with the voice of human consciences. (*DeV* 44.1)

Of ever present sin in the history of mankind it is said simply: it is subjected to the saving power of the Redemption. What that means exactly is not said. Only the heart of that meeting of sin and Redemption is exposed: The Spirit of Truth who convinces the world concerning sin also comes into contact with man's conscience.

The Encyclical continues:

By following this path we come to a demonstration of the roots of sin, which are to be found in man's inmost being, as described by the same Pastoral Constitution: "The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labours are linked with that more basic imbalance rooted in the heart of man. For in man himself many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as a creature he undergoes his limitations in a multitude of ways. On the other, he feels himself to be boundless in his desires and summoned to a higher life. Pulled by manifold attractions, he is constantly forced to choose among them and to renounce some. Indeed, as a weak and sinful being, he often does what he would not, and fails to do what he would" (*GS* 10). The Conciliar text is here referring to the well-known words of St. Paul (cf. Rom. 7:14ff; 19). (*DeV* 44.2)

In the meeting of the Holy Ghost with man's conscience it is evident then that sin is rooted in the heart of man and the imbalance of the modern world has its source there. St. Paul is said to have described the battle between good and evil in man's inmost being.

With reference to St. Paul as a witness of this battle it needs to be said: While in the Encyclical the meeting of the Holy Ghost with man's conscience is a simple battle inside

man, the Apostle considers the battle from the point of view of the faith and therefore from a double aspect: as a battle in man's inmost being with Christ or without Christ.

St. Paul's words in Romans 7:14-25 in the light of *faith* draw a picture of man without Christ. Only faith in Christ sees the reality of man without Christ. Such a man is a man in contradiction. From him, the Apostle distinguishes the man "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1). The Christian too has a battle. The sign of being a Christian is precisely this battle of the "spirit" against the "flesh" (Gal. 5:16-24). But in contrast with the life without Christ something decisive has happened. In man without Christ it is "reason" (Rom. 7:23) which fights against the "flesh," and this battle is hopeless since the flesh is always stronger than reason. In man with Christ the "spirit" and the "flesh" fight against each other and this battle has already been won, for the spirit is the spirit of him whom Jesus has raised from the dead (Rom. 8:11). If Christians live from this spirit they are free from sin.³⁴

In the Encyclical, the meeting of the Holy Ghost with man is one that takes place in the conscience of every man. That is why there is no distinction between the believing disciples of Christ who received the Holy Ghost as a Paraclete and the unbelievers who have not received Him or, because of their lack of belief, cannot receive Him at all. The reason for this is because of the Encyclical's thesis of universal salvation: According to this, the Holy Ghost is "the invisible and at the same time omnipresent Paraclete" in the hearts and consciences of all men who conquers all evil!

The discovery of the roots of sin in man leads the Encyclical to search further as to its nature:

³⁴ Cf. Paul Althaus, *Der Brief an die Römer [Epistle to the Romans]* (Göttingen, 1966), pp. 75-84.

The "convincing concerning sin" which accompanies the human conscience in every careful reflection upon itself thus leads to the discovery of sin's roots in man, as also to the discovery of the way in which the conscience has been conditioned in the course of history. In this way we discover that original reality of sin of which we have already spoken. The Holy Spirit "convincing concerning sin" in relation to the mystery of man's origins, showing the fact that man is a created being, and therefore in complete ontological and ethical dependence upon the Creator. The Holy Spirit reminds us, at the same time, of the hereditary sinfulness of human nature. But the Holy Spirit the Counselor "convincing concerning sin" always in relation to the Cross of Christ. In the context of this relationship Christianity rejects any "fatalism" regarding sin. As the Council teaches: "A monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested" (*GS* 37). "But the Lord himself came to free and strengthen man" (*GS* 13). Man, therefore, far from allowing himself to be "ensnared" in his sinful condition, by relying upon the voice of his own conscience "is obliged to wrestle constantly if he is to cling to what is good. Nor can he achieve his own interior integrity without valiant efforts and the help of God's grace" (*GS* 37). The Council rightly sees sin as a factor of alienation which weighs heavily on man's personal and social life. But at the same time it never tires of reminding us of the possibility of victory. (*DeV* 44.3)

The discovery of the roots of sin in man leads under the influence of the Holy Ghost to a knowledge that has already been discussed at length in the Encyclical: Original Sin, an inherited sinfulness of human nature and a hopeful glance at the Cross. Only conversion is missing.

What is important to the Encyclical at this point is the inner struggle in man's conscience which is the next subject of consideration. It is here that conversion is dealt with once

more. It is not the faith of St. Paul which is used as a premiss but simply man's conscience alone.

5.4. The laborious effort of man's conscience

The struggle inside man when he meets the Spirit of truth in his conscience and is convinced concerning sin is described by the Encyclical as a process of conversion:

The Spirit of truth, who "convinces the world concerning sin," comes into contact with that laborious effort on the part of the human conscience which the Conciliar texts speak of so graphically. This laborious effort of conscience also determines the paths of human conversion: turning one's back on sin, in order to restore truth and love in man's very heart. We know that recognising evil in ourselves sometimes demands a great effort. We know that conscience not only commands and forbids but also Judges in the light of interior dictates and prohibitions. It is also the source of remorse: man suffers interiorly because of the evil he has committed. Is not this suffering, as it were, a distant echo of that "repentance at having created man" which in anthropomorphic language the Sacred Book attributes to God? Is it not an echo of that "reprobation" which is interiorised in the "heart" of the Trinity and by virtue of the eternal love is translated into the suffering of the Cross, into Christ's obedience unto death? When the Spirit of truth permits the human conscience to share in that suffering, the suffering of the conscience becomes particularly profound, but also particularly salvific. Then, by means of an act of perfect contrition, the authentic conversion of the heart is accomplished: this is the evangelical "metanoia." (*DeV* 45.1)

The "laborious effort on the part of the human conscience" from which conversion proceeds in the meeting with the Spirit of truth concerns all men because the Holy Ghost is present in the hearts of all men and conquers all evil.

Since, however, there is no suffering in the heart of the Trinity it cannot be translated into the suffering of the Cross either. That is why man's remorse is in no way an echo of that suffering within the Trinity. It *can* be said that the suffering of the conscience is particularly profound and salvific if it is united to the suffering of the crucified Lord and saviour. But such a union in a perfect contrition is only under the condition of Christian faith, that is, for a Christian.

Similarly, the act of conversion which the Encyclical comes back to means in the Gospel first the acceptance of faith in Christ: "Repent and believe in the Gospel!" (Mk. 1:15). But the faith is not mentioned in the next passage, which completes the analysis of the laborious effort on the part of the human conscience:

The laborious effort of the human heart, the laborious effort of the conscience in which this "metanoia," or conversion, takes place, is a reflection of that process whereby reprobation is transformed into salvific love, a love which is capable of suffering. The hidden giver of this saving power is the Holy Spirit: he whom the Church calls "the light of consciences" penetrates and fills "the depths of the human heart." (Sequence from Whitsun: *Reple cordis intima.*) Through just such a conversion in the Holy Spirit a person becomes open to forgiveness, to the remission of sins. And in all this wonderful dynamism of conversion-forgiveness there is confirmed the truth of what St. Augustine writes concerning the mystery of man, when he comments on the words of the Psalm: "The abyss calls to the abyss" (cf. Comm. Ps. XLI, 13; CCL 38, 470). Precisely with regard to these "unfathomable depths" of man, of the human conscience, the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit is accomplished. The Holy Spirit "comes" by virtue of Christ's "departure" in the Paschal Mystery: he comes in each concrete case of conversion-forgiveness, by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross. For in this sacrifice "the blood of Christ...pu-

rifies your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Thus there are continuously fulfilled the words about the Holy Spirit as "another Counselor," the words spoken in the Upper Room to the Apostles and indirectly spoken to everyone: "You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (Jn. 14:17). (*DeV* 45.2)

From "the laborious effort of the human heart" proceeds conversion which opens the heart for the forgiveness of sins.

What is remarkable is that only the forgiveness of sins is mentioned but not the communication of sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost which belong to the subjective Redemption in the process of man's justification. The reason for this is the Encyclical's teaching that the Holy Ghost is already in the heart of all men anyway and the Redemption therefore means only the forgiveness of sins and the participation in the life of God.

It is furthermore significant that it is not said that Christ's call to conversion means the acceptance of the faith in the Son of God made man. That is why "in each concrete case of conversion—forgiveness, by virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross" it is first a question of faith in Christ, the crucified Son of God. Requiring this faith would, however, contradict the theory of universal salvation.

We may sum up: The whole second part of the Encyclical is devoted to the development of the main thesis that the Paraclete in Jn. 16:7ff. convinces the world concerning sin not to judge it but to save it. Salvation happens like this: The Holy Ghost who is present in the hearts of all men exposes sin in man's conscience and thus brings about conversion and the forgiveness of sins, turning reprobation into salvific love.

This is the Encyclical's pneumatological theory of universal salvation.

But the Pope himself considers at the end of his exposition (*DeV* 46-48) the decisive objection which puts the theo-

ry of universal salvation and its interpretation of the key text of Jn. 16:7ff. in question: the sin against the Holy Ghost, the stubborn refusal to convert which cannot be forgiven.

6. The sin against the Holy Ghost in individuals and in history (*DeV* 46-48)³⁵

Already in *Sign of Contradiction*³⁶ Cardinal Wojtyła formulated his theory of universal salvation: "All men from the beginning to the end of the world have been redeemed and justified by Christ through his Cross." But the Cardinal already in this work had to come to terms with the problem of eternal damnation (cf. pp. 202ff.).

The theory of universal salvation excludes *per se* man's eternal damnation. The Pope turns his attention in the last section of the second part to the central problem which has not yet been dealt with in the Encyclical.

6.1. The essence of the sin against the Holy Ghost

The Pope puts Jesus' words about "unforgiveness" into their Scriptural context and is of the opinion that they then become easier to understand:

Against the background of what has been said so far, certain other words of Jesus, shocking and disturbing ones, become easier to understand. We might call them the words of "unforgiveness." They are reported for us by the Synoptics in connection with a particular sin which is called "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." This is how they are reported in their three versions: [We give here only Mt. 12:31ff. and summarise the others]: "Whoever says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven but whoever speaks against the

³⁵ In the English translation: "The Sin Against the Holy Spirit."

³⁶ [*Sign of Contradiction*], p. 103.

Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come." (*DeV* 46.1)

What are we to understand by this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and why is it not possible to be forgiven?

The Encyclical answers with St. Thomas:

It is a sin "that is 'unforgivable by its very nature, insofar as it excludes the elements through which the forgiveness of sin takes place' (*S. Th.*, II II, Q.14, Art.3)" (*DeV* 46.2).

With reference to Jn. 16:7ff. and Heb. 9:14 this means in the Encyclical:

The blasphemy consists "in the refusal to accept the salvation which God offers to man through the Holy Spirit, working through the power of the Cross. If man rejects the 'convincing concerning sin' which comes from the Holy Spirit and which has the power to save, he also rejects the 'coming' of the Counselor—that 'coming' which was accomplished in the Paschal Mystery, in union with the redemptive power of Christ's Blood: the Blood which 'purifies the conscience from dead works.'" (*DeV* 46.3)

The Pope draws the following conclusions:

We know that the result of such a purification is the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, whoever rejects the Spirit and the Blood remains in "dead works," in sin. And the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit consists precisely in the radical refusal to accept this forgiveness, of which he is the intimate giver and which presupposes the genuine conversion which he brings about in the conscience. If Jesus says that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven either in this life or in the next, it is because this "non-forgiveness" is linked, as to its cause, to "non-repentance," in other words to the radical refusal to be converted. This means the refusal to come to the sources of Redemption, which nevertheless

remain “always” open in the economy of salvation in which the mission of the Holy Spirit is accomplished. The Spirit has infinite power to draw from these sources: “he will take what is mine,” Jesus said. In this way he brings to completion in human souls the work of the Redemption accomplished by Christ, and distributes its fruits. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, then, is the sin committed by the person who claims to have a “right” to persist in evil—in any sin at all—and who thus rejects Redemption. One closes oneself up in sin, thus making impossible one’s conversion, and consequently the remission of sins, which one considers not essential or not important for one’s life. This is a state of spiritual ruin, because blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not allow one to escape from one’s self-imposed imprisonment and open oneself to the divine sources of the purification of consciences and of the remission of sins. (*DeV* 46.4)

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost then leads to a situation of “spiritual ruin.” And that means remaining in sin. Even now the Encyclical doesn’t speak about the loss of grace and the Holy Ghost. Spiritual ruin is not the same as the loss of grace.

The Pope’s formulation is more “understandable” against the Encyclical’s background of the theory of universal salvation. According to this, man is *ab origine* in an inalienable covenant of grace with the Father. He, in everlasting faithfulness to His covenant with mankind, because of the continuation of sin gives His Son over in reparation. The Son united Himself by His Incarnation formally with all men and through the Cross redeemed all men and justified them. The Holy Ghost is and remains present through the mystery of the Creation in the hearts of all men. Every man possesses an inalienable dignity of a supernatural Sonship. That is why the sin of blasphemy doesn’t mean the loss of the inalienable communion of grace with God, but only the living participation

of man in the life and love of God. That is why the rejection of the Redemption does not mean an eternal separation from God but only a "spiritual ruin."

6.2. The sin against the Holy Ghost —the sin of our century (*DeV* 47)

The Pope boldly extends his analysis of the sin against the Holy Ghost and the "spiritual ruin" in man's conscience to the spiritual state of our own age:

The action of the Spirit of truth, which works toward salvific "convincing concerning sin," encounters in a person in this condition an interior resistance, as it were an impenetrability of conscience, a state of mind which could be described as fixed by reason of a free choice. This is what Sacred Scripture usually calls "hardness of heart." In our own time this attitude of mind and heart is perhaps reflected in the loss of the sense of sin, to which the Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Poenitentia* devotes many pages. Pope Pius XII had already declared that "the sin of the century is the loss of the sense of sin" (Radio message: *Discorsi e Radiomessagi*, VIII 1946, 288); and this loss goes hand in hand with the "loss of the sense of God." In the Exhortation just mentioned we read: "In fact, God is the origin and the supreme end of man, and man carries in himself a divine seed. Hence it is the reality of God that reveals and illustrates the mystery of man. It is therefore vain to hope that there will take root a sense of sin against man and against human values, if there is no sense of offence against God, namely the true sense of sin" (John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Poenitentia*, Dec. 2, 1984). (*DeV* 47.1)

The working of the Holy Ghost concerns thus the impenitent "hardening of heart" which in the Encyclical means a "spiritual ruin" but not the loss of grace (cf. *DeV* 46.4). The quoted passage expresses this thesis with the quotation from

John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation that man in spite of any hardening of heart carries within him a "divine seed." The "divine seed" means in the Pope's theology the inalienable supernatural dignity of the Sonship of God in every man.

That is also why in the quoted passage the hardening of heart doesn't lead to the loss of that dignity but only to the loss of the sense for God and sin.

What does the Church do if our century has lost the feeling for God, and sin and blasphemy continue? The Encyclical gives the answer:

Hence the Church constantly implores from God the grace that integrity of human consciences will not be lost, that their healthy sensitivity with regard to good and evil will not be blunted. This integrity and sensitivity are profoundly linked to the intimate action of the Spirit of truth. In this light the exhortations of St. Paul assume particular eloquence: "Do not quench the Spirit"; "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." But above all the Church constantly implores with the greatest fervour that there will be no increase in the world of the sin that the Gospel calls "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." Rather, she prays that it will decrease in human souls—and consequently in the forms and structures of society itself—and that it will make room for that openness of conscience necessary for the saving action of the Holy Spirit. The Church prays that the dangerous sin against the Spirit will give way to a holy readiness to accept his mission as the Counselor, when he comes to "convince the world concerning sin, and righteousness and judgment." (*DeV* 47.2)

The Church then prays for a good conscience; she prays that the sin of blasphemy will decrease in the world and give way to a readiness to accept the Counselor who convinces the world concerning sin, of justice and of judgment.

Is all that remains for the Church, faced with the sin of blasphemy, prayer?

The loss of sensitivity for God and sin is the loss of faith in God. But it is the Church's mission to confront the godless world with God made man, to demand faith and to show the eternal consequences of refusing to believe.

The Encyclical quotes the Counselor in Jn. 16:7ff. Why doesn't it call sin by its name as is done in Jn. 16:7ff.? In Jn. 16:7ff. the Paraclete convinces the world concerning sin because it doesn't believe in Christ. The refusal to convert is the refusal to believe. The Holy Ghost is the Church's Paraclete which is *natura sua* missionary (*Ad Gentes* 2) and first preaches the faith, then demands it.

6.3. The mystery of iniquity and the mission of the Church (*DeV* 48)

The second part of the Encyclical begins and ends with Jn. 16:7ff. The Pope closes the second part with a short résumé of his exegesis of Jn. 16:7ff. and finally defines once again the service of the Church faced with the mystery of iniquity in our time:

In his farewell discourse Jesus linked these three areas of "convincing" as elements of the mission of the Paraclete: sin, righteousness and judgment. They mark out the area of that *mysterium pietatis* that in human history is opposed to sin, to the mystery of iniquity. On the one hand, as St. Augustine says, there is "love of self to the point of contempt of God"; on the other, "love of God to the point of contempt of self." The Church constantly lifts up her prayer and renders her service in order that the history of consciences and the history of societies in the great human family will not descend toward the pole of sin, by the rejection of God's commandments "to the point of contempt of God," but rather will rise toward the love in which the Spirit that gives life is revealed. (*DeV* 48.1)

If the Paraclete of the Church in Jn. 16:7ff. in a historical process convinces the world concerning sin, justice, and judgment, it is only a question of three subdivisions of the *one* work of Christ's Redemption which convinces the world concerning sin through the sacrifice of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the glorification. It is the sin of lack of faith which is meant in St. John by convincing concerning sin.

That is why according to the Gospel the Church's service consists in confronting the world with the help of the Paraclete with the crucified God-man and demanding faith. Why doesn't the Encyclical say that clearly? It doesn't require the faith but defines the Church's service simply as a continual prayer and effort to ensure the history of conscience in the great human family will not descend toward the pole of sin but raise itself to love.

