

## Determining the Council's Agenda

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Soon after Pope John announced that the Council would begin in October 1962, the widespread complaints about the disorganized character of the preparations, confirmed by the haphazard sequence in which texts were being brought before the Central Preparatory Commission [CPC], became fears about the Council itself and particularly that it would not correspond to the intentions of the Pope. Suenens says that he raised the issue with Pope John as early in March 1962, when he complained about the number and disorganized and often trivial character of the texts that were coming before the CPC. In response to encouragement by the Pope, Suenens drafted a text that criticized the preparatory texts, 80% of which he said were not proper matter for a Council, and proposed the establishment of a special commission--"a sort of brain trust"--to prepare a conciliar agenda that would be limited to major and vital questions that concern the whole Church and that embody the desired pastoral renewal. Other topics would be left to the reform of Canon Law or to post-conciliar commissions. According to Suenens, the Pope approved his note and asked him to develop it further and to solicit the opinions of other important Cardinals.<sup>1</sup>

While Suenens worked privately on a fuller statement of a coherent program for the Council, other members brought the issue out into the open at the May meeting of the CPC. During a discussion of the schema *De animarum cura* prepared by the commission on bishops and governance, Frings twice objected to the number and relatively minor character of many of the texts being brought to the CPC. He thought it unlikely that bishops would be able to form a judgment on all these things in the few weeks or months they would have to study them.<sup>2</sup> Felici echoed Frings' remarks, warning that the Council should not become "an encyclopedia of sacred matters rather than, as it should be, the source and origin of basic constitutions and decrees."<sup>3</sup>

Frings' remarks were welcomed by Archbishop Hurley, who had long been frustrated both by the methods employed in the CPC discussions and by the scattered quality of the materials it had to review.<sup>4</sup> On 18 April he had written to Suenens, asking him to intervene with the Pope or to encourage a group of Cardinals to do so and enclosing a copy of a draft he had himself written: "De praeparatione Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II". Hurley feared that if the Council were to lose itself in the many and very particular questions found in the prepared texts, it would never speak about the basic principles of the renewal and adaptation of Church life that the Pope

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<sup>1</sup> See Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," 88-105; idem, *Souvenirs et espérances* (Paris 1991) 65-80. Suenens expressed similar ideas at the 28 March Central Commission discussion of the schema *De regimine missionum*, where he also made use of the distinction between the *Ecclesia ad intra* and the *Ecclesia ad extra*; ADP II/3 183.

<sup>2</sup> "Either they will deliver themselves over to the bishops or consultors who have studied the materials or they will refrain from judgment or they will cover their eyes and approve everything. Such behavior is not to be hoped for and will greatly detract from the honor and dignity of the ecumenical council;" ADP II/3 745-46; see also 713, where he feared that Vatican II's documents would prove longer than those of all previous Councils.

<sup>3</sup> ADP II/3 719; see also 758.

<sup>4</sup> The following paragraphs are based upon materials Archbishop Hurley kindly gave to me.

desired. But he then made a proposal that would have altered the structure of the preparation: the immediate appointment of a sub-commission to reduce the mass of materials, retaining only what was worthy of a Council, with the material retained being ordered in such a way as to move from basic principles to general applications, leaving specific questions to post-conciliar commissions or to the episcopal conferences. This might require that the date of the Council be postponed; but if this were not possible, at least only the basic principles of Church renewal should be taken up in the first session, with other questions deferred until later sessions. On 3 May Suenens told Hurley that while he did not think he should make such a proposal in the CPC itself, he would be willing to speak to the Pope privately.<sup>5</sup>

After Frings' remarks on 4 May, Hurley brought the German Cardinal a copy of the draft he had prepared. That evening Frings telephoned Hurley to say that he intended at the next morning's session to offer Hurley's proposal of a special subcommission to take charge of the preparation. Hurley also left a copy of his text with König, who promised to support Frings' proposal.