From convincing concerning sin as it is generously interpreted in the Encyclical, the Pope derives in conclusion a short commentary on the convincing concerning justice and judgment:

Those who let themselves be "convinced concerning sin" by the Holy Spirit, also allow themselves to be convinced "concerning righteousness and judgment." The Spirit of truth who helps human beings, human consciences, to know the truth concerning sin, at the same time enables them to know the truth about that righteousness which entered human history in Jesus Christ. In this way, those who are "convinced concerning sin" and who are converted through the action of the Counselor are, in a sense, led out of the range of the "judgment" that "judgment" by which "the ruler of this world is judged." In the depths of its divine-human mystery, conversion means the breaking of every fetter by which sin binds man to the whole of the mystery of iniquity. Those who are converted, therefore, are led by the Holy Spirit out of the range of the "judgment," and introduced into that righteousness which is in Christ Jesus, and is in

him precisely because he receives it from the Father, as a reflection of the holiness of the Trinity. This is the righteousness of the Gospel and of the Redemption, the righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Cross, which effects the purifying of the conscience through the Blood of the Lamb. It is the righteousness which the Father gives to the Son and to all those united with him in truth and in love (*DeV* 48.2).

The second part concludes thus:

In this righteousness the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, who "convinces the world concerning sin," reveals himself and makes himself present in man as the Spirit of eternal life. (*DeV* 48.3)

A resumé of *DeV* 48.1-2 and the second part of the Encyclical would be: If anyone converts he is not judged but is taken out of the range of judgment. This seems quite in line with Scripture.

If we understand this obvious-sounding statement in the context of the Encyclical, however, that is, based on the theory of universal salvation and the change in meaning of the key passage Jn. 16:7ff., then this subtle change of meaning from St. John can also be seen in the quoted passage:

When in Jn. 16:7ff. the Paraclete convinces the world concerning sin, it's the fundamental sin of unbelief. It is in relationship to this that we must then understand justice and judgment:

When the Paraclete convinces the world concerning justice in Jn. 16:7ff. it is not talking about the Sermon on the Mount and the Cross but the glorification of Christ in the Resurrection and Ascension through which the truth of the faith is proven and unbelief is left with no justification.

When the Paraclete convinces the world concerning judgment in Jn. 16:7ff. it is not just talking about the judgment of the prince of this world which has already been passed (cf. Jn. 12:31) but also of his unbelieving followers which is being passed continually. For: "He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (cf. Jn. 3:18).

The whole of the second part has the aim of eliminating as far as is possible from the central passage in Jn. 16:7ff., Jesus' words about the faith being necessary for salvation and by long analysis to replace them with a new definition of "conversion." In place of faith which in St. John has a discriminatory and judgmental character, there is a concept of a conversion under the influence of the omnipresent Paraclete in the hearts of all men who conquers all evil and brings about the conversion and forgiveness of sins. This leads to a justice "which the Father gives to the Son and to all those united with him in truth and in love."

But there still remains the problem: the sin against the Holy Ghost. This leads to a "spiritual ruin" but not to the loss of the inalienable dignity of the sonship of God. In spite of the Pope's hermeneutical efforts the contradiction between the traditional teaching of the faith and the doctrine of universal salvation, which sometimes he simply tacitly assumes and others he more or less clearly teaches, remains.

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT WHICH GIVES LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR CENTURY¹

Plan and layout of the third part of the Encyclical

Just as in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia, Dominum et Vivificantem* has an eye on the great jubilee of Christ's birth. That is especially the case for the third part. The Encyclical's emphasis moves from Jesus' final discourse in the Upper Room to the accounts of His conception in Luke and Matthew, from the Paschal mystery to the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation of the Son through the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary in the context of the great Jubilee is the central theme of the third part of the Encyclical.

The main thesis in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*: The Son, through His Incarnation, united Himself (formally) to all men,² achieves its pneumatological completion in *Dominum et Vivificantem*.

The third part too is a carefully composed unity. The plan may be subdivided into six sections.

The first section (*DeV* 49-51) defines the dogmatic basis and content of the great Jubilee of Christ's birth which is to be celebrated as a commemoration of the Holy Ghost too.

The second section (*DeV* 52-54) sketches the pneumatological dimension in the Incarnation as the object of the great Jubilee.

¹ In the English translation: "The Spirit Who Gives Life."

² Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/2.

The third section (*DeV* 55-57) describes the negative opposition against the working of the Holy Ghost in individuals and man's history.

The fourth section (*DeV* 58-60) shows the positive service of the Church in unity with the Holy Ghost in the divine life in man and the world.

The fifth section (*DeV* 61-64) deals with the sacramental substance and the mission of the Church according to the teaching of Vatican II with an eye on the third millennium.

The sixth section (*DeV* 65-66) gives the pneumatological foundation for the common prayer of all religions.

In the third part too the plan is according to the principle of "integration of the faith": the traditional faith is accepted but at the same time integrated into the new teaching of universal salvation through the Holy Ghost and in this way almost imperceptibly transformed.

1. Basis and content of the great Jubilee in the year 2000 (*DeV* 49-51)³

First of all, the Encyclical explains why the Jubilee of Christ's birth is also a Jubilee of the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 49) and sets thereby the christological and pneumatological direction of the Jubilee (*DeV* 50-51).

1.1. The Son's Incarnation by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary (*DeV* 49)

The reason why the Church in regard to the Jubilee of Christ's birth also turns to the Holy Ghost is to be found in the mystery of the Incarnation itself.

³ In the English translation: "Reason for the Jubilee of the Year 2000: Christ Who Was Conceived of the Holy Spirit."

We will summarise the Pope's detailed Biblical reasoning since it says nothing new.

The reasoning is linked to the third millennium:

The Church's mind and heart turn to the Holy Spirit as this twentieth century draws to a close and the third Millennium since the coming of Jesus Christ into the world approaches.... This event (happened) as St. Paul says, (in) the "fulness of time." ... "When the time had finally come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman... so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4ff.). And this Incarnation of the Son-Word came about "by the power of the Holy Spirit." (*DeV* 49.1)

The Jubilee of Christ's birth is thus also a jubilee of the Holy Ghost because the Son took flesh by the power of the Holy Ghost. This was, however, on the day of His conception, not His birth.

Therefore the Pope in his Biblical reasoning for the celebration of the jubilee as a feast of the Holy Ghost does not quote from the Gospel reporting the Birth of Jesus (Lk. 2:1ff.), but those passages which report the Annunciation to Mary in Luke (Lk. 1:34ff.) and Matthew (Mt. 1:18. 20ff.). For the Incarnation of the Son happened by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary (cf. *DeV* 49.2/3).

That is what the Church professes:

Thus from the beginning, the Church confesses the mystery of the Incarnation, this key-mystery of the faith, by making reference to the Holy Spirit. The Apostles' Creed says: "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary." Similarly, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed professed: "By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man." (*DeV* 49.4)

The Encyclical continues by formulating the Church's faith especially emphasising the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father:

“By the power of the Holy Spirit” there became man he whom the Church, in the words of the same Creed, professes to be the Son, of the same substance as the Father: “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made.” He was made man by becoming “incarnate from the Virgin Mary.” This is what happened when “the fulness of time had come.” (*DeV* 49.5)

1.2. The content of the faith defines the direction of the Jubilee (*DeV* 50)

The faith of the Church in the Incarnation of the Son through the Holy Ghost defines the Christological and at the same time pneumatological direction of the Jubilee, for:

The great Jubilee at the close of the second Millennium, for which the Church is already preparing, has a directly Christological aspect: for it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time it has a pneumatological aspect, since the mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished “by the power of the Holy Spirit.” It was “brought about” by that Spirit—consubstantial with the Father and the Son—who, in the absolute mystery of the Triune God, is the Person-love, the uncreated gift, who is the eternal source of every gift that comes from God in the order of creation, the direct principle and, in a certain sense, the subject of God's self-communication in the order of grace. The mystery of the Incarnation constitutes the climax of this giving, this divine self-communication. (*DeV* 50.1)

The passage describes particularly the pneumatological content of the Jubilee and makes four fundamental statements about the Holy Ghost:

1) The Holy Ghost who is one substance with the Father and the Son is the uncreated gift, the "Person-love."

This is the same point of departure that the Pope mentioned back in *DeV* 34 in more detail.

2) As the uncreated gift the Holy Ghost is *ad extra* the source of the order of Creation and of grace.

This phrase is of course to be understood in the sense of the Encyclical, *i.e.*, in the sense of the identity of the Creation and the self-communication of God in the Holy Ghost (cf. *DeV* 12, 34).

3) The Holy Ghost is in a certain sense the subject of God's self-communication in the order of grace.

According to Church teaching, however, the three divine Persons are one single, common principle of all exterior acts of God. This means that the Holy Ghost is not the "subject of God's self-communication in the order of grace."

The Fathers deduce the unity of divine action *ad extra* from the unity of the divine nature.⁴ According to this, the one divine nature of the triune God is the effective principle of both the Creation and the order of grace. The communication of grace as a work of divine love is "appropriated" to the Holy Ghost although it proceeds from all three divine Persons.⁵

The Pope, however, does not make such fine scholastic distinctions. In the Encyclical it is simply the Holy Ghost who performs all works *ad extra*: He is the source of Creation and the subject of God's self-communication. The exterior actions of God seem to be the *proprium* of the Holy Ghost.

4) The climax of the self-communication of God is the Incarnation "by the power of the Holy Ghost."

⁴ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 72.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 220ff.

The Encyclical explains how this sentence is to be understood in two further steps.

First there is a reference to St. Thomas Aquinas:

The conception and birth of Jesus Christ are in fact the greatest work accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the history of creation and salvation: the supreme grace, "the grace of union," source of every other grace, as St. Thomas explains (cf. *Summa Theologica* III a. Q. 2, Arts. 10-12; Q. 6, ad 6, Q. 7, Art. 13). The great Jubilee refers to this work and also—if we penetrate its depths—to the author of this work, to the person of the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 50.2)

It is the hypostatic union that is meant by the "grace of union," the greatest of the Holy Ghost's works *ad extra*.

The hypostatic union is not only for St. Thomas but for the whole of tradition the central mystery of the Christian faith towards which all the other mysteries are ordered (cf. also *S.c.G.* IV, 27).

The Encyclical continues explaining how we are to understand this statement about the hypostatic union:

For the "fulness of time" is matched by a particular fullness of the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Spirit. "By the power of the Holy Spirit" the mystery of the "hypostatic union" is brought about—that is, the union of the divine nature and the human nature, of the divinity and the humanity in the one Person of the Word-Son. When at the moment of the Annunciation Mary utters her "*fiat*": "Be it done unto me according to your word," she conceives in a virginal way a man, the Son of Man, who is the Son of God. By means of this "humanisation" of the Word-Son the self-communication of God reaches its definitive fullness in the history of creation and salvation. This fullness acquires a special wealth and expressiveness in the text of John's Gospel: "The Word became flesh." The Incarna-

tion of God the Son signifies the taking up into unity with God not only of human nature, but in this human nature, in a sense, of everything that is "flesh": the whole of humanity, the entire visible and material world. The Incarnation, then, also has a cosmic significance, a cosmic dimension. The "first-born of all creation," becoming incarnate in the individual humanity of Christ, unites himself in some way with the entire reality of man, which is also "flesh"—and in this reality with all "flesh," with the whole of creation. (*DeV* 50.3)

What is particular to this passage can be more clearly seen in the light of traditional teaching:

1) When it says the hypostatic union is brought about "by the power of the Holy Spirit" we must remember that all God's exterior actions are common to all three divine Persons, the hypostatic union included. If the actions are "appropriated" to the individual Persons, this is done to make the distinction of Persons in God more understandable for man.⁶

But the Incarnation is proper to the second Person, for only the Son assumed a human nature and became man. The Incarnation of the Son has no interior analogy. It is understood in traditional theology as the extension of the eternal begetting of the Father. That is also why Christ as the Son of God made man has the divine nature because of being eternally begotten of the Father. That is also why there is no double Sonship in Christ and the relationships within the Trinity of the Logos made man to the Father and the Holy Ghost remain unchanged.⁷

2) The Encyclical defines the "hypostatic union" as the union of the divine nature *with* a human nature in the single

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 155ff.

person of the eternal Word. This formulation is ambiguous. It may be understood in a monophysite way.⁸

The Council of Chalcedon defined the fundamental statement of the faith concerning the hypostatic union: "We teach that one and the same Christ, the Son, the Lord, the Only Begotten is to be recognised in two natures unmixed, unchanged [against monophysitism], unseparated, undivided [against Nestorianism], whereby the difference of natures following the union is never taken away but the particularity of each of the two natures remains intact" (Dz. 143).

The Council, then, rejects a union of the divine nature *with* human nature. It teaches rather a union of the divine nature *and* the human nature without any mixing of the Person of the eternal Word. Both natures remain in the unity of the divine Person of the eternal Word without uniting with each other, *i.e.*, without mixing. The hypostatic union has a mutual indwelling of the two natures as a consequence. Classic theology explains this using the principle of Christological *perichorese*. According to this, the divinity, which itself is impenetrable, penetrates the humanity which, without suffering any change, is in this way divinised.⁹

3) The Virgin Mary after her "fiat" does not conceive a "man" who is God's Son. Rather Mary conceives the divine Logos, who only after her "fiat" is made man of the Virgin Mary. Mary is the mother of God.

4) The Encyclical's thesis "By means of this 'humanisation' of the Word-Son the self-communication of God reaches its definitive fullness in the history of creation and salvation" implies that already through the Incarnation of the Son—*i.e.*, not only by the Paschal mystery—the definitive fullness of the self-communication of God is reached.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 153, 161.

But if the Incarnation includes not only the assumption of Christ's human nature but also the whole of humanity in the unity with God and this means the "the definitive fullness of the self-communication of God in the history of creation and salvation" this can only mean that universal salvation is achieved by the Incarnation.

The Fathers do say in their theology that Christ as the head of the whole creation has united the whole of humanity and the visible creation with Himself in His human nature. Here, however, is meant a material but not a formal (*i.e.*, through grace) union.¹⁰ It is true that the so-called recapitulation theory of St. Irenaeus of Lyons teaches that Christ as the second Adam took up the whole human race in Himself, sanctified it, and united it to God. This reuniting with God was principally achieved at the Incarnation. That would fit in with the Pope's position. But in opposition to this, the Church's dogma states that Christ redeemed us through His sacrificial death on the Cross and reconciled us to God.¹¹ This objective universality of the Redemption must, however, be subjectively accepted by man and in the process of justification applied by Christ to the individual.¹²

5) The last sentence of the quoted passage is similarly problematic because it is imprecise. The Son of God "unites himself" through the Incarnation not simply "with the entire reality of man." A part of the entire reality of man is sin. The Son of God took upon Himself the sins of the world but he did not "unite" Himself to the sin of the world.

¹⁰ Scheeben, [*The Mysteries of Christianity*], [Collected Works] II, 295-356; [*Redemption*], [Collected Works] VI/1, 406-426; VI/2, 196-226. Concerning the decisive point of the material or formal union in Cardinal Wojtyła's theology, see Dörmann, [*Theological Journey*], I, 62-98.

¹¹ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 185ff.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 177ff.

1.3. The content of the great Jubilee and the faith of Mary (*DeV* 51)

Everything which the Encyclical said in the previous article (*DeV* 50) concerning the hypostatic union and the assumption of the whole of humanity in the unity with God—thus also universal salvation—belongs as the work of the Holy Ghost to the content of the great Jubilee:

All this is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, and so is part of the great Jubilee to come. The Church cannot prepare for the Jubilee in any other way than in the Holy Spirit. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit “in the fulness of time” can only through the Spirit’s power now emerge from the memory of the Church. By his power it can be made present in the new phase of man’s history on earth: the year 2000 from the birth of Christ. (*DeV* 51.1)

The Encyclical’s formulation is consistent: The unique work of universal salvation in the Incarnation which took place through the working of the Holy Ghost in the fulness of time can today also “emerge from the memory of the Church” only through the working of the same Spirit. This new emerging is thus a simple process of consciousness. The new content of the memory in the Church’s consciousness which is to be made present in the new phase of man’s history by the Holy Ghost in the jubilee year is universal salvation!

The Encyclical began this section (*DeV* 49-51) with the idea of the Annunciation (cf. *DeV* 49.1) and concludes with the Annunciation by showing the exemplary character in the faith of the mother of God:

The Holy Spirit, who with his power overshadowed the virginal body of Mary, bringing about in her the beginning of her divine Motherhood, at the same time made her heart

perfectly obedient to that self-communication of God which surpassed every human idea and faculty. "Blessed is she who believed!" thus Mary is greeted by her cousin Elizabeth, herself "full of the Holy Spirit." In the words of greeting addressed to her "who believed" we seem to detect a distant (but in fact very close) contrast with all those about whom Christ will say that "they do not believe." Mary entered the history of the salvation of the world through the obedience of faith. And faith, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift: to God's self-communication in the Holy Spirit. St. Paul writes: "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." When the Triune God opens himself to man in the Holy Spirit, this opening of God reveals and also gives to the human creature the fulness of freedom. This fulness was manifested in a sublime way precisely through the faith of Mary, through the "obedience of faith" truly, "Blessed is she who believed!" (*DeV* 51.2)

The mother of the Lord, however, not only entered the history of salvation of the world by her obedience of faith but already from the first moment of her existence as the *Immaculata*.

The Encyclical defines Mary's obedience of faith as the openness of the human heart in the fulness of freedom to the triune God in the Holy Ghost. The faith so understood, which is said to have been manifested in a sublime way in Mary's faith, is the prototype for faith pure and simple.

In the definition of faith in the quoted passage, however, there is something very important missing:

Catholic faith is the theological faith of the Creed which is absolutely necessary for justification.¹³ According to the definition of the first Vatican Council this faith consists in the

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252ff.

assent to the truths divinely revealed because of the authority of God who revealed them (Dz. 1789).

The faith of the mother of God also had this character: her faith too at the Annunciation wasn't just an "openness of the heart" but the free and conscious assent to the content of the Angel's message. Her "*fiat*" therefore was not just an opening of the heart to the self-communication of God but primarily the conscious assent to the inscrutable content of the Angel's message to which she answered with her "*fiat*."

The Encyclical pushes the free assent to a concrete revealed truth out of the picture of the theological faith of the Creed and in this way comes to a general human faith: to an "openness of the human heart to the self-communication of God in the Holy Ghost." This openness is commensurate with universal salvation as the content of the great Jubilee.

2. The pneumatological dimension of the

Incarnation as content of the great Jubilee (*DeV* 52-54)

The Christological dimension of the Incarnation has already been the theme of the Encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*.¹⁴ Now it is the turn of the pneumatological dimension in the mystery of the Incarnation, which again is the content of the great Jubilee.

2.1. The Incarnation: Prototype of the communication of the divine life to man through the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 52)

The Pope first gives a general sketch of the pneumatological dimension in the mystery of the Incarnation:

¹⁴ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. II/1-II/2.

In the mystery of the Incarnation the work of the Spirit “who gives life” reaches its highest point. It is not possible to give life, which in its fullest form is in God, except by making it the life of a Man, as Christ is in his humanity endowed with personhood by the Word in the hypostatic union. And at the same time, with the mystery of the Incarnation there opens in a new way the source of this divine life in the history of mankind: the Holy Spirit. The Word, “the first-born of all creation,” becomes “the first-born of many brethren.” And thus he also becomes the head of the Body which is the Church, which will be born on the Cross and revealed on the day of Pentecost—and in the Church, he becomes the head of humanity: of the people of every nation, every race, every country and culture, every language and continent, all called to salvation. “The Word became flesh, (that Word in whom) was life and the life was the light of men...to all who received him he gave the power to become the children of God.” But all this was accomplished and is unceasingly accomplished “by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (*DeV* 52.1)

Why the work of the Holy Ghost reaches its highest point in the Incarnation has already been explained in the Encyclical (*DeV* 50.3): In the Incarnation of the Son the whole of humanity was assumed into the unity of God.

Now the Pope turns his attention to the question of how the communication of the divine life to the individual happens. He starts from the assumption that the life of God can only be communicated to man if it becomes the life of a man as happened in the Incarnation of the Son by the Holy Ghost. The Incarnation is thus not only the highest point of, but also the prototype for, the communication of the divine life to mankind.

This does not exclude the communication of the divine life also taking place in other ways, as traditional teaching tells us: the communication of *iustitia originalis* to our first parents

or, according to the Encyclical, in the mystery of the Creation (cf. *DeV* 12, 34).

It is the Encyclical's formulation which is ambiguous:

The human nature is "endowed with personhood by the Word in the hypostatic union." It should say: A human nature is assumed by the second Person of God in the hypostatic union and in this way constituted a unity.

If the work of the Holy Ghost reached its highest point in the Incarnation and the hypostatic union is the prototype of the communication of the divine life to man through the Holy Ghost, one might ask: How does the Encyclical define the relationship of the Incarnation to the communication of the divine life to man through the Holy Ghost?

The answer is: In the mystery of the Incarnation there "opens in a new way the source of this divine life in the history of mankind: the Holy Spirit."

The Incarnation itself is, therefore, not the source of divine life for man but it only gives access to the source. The source itself is the Holy Ghost.

This source is opened "in a new way" because it originally was opened first already in the Creation which in the Encyclical is equated with the communication of the Holy Ghost (cf. *DeV* 12-14, 34).

In the mystery of the Incarnation, the work of the Holy Ghost again includes in a new way the whole of Creation and the whole work of Redemption. This pneumatological dimension of the Incarnation is briefly sketched in the text of the Encyclical:

By the Holy Ghost, the Word, the first born of all Creation, becomes the first born of many brethren and so also the head of the body the Church and through the Church the head of all humanity which as a whole is called to salvation. According to this, the whole of humanity becomes through the Holy Ghost the body of Christ, the hidden Church.¹⁵

Because this all happens continually through the Holy Ghost, it is He who is the beginning and source of the work of salvation, *i.e.*, not the Son.

The first consequences of this point of departure are demonstrated as the Encyclical continues to describe the pneumatological dimension of the Incarnation by showing how the communication of the divine life to the individual in the mystery of the Incarnation through the Holy Ghost happens:

For as St. Paul teaches, "all who are led by the Spirit of God" are "children of God." The filiation of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of the Incarnation, therefore through Christ the eternal Son. But the birth, or rebirth, happens when God the Father "sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts." Then "we receive a spirit of adopted sons by which we cry 'Abba, Father!'" Hence the divine filiation planted in the human soul through sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit. "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." Sanctifying grace is the principle and source of man's new life: divine, supernatural life. (*DeV* 52.2)

The Encyclical makes an astounding distinction between the adoptive Sonship of God and the birth or rebirth. This difference is defined more closely:

Sonship through divine acceptance as a child happens in man through the mystery of the Incarnation. That can only mean—Adoptive Sonship occurs "through Christ."

The true acceptance as a child happens in "rebirth." This is the work of the Holy Ghost. This is described in more detail: Rebirth makes us sons when "God sends the Spirit of his

¹⁵ Cf. prologue.

Son into our hearts” and the Holy Ghost puts sanctifying grace in man’s soul. It is the beginning and source of divine, supernatural life in man.

On the other hand it must be borne in mind that Sacred Scripture uses the expression of begetting or giving birth to mean the communication of divine life to man. Adoptive Sonship and rebirth mean the same thing in Sacred Scripture and classic theology.

The distinction of adoptive Sonship “through Christ” and rebirth as the work of the Holy Ghost is in fact an unacceptable separation. It’s a question of a new definition of the mutual relationship of Redemption and the working of the Holy Ghost with the aim of attributing the communication of divine life to the Holy Ghost alone.

This interpretation is due to the Pope’s Photian understanding of the Trinity, according to which the Holy Ghost and His mission are from the Father alone, *i.e.*, not from the Father *and* the Son, so that there is only a relationship of dependence or “quasi causality” between the Redemption through Christ and the working of the Holy Ghost.

But, according to classic teaching, the communication of supernatural life in the divine adoption of man is not just “through Christ” but due to the analogous Sonship (Jn. 1:13, 3:3ff.) which is the foundation of the physical communion of the adoptive son with God. The exemplar of divine adoptive sonship or birth from God is the natural, eternal Sonship of Christ based on his divine Sonship within God “that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).¹⁶

The adoptive sonship, therefore, doesn’t just take place “through Christ” and without the “rebirth” which in the Encyclical is proper to the working of the Holy Ghost, but the adoptive sonship which is identical to rebirth is a result of the

¹⁶ Cf. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 256ff.

communication of divine life from the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost and thereby reflects the order of origin within the Trinity.

The Encyclical next presents the giving of new divine life through the Holy Ghost to individuals in the context of St. Paul's cosmic vision:

The giving of this new life is as it were God's definitive answer to the Psalmist's words, which in a way echo the voice of all creatures: "When you send forth your Spirit, they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth." He who in the mystery of creation gives life to man and the cosmos in its many different forms, visible and invisible, again renews this life through the mystery of the Incarnation. Creation is thus completed by the Incarnation and since that moment is permeated by the powers of the Redemption, powers which fill humanity and all creation. This is what we are told by St. Paul, whose cosmic and theological vision seems to repeat the words of the ancient Psalm: creation "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19), that is, those whom God has "foreknown" and whom he "has predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). Thus there is a supernatural "adoption," of which the source is the Holy Spirit, love and gift. As such he is given to man. And in the superabundance of the uncreated gift there begins in the heart of all human beings that particular created gift whereby they "become partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Thus human life becomes permeated, through participation, by the divine life, and itself acquires a divine, supernatural dimension. There is granted the new life, in which as a sharer in the mystery of Incarnation "man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 2:18). Thus there is a close relationship between the Spirit who gives life and sanctifying grace and the manifold supernatural vitality which derives from it in man: between the uncreated Spirit and the created human spirit. (*DeV* 52.3)

If the Holy Ghost is given “to man” and gives sanctifying grace in the heart of *every* man, through which all men become the sons of God and have a participation in the divine life, then this means that universal salvation through the Holy Ghost has been “integrated” into traditional faith which in this way undergoes a change in meaning.

2.2. Universal giving of grace through the Holy Ghost in the context of the great Jubilee (*DeV* 53)

The universal giving of grace through the Holy Ghost belongs of course to the content of the great Jubilee. This pneumatological dimension of the Christological event embraces the whole history of mankind. The Pope exposes his thoughts in three steps.

First he casts a glance on the Holy Ghost's working over the two thousand years since the birth of Christ:

All this may be said to fall within the scope of the great Jubilee mentioned above. For we must go beyond the historical dimension of the event considered in its surface value. Through the Christological content of the event we have to reach the pneumatological dimension, seeing with the eyes of faith the two thousand years of the action of the Spirit of truth, who down the centuries has drawn from the treasures of the Redemption achieved by Christ and given new life to human beings, bringing about in them adoption in the only-begotten Son, sanctifying them, so that they can repeat with St. Paul: “We have received...the Spirit which is from God.” (*DeV* 53.1)

The working of the Holy Ghost over the past two thousand years is of course in the heart of all men as was clearly said in the previous article (cf. *DeV* 52). Thus we may resume the thought process behind the quoted passage as follows: The Holy Ghost draws from the treasury of the Redemption,

communicates Himself to all men, gives all new life, and brings about in everyone the sonship of God.

The omnipresence of the Holy Ghost in the heart of all men as a part of the faith content of the Jubilee leads to a still more embracing consideration of the history of salvation:

But as we follow this reason for the Jubilee, we cannot limit ourselves to the two thousand years which have passed since the birth of Christ. We need to go further back, to embrace the whole of the action of the Holy Spirit even before Christ—from the beginning, throughout the world, and especially in the economy of the Old Covenant. For this action has been exercised, in every place and at every time, indeed in every individual, according to the eternal plan of salvation, whereby this action was to be closely linked with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, which in its turn exercised its influence on those who believed in the future coming of Christ. This is attested to especially in the Letter to the Ephesians. Grace, therefore, bears within itself both a Christological aspect and a pneumatological one, which becomes evident above all in those who expressly accept Christ: "In him [in Christ] you...were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it" (Eph. 1:13ff.). (*DeV* 53.2)

According to this, the Holy Ghost's working of grace embraces the whole history of mankind from the beginning, at every time, in every place and in every individual. Nonetheless the Encyclical, in the sense of traditional teaching, does limit the grace of the Holy Ghost to those who believed in the Christ who was to come and those who expressly accept Him.

But this limitation according to faith and Church is gradually lifted. For with an eye on the Jubilee one needs to "go further afield." It is necessary to abstract oneself from the con-

dition of faith and go from the working of the Holy Ghost in all men of good will:

But, still within the perspective of the great Jubilee, we need to look further and go further afield, knowing that “the wind blows where it wills,” according to the image used by Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus. (cf. Jn. 3:8) The Second Vatican Council, centered primarily on the theme of the Church, reminds us of the Holy Spirit’s activity also “outside the visible body of the Church.” The council speaks precisely of “all people of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this Paschal Mystery” (GS 22; cf. LG 16). (*DeV* 53.3)

According to this, Jesus’ words to Nicodemus “the wind blows where it wills” are supposed to show the working of the Holy Ghost outside the visible boundaries of the Church. But in the discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus’ words are referring to the rebirth from water and the Holy Ghost, which is baptism, *i.e.*, precisely not—as the Encyclical would like it to say—to the working of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men “even outside” the visible Church.

The quotation from *Gaudium et Spes*, 22, which can be understood in the sense of traditional teaching, is often used by the Pope and is understood by him in the sense of universal salvation.¹⁷

¹⁷ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/I, 14ff.

2.3. The Jubilee: the call to worship God in spirit and truth (*DeV* 54)

The great Jubilee is not just to announce the presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men but also to call everyone to worship God in spirit and truth:

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). These words were spoken by Jesus in another conversation, the one with the Samaritan woman. The great Jubilee to be celebrated at the end of this Millennium and at the beginning of the next ought to constitute a powerful call to all those who “worship God in spirit and truth.” It should be for everyone a special occasion for meditating on the mystery of the Triune God, who in himself is wholly transcendent with regard to the world, especially the visible world. For he is absolute Spirit, “God is spirit” (*ibid.*); and also, in such a marvellous way, he is not only close to this world but present in it, and in a sense immanent, penetrating it and giving it life from within. This is especially true in relation to man: God is present in the intimacy of man’s being, in his mind, conscience and heart: an ontological and psychological reality, in considering which St. Augustine said of God that he was “closer than my inmost being” (cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, III,6,11). These words help us to understand better the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman: “God is spirit.” Only the Spirit can be “closer than my spiritual experience.” Only the spirit can be so permanent in man and in the world, while remaining inviolable and immutable in his absolute transcendence. (*DeV* 54.1)

In the discussion with the Samaritan woman the question is about true religion.

One would expect that the great Jubilee of Christ’s birth would be the perfect opportunity for the Pope to use an Encyclical to call mankind to belief in Christ and to the worship

of His Father as is expressed in the obvious sense of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman.

Instead of this, however, man is called in a wholly different sense to worship "God in spirit and truth." Who is this God in the context of the Encyclical? The Pope does speak briefly about the contemplation of the triune God, but this is merely the opportunity for a philosophical consideration of the essence of God which is said to give the deeper meaning to Jesus' words:

The God who is to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth" is the God of absolute transcendence who is ontologically and psychologically immanent to the world and all men. He is, as absolute spirit, the omnipresent principle of the Creation who penetrates and gives life to all things. But this does not just mean the common truth from the catechism concerning the universal presence of God in the world, but also the presence of God by grace in the hearts of all men. Even though the Encyclical doesn't give explanatory scholastic distinctions regarding the different modes of God's presence in the world and within man, nonetheless the general idea is clear enough:

The God who is present and works in the hearts of all men is the same God who in absolute transcendence goes beyond all the religions of history and therefore can be worshipped by all men "in spirit and truth." In other words the "God of Assisi"!

The Encyclical concludes by describing the special relationship of God's invisible presence in all men to Christian revelation:

But in Jesus Christ the divine presence in the world and in man has been made manifest in a new way and in visible form. In him "the grace of God has appeared indeed" (cf. Tit. 2:11). The love of God the Father, as a gift, infinite grace, source of life, has been made visible in Christ, and in his humanity that love has become "part" of the universe,

the human family and history. This appearing of grace in human history, through Jesus Christ, has been accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all God's salvific activity in the world: he, the "hidden God" (Is. 45:15), who as love and gift "fills the universe" (Wis. 1:7). The Church's entire life, as will appear in the great Jubilee, means going to meet the invisible God, the hidden God: a meeting with the Spirit "who gives life." (*DeV* 54.2)

The passage makes an unambiguous statement about the relationship of the universal giving of grace to Christian revelation: The divine presence in the world and in man has been made "manifest in a new way" in Christ!

The divine presence in man is of course to be understood in the sense of God's presence through grace in all men: For this has "been made visible in Christ" and "now in his humanity" has become a "part" of "the universe, the human family and history." It's a question then of an "appearance" or a becoming visible in the history of man of the universal giving of grace which was present, though invisible, in man *ab origine* through the Incarnation. That happened through the Holy Ghost who as love and gift "fills the universe."

That is why the great Jubilee means for the Church to go to meet the hidden God in the hearts of all men where she meets the spirit who gives life.

3. The condescension of the Holy Ghost meets with opposition and rejection from men (*DeV* 55-57)

The wonderful condescension of the Holy Ghost in the heart of every man, which has been described many times in the Encyclical, is now said, however, to meet with opposition and rejection, as is seen in the history of salvation. This is now

the point on which the Pope, as he has already done many times, concentrates.

The Encyclical looks at the theme from a double point of view of the inner (*DeV*55) and exterior dimension of opposition (*DeV*56-57). By the inner dimension is meant the opposition to the Holy Ghost in the heart of man from which comes the exterior dimension of opposition in history.

3.1. The inner dimension of human opposition to the Holy Ghost (*DeV*55)

The Encyclical starts from the general observation that man's opposition to the condescension of the Holy Ghost is reported in the history of salvation:

Unfortunately, the history of salvation shows that God's coming close and making himself present to man and the world, that marvellous "condescension" of the Spirit, meets with resistance and opposition in our human reality. How eloquent from this point of view are the prophetic words of the old man Simeon who, inspired by the Spirit, came to the Temple in Jerusalem, in order to foretell in the presence of the new-born Babe of Bethlehem that he "is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, for a sign of contradiction" (Lk. 2:27, 34). (*DeV*55.1)

According to Simeon's words the presence of God appearing in the history of salvation means quite concretely the child of Bethlehem. Christ is a sign of contradiction because He will demand faith in His messianic mission. Faith brings separation and leads to the fall or the rising of many in Israel.

The Encyclical does not, however, then ask about Israel's faith, which would be expected exegetically, but the ontological and ethical reasons for opposition to the presence of God inside man. In this way the Pope ties his considerations down to the level of the generally human:

Opposition to God, who is an invisible Spirit, to a certain degree originates in the very fact of the radical difference of the world from God, that is to say in the world's "visibility" and "materiality" in contrast to him who is invisible and "absolute Spirit"; from the world's essential and inevitable imperfection in contrast to him, the perfect being. But this opposition becomes conflict and rebellion on the ethical plane by reason of that sin which takes possession of the human heart, wherein "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). Concerning this sin, the Holy Spirit must "convince the world," as we have already said. (*DeV* 55.2)

According to this, the rejection of God is based on the ontological opposition of God and man which, through man's rebellion, becomes an ethical conflict and sin.

The Encyclical describes the ontological-ethical conflict in man's heart quite generally using the words from Galatians as the desires of the flesh against the spirit and vice versa. That means: The Encyclical applies St. Paul's words to the Christian Galatians to all men. The Encyclical assumes that all men—like the Galatians—possess the Holy Ghost and therefore the conflict of the flesh against the Holy Ghost, which is described in the letter to the Galatians, is a general human experience.