On 5 May Frings proposed at the CPC meeting that the Pope appoint a new subcommission which would have greater authority over the schemata being prepared and also enjoy a "a power of initiative in the name and by the mandate of this Commission." The role of this subcommission would be (1) to prepare an introductory constitution in which the purpose of the Council would be clearly stated: the renewal of religious life and the adaptation of the Church's apostolic activity to the modern world; (2) to combine and simplify the texts that deal with the same material; (3) to eliminate from the conciliar agenda anything that has to do with the reform of the Code, is merely a matter of organization, or does not fit the purpose of the Council.<sup>6</sup>

In the discussion that followed, Frings' proposal, was seconded by a large number of the most important Cardinals, of varied theological tendencies.<sup>7</sup> Léger flatly stated, "We are not ready to begin the Council next October," and urged that the June meeting of the CPC be devoted to a study of the amended texts to be sent out to the bishops.<sup>8</sup> Card. Roberti said that the subcommission on the conciliar rules, which he chaired, had also considered the question and concluded that it should prepare a new edition of texts, unifying them and removing what is not pertinent material for the Council. This new edition would be sent to the Fathers who would

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<sup>5</sup> Suenens' response may have been prompted by a concern to keep his earlier intervention with the Pope confidential. By the end of April he had already completed a larger draft of his plan for the Council, and in a letter to the Pope on 16 May 1962, he spoke of having discussed it with "various members [presumably of the CPC] consulted on the spot in Rome;" copy in Roncalli papers, ISR.

<sup>6</sup> Frings concluded: "Unless we proceed in this or a similarly energetic way, I am afraid that the Council may be suffocated by the mass of material to be treated, that the discussions in the Council will be infinite or will be suppressed in an undesirable way, that in the end the whole Council will be frustrated after having been begun with such great hope and with such great expectations of Christians or the whole world;" ADP, II/3, 814-15.

<sup>7</sup> Liénart, Valeri, Siri, Quiroga y Palacios, Léger, Giobbe, Godfrey, Confalonieri, Döpfner, Marella, Santos, Rugambwa, Ritter, Di Jorio, Jullien, Larraona, Heard, Browne, Albareda, and many of the other participants supported Frings' proposal. König and Suenens did not comment on it.

<sup>8</sup> ADP II/3 828.

prepare their responses.<sup>9</sup>

Felici felt obliged to reply to the hardly disguised critique of the work he had been directing. He said that Frings' proposal would be brought to the Pope, but also pointed out that the Pope had already assigned many of the tasks envisaged to the subcommissions on amendments and on mixed matters. The former had begun the desired winnowing of texts and six important texts had already been selected and would be sent to the bishops in July. He ended by remarking that the purpose of the Council had already been determined by the Pope; any further specification of it should be the work of the Council. He did not comment on Léger's proposal that the amended texts be brought back to the CPC.<sup>10</sup>

At the beginning of May 1962, then, a majority of the members of the CPC not only were critical of the texts prepared for the Council and fearful that the latter would lose its way in a morass of detail, but also supported the appointment of a special commission to take the matter in hand and to select significant questions on the basis of a coherent and significant plan. This was a last effort on the part of the CPC to assume responsibility for the coordination of the preparatory work. Although Felici shared the concern about the minor character of many of the prepared texts and agreed that the Council's agenda should be limited to statements of principle, he resisted the idea of a new commission and gave the first indication that decisions about the agenda, on which he apparently did not think it necessary to consult the CPC, were already being made. The General Secretary's position remained what it had been: that the coordination could be accomplished at the end of the whole process and by the structures already in place.