The Apostle Paul, however, is talking in his letter not to mankind but to the Christian Galatians. These people, not all men, have received the Holy Ghost because of their faith and baptism. That is why there can be a conflict between the flesh and the Holy Ghost only in the hearts of Christians. The words of the Apostle to the Galatians mean that the possession of the Spirit of the baptized Christian does not make the fight against the "flesh" unnecessary but the Christian in the power of the Holy Ghost will certainly gain the victory.¹⁸

The same distinction between the believing disciples of Jesus and the non-believing world, between those who will receive the Holy Ghost and those who cannot receive him at all, is also in Jesus' final discourse fundamental for the coming and working of the Holy Ghost when He is to come to convince the world concerning sin in the tremendous trial as the advocate of Jesus' disciples. And this sin is clearly in St. John lack of faith.

On the other hand, the Pope in the conflict between flesh and spirit distinguishes not between Christians and non-Christians because he holds that all men possess the Holy Ghost. The struggle between the Holy Ghost and the flesh which St. Paul describes in the heart of the baptized Galatians is in the Encyclical the struggle of the human heart as such. The description of the struggle between the flesh and the Holy Ghost in the letter to the Galatians becomes in the Encyclical a paradigm of the struggle in the midst of all men:

It is St. Paul who describes in a particularly eloquent way the tension and struggle that trouble the human heart. We read in the Letter to the Galatians: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would" (Gal. 5:16ff.). There already exists in man, as a being made up of body and spirit, a certain tension, a certain struggle of tendencies between the "spirit" and the "flesh." But this struggle in fact belongs to the heritage of sin, is a consequence of sin and at the same time a confirmation of it. This is part of everyday experience. As the Apostle writes: "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness...drunkenness, carousing and the like." These are the

¹⁸ Hermann Wolfgang Beyer and Paul Althaus, *Der Brief an die Galater [Epistle to the Galatians]* (Göttingen, 1968), pp. 47ff.

sins that could be called "carnal." But he also adds others: "enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy" (cf. Gal. 5:22ff.). All of this constitutes the "works of the flesh." (*DeV* 55.3)

St. Paul opposes the evil works of the flesh with the "fruits of the spirit" which in the Encyclical are not only applied to the Christian Galatians but to all men because they all possess the Holy Ghost:

But with these works, which are undoubtedly evil, Paul contrasts "the fruit of the Spirit," such as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (cf. Gal. 5:22ff.). From the context it is clear that for the Apostle it is not a question of discriminating against and condemning the body, which with the spiritual soul constitutes man's nature and personal subjectivity. Rather, he is concerned with the morally good or bad works, or better the permanent dispositions—virtues and vices—which are the fruit of submission to (in the first case) or of resistance to (in the second case) the saving action of the Holy Spirit. Consequently the Apostle writes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). And in other passages: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit"; "You are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. 8:5,9). The contrast that St. Paul makes between life "according to the Spirit" and life "according to the flesh" gives rise to a further contrast: that between "life" and "death." "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace"; hence the warning: "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live" (Rom. 8:6,13). (*DeV* 55.4)

The warning at the end of the passage is emphasised again and confirmed with more passages from Scripture particularly for Christians:

Properly understood, this is an exhortation to live in the truth, that is, according to the dictates of an upright conscience, and at the same time it is a profession of faith in the Spirit of truth as the one who gives life. For the body is "dead because of sin, but your spirits are alive because of righteousness." "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh" (Rom. 8:10.12). Rather we are debtors to Christ, who in the Paschal Mystery has effected our justification, obtaining for us the Holy Spirit: "Indeed, we have been bought at a great price" (I Cor. 6:20). (*DeV* 55.5)

After this warning to Christians, the Encyclical sums up the result of its description of the struggle between flesh and spirit in the heart of man:

In the texts of St. Paul there is a superimposing—and a mutual compenetration—of the ontological dimension (the flesh and the spirit), the ethical (moral good and evil), and the pneumatological (the action of the Holy Spirit in the order of grace). His words (especially in the Letters to the Romans and Galatians) enable us to know and feel vividly the strength of the tension and struggle going on in man between openness to the action of the Holy Spirit and resistance and opposition to him, to his saving gift. The terms or poles of contrast are, on man's part, his limitation and sinfulness, which are essential elements of his psychological and ethical reality; and on God's part, the mystery of the gift, that unceasing self-giving of divine life in the Holy Spirit.—Who will win? The one who welcomes the gift. (*DeV* 55.6)

In the Letters to the Romans and Galatians there is absolutely no compenetration of the ontological and pneumatological dimensions, rather they are kept very clearly apart especially where they are described in the struggle between the desires of the flesh and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believing Christian. St. Paul teaches not the presence of the Holy Ghost in all men but in Christians because of faith and baptism. That is why there are the two opposing poles in the Apostle: the flesh and the Holy Ghost and not the ontological reality of each man but of a Christian. That is why the struggle between the flesh and the Holy Ghost can only take place inside a believing Christian and not in the hearts of all men.

But in the Encyclical we can see it is taught: The two poles: the flesh as sinful limitation from man's side, and the Holy Ghost as unceasing self-giving from God's side are the ontological realities of all men because it is claimed that all men possess the Holy Ghost. Based on these premisses, therefore, the struggle between the flesh and spirit takes place without any distinction in every human heart. It is amazing that in this process the reality of the faith being necessary for salvation plays no part.

3.2. The external dimension of opposition to the Holy Ghost (*DeV* 56 -57)

The opposition of the flesh to the Holy Ghost in the interior, subjective dimension of the human heart in general finds its objective expression in the exterior dimension of the various epochs of human history. The Encyclical now turns its attention to showing the struggle between the flesh and the Holy Ghost in the objective dimension:

Unfortunately, the resistance to the Holy Spirit which St. Paul emphasises in the interior and subjective dimension as tension, struggle and rebellion taking place in the human

heart, finds in every period of history and especially in the modern era its external dimension, which takes concrete form as the content of culture and civilisation, as a philosophical system, an ideology, a programme for action and for the shaping of human behaviour. It reaches its clearest expression in materialism, both in its theoretical form: as a system of thought, and in its practical form: as a method of interpreting and evaluating facts, and likewise as a programme of corresponding conduct. The system which has developed most and carried to its extreme practical consequences this form of thought, ideology and praxis is dialectical and historical materialism, which is still recognised as the essential core of Marxism. (*DeV* 56.1)

The Encyclical characterises materialism as the highest expression of opposition to the Holy Ghost in history as follows:

In principle and in fact, materialism radically excludes the presence and action of God, who is spirit, in the world and above all in man. Fundamentally this is because it does not accept God's existence, being a system that is essentially and systematically atheistic. This is the striking phenomenon of our time: atheism, to which the Second Vatican Council devoted some significant pages (*GS* 19,20,21). Even though it is not possible to speak of atheism in a univocal way or to limit it exclusively to the philosophy of materialism, since there exist numerous forms of atheism and the word is perhaps often used in a wrong sense, nevertheless it is certain that a true and proper materialism, understood as a theory which explains reality and accepted as the key-principle of personal and social action, is characteristically atheistic. The order of values and the aims of action which it describes are strictly bound to a reading of the whole of reality as "matter." Though it sometimes also speaks of the "spirit" and of "questions of the spirit," as for example in the fields of culture or morality, it does so only insofar as it con-

siders certain facts as derived from matter (*epiphenomena*), since according to this system matter is the one and only form of being. It follows, according to this interpretation, that religion can only be understood as a kind of "idealistic illusion," to be fought with the most suitable means and methods according to circumstances of time and place, in order to eliminate it from society and from man's very heart. (*DeV* 56.2)

The Encyclical similarly applies the words of St. Paul concerning the desires of the flesh against the Holy Ghost to atheistic materialism as an example of the decisive struggle of an historical system of thought against the Holy Ghost:

It can be said therefore that materialism is the systematic and logical development of that "resistance" and opposition condemned by St. Paul with the words: "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit." But, as St. Paul emphasises in the second part of his aphorism, this antagonism is mutual: "The desires of the Spirit are against the flesh." Those who wish to live by the Spirit, accepting and corresponding to his salvific activity, cannot but reject the internal and external tendencies and claims of the "flesh," also in its ideological and historical expression as anti-religious "materialism." Against this background so characteristic of our time, in preparing for the great Jubilee we must emphasise the "desires of the spirit," as exhortations echoing in the night of a new time of advent, at the end of which, like two thousand years ago, "every man will see the salvation of God" (Lk. 3:6; cf. Is. 40:5). This is a possibility and a hope that the Church entrusts to the men and women of today. She knows that the meeting or collision between the "desires against the spirit" which mark so many aspects of contemporary civilisation, especially in some of its spheres, and "the desires against the flesh," with God's approach to us, his Incarnation, his constantly renewed communication of the Holy Spirit—this meeting or collision may in many cases be of a tragic nature

and may perhaps lead to fresh defeats for humanity. But the Church firmly believes that on God's part there is always a salvific self-giving, a salvific coming and, in some way or other, a salvific "convincing concerning sin" by the power of the Spirit. (*DeV* 56.3)

The passage gives the Pope's exhortation for the great Jubilee: Everyone who wishes to live according to the Spirit must reject the strivings of the flesh in all its forms. The desires of the spirit, on the other hand, must be encouraged as exhortations echoing in the night of a new time of advent, at the end of which, like two thousand years ago, "every man will see the salvation of God." The Church entrusts this hope to present day mankind.

The Church sees that the dramatic struggle of the flesh against the coming of God could lead to human failures, but she is said to firmly believe that from God's side there is *always* a salvific convincing concerning sin through the Holy Ghost and a saving self-communication of God. The Church, then, in spite of everything believes in universal salvation.

3.3. The opposition of life and death in the light of the Jubilee (*DeV* 57)

The Encyclical goes further in its analysis of the historical dimension of the opposition to the Holy Ghost by taking the Pauline contrast of flesh and spirit as a struggle between life and death and puts that in the context of the Jubilee.

The point of departure is the Pauline contrast of "flesh" and "spirit":

The Pauline contrast between the "Spirit" and the "flesh" also includes the contrast between "life" and "death." This is a serious problem, and concerning it one must say at once that materialism, as a system of thought, in all its forms, means the acceptance of death as the definitive end of

human existence. Everything that is material is corruptible, and therefore the human body (insofar as it is "animal") is mortal. If man in his essence is only "flesh," death remains for him an impassable frontier and limit. Hence one can understand how it can be said that human life is nothing but an "existence in order to die." (*DeV* 57.1)

The Encyclical doesn't remain with a philosophical analysis of death-bringing materialism but goes further in its consideration to other signs of death in today's materialistic civilisation:

It must be added that on the horizon of contemporary civilisation—especially in the form that is most developed in the technical and scientific sense—the signs and symptoms of death have become particularly present and frequent. One has only to think of the arms race and of its inherent danger of nuclear self-destruction. Moreover, everyone has become more and more aware of the grave situation of vast areas of our planet marked by death-dealing poverty and famine. It is a question of problems that are not only economic but also and above all ethical. But on the horizon of our era there are gathering ever darker "signs of death": a custom has become widely established—in some places it threatens to become almost an institution—of taking the lives of human beings even before they are born, or before they reach the natural point of death. Furthermore, despite many noble efforts for peace, new wars have broken out and are taking place, wars which destroy the lives or the health of hundreds of thousands of people. And how can one fail to mention the attacks against human life by terrorism, organized even on an international scale? (*DeV* 57.2)

This dour realistic picture of death of our age is now considered in the light of the Jubilee:

Unfortunately, this is only a partial and incomplete sketch of the picture of death being composed in our age as we come ever closer to the end of the second Millennium of the Christian era. Does there not rise up a new and more or less conscious plea to the life-giving Spirit from the dark shades of materialistic civilisation, and especially from those increasing signs of death in the sociological and historical picture in which that civilisation has been constructed? At any rate, even independently of the measure of human hopes or despairs, and of the illusions or deceptions deriving from the development of materialistic systems of thought and life, there remains the Christian certainty that the Spirit blows where he wills and that we possess "the first fruits of the Spirit," and that therefore even though we may be subjected to the sufferings of time that passes away, "we groan inwardly as we wait for...the redemption of our bodies" (cf. Rom. 8:23), or of all our human essence, which is bodily and spiritual. Yes, we groan, but in an expectation filled with unflagging hope, because it is precisely this human being that God has drawn near to, God who is Spirit. God the Father, "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). At the culmination of the Paschal Mystery, the Son of God, made man and crucified for the sins of the world, appeared in the midst of his Apostles after the Resurrection, breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This "breath" continues forever, for "the Spirit helps us in our weakness" (Rom. 8:26). (*DeV*57.3)

From out of the dark of materialistic civilisation and the culture of death the Pope believes he can hear the call for the spirit who gives life. Quite extraordinary. Is it not more likely that out of the atheistic materialism which the Pope described so impressively that he hears rather the "*non serviam*" of the world which the Holy Ghost convinces concerning sin and judgment?

Instead of this, the Pope opposes the light of a double "Christian certainty" to the darkness of our age: The certainty that in spite of the terrible sins of our age we possess "the first fruits of the Spirit" and that "the spirit blows where he wills." In the Encyclical, the latter means the movement of the Holy Ghost beyond the boundaries of the visible Church and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men.

However, there is a difference between the two "Christian certainties." It's a difference of knowledge and consciousness. The Christians too suffer like everyone else under the terrible burden of our age, but they know revelation. Through that they have the Christian certainty of an unflagging hope which is based on Christ's death on the Cross and His Resurrection, who breathed upon His disciples and us on Easter Sunday. But the Spirit who moves where He wills is also present beyond the boundaries of the Church even in the hearts of other men. To communicate this certainty even to those who possess the Spirit unconsciously is the service of the Church. How this service is carried out is described in the following articles of the Encyclical (*DeV* 58-60).

4. The service of the Church in unity with the Holy Ghost in the divine life in man and in the world (*DeV* 58-60)¹⁹

By the Holy Ghost convincing the world concerning sin in order to save it, it is in fact saved. The Encyclical describes this salvific process of the redemption of the world through the service of the Church in a broad theological vision.

This section is an excellent example of the application of the principle of "integration of the faith." The old faith is kept but at the same time the new teaching of universal salvation is

¹⁹ In the English translation: "The Holy Spirit Strengthens the 'Inner Man.'"

integrated into it and in this way it is imperceptibly transformed.

4.1. The Church lives and preaches the mystery of the Resurrection and of the Pentecost event (*DeV* 58)

The point of departure for the consideration is the observation that the Church lives and preaches the mystery of the Resurrection and the Pentecost event. The Encyclical says what this mystery and the service of the Church consists of in the first paragraph:

The mystery of the resurrection and of Pentecost is proclaimed and lived by the Church, which has inherited and which carries on the witness of the Apostles about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. She is the perennial witness to this victory over death which revealed the power of the Holy Spirit and determined his new coming, his new presence in people and in the world. For in Christ's Resurrection the Holy Spirit-Paraclete revealed himself especially as he who gives life: "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11). In the name of the Resurrection of Christ the Church proclaims life, which manifested itself beyond the limits of death, the life which is stronger than death. At the same time, she proclaims him who gives this life: the Spirit, the Giver of Life; she proclaims him and cooperates with him in giving life. For "although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10), the righteousness accomplished by the Crucified and Risen Christ. And in the name of Christ's Resurrection the Church serves the life that comes from God himself, in close union with and humble service to the Spirit. (*DeV* 58.1)

The mystery of the Resurrection and Pentecost is thus the life of the Church, that which she proclaims and the object of her service.

What is special about what the Encyclical says is first the one-sided emphasis on the Holy Ghost. The Paschal victory of Christ over death doesn't just reveal the power of the Holy Ghost but first the power and divinity of Christ. Furthermore it is noticeable that the Encyclical doesn't mention any condition on the side of man when it talks about the communication of the Paschal, eternal life and makes no distinction between Christ's disciples and the world but just talks in a general way of the coming and presence of the Holy Ghost "in man and in the world." According to Jesus' words, however, it is only the one who believes in Him, not just the world, who can receive the Holy Ghost (Jn. 14:17; 16:7ff.). Rather the world has already been judged because of its lack of belief (Jn. 3:18). Already in the first paragraph of the Encyclical the discriminatory point of faith necessary for salvation is not mentioned; neither is the resulting judgment.

But the Pope describes once more from another point of view and with different words the service of the Church to the "reality of the inner man":

Precisely through this service (of the Church) man becomes in an ever new manner the "way of the Church" as I said in the Encyclical on Christ the Redeemer (*RH* 14) and as I now repeat in this present one on the Holy Spirit. United with the Spirit, the Church is supremely aware of the reality of the inner man, of what is deepest and most essential in man, because it is spiritual and incorruptible. At this level the Spirit grafts the "root of immortality" (cf. Wis. 15:3) from which the new life springs. This is man's life in God, which, as a fruit of God's salvific self-communication in the Holy Spirit, can develop and flourish only by the Spirit's action. Therefore St. Paul speaks to God on behalf of believers,

to whom he declares "I bow my knees before the Father..., that he may grant you...to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man" (cf. Eph. 3:14-16). (DeV 58.2)

The passage describes the reality of the inner man and the service of the Church:

The statement about the reality of the inner man is applied in a quite general way to man as such: The Holy Ghost grafts the "root of immortality" onto the immortal spirit of man from which the new life in God springs as a fruit of God's salvific self-communication in the Holy Spirit. Expressed in traditional terms this means: The Holy Ghost grafts sanctifying grace onto the immortal soul of man from which the life in God springs through the self-communication of the Holy Ghost.