At this point, the struggle over the character and agenda of the Council moved behind the scenes. On 16 May, shortly after the meeting of the CPC, Suenens sent Pope John a fuller and more positive plan for the Council. It would bring coherence to the Council by beginning with a text "De Ecclesiae Christi mysterio," followed by a grouping of schemas having to do with the Ecclesia ad intra, considered as evangelizing, teaching, sanctifying, and worshipping, with a final section on the Ecclesia ad extra that would meet the world's expectations of conciliar responses to social questions.<sup>11</sup> Suenens related his project to the official texts already prepared;

These themes allow maximum possible use of the schemata drawn up: a massive and important amount of work has been done which we must take advantage of, while removing its fragmentary and mosaic character, breathing a soul into it. Most of these schemata are lifeless skeletons, due to their juridical, canonical and sometimes repressive approach. We will try in our plan to give them some life and breadth of approach and make them contribute to an overall whole.<sup>12</sup>

In the letter to the Pope accompanying his plan, Suenens' remarks suggest that the Pope was considering accepting the proposal, widely supported in the CPC, of a special commission to

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<sup>9</sup> ADP II/3 831. Hurley took up Roberti's invitation for comments on the rules of the Council and sent him a proposal on 10 May; see ADP IV/1, 87-89.

<sup>10</sup> ADP II/3, 833-34. Hurley said that, while Felici's remarks had partially quieted his concern, still "the work of the Council will lack unity unless there is a clear, enlightening, soul-stirring introductory schema about the Church and its apostolic activity in today's circumstances, which will also illumine all the other schemata;" 836.

<sup>11</sup> See Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," 96-102; on p. 4, he calls this "the final version" of his plan, that is, after discussions with other Cardinals in July.

<sup>12</sup> Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," 96.

draw up the conciliar agenda:

It would also be the role of the working group that your Holiness is thinking of establishing to examine how to insert the correct schemata into the plan proposed--or some other better plan. This same group could, moreover, propose the list of schemata which would be reserved not to the Council itself but to the Commission for the reform of the Code or to some postconciliar commissions, a desire that has been expressed many times in the course of the meetings of the Central Commission.<sup>13</sup>

The Pope told Suenens to meet with some Cardinals, whom he named, to get their views of the proposal.

On 19 May, Cicognani sent a select group of Cardinals a copy of Suenens' plan, which he described as "a draft of the 'pastoral plan' on which Cardinal Suenens, in agreement with other Cardinals, proposes that the forthcoming ecumenical Council proceed, with the use of the schemata already written but to be revised and with a broader vision of the pastoral ministry."<sup>14</sup>

The first documented response of Pope John to these efforts was his direction, 20 May, that Cicognani ensure the bishops that they would have sufficient time to review the texts before the Council opened, since the texts to be discussed at the Council would be sent to them in July and August, and not in September.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps in accord with this papal desire, on 27 May Felici wrote a memorandum in which he responded to the recommendations of the CPC that the many schemata be reduced in number and that only the more important and pressing topics be submitted to the Council. Felici told the Pope that the material could be reduced to twenty basic texts, seven of them theological and thirteen pastoral. Of these twenty texts, six had already been completely amended and were now being printed so that, with the Pope's approval, they could be sent to the bishops in July: De fontibus Revelationis, De deposito Fidei pure custodiendo, De ordine morali, De castitate, virginitate, matrimonio, familia, De sacra Liturgia, De instrumentis communicationis socialis. The subcommissions on mixed matters and on amendments were diligently at work,<sup>16</sup> Felici added, and it was hoped that the other schemata could be printed and sent out in the following months.<sup>17</sup>

It seems likely that these were the six texts to which Felici referred in his remarks to the CPC on 5 May; and these would in fact be approved by the Pope in July for transmission to the

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<sup>13</sup> Suenens to Pope John, 16 May 1962; Suenens urged that this group not be more than four or five in number and proposed the names of Larrain, Hurley, Morcillo, and Seper.

<sup>14</sup> Cicognani's note is found in the Roncalli papers, ISR. To which Cardinals he sent Suenens' plan is not now known, but Liénart seems to have been among them; see his enthusiastic letter to Suenens, 14 June 1962, in Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," 94-95.

<sup>15</sup> See Lettere, 535-36; Capovilla supplies only the information that the Pope wrote this note on the back of a page that summarized a conversation between Dell'Acqua and Msgr. Gouet, secretary of the French episcopal conference.