The definition of the service of the Church is: The service of the Church is valid for that reality of the inner man in close unity with the Holy Ghost. Thus the Encyclical confirms the significant phrase from *Redemptor Hominis* once again: "Man is the way of the Church."²⁰ What is particular about what the Encyclical says is that it once again speaks in a quite general way about the reality of "the inner man" and doesn't mention any conditions like penance, faith, or baptism. According to that, the difference between Christian and non-Christian, between Church and world, would not be a difference in the "reality of the inner man" itself but of consciousness. According to this, the service of the Church to the non-Christian part of mankind would consist of making them aware of the "reality of the inner man."²¹

²⁰ *Redemptor Hominis* 14. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 181ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The Encyclical goes further in its description of the reality of the inner man by describing how the meeting of the human spirit and the Trinity happens:

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit this inner, "spiritual," man matures and grows strong. Thanks to the divine self-communication, the human spirit which "knows the secrets of man" meets the "Spirit who searches everything, even the depths of God" (I Cor. 2:10ff.). In this Spirit, who is the eternal gift, the Triune God opens himself to man, to the human spirit. The hidden breath of the divine Spirit enables the human spirit to open in its turn before the saving and sanctifying self-opening of God. Through the gift of grace, which comes from the Holy Spirit, man enters a "new life," is brought into the supernatural reality of the divine life itself and becomes a "dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit," a living temple of God (cf. Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19). For through the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son come to him and take up their abode with him (cf. Jn. 14:23). In the communion of grace with the Trinity, man's "living area" is broadened and raised up to the supernatural level of divine life. Man lives in God and by God: he lives "according to the Spirit," and "sets his mind on the things of the Spirit." (*DeV* 58.3)

This subtle presentation of the meeting of the inner man with God in which the "human spirit" opens himself to the self-communication of the Holy Ghost, receives the triune God, and brings about the maturation of the the spiritual man seems to correspond completely to the traditional teaching, especially as in this case the distinction is made between the natural and the supernatural.

But what is special about what the Encyclical says is that once again it talks quite generally about the "human spirit" and doesn't distinguish between the faithful and non-believ-

ers. There is also no mention of the subjective conditions of faith and baptism.

To sum up: What in traditional teaching is said about the believing Christian is valid in the Pope's theology for the "human spirit" in general.²²

That means: The passage from the Encyclical is to be understood in the sense of universal salvation and the principle of "integration of the faith."

4.2. Man's new understanding of himself (*DeV* 59)

The inner relationship with God in the Holy Ghost makes man understand his own humanity in a new way. From this recognition of his being, there comes a new understanding of himself, which penetrates and changes the individual and the world of man from inside. The Encyclical develops this idea step by step.

First it shows how, from the knowledge of his own humanity, the new understanding of himself proceeds:

Man's intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself, his own humanity, in a new way. Thus that image and likeness of God which man is from his very beginning is fully realised (*Gen.* 1:26ff.). This intimate truth of the human being has to be continually rediscovered in the light of Christ who is the prototype of the relationship with God. There also has to be rediscovered in Christ the reason for "full self-discovery through a sincere gift of himself" to others, as the Second Vatican Council writes: precisely by reason of this divine likeness which "shows that on earth man...is the only creature that God wishes for himself" in his dignity as a person, but as one open to integration and social communion (*GS* 24, 25). The effective knowledge and full implementation of

²² *Gaudium et Spes* 22.4. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 221ff.

this truth of his being comes about only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Man learns this truth from Jesus Christ and puts it into practice in his own life by the power of the Spirit, whom Jesus himself has given to us. (*DeV* 59.1)

When man through the relationship with God realises that he himself is the image and likeness of God which he has been from the beginning, and if this process of recognition means the full self-realisation of man as the image and likeness of God, then this is a clear statement of the theory of universal giving of grace.

For according to the Pope's theology the natural image and supernatural likeness of God which "man is from the beginning" is inalienably present in man.²³ It is from this inalienable reality of human being present in man *ab origine*, which was not lost through Original Sin either, that man's new understanding of himself occurs as a pure process of consciousness.

That is what the Encyclical expresses in various ways. Thus in the quoted passage it says:

Man must discover the truth of his own humanity continually anew. This new understanding of himself is a full realisation of that which man, as the image and likeness of God, is from the beginning, the complete finding of himself. All these formulae presuppose an indestructible likeness to God in man. That means they presuppose the theory of the universal giving of grace. That also explains why in the previous analysis of the Encyclical there was no distinction made between faithful Christians and the non-believing world and why there were no conditions from the side of man named for the presence of the Holy Ghost in the heart of man.

²³ Cf. *Dominum et Vivificantem* 12, and *Redemptor Hominis* 13.3. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 181-187.

Of course man must learn the inner truth of humanity from Christ, the prototype for the relationship of man with God. The Pope has already described this in detail in *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*, quoting *Gaudium et Spes* 22 where it says: "Christ the new Adam announces man to himself and opens to him his highest calling."²⁴

The process from the truth of humanity to the complete realisation of this truth in man's consciousness is understood in the Encyclical as inner maturation, which changes man and his world through the working of the Holy Ghost from inside as the following passage shows in detail:

Along this path—the path of such an inner maturity, which includes the full discovery of the meaning of humanity—God comes close to man, and permeates more and more completely the whole human world. The Triune God, who "exists" in himself as a transcendent reality of interpersonal gift, giving himself in the Holy Spirit as gift to man, transforms the human world from within, from inside hearts and minds. Along this path the world, made to share in the divine gift, becomes—as the Council teaches—"ever more human, ever more profoundly human" (cf. *GS* 38,40), while within the world, through people's hearts and minds, the Kingdom develops in which God will be definitively "all in all" (cf. I Cor. 15:28): as gift and love. Gift and love: this is the eternal power of the opening of the Triune God to man and the world, in the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 59.2)

It's not possible to describe the inner process of development in a more impressive way than is done in this passage: Because man and the world in general possess the Holy Ghost as a divine gift, who changes the heart of man from inside and

²⁴ *Redemptor Hominis* 8.2. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/1, 115ff. *Dives in Misericordia* 1.2. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, II/2, 23ff.

from there also the world through the divine self-communication, the kingdom of God matures in humanity to its definitive perfection.

Traditional faith understands the *Church* but not the world to be the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God, which according to Jesus' words is "not of this world" (Jn. 18:36), is in the Encyclical denaturalised to a process of maturation of mankind in this world which finds its definitive perfection in an interior *Eschaton*.²⁵

In the quoted passage from the Encyclical there is once again no distinction made between the non-believing world and the believing disciples of Jesus. The Holy Ghost is in this way not only the promised Paraclete of the Church but also of the world which, according to Christ's words, cannot receive the Holy Ghost at all (cf. Jn. 14:17).

Mankind's inner maturation process makes man's world ever more human and leads finally to its definitive perfection. The Pope, with an eye on the great Jubilee, wants to open up this vision to as many people as possible:

As the year 2000 since the birth of Christ draws near, it is a question of ensuring that an ever greater number of people "may fully find themselves...through a sincere gift of self," according to the expression of the Council already quoted. Through the action of the Spirit-Paraclete, may there be accomplished in our world a process of true growth in humanity, in both individual and community life. In this regard Jesus himself "when he prayed to the Father, 'that all may be one...as we are one' (Jn. 17:21-22)...implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine persons and the union of the children of God in truth and charity" (cf. GS 24). The Council repeats this truth about man, and the

²⁵ The influence of Teilhard de Chardin must also have influenced the Pope's viewpoint.

Church sees in it a particularly strong and conclusive indication of her own apostolic tasks. For if man is the way of the Church, this way passes through the whole mystery of Christ, as man's divine model. Along this way the Holy Spirit, strengthening in each of us "the inner man," enables man ever more "fully to find himself through a sincere gift of self." These words of the Pastoral Constitution of the Council can be said to sum up the whole of Christian anthropology: that theory and practice, based on the Gospel, in which man discovers himself as belonging to Christ and discovers that in Christ he is raised to the status of a child of God, and so understands better his own dignity as man, precisely because he is the subject of God's approach and presence, the subject of the divine condescension, which contains the prospect and the very root of definitive glorification. Thus it can truly be said that "the glory of God is the living man, yet man's life is the vision of God" (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, IV, 20, 7): man, living a divine life, is the glory of God, and the Holy Spirit is the hidden dispenser of this life and this glory. The Holy Spirit—says the great Basil—"while simple in essence and manifold in his virtues...extends himself without undergoing any diminishing, is present in each subject capable of receiving him as if he were the only one, and gives grace which is sufficient for all" (Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, IX, 22). (*DeV* 59.3)

The Pope has no scruple in taking Jn. 17:20-22 to justify his theory of one world and humanity. It's hardly possible to express more clearly the unity of the believing disciples of Christ and the non-believing humanity. This opinion is in direct contrast to what is said in the Bible.

According to the quoted passage the whole of Christian anthropology is based on that unity. Both the individual and the community become aware of it by "man discovering himself as belonging to Christ and discovering that in Christ he is raised to the status of a child of God," and thus he "under-

stands better his own dignity as man." Expressions such as "discovering himself," "discovering he is raised to the status of a child of God," "understanding better his own dignity as man" presuppose the presence of a supernatural sonship of God! The expression: "in each subject capable of receiving the Holy Ghost" does appear in the Basil quotation, but in the Encyclical itself there is no mention of the condition of faith necessary for salvation which the Church's whole Tradition of "Christian anthropology" is based on.

In one sentence: The whole Christian anthropology in the Encyclical is not based on the traditional faith but on a more "mature" new knowledge that all men possess the supernatural dignity of the sonship of God. The foundation of the whole Christian anthropology thus becomes universal salvation!

4.3. The liberating message of the Church for the year 2000 (*DeV 60*)

The discovery of the divine dimension of human being and also of what man has always been and is in the depths of his being has consequences for the personal and social life of man. In the context of our civilisation marked by a materialistic way of thinking they are described as follows:

When, under the influence of the Paraclete, people discover this divine dimension of their being and life, both as individuals and as a community, they are able to free themselves from the various determinisms which derive mainly from the materialistic bases of thought, practice and related modes of action. In our age these factors have succeeded in penetrating into man's inmost being, into that sanctuary of the conscience where the Holy Spirit continuously radiates the light and strength of new life in the "freedom of the children of God." Man's growth in this life is hindered by the conditionings and pressures exerted upon him by dominat-

ing structures and mechanisms in the various spheres of society. It can be said that in many cases social factors, instead of fostering the development and expansion of the human spirit, ultimately deprive the human spirit of the genuine truth of its being and life—over which the Holy Spirit keeps vigil—in order to subject it to the “prince of this world.” (*DeV* 60.1)

The divine dimension of man is his sonship of God (cf. *DeV* 59). Its discovery means also discovering the freedom of the sons of God. By this, man is able to free himself from the determinisms of materialistic ways of thinking in our civilisation, which hinder the maturation of the divine life in man and subject man to the “prince of this world.”

The Encyclical now puts this view of man and our era into the context of the great Jubilee and formulates the message of the Church and Christians for the year 2000:

The great Jubilee of the year 2000 thus contains a message of liberation by the power of the Spirit, who alone can help individuals and communities to free themselves from the old and new determinisms, by guiding them with the “law of the Spirit, which gives life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), and thereby discovering and accomplishing the full measure of man’s true freedom. For, as St. Paul writes, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (II Cor. 3:7). This revelation of freedom and hence of man’s true dignity acquires a particular eloquence for Christians and for the Church in a state of persecution—both in ancient times and in the present—because the witnesses to divine Truth then become a living proof of the action of the Spirit of truth present in the hearts and minds of the faithful, and they often mark with their own death by martyrdom the supreme glorification of human dignity. (*DeV* 60.2)

The great Jubilee's message to man, then, is a message of liberation and of the true dignity of man. The liberation happens through the action of the Holy Ghost who, according to the Encyclical's teaching, is present in the heart of all men. That is also where the specific meaning which the Encyclical gives to the witness of Christians comes from: As Christians they alone have the knowledge of the Holy Ghost and the revelation of true freedom and dignity of man. That is also why they are called not only to announce this to their fellow men but also through their Christian existence especially during persecution to give witness to it: Thus they become a living proof of the working of the Spirit of truth and in times of persecution are not rarely "by martyrdom the supreme glorification of human dignity."

But also by their normal intercourse with all men and in all areas of life, Christians, as witnesses of the true dignity of man, play their part in the "renewal of the face of the earth":

Also in the ordinary conditions of society, Christians, as witnesses to man's authentic dignity, by their obedience to the Holy Spirit contribute to the manifold "renewal of the face of the earth," working together with their brothers and sisters in order to achieve and put to good use everything that is good, noble and beautiful in the modern progress of civilisation, culture, science, technology and the other areas of thought and human activity (*GS* 22,24). They do this as disciples of Christ who—as the Council writes—"appointed Lord by his Resurrection...is now at work in the hearts of men through the power of his Spirit. He arouses not only a desire for the age to come but by that very fact, he animates, purifies and strengthens those noble longings too by which the human family strives to make its life more humane and to render the earth submissive to this goal" (*ibid.* 38). Thus they affirm still more strongly the greatness of man, made in the image and likeness of God, a greatness shown by the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, who "in the

fulness of time," by the power of the Holy Spirit, entered into history and manifested himself as true man, he who was begotten before every creature, "through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (I Cor. 8:6). (*DeV60.3*)

Christians working together with all men in order to achieve cultural progress has, according to the passage, a common spiritual basis: the working of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. The Holy Ghost doesn't just work in Christians but generally in the whole family of man and not just for the longing after the world to come, but he animates, purifies, and strengthens those noble longings, too, by which the human family strives to make its life more humane. Thus Christians, by working together with all men, affirm the greatness of man, made in the image and likeness of God, a greatness revealed in Christ.

We can sum up the message of the Encyclical for the jubilee year 2000 in its essential points thus: All men are God's children and therefore also brothers and sisters. The message of God's sonship contains the message of true freedom and dignity of man. This message is aimed at the whole human family, but Christians are to live and preach it because it is only they who have received the message of freedom through revelation in Christ.

The knowledge of true freedom and dignity of the children of God leads through the working of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of men to the liberation from all bonds of materialism and its social structures. The discovery of the freedom of the children of God is at the same time a discovery of the dignity and greatness of man. It is brought about by the working together of Christians with all men for the creation of a more humane world.

It is not by chance that in the jubilee message there is no call to non-Christian mankind to convert and accept the Christian faith.

5. Essence and mission of the Church with an eye on the end of the second millennium (*DeV 61-64*)²⁶

With an eye on the end of the second millennium and the teaching of Vatican II, the Encyclical sketches broadly its ecclesiology and, because the Church is a sacramental reality, its concept of the sacraments.

The condition to understand properly the extremely difficult section is not only the theory of universal salvation but also the Photian concept of the Trinity and the Pope's teaching on Redemption and grace which are a result of that.

5.1. The coming of the Counselor and the new coming of Christ: announcement in the Upper Room (*DeV 61*)

In order to grasp the essence and mission of the Church the Encyclical returns to the Upper Room:

As the end of the second Millennium approaches, an event which should recall to everyone and as it were make present anew the coming of the Word in the fulness of time, the Church once more means to ponder the very essence of her divine-human constitution and of that mission which enables her to share in the messianic mission of Christ, according to the teaching and the ever valid plan of the Second Vatican Council. Following this line, we can go back to the Upper Room, where Jesus Christ reveals the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, and where he speaks of his own "departure" through the Cross as the necessary condition for the Spirit's "coming": "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (Jn. 16:7). We have seen that this prediction first came true the evening of Easter day and then during the celebration of Pentecost in

²⁶ In the English translation: "The Church as the Sacrament of Intimate Union with God."

Jerusalem, and we have seen that ever since then it is being fulfilled in human history through the Church. (*DeV* 61.1)

Concerning the essence and the mission of the Church, the passage makes a few introductory remarks in a quite traditional vein: The Church has a “divine-human constitution” which enables it to share in the messianic mission of Christ. The divine-human constitution of the Church naturally has its origin in the divine-human constitution of the Incarnation.

In order to better grasp this essence of the Church the Pope goes back to the Upper Room. This return to the Upper Room means a return to the sacrifice of the Cross. To understand the essence of the Church from the point of view of the Cross is traditional theology. The Pope, however, goes his own exegetical way.

He doesn't just say clearly and simply: The Church founded on the sacrifice of the Cross but rather Christ's “‘departure’ through the Cross” is the “necessary condition” for the coming of the Paraclete at Easter and Pentecost as well as throughout history through the Church. He therefore makes no direct statement about the relationship of Christ's sacrifice of the Cross to the Church at all but about the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross to the coming of the Holy Ghost. In doing this he repeats the Encyclical's ever recurring refrain that the sacrifice of the Cross is the “necessary condition” for the coming of the Holy Ghost. We have already mentioned in our commentary that this formulation of the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity is reflected in its consequences for the teaching on Redemption and grace. This is also the case for the Encyclical's ecclesiology. This becomes clear when we compare the Encyclical's teaching on the relationship of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross first to the coming of the Holy Ghost and then also to the Church with traditional teaching:

Here the relationship between Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost is based on the processions within the Trinity, from which come the sending of the Son from the Father and that of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son *ad extra*. They constitute therefore the inner relationship between Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and the sending of the Holy Ghost. Already the Fathers expressed this by relating the blood from the wound in the side of Christ to the Holy Ghost and gave this the meaning of a pouring out of the love of the crucified Son of God.²⁷ The relationship within the Trinity of the Father and the Son as a pouring out of love in the Holy Ghost is reflected in this way in Christ's sacrifice of the Cross.

This "divine" relationship between Christ's sacrifice of the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost cannot exist in the Photian teaching. For if the Father is the only source of the Son and the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Father and the Son then, in Christ's sacrifice of the Cross, the Holy Ghost doesn't proceed from the Son either. Rather the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost are parallel to one another. The inner unity of the work of Redemption is dissolved and divided into the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is what happens in the Encyclical in that it fixes the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross to the coming of the Holy Ghost as one of "dependence" or of "quasi causality."

Concerning the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross to the Church, the Fathers have already taught that the Church was born out of the side of the crucified Saviour.²⁸ In this way they expressed in a vivid manner that both the gifts

²⁷ Scheeben, [*The Mysteries of Christianity*], [Collected Works] II, 295-356; [*Redemption*], [Collected Works] VI/1, 406-426, VI/2, 196-226.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

of the Holy Ghost as well as the Church come forth as the immediate fruits of the Redemption from Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. This organic unity has similarly already been dissolved at the beginning of the ecclesiological part of the Encyclical because of the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity.

The ecclesiological part of the Encyclical begins, remaining in the Upper Room, by considering Christ's coming in the light of Jesus' words concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost:

In the light of that prediction, we also grasp the full meaning of what Jesus says, also at the Last Supper, about his new "coming." For it is significant that in the same farewell discourse Jesus foretells not only his "departure" but also his new "coming." His exact words are: "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you" (Jn. 14:18). And at the moment of his final farewell before he ascends into heaven, he will repeat even more explicitly: "Lo, I am with you," and this "always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20). This new "coming" of Christ, this continuous coming of his, in order to be with his Apostles, with the Church, this "I am with you always, to the close of the age," does not of course change the fact of his "departure." It follows that departure, after the close of Christ's messianic activity on earth, and it occurs in the context of the predicted sending of the Holy Spirit and in a certain sense forms part of his own mission. And yet it occurs by the power of the Holy Spirit, who makes it possible for Christ, who has gone away, to come now and for ever in a new way. This new coming of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and his constant presence and action in the spiritual life are accomplished in the sacramental reality. In this reality, Christ, who has gone away in his visible humanity, comes, is present and acts in the Church in such an intimate way as to make it his own Body. As such, the Church lives, works and grows "to the close of the age." All this happens through the power of the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 61.2)

At first sight the passage seems to say simply the known truth about the “new coming of Christ”:

By the “new coming of Christ” the coming of the Risen One is meant. He comes to the apostles and to the Church. It means a “continuous coming,” a “continuous presence,” and a “constant action in the spiritual life” and that in the sacramental reality of the Church. Christ works so intimately in the Church that He makes it His body. The Church, as the Body of Christ, lives, works and grows until the end of the world.

What is particular about the Encyclical’s teaching can only be seen when carefully examined from its own peculiar point of view: After the Pope has described the relationship of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross to the Holy Ghost, he now looks at the relationship between the coming of the Holy Ghost and the Risen Christ, that is—not as in St. John’s description of the final discourse—the relationship of Christ’s mission to the Paraclete, but the other way round!

The meaning of this reversal is even emphasised: Only in the light of the coming of the Paraclete can the “new coming of Christ” in the Resurrection receive its “full meaning.” What this full meaning consists of is also described: The new coming of the Risen One—with everything He does—“happens through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Christ’s resurrection is thus ascribed to the action of the Holy Ghost. We are also told why: This performing of Christ’s Resurrection by the Holy Ghost “forms part of his own (*i.e.*, the Holy Ghost’s) mission.” That means: The Holy Ghost sends the Risen One. But the Resurrection surely belongs to the heart of Christ’s own mission.

The turning around of the missions of the Son and the Holy Ghost in the passage from the Encyclical is only possible because of the Pope’s Photian concept of the Trinity.

On the other hand, classic theology teaches that the whole work of Christ's Redemption has its deepest foundations in the Catholic teaching of the *Filioque*. From the processions within the Trinity come the missions of the divine persons *ad extra* from the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost. That is why, not only the relationship of Christ's sacrifice of the Cross, but also that of the Risen One to the Holy Ghost is based on the divine relationships. That is also why the Risen Saviour sends the Holy Ghost and not the other way round. The Holy Ghost's work of salvation cannot be separated from the order of missions.

Therefore it is the Redeemer Himself who by virtue of His own divinity called the Church into existence on the Cross and at the same time made it His body, chose it as His bride, and communicated the Holy Ghost. It is not the Holy Ghost who became man but only the eternal Son of the Father. It is not the Holy Ghost who sent the Son but the Son who sent the Holy Ghost. The new coming of the Risen Christ forms an intrinsic part of His own (*i.e.*, of Christ) mission, not the Holy Ghost's. It is not the Holy Ghost who raised the Risen One to the right hand of the Father but the risen Christ put Himself at the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Ghost as a Comforter for His Church. That is why the God-man Jesus Christ is and remains in the sacramental reality of the Church the primary giver of the sacraments and brings forth their effects in souls.²⁹ It is the High Priest Jesus Christ Himself who applies the merits of His Redemption to the faithful in the sacraments and communicates the Holy Ghost even though the work of sanctification is normally appropriated to the Holy Ghost.

²⁹ Scheeben, [*Redemption*], [Collected Works] VI/2, 198ff. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 341.

5.2. Essence and effect of the holy Eucharist (*DeV* 62)

The realisation that the new coming of Christ takes place through the action of the Holy Ghost in sacramental reality sets the tone for the following consideration of the Eucharist as the most perfect expression of Christ's death and Resurrection. This is what is said:

The most complete sacramental expression of the "departure" of Christ through the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection is the Eucharist. In every celebration of the Eucharist his coming, his salvific presence, is sacramentally realised: in the Sacrifice and in Communion. It is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, as part of his own mission (see *epiclesis* in second eucharistic prayer). Through the Eucharist the Holy Spirit accomplishes that "strengthening of the inner man" spoken of in the Letter to the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 3:16). Through the Eucharist, individuals and communities, by the action of the Paraclete-Counselor, learn to discover the divine sense of human life, as spoken of by the Council: that sense whereby Jesus Christ "fully reveals man to man himself," suggesting "a certain likeness between the union of the divine persons, and the union of God's children in truth and charity" (*GS* 22,24). This union is expressed and made real especially through the Eucharist, in which man shares in the sacrifice of Christ which this celebration actualises, and he also learns to "find himself...through a...gift of himself" (*ibid.* 24), through communion with God and with others, his brothers and sisters. (*DeV* 62.1)

The passage first makes a statement about the essence of the Eucharist then about its effects in man.

Concerning the essence of the Eucharist it says: It is the most perfect sacramental expression of Christ's "departure" and His coming, of His salvific presence in the sacrifice and

communion. This happens through the action of the Holy Ghost within His own mission.

What is special about the passage from the Encyclical is that Jesus' words in the Upper Room about His "departure" and "coming" form the essential content of the definition of the sacrament of the Eucharist although they have no direct relation to the Eucharist in their literal sense. This peculiarity becomes clear when you consider that the institution of the Eucharist, which after all took place at the Last Supper, is not even mentioned in the passage from the Encyclical even though Jesus' words of institution with their reference to the sacrifice of the Cross define the authentic sacramental essence of the Eucharist.

Another peculiarity of the passage from the Encyclical is that Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist is dealt with in relation to the *epiclesis* and attributed to the mission and the working of the Holy Ghost. This is not only a logical consequence from what has previously been said in the Encyclical about the relationship of the sacrifice of the Cross and of the Risen One to the Holy Ghost but also adopts the teaching on the *epiclesis* of the Greek Orthodox church. The Catholic Church, however, teaches that it is the priest, simply by speaking the words of consecration (*ex vi verborum*), who performs the consecration (Dz. 698, 876). Jesus' words at the Last Supper which the priest speaks *in persona Christi* are in the traditional terms the "form of the sacrament."³⁰

³⁰ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 392: "While the Greek-Orthodox Church wrongly placed the power of transmutation either in the *Epiclesis* alone, following the narrative of the institution, or in the connection of the words of institution with the *Epiclesis* (*Confessio orth.* I, 107), the Catholic Church adheres firmly to the view that the priest consummates the transubstantiation solely by uttering of the words of institution (*Vi verborum*)."

The quoted passage from the Encyclical has the following to say concerning the effects of the Eucharist in man:

Through the Eucharist the Holy Ghost strengthens the inner man, persons and communities discover the divine sense of human life which Jesus Christ "fully reveals man to man himself" by suggesting a likeness between the union of the divine persons and the union of God's children in truth and charity.

When the Encyclical says Christ fully makes known man to man, this means making known the inalienable supernatural dignity of each man's divine sonship.³¹ That is also why the Encyclical's statement about the similarity between the unity between the divine Persons and the children of God which is said to be realised in the Eucharist by the participation in Christ's sacrifice has a universal meaning. Man learns by giving himself to "find himself" and discovers his unity in communion with God and his fellow man. Also in this sense the finding of oneself through giving oneself is thus in the Eucharist the sacrament of unity.

What is special about the Encyclical's concept is more clearly visible against the background of traditional teaching.³² We shall just mention the main points here for comparison:

Christ's sacrifice is first the highest act of worship in which Christ offers Himself in a spirit of obedience and love to the heavenly Father as a victim and thereby shows Him "all honour and glory" (cf. doxology of the holy Mass). By the participation in Christ's sacrifice in the Eucharist the faithful unite themselves in their worship with Christ's worship. They are thus directed towards the Father by their giving them-

³¹ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, I-II/2.

³² Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 394ff.

selves in Christ. That is in no way an egotistical finding of oneself.

Communion is the faithful's most intimate union with Christ. Because the Encyclical ascribes the whole realisation of the Eucharist to the working and mission of the Holy Ghost, this aspect falls into the background. From the unity of the faithful with Christ as the Head of the mystical body comes the unity of the faithful as members of the mystical body with one another which is expressed in its most perfect sacramental way in Communion (Dz. 698). The Eucharist as food for the soul contains and increases the supernatural life of the soul (Dz. 698). It is the guarantee of heavenly bliss and the future resurrection of the body (Dz. 875).

One of the main ideas in the passage from the Encyclical is the unity realised by the Eucharist. The Encyclical now turns its attention to the eucharistic unity of the Church from the first community until the present day:

For this reason the early Christians, right from the days immediately following the coming down of the Holy Spirit, "devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and the prayers," and in this way they formed a community united by the teaching of the Apostles (Acts 2:42). Thus "they recognised" that their Risen Lord, who had ascended into heaven, came into their midst anew in that Eucharistic community of the Church and by means of it. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church from the beginning expressed and confirmed her identity through the Eucharist. And so it has always been, in every Christian generation, down to our own time, down to this present period when we await the end of the second Christian Millennium. Of course, we unfortunately have to acknowledge the fact that the Millennium which is about to end is the one in which there have occurred the great separations between Christians. All believers in Christ, therefore, following the example of the Apostles, must fervently strive to conform their thinking

and action to the will of the Holy Spirit, “the principle of the Church’s unity” (UR 2), so that all who have been baptized in the one Spirit in order to make up one body may be brethren joined in the celebration of the same Eucharist, “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity!” (SC 47). (*DeV* 62.2)

With his realisation that the Church is the community united by the teaching of the Apostles which is sacramentally expressed in the Eucharist, the Pope turns his attention to the unity of the Church in faith.

Considering the great schisms that have occurred, one could logically expect the Pope to call upon the separated Christians to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church so that the Church, united in the apostolic faith, could also find its expression in the sacrament of unity. Instead of this, the Pope answers the problem of the millennium, the schisms, with a concept of the Church which is satisfied with an undefined faith in Christ which is based on baptism alone and therefore includes all baptized Christians: For they were all “assumed into one body through the one spirit in baptism.”

We may define this ecumenical-pneumatological concept of the Church as follows: All Christians through their respective faith in Christ form the one unique body of the Church by baptism. The principle of unity of this church is the Holy Ghost. One could say: The one unique body of the Church is realised in the one Church of the Holy Ghost of all baptized Christians. And this one Church of the Holy Ghost is a sacramental reality because of the sacrament of baptism.

The Pope shows the way to the solution of the problem of the millennium of schism not based on the unity of apostolic teaching but his ecumenical-pneumatological concept of the Church:

Because the Holy Ghost is the “principle of unity” all baptized Christians—“following the example of the the Apos-

bles" (!)—must strive to “harmonise their thoughts and deeds with the will of the Holy Ghost”—with the aim of a common celebration of the Eucharist.

If the Catholic Church understood herself until Vatican II as the “community united by the teaching of the Apostles” and as the infallible guardian of unity in the apostolic teaching, this position is given up in the Encyclical. It is not the return to the unity of the Apostolic teaching and thus the bosom of the Catholic Church which is demanded³³ but the striving of all Christians to “bring their thoughts and deeds into line with the will of the Holy Ghost.”

If the Church of the Holy Ghost is the sacrament of unity of all Christians, the Church of the Council is moreover the sacrament of unity for all humanity. The two following articles of the Encyclical are devoted to the realisation of this universal sacramental Church (*DeV*63, 64).

5.3. Through the Eucharist to a deeper understanding of the Church (*DeV*63)

According to the Pope, the Council also discovered in a more profound way the mystery of the Church through the Eucharist:

Christ's Eucharistic presence, his sacramental “I am with you,” enables the Church to discover ever more deeply her own mystery, as shown by the whole ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, whereby “the Church is in Christ as a sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race” (*LG* 1.1). As a sacrament, the Church is a development from the Paschal Mystery of Christ's “departure,” living by his ever new “coming” by the power of the Holy Spirit, within the same

³³ Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos*, Jan. 6, 1928. Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, I, 1-19.

mission of the Paraclete-Spirit of truth. Precisely this is the essential mystery of the Church, as the Council professes. (*DeV* 63.1)

The Council's definition of the essence of the Church as sacrament of unity for the whole of humanity in the quoted passage is first given a general interpretation by the Pope: According to this, the Cross and Resurrection is the principal mystery of the Church as a sacrament. This is then defined more closely: The sacrifice of the Cross is the prerequisite for the ever new "coming" of the Risen Christ which happens through the working of the Holy Ghost within His mission and represents the inner life of the Church.

The definition contains formulations with which the Encyclical has already described the "sacramental reality" of the Church (cf. *DeV* 61) and the Eucharist (cf. *DeV* 62.1).

The following passage describes how the Redemption in Creation and history has developed in the individual on this basis:

While it is through creation that God is he in whom we all "live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), in its turn the power of the Redemption endures and develops in the history of man and the world in a double "rhythm" as it were, the source of which is found in the Eternal Father. On the one hand there is the rhythm of the mission of the Son, who came into the world and was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit; and on the other hand there is also the rhythm of the mission of the Holy Spirit, as he was revealed definitively by Christ. Through the "departure" of the Son, the Holy Spirit came and continues to come as Counselor and Spirit of truth. And in the context of his mission, as it were within the indivisible presence of the Holy Spirit, the Son, who "had gone away" in the Paschal Mystery, "comes" and is continuously present in the mystery of the Church, at times concealing himself and at times reveal-

ing himself in her history, and always directing her steps. All of this happens in a sacramental way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who, "drawing from the wealth of Christ's Redemption," constantly gives life. As the Church becomes ever more aware of this mystery, she sees herself more clearly, above all as a sacrament (*DeV* 63.2).

This Trinitarian view of the work of Redemption which communicates to the Church a more profound understanding of her essence as a sacrament contains four important statements:

1) Since all men are God's creatures, all are and live in God. It is not yet stated how that is to be understood exactly. At any rate the Creation is the universal framework in which the "power of the Redemption" develops in the history of man.

2) The source of the work of Redemption is the Father: He sends the Son who became man of the Virgin Mary—by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Father also sends the Holy Ghost who has been definitively "revealed" (*i.e.*, not "sent") by Christ. It is thus the Father alone who sends both the Son and the Holy Ghost. That is how the Redemption develops in history and in the world in a sort of "double rhythm."

The passage from the Encyclical reflects the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity. According to Catholic teaching, it is not only the Father who is the "source" of the sending of the Son and the Holy Ghost but the Father and the Son send the Holy Ghost. Father and Son are a single principle of the sending of the Holy Ghost. That is why the Redemption does not develop in a "double rhythm" of the sending of the Son and that of the Holy Ghost, but in a single rhythm from the Father and the Son (or from the Father through the Son) in the Holy Ghost. The consequences of the Photian understanding of the Trinity are also visible in the Encyclical's teaching on the Redemption.

3) The relationship of the Holy Ghost to the sacrifice of the Cross and to Christ's Resurrection in the Encyclical are also to be interpreted from this Photian understanding of the Trinity. According to this the Cross is only a "condition" for the continual coming of the Holy Ghost who draws from Christ's riches and gives life.

Christ's sacrifice on the Cross according to Church teaching, however, is more than just an external condition for the coming and working of the Holy Ghost. Since the sending of the Holy Ghost takes place because of the processions from the Father and from the Son within the Trinity, the Holy Ghost proceeds directly from the sacrifice of the Cross as a fruit of the Redemption and constitutes the relationship between the sacrifice of the Cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

In the Encyclical it is also the Son who "comes." But the "coming" of the Risen One takes place "within the framework of the mission of the Holy Ghost." It is thus the Holy Ghost who in a certain way "sends" the Son.

According to classic teaching the processions within the Trinity are reflected in the coming and working of the Risen One. That is why the Father and the Risen Christ are the common principle of the sending of the Holy Ghost. In the Encyclical it should say the opposite: The coming of the Holy Ghost takes place "within the framework of the sending of the Son."

4) The consequences of the Photian understanding of the Trinity are likewise visible in the Pope's teaching on the sacraments.

What was said in points 1-3 includes the mystery of the Church as a sacrament. Since the Holy Ghost draws from the riches of the Redemption He also gives man life in a sacramental way.

The following passage from the Encyclical shows how the giving of life through the Holy Ghost, which happens according to the will of Christ as a sacramental service of the Church, takes place:

This also happens because, by the will of her Lord, through the individual sacraments the Church fulfills her salvific ministry to man. This sacramental ministry, every time it is accomplished, brings with it the mystery of the "departure" of Christ through the Cross and the Resurrection, by virtue of which the Holy Spirit comes. He comes and works: "He gives life." For the sacraments signify grace and confer grace: they signify life and give life. The Church is the visible dispenser of the sacred signs, while the Holy Spirit acts in them as the invisible dispenser of the life which they signify. Together with the Spirit, Christ Jesus is present and acting. (*DeV* 63.3)

This brief treatise on the Sacraments may be summarised as follows:

When it says: The sacramental service of the Church takes place according to the will of Christ, this means the institution of the sacraments through Christ. Nothing is said about the number or the circumstances of their institution.

Concerning the essence and the objective effectiveness of the sacraments it says: Because the Church as a sacrament includes the mystery of Christ's Cross and Resurrection, the sacraments also contain this mystery and pass it on: They "signify grace and communicate it." That is a simple truth from the catechism.³⁴

Concerning the dispenser of the Sacraments the Encyclical says: The Church is the visible dispenser of the holy signs,

³⁴ For a short overview of the traditional teaching, see Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 325-346.

the Holy Ghost the invisible giver of life. In this definition Christ is not mentioned.

It is said that the Holy Ghost acts and is present together with Christ, but it is also said how that is to be understood: We are talking about the "departure" and the "coming" of Christ by virtue of whom the Holy Ghost comes. But the "departure" and "coming" of Christ is only the condition in the sense which has been explained many times of the Photian understanding of the Trinity.

In contrast, Tradition teaches that the primary dispenser of the sacraments is the God-man Jesus Christ who is the same who brings forth the effects in souls. It is Christ Himself "who through the Church baptizes, teaches, rules, looses, binds, and offers sacrifice."³⁵ The human minister is only the servant and representative of Christ (I Cor. 4:1).³⁶ Similarly at the application of the fruits of Redemption through the sacraments, the relationship within the Trinity of the Son to the Holy Ghost, which continues in the missions of the two divine Persons, remains.

5.4. The Church as a sacrament for the unity of the whole of mankind (*DeV 64*)

The Pope now goes through the famous definition of the Council point by point: "The Church is as it were in Christ the sacrament, *i.e.*, sign and instrument, of the intimate union with God as of the unity of all mankind" (*LG 1.1*). He interprets one by one the statements in the definition concerning Christ (*DeV 64.1*), sacrament (*DeV 64.2*), and unity of man (*DeV 64.3*) by linking them to the Holy Ghost.

³⁵ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943.

³⁶ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 341ff.

What does the intimate union with God "in Jesus Christ" through the Church as a sacrament mean in the Council's definition? This is the Encyclical's answer:

If the Church is the sacrament of intimate union with God, she is such in Jesus Christ, in whom this same union is accomplished as a salvific reality. She is such in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The fulness of the salvific reality, which is Christ in history, extends in a sacramental way in the power of the Spirit Paraclete. In this way the Holy Spirit is "another Counselor," or new Counselor, because through his action the Good News takes shape in human minds and hearts and extends through history. In all this it is the Holy Spirit who gives life. (*DeV* 64.1)

It is certain that in Christ the intimate union with God is present as the fulness of the salvific reality, but that is of course first the case through the Son Himself in the hypostatic union. The eternal son, not the Holy Ghost, assumed human nature and performed the Redemption through His humanity. The Risen One Himself communicates the Holy Ghost to His Church as a precious fruit of the Redemption. As the eternal High Priest He Himself applies the merits of the Redemption to man in the process of justification; He is the primary minister of the sacraments who brings forth the effects of grace, the communication of sanctifying grace and the Holy Ghost in souls even if the work of sanctification is "appropriated" in a special way to the Holy Ghost.

What does the word "sacrament" mean as a term applied to the Church? The Encyclical answers:

When we use the word "sacrament" in reference to the Church, we must bear in mind that in the texts of the Council the sacramentality of the Church appears as distinct from the sacramentality that is proper, in the strict sense, to the

Sacraments. Thus we read: "The Church is...in the nature of a sacrament—a sign and instrument of communion with God." But what matters and what emerges from the analogical sense in which the word is used in the two cases is the relationship which the Church has with the power of the Holy Spirit, who alone gives life: the Church is the sign and instrument of the presence and action of the life-giving Spirit. (*DeV* 64.2)

The Encyclical acknowledges the difference between the understanding of the Church as a sacrament and that of the individual sacraments but stresses the essential similarity. This is said to subsist in the relationship of the Church to the Holy Ghost: In both cases the Church is the sacramental sign of the presence and the instrument of the working of the Holy Ghost who gives life. This is a result of the Pope's concept of the sacraments (cf. *DeV* 63.3).

But the Church is in fact the ever-living Christ. In this way the Church in Christ is also primarily the "sign" of the ever-living Christ. Moreover the Encyclical once again removes Jesus Christ as the primary minister of the sacraments from its concept of them.

What does it mean to say: The Church is a sacrament for the unity of all humanity? This is what the Encyclical says:

Vatican II adds that the Church is "a sacrament...of the unity of all mankind." Obviously it is a question of the unity which the human race which in itself is differentiated in various ways—has from God and in God. This unity has its roots in the mystery of creation and acquires a new dimension in the mystery of the Redemption, which is ordered to universal salvation. Since God "wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4), the Redemption includes all humanity and in a certain way all of creation. In the same universal dimension of Redemption the Holy Spirit is acting, by virtue of the "departure of

Christ." Therefore the Church, rooted through her own mystery in the Trinitarian plan of salvation with good reason regards herself as the "sacrament of the unity of the whole human race." She knows that she is such through the power of the Holy Spirit, of which power she is a sign and instrument in the fulfilment of God's salvific plan. (*DeV* 64.3)

What precisely the individual statements in the passage mean can be seen from the oft repeated thesis of the Encyclical:

The unity of mankind which is "rooted in the mystery of the Creation" and which it has "from God and in God" is obviously to be understood in the sense of the unity in Creation. Creation in the Encyclical, however, means not only the Creation *ex nihilo* but at the same time the self-communication of God to man (cf. *DeV* 12). The unity of the whole of mankind in God is therefore to be understood in the sense of the universal giving of grace *ab origine*.

This unity of mankind gets a new dimension because of the Redemption. Because God wants all men to be saved, the Redemption includes the whole of mankind. Even though it is not said here *expressis verbis*, nonetheless the universal dimension of the Redemption in the sense of all men are saved, no matter what, is meant (cf. *DeV* 14).

The relationship to the Holy Ghost is established by the key statement which has already been analysed many times: In the "universal dimension of the Redemption, the Holy Ghost works by virtue of the 'departure' of Christ." Like the Redemption, so the salvific working of the Holy Ghost embraces the whole of humanity.

The relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Church as the "sacrament" of unity for the whole of mankind is the result of the Pope's pneumatological understanding of the sacraments: According to this, the Church as a sacrament is the "sign and

instrument of the presence and working of the life-giving spirit" (cf. *DeV*63.3, 64.2).

But we should remember that the Church is the "ever living Christ." She is the body of Christ in which Christ is the head and the Holy Ghost is the soul.³⁷ Through the Encyclical's Photian understanding of the sacraments, this organic unity is broken and changed into a relationship of dependence.

The Pope sums up the results of his analysis in a short conclusion in which he describes how the coming of God into the visible world is realised and how the working of the Church as a sacrament of unity is for the whole of mankind:

In this way the "condescension" of the infinite Trinitarian Love is brought about: God, who is infinite Spirit, comes close to the visible world. The Triune God communicates himself to man in the Holy Spirit from the beginning through his "image and likeness." Under the action of the same Spirit, man, and through him the created world, which has been redeemed by Christ, draw near to their ultimate destinies in God. The Church is "a sacrament, that is sign and instrument" of this coming together of the two poles of creation and redemption, God and man. She strives to restore and strengthen the unity at the very roots of the human race: in the relationship of communion that man has with God as his Creator, Lord and Redeemer. This is a truth which on the basis of the Council's teaching we can meditate on, explain and apply in all the fulness of its meaning in this phase of transition from the second to the third Christian Millennium. And we rejoice to realise ever more clearly that within the work carried out by the Church in the history of salvation, which is part of the history of humanity, the Holy Spirit is present and at work—he who with the breath of divine life permeates man's earthly pilgrimage and causes all

³⁷ *Ibid.*

creation, all history, to flow together to its ultimate end, in the infinite ocean of God. (*DeV* 64.4)

One needs to analyse the passage statement by statement in order to grasp the Pope's particular view of the history of salvation. We follow the thought process as laid out in the quoted passage:

When it says: "The Triune God communicates himself to man in the Holy Spirit from the beginning through his 'image and likeness'" it sounds very much like traditional teaching. For even according to Church teaching man entered existence as the image and likeness of God. But there is a profound difference:

According to the Pope's teaching, the Creation means the self-communication of the Triune God in the Holy Ghost (cf. *DeV* 12,34), which is the foundation for a reality in man "in which is contained the indestructible image and likeness of God" (*RH* 13.3). That is why there is no mention anywhere in *Dominum et Vivificantem* of a supernatural likeness to God in man which was lost by Original Sin.

According to Church teaching, too, man as the image and likeness of God came into existence in a state of Original Justice. But the gifts of supernatural grace were lost by Original Sin. From Adam all that was left was the natural unity of man. This was not lost by our first parents' sin and therefore did not need to be restored. This unity of species is a unity in a state of Original Sin and as such the presupposition for the objective universality of the Redemption which is applied to the individual in the process of justification.

When the Encyclical continues: "Under the action of the same Spirit, man, and through him the created world, which has been redeemed by Christ, draw near to their ultimate destinies in God," it is referring to a humanity as the subject of a universal redemption. The history of salvation is conceived as

a spiritual process of development or maturation in which universally redeemed mankind draws near to its ultimate destiny in God under the action of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is then not just the Paraclete of the Church but also of all humanity and the world!

On the other hand, the traditional view of the history of salvation takes into account the loss of the original state of grace and mankind in Original Sin in need of Redemption who is freed from the bonds of Original Sin by Christ and reconciled with God, not automatically, but through the process of justification in the individual.

In the passage from the Encyclical, the history of salvation is described as a process of drawing near in the history of the world of the two poles of Creation and Redemption, God and man, in which the rôle of the Church is defined as a sacrament of unity for the whole of humanity: that is the aim of the Church, "She strives to restore and strengthen the unity at the very roots of the human race: in the relationship of communion that man has with God as his Creator, Lord and Redeemer."

This relationship of communion that man "has" has already been described many times in the Encyclical. In the quoted passage, too, it means the indestructible image of God in man and God's communication of Himself through the Creation as well as the salvific presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men.

Thus the Encyclical sees the action of the Church, which is to be understood as a sacrament for the religious unity of the whole of mankind throughout history, together with the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, as the making aware and fruitful of the fundamental knowledge of its religious unity which man already possesses because of the universal giving of grace and Redemption through the Creation and Redemption. It's a question of making known a hidden unity and the

common soteriological root of all religions. The Pope describes this radical unity more clearly in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*³⁸ with the following words:

In another passage the Council says that the Holy Spirit works effectively even outside the visible structure of the Church (cf. *LG* 13) making use of these *semina Verbi*, that constitute a kind of *common soteriological root present in all religions*.

But it is an entirely different picture of the Church as sacrament of unity which is gained from the Church's traditional teaching on Original Sin: according to this, the Church's action is also directed towards the mutual relationship between God and man in order to restore this relationship at its roots. But the Church assumes a state of man in Original Sin far from God. That is why the task of the Church which is *natura sua* missionary (*Ad Gentes* 2) is to free the individual man from his state of Original Sin which left him far from God and to lead him to the state of God's sonship through faith and baptism. In this way it gathers together men in a unity of a new people of God in the Church. The unity of the whole of humanity as such in "one world" has never been the mission or aim of the Church. Today it is the aim of the UNO, the Freemasons, and New Age.

The new view of the Church as a sacrament of unity for all mankind based on the thesis of universal salvation is for the Pope a truth which fills him with joy looking at the turn of the millennium. It is a joyful new knowledge of universal salvation which "within the work carried out by the Church in the history of salvation...the Holy Spirit is present and at work—he who with the breath of divine life permeates man's

³⁸ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p. 81.

earthly pilgrimage and causes all creation, all history, to flow together to its ultimate end, in the infinite ocean of God."

6. The prayer of religious groups with an eye on the third millennium (*DeV* 65-66)³⁹

Already in his inaugural Encyclical John Paul II announced the "common prayer" of representatives of non-Christian religions as the main aim of his pontificate. He already saw then the "strong religious conviction of those who belong to non-Christian religions" "being led by the Spirit of Truth" "who is active outside the visible boundaries of the Mystical Body" (cf. *RH* 6.3). In this spirit came the announcement of the prayer meeting of all religious groups on January 25, 1986, which took place in Assisi on October 27, 1986. One might expect a theological justification of interreligious prayer from *Dominum et Vivificantem* (May 18, 1986), which was written a good five months before the planned prayer meeting. The Encyclical gives this justification—and not only with an eye on Assisi but beyond that to the great Jubilee. The first prayer meeting of religions in Assisi was the "beginning of a new age,"⁴⁰ The pioneering first step of a prayer movement which was to find its climax in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, on Sinai and at all the prominent places of prayer in the year 2000.⁴¹

The Pope first develops his general theology for prayer among religious groups (*DeV* 65) in order to go on to prove the never failing faithfulness of the Church to its own prayer tradition with a specific theology of prayer for the Church (*DeV* 66).

³⁹ In the English translation: "The Spirit and the Bride Say: 'Come!'"

⁴⁰ Cf. Dörmann, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*], pp. 126-182.

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 53.

6.1. The prayer of religions brought from the hearts of all men by the Spirit (*DeV* 65)

At the beginning of his theology of prayer of religions the Pope gives his fundamental thesis: The prayer of religions, wherever it happens, is as such an expression of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. This is what he says:

The breath of the divine life, the Holy Spirit, in its simplest and most common manner, expresses itself and makes itself felt in prayer. It is a beautiful and salutary thought that, wherever people are praying in the world, there the Holy Spirit is, the living breath of prayer. It is a beautiful and salutary thought to recognise that, if prayer is offered throughout the world, in the past, in the present and in the future, equally widespread is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, who "breathes" prayer in the heart of man in all the endless range of the most varied situations and conditions, sometimes favourable and sometimes unfavourable to the spiritual and religious life. Many times, through the influence of the Spirit, prayer rises from the human heart in spite of prohibitions and persecutions and even official proclamations regarding the non-religious or even atheistic character of public life. Prayer always remains the voice of all those who apparently have no voice—and in this voice there always echoes that "loud cry" attributed to Christ by the Letter to the Hebrews (cf. Heb. 5:7). Prayer is also the revelation of that abyss which is the heart of man: a depth which comes from God and which only God can fill, precisely with the Holy Spirit. We read in Luke: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Lk. 11:13). (*DeV* 65.1)

What could be said of the prayer of the Christian faithful is here applied without distinction to all men professing any

religion. And it is not only said to be the Holy Ghost who breathes prayer in the heart of man but also always Christ's "loud cry" which echoes in the voice of those who apparently have no voice.

It is with the idea that the Holy Ghost's "divine breath of life" gives life to the prayer of all men from within, and as such, wherever one prays in the world, it is an expression of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the heart of man, that the Pope lays the theological foundation for the prayer for peace of religions in Assisi.

There still remains the problem of the polyphony of prayer which the many groups produce to their various gods and numina. The following passage proposes a solution:

The Holy Spirit is the gift that comes into man's heart together with prayer. In prayer he manifests himself first of all and above all as the gift that "helps us in our weakness." This is the magnificent thought developed by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans, when he writes: "For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). Therefore, the Holy Spirit not only enables us to pray, but guides us "from within" in prayer: he is present in our prayer and gives it a divine dimension (cf. Origen, *De oratione*, 2). Thus "he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27). Prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit becomes the ever more mature expression of the new man, who by means of this prayer participates in the divine life. (*DeV* 65.2)

According to this, the solution to the polyphony of prayer from different religious groups is that with prayer the Holy Ghost comes into the heart of man and helps us in our weakness.

The Encyclical then solves the polytheistic or multi-religious problem with a reference to the general helplessness and weakness of all human prayer: The prayers of the many religions to their various gods is interpreted in a general way as human weakness which in just as general a way is healed by the Holy Ghost Himself, the "divine breath of life" in the hearts of all men.

To back up this idea the Pope casually uses passages from the New Testament about Christian prayer: Christian prayer is in this way used as a paradigm for the prayer of all men in all religions. The justification for the extension to all religions comes from the Encyclical's thesis: The Holy Ghost Himself, present in the hearts of all men, "breathes" the prayer of every individual "who thus participates in the divine life."

Prayer understood in this way becomes, "through the action of the Holy Ghost, an ever more mature expression of the new man." The maturity of the "new man" is thus shown in the knowledge of the universal unity of prayer of all men in the Holy Ghost.

This invisible unity of prayer of all men in the Holy Ghost is right now becoming more visible. For the first time in the history of the Church it became visible at the prayer meeting at Assisi. The Pope himself ascribed a powerful force for peace to this interreligious prayer for peace made in radical faithfulness to one's own religion.⁴²

He believes he can see a growing appreciation for prayer amongst many of his contemporaries under the influence of the Holy Ghost and considers it to be a timely and salvific answer to the problems of our age. This idea is developed by the Encyclical. This is how it begins:

⁴² Dörmann, [*The One Truth and the Many Religions*], pp. 126-182.

Our difficult age has a special need of prayer. In the course of history—both in the past and in the present—many men and women have borne witness to the importance of prayer by consecrating themselves to the praise of God and to the life of prayer, especially in monasteries and convents. So, too, recent years have been seeing a growth in the number of people who, in ever more widespread movements and groups, are giving first place to prayer and seeking in prayer a renewal of their spiritual life. This is a significant and comforting sign, for from this experience there is coming a real contribution to the revival of prayer among the faithful, who have been helped to gain a clearer idea of the Holy Spirit as he who inspires in hearts a profound yearning for holiness. (*DeV* 65.3)

The passage is primarily talking about Christians who pray. But in the context of the Encyclical's theology of interreligious prayer, which sees the Holy Ghost in the heart of all who pray in whatever religion, one may see in the mentioned prayer groups which are ever more widespread and who therefore make a real contribution to the spiritual renewal of our age, a movement in the sense of the prayer for peace of all religions at Assisi, a movement which goes beyond the boundaries of the visible Church.

It is these people who pray who also see how mankind is threatened by modern civilisation and who have discovered the salvation of prayer. This is what the Encyclical says:

In many individuals and many communities there is a growing awareness that, even with all the rapid progress of technological and scientific civilisation, and despite the real conquests and goals attained, man is threatened, humanity is threatened. In the face of this danger, and indeed already experiencing the frightful reality of man's spiritual decadence, individuals and whole communities, guided as it were by an inner sense of faith, are seeking the strength to

raise man up again, to save him from himself, from his own errors and mistakes that often make harmful his very conquests. And thus they are discovering prayer, in which the "Spirit who helps us in our weakness" manifests himself. In this way the times in which we are living are bringing the Holy Spirit closer to the many who are returning to prayer. And I trust that all will find in the teaching of this Encyclical nourishment for their interior life, and that they will succeed in strengthening, under the action of the Spirit, their commitment to prayer in harmony with the Church and her Magisterium. (*DeV*65.4)

The Pope's theology of interreligious prayer with its practical realisation in the prayer for peace of religions at Assisi is something completely new in the history of the Church. That is why the Pope has every reason to urge the Catholic faithful, faced with the "Assisi event," to strengthen "their commitment to prayer in harmony with the Church and her Magisterium." This harmony with the Church and her magisterium consists for Catholics concretely in creating a harmony between the traditional prayer life of the Church and the Pope's completely new and without precedent theology of interreligious prayer and its visible expression at Assisi. He is helped to do this by the Pope who in the following article "proves" the Church's unbroken identity in prayer from the beginning till today. (*DeV*66)

6.2. From the prayer in the Upper Room to the celebration of the great Jubilee (*DeV*66)

After the Pope has presented his theology of interreligious prayer (*DeV*65) which doubtless was written with an eye on Assisi, we may wait with expectation for his calming proof of its essential identity with the Church's tradition of faith.

The proof begins with the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost:

In the midst of the problems, disappointments and hopes, desertions and returns of these times of ours, the Church remains faithful to the mystery of her birth. While it is an historical fact that the Church came forth from the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, in a certain sense one can say that she has never left it. Spiritually the event of Pentecost does not belong only to the past: the Church is always in the Upper Room that she bears in her heart. The Church perseveres in prayer, like the Apostles together with Mary, the Mother of Christ, and with those who in Jerusalem were the first seed of the Christian community and who awaited in prayer the coming of the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 66.1)

This passage simply claims an unbroken faithfulness of the Church to its tradition of prayer as an "historical fact."

The proof for this theory is the identity of the prayer of the early Church with that of the Church of the present. This agreement is shown as follows:

The Church perseveres in prayer with Mary. This union of the praying Church with the Mother of Christ has been part of the mystery of the Church from the beginning: we see her present in this mystery as she is present in the mystery of her Son. It is the Council that says to us: "The Blessed Virgin...overshadowed by the Holy Spirit...brought forth... the Son..., he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren (cf. Rom 8:29), namely the faithful. In their birth and development she co-operates with a maternal love"; she is through "his singular graces and offices...intimately united with the Church....[She] is a model of the Church" (*LG* 63). "The Church, moreover, contemplating Mary's mysterious sanctity, imitating her charity, ...becomes herself a mother" and "herself is a virgin, who keeps...the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse. Imitating the Mother of the Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she preserves with virginal purity an integral faith, a firm hope, and a sincere charity" (*ibid.*, 64). (*DeV* 66.2)

It is surprising that the agreement of the prayer of the early Church and the prayer of the Church of today is proven by a text from *Lumen Gentium* and not from a passage from the Pope's theology of interreligious prayer. The proof of the Church's unbroken tradition of prayer goes from the first Pentecost until Vatican II. The relationship of the Pope's theology of interreligious prayer to the Church's tradition of prayer is similarly not discussed in the following passage:

Thus one can understand the profound reason why the Church, united with the Virgin Mother, prays unceasingly as the Bride to her divine Spouse, as the words of the Book of Revelation, quoted by the Council, attest: "The Spirit and the bride say to the Lord Jesus Christ: Come!" (*LG* 4; Apoc. 22:17). The Church's prayer is this unceasing invocation, in which "the Spirit himself intercedes for us": in a certain sense, the Spirit himself utters it with the Church and in the Church. For the Spirit is given to the Church in order that through his power the whole community of the People of God, however widely scattered and diverse, may persevere in hope: that hope in which "we have been saved" (Rom. 8:24). It is the eschatological hope, the hope of definitive fulfillment in God, the hope of the eternal Kingdom, that is brought about by participation in the life of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit, given to the Apostles as the Counselor, is the guardian and animator of this hope in the heart of the Church. (*DeV* 66.3)

The description of the prayer of the Church and the unbroken faithfulness to the prayer of the original Church from the beginning to Vatican II is done in the Encyclical in a most expressive way. The most profound motives for prayer in tradition are adduced:

First Mary who is presented as a model for the praying Church. In imitation of the mother of the Lord and in the strength of the Holy Ghost the Church keeps a pure faith, a

firm hope, and a sincere love. Then the ancient image of the Church as a bride and Christ as her divine bridegroom is brought into consideration in order to express the intimacy of the prayer of the Church and the fidelity of the virginal bride. It is a prayer of eschatological hope of the union of man with the triune God.

The Pope now considers the eschatological hope of the Church in the context of the great Jubilee. It is to give it its full meaning:

In the time leading up to the third Millennium after Christ, while "the Spirit and the bride say to the Lord Jesus: Come!" this prayer of theirs is filled, as always, with an eschatological significance, which is also destined to give fullness of meaning to the celebration of the great Jubilee. It is a prayer concerned with the salvific destinies toward which the Holy Spirit by his action opens hearts throughout the history of man on earth. But at the same time this prayer is directed toward a precise moment of history which highlights the "fulness of time" marked by the year 2000. The Church wishes to prepare for this Jubilee in the Holy Spirit, just as the Virgin of Nazareth in whom the Word was made flesh was prepared by the Holy Spirit. (*DeV* 66.4)

If we want to understand the whole discussion of the prayer of the Church and its essential identity from the Upper Room until Vatican II in the sense of Tradition, then the prayer of the Church would be no support for the prayer for peace of religions in Assisi and for the planned prayer meetings of the world's religions in 2000. On the contrary: The unique character and greatness of the prayer of the Church has vigorously excluded any form of interreligious prayer throughout the history of the Church. The Church's tradition of prayer is in decisive contradiction to the Pope's theology of

interreligious prayer and the prayer for peace of the religions at Assisi.

Since the Pope has drawn attention to the Church's uninterrupted fidelity to the prayer of the early Church in the framework of the great Jubilee, the whole presentation of the prayer of the Church in the Encyclical is not to be understood in the sense of Tradition but in the context of the Pope's theology of interreligious prayer and the Assisi event:

The Pope has not given his promised and awaited proof for the agreement of his theology of interreligious prayer with the way the Church has prayed from the beginning but only shown the Church's tradition of prayer as it remained up till Vatican II. But this has been done based on his own theology of interreligious prayer and therefore open to an interpretation in the sense of his theology of prayer. Let us give an example. In the passage from the Encyclical the great Jubilee is said to give the Church's prayer of hope its full eschatological breadth and meaning. If we define this prayer thus: "It is a prayer concerned with the salvific destinies toward which the Holy Spirit by his action opens hearts throughout the history of man on earth," then this phrase gets its "full meaning" through the Pope's theory that the Holy Ghost Himself "breathes" prayer in the heart of anyone who prays.

The openness of the prayer of the Church for the prayer of the Holy Ghost in the prayer of all religions is the sufficient theological foundation for the interreligious prayer for peace in Assisi and on Sinai.

When the Pope asks Catholics to "strengthen their commitment to prayer in harmony with the Church and her Magisterium" (*DeV* 65.4), in the context of Assisi this means not to deny the Church's tradition of prayer but only to believe with the Pope in the prayer breathed by the Holy Ghost in all religions.

That is precisely what the principle stated at Assisi requires, that each participant makes his prayer in radical fidelity to his own tradition.⁴³ Therefore Catholics also can happily make their prayer in radical fidelity to their tradition at the interreligious prayer meeting, with of course the new knowledge that the Holy Ghost is breathing prayer in the hearts of all those who are praying.

The description of the Pope's theology of interreligious prayer in the Encyclical is another excellent example of the application of the principle which we have looked at again and again: "integration of the faith."

The Pope first develops his fundamental theory: The Holy Ghost Himself brings about and "breathes" prayer in all those who pray in any religion (*DeV* 65). Thus he gives the framework wherein we are to consider the prayer of the Church. He then impressively describes the prayer of the Church without, however, proving any agreement with his theory in any detail (*DeV* 66). It is enough for him to extend the description of the prayer of the Church by certain turns of phrase to the prayer of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. In this way the prayer of the Church is "integrated" into the all-embracing view of the Pope's theology of interreligious prayer. This actually means, however, a profound change of meaning for the uniqueness of the prayer of the Church since the first day of Pentecost.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

The Pope ends his Encyclical with a resumé of the main ideas.

He begins with the fundamental thesis of the presence and action of the Holy Ghost in the heart of all men:

We wish to bring to a close these considerations in the heart of the Church and in the heart of man. The way of the Church passes through the heart of man, because here is the hidden place of the salvific encounter with the Holy Spirit, with the hidden God, and precisely here the Holy Spirit becomes "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (cf. Jn. 4:14). He comes here as the Spirit of truth and as the Paraclete, as he was promised by Christ. From here he acts as Counselor, Intercessor, Advocate, especially when man, when humanity find themselves before the judgment of condemnation by that "accuser" about whom the Book of Revelation says that "he accuses them day and night before our God" (cf. Apoc. 12:10). "The Holy Spirit does not cease to be the guardian of hope in the human heart: the hope of all human creatures, and especially of those who "have the first fruits of the Spirit" and "wait for the redemption of their bodies" (Rom. 8:23). (*DeV* 67.1)

If the Holy Ghost is the source of eternal life in the heart of all men (cf. *DeV* 67.2) and if from there He, as the Paraclete of humanity, enters into the process of judgment in which man stands before the accuser's "sentence of damnation," there can be no damnation for anyone. Rather, in the heart of all men the Holy Ghost is the continual "Guardian of hope" that there is no damnation. This hope is the hope of a Hans Urs von Balthasar! Who is there who would not have the hope that there is no damnation? But Christ took neither

judgment nor damnation out of His good news. May the Pope do it?

In the quoted passage from the Encyclical it stresses that it is talking about a hope which the Holy Ghost keeps in the hearts of all human creatures but especially a hope of Christians (cf. Rom. 8:23) who "have the first fruits of the Spirit." There is, therefore, only a difference of degree between the "special" hope of Christians and the hope of the rest of humanity. According to this, it is the Church's job to announce her hope to all men.¹

The passage from the Apocalypse of St. John which is adduced to back up the reference to the "accuser" in the judgment (Apoc. 12:10) is given an interpretation in the Encyclical which has nothing to do with the actual sense in Scripture. The New Testament knows no inalienable presence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all men. There is, therefore, no Paraclete in St. John who "from here," *i.e.*, from the hearts of men, nullifies the Accuser's sentence of damnation. There is anyway in any trial *per se* no sentence of damnation from an "accuser" at all, even if this Satan is personal. An accuser simply accuses, he does not pass judgment. The judgment is the business of the Judge and in this case that is God. There is also in St. John no Paraclete who was sent into the hearts of all men but only into the hearts of the disciples who believe in Christ.

The Pope next comes back to the relationship between the Holy Ghost and the Redeemer Jesus Christ, which in the sense of the Pope's Photian concept of the Trinity is likewise a main theme in the Encyclical:

The Holy Spirit, in his mysterious bond of divine communion with the Redeemer of man, is the one who brings

¹ Cf. Dörmann, *Theological Journey*, vols. I-II/1.

about the continuity of his work: he takes from Christ and transmits to all, unceasingly entering into the history of the world through the heart of man. Here he becomes—as the liturgical Sequence of the Solemnity of Pentecost proclaims—the true “father of the poor, giver of gifts, light of hearts”; he becomes the “sweet guest of the soul,” whom the Church unceasingly greets on the threshold of the inmost sanctuary of every human being. For he brings “rest and relief” in the midst of toil, in the midst of the work of human hands and minds; he brings “rest” and “ease” in the midst of the heat of the day, in the midst of the anxieties, struggles and perils of every age; he brings “consolation,” when the human heart grieves and is tempted to despair. (*DeV* 67.2)

The passage repeats ideas about the relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Redeemer Jesus Christ which go through the whole of the Encyclical but here the aspect of universal salvation is emphasised:

In the Final discourse in St. John the Holy Ghost continues the work of the Redeemer, but in the quoted passage from the Encyclical this happens in another way: The Holy Ghost “takes from Christ and transmits to all(!), unceasingly entering into the history of the world through the heart of man.” Thus He becomes “the sweet guest of the soul” whom the Church unceasingly greets on the threshold of the inmost sanctuary of every (!) human being. He thus brings “consolation” and “relief” into the hearts of all men.

The Pope sees in this universal action of the Holy Ghost the Encyclical’s other main ideas realised “The Holy Ghost convinces the world concerning sin in order to save it.” He backs up this theory with quotations from the sequence from Pentecost:

And therefore the same Sequence exclaims: “without your aid nothing is in man, nothing is without fault.” For only the Holy Spirit “convinces concerning sin,” concerning

evil, in order to restore what is good in man and in the world: in order to “renew the face of the earth.” Therefore, he purifies from everything that “disfigures” man, from “what is unclean”; he heals even the deepest wounds of human existence; he changes the interior dryness of souls, transforming them into the fertile fields of grace and holiness. What is “hard he softens,” what is “frozen he warms,” what is “wayward he sets anew” on the paths of salvation. (Sequence from Pentecost, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*). (*DeV* 67.3)

What the Church in the Sequence from Pentecost says about the working of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of her children is here extended to all men, to the “human world” in general.

In this universal sense the Pope formulates from the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* a creed and a prayer to the Holy Ghost:

Praying thus, the Church unceasingly professes her faith that there exists in our created world a Spirit who is an uncreated gift. He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son: like the Father and the Son he is uncreated, without limit, eternal, omnipotent, God, Lord (cf. *Quicumque vult* Dz. 75). This Spirit of God “fills the universe,” and all that is created recognises in him the source of its own identity, finds in him its own transcendent expression, turns to him and awaits him, invokes him with its own being. Man turns to him, as to the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth and of love, man who lives by truth and by love, and who without the source of truth and of love cannot live. To him turns the Church, which is the heart of humanity, to implore for all and dispense to all those gifts of the love which through him “has been poured into our hearts” (cf. Rom. 5:5). To him turns the Church, along the intricate paths of man’s pilgrimage on earth: she implores, she unceasingly implores uprightness of human acts, as the Spirit’s work; she implores the joy and consolation that only he, the true Counselor, can bring by coming down into people’s inmost hearts; the Church im-

plores the grace of the virtues that merit heavenly glory, implores eternal salvation, in the full communication of the divine life, to which the Father has eternally "predestined" human beings, created through love in the image and likeness of the Most Holy Trinity. (*DeV* 67.4)

The confession of the divinity of the Holy Ghost who is "the Spirit of the Father and of the Son" this time reflects the Roman *Filioque*. As has already been said, both the Eastern and the Western concepts of the Trinity are present in the Encyclical.

If the Church is the "heart of humanity" then this needs also a body of humanity, so the invisible Church includes the whole of humanity. It is knowing and being conscious of this that the Church asks for the gifts of the Holy Ghost in order to distribute them to "everyone." It is also the Church who knows about the indestructible image and likeness of God in man since the Creation, and because of this, the predestination of all men to eternal salvation. That is why she asks only for the "full" realisation of the happiness hidden in man and the "full" participation in the divine life.

Why is the prayer that the faith necessary for salvation should be given to non-Christian mankind missing from the list of the Church's prayers, since it is faith which the Church, *natura sua* missionary, was sent to preach and require (*Ad Gentes* 2.1)?

The statement: the Church is the "heart of humanity" is made more clear in the following passage:

The Church with her heart which embraces all human hearts implores from the Holy Spirit that happiness which only in God has its complete realisation: the joy "that no one will be able to take away" (cf. Jn. 16:22), the joy which is the fruit of love, and therefore of God who is love; she implores "the righteousness, the peace and the joy of the Holy Spirit"

in which, in the words of St. Paul, consists the Kingdom of God (cf. Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22). (*DeV* 67.5)

If the heart of the Church “embraces...all human hearts” in which of course the Holy Ghost dwells, then the whole of humanity makes up the invisible Church in the Holy Ghost.

With an eye on the great Jubilee, the Encyclical ends with the vision of a “civilisation of love” through the action of the Holy Ghost:

Peace too is the fruit of love: that interior peace, which weary man seeks in his inmost being; that peace besought by humanity, the human family, peoples, nations, continents, anxiously hoping to obtain it in the prospect of the transition from the second to the third Christian Millennium. Since the way of peace passes in the last analysis through love and seeks to create the civilisation of love, the Church fixes her eyes on him who is the love of the Father and the Son, and in spite of increasing dangers she does not cease to trust, she does not cease to invoke and to serve the peace of man on earth. Her trust is based on him who, being the Spirit-love, is also the Spirit of peace and does not cease to be present in our human world, on the horizon of minds and hearts, in order to “fill the universe” with love and peace. (*DeV* 67.6)

According to this, the action of the Holy Ghost who dwells as the spirit of love in mankind is aimed at forming a “civilisation of love” and a kingdom of peace “in the human world.”

But with the whole of the New Testament and the Tradition of the Church it must be said: The way to peace is via the faith in Jesus Christ which has for its aim to create the kingdom of God, the kingdom of love, of peace and justice in and through the Church. A civilisation of love in the human world which is not based on faith in Christ is a human utopia

and for the believing Christian not even a particularly nice one.

In the Encyclical, however, there is no mention of faith necessary for salvation as a presupposition and condition for the coming of the Holy Ghost into the heart of man nor of the Biblical distinction of faith in mankind. The Encyclical has given the faith itself a whole new and more "universal" character and content.

The Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* is after *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia* the third milestone on the way to the interreligious prayer for peace at Assisi to which the Pope has already invited all religions so that they, in "radical fidelity to their religious traditions," can ask their gods for the gift of peace.² Assisi was a watershed. From there the road goes consistently on via annual follow-up meetings to Jerusalem and Sinai in the jubilee year 2000. The Pope laid the theological foundations for it with his Trinitarian Trilogy.

The Encyclical ends with an ecumenical prayer of the Pope to the Holy Ghost and with the request for blessings and grace for all men:

Before him I kneel at the end of these considerations, and implore him, as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, to grant to all of us the blessing and grace which I desire to pass on, in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, to the sons and daughters of the Church and to the whole human family. (*DeV* 67.7)

² Dörmann, [*The One Truth and Many Religions*], pp. 144-149.