<sup>16</sup> While the latter subcommission was already at work, the subcommission on mixed matters did not hold its first meeting until 15 June; see L. Governatori in Le Concile Vatican II, 88. In fact, the subcommission would meet only twice before the Council opened and twice more during its first session. The meagre result of its work, not completed until December 1962, was the gathering of related materials into two schemata: De Episcopis ac de dioceseon regimine and De pastoralis Episcoporum munere deque cura animarum; see Caprile, I/2, 533-35, and Governatori, Le Concile Vatican II, 87-89.

<sup>17</sup> This memorandum can be found in the Roncalli papers at the ISR, Bologna.

bishops.<sup>18</sup> But a few things remain puzzling. When Felici made his remarks to the CPC, of the six texts eventually selected only the schemas De fontibus and De ordine morali had been both discussed at the CPC and reviewed by the subcommission on amendments; the schema De deposito fidei had been discussed at the CPC but the subcommission had only reviewed half of it; the schemas De sacra Liturgia and De instrumentis communicationis socialis had been discussed at the CPC but not yet reviewed by the subcommission; and the schema De castitate... had not yet even been discussed by the CPC. Even by the time Felici wrote his memorandum, 27 May, the schema De castitate had not yet been discussed by the subcommission on amendments.<sup>19</sup>

It was not true, even on 27 May, then, that all of the six schemata which Felici mentioned in his memorandum of that day, had in fact been "already entirely amended." When the initial choice was made, before 5 May, things were in an even more incomplete state. The basic decision about the selection of texts for the Council was made, then, before either the CPC or its subcommission had completed their work. The criteria of this selection, of course, remain quite unclear.

It is tempting to think that all this discussion about the purpose and agenda of the Council lay behind the invitation Pope John extended to the members of the CPC in his final address to them on 20 June:

No more welcome contribution to the success of ecumenical council that is to begin on October 11 could be given than that each Father send in good time to the new General Secretariat or to the Cardinal Secretary of State, along with a personal letter, whatever he believes, given the circumstances, is appropriate to the project. All this will be of help in examining the problems with prudence and in proper light, in avoiding difficulties, and in bringing everything to completion in utter peace.<sup>20</sup>

Was this invitation a response to indications of dissatisfaction and an effort to find out how widespread it was?<sup>21</sup> How much should be read into the specification that these private letters were to be sent either to the Secretariat of State or to a new general secretariat? What were the

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<sup>18</sup> Schemata Constitutionum et Decretorum de quibus disceptabitur in Concilii sessionibus, Series prima (TPV 1962). Included with these texts was the schema De unitate Ecclesiae, which was only discussed by the CPC in mid-June, when the consensus was that it should be integrated with the two other texts on ecumenism in the TC's De Ecclesia and the SCU's De oecumenismo catholico. No such effort was undertaken, and the reason why the OR's text was chosen is unclear.

<sup>19</sup> See the summaries of the work of the CCP and of the subcommission on amendments by Fagiolo, Le Concile Vatican II, 79-85, 89-92. Note also that the schema De unitate Ecclesiae came before the CPC only in mid-June; if and when this text was reviewed by the subcommission is not clear, but if it was so reviewed, it could not have been before 16 July, that is, after it had been submitted to the Pope for his approval.

<sup>20</sup> DMC IV 386; ADP I 262.

<sup>21</sup> A week after the Pope made these remarks, Msgr. Jean Villot, auxiliary of Lyons, recorded his impressions in a letter to Henri Denis, 20 June 1962: "On the other hand, I have the impression that a certain number of bishops who were associated with the preparatory work are dissatisfied with the general orientation of that work, which as a whole seems like a mosaic of disconnected questions. At the instigation of the Cardinals of Malines and of Munich, who spoke about it recently to the pope, there may be in the months that will precede the Council a rather strong current calling this rather narrow 'problematic' into question. Here too the beginning of the Council risks being rather charged;" Villot to Denis, 20 June 1962; Denis papers, Bibliothèque des Facultés Catholiques, Lyon.

"difficulties" that would need to be avoided if the Council were to proceed effectively?

Meanwhile, Suenens was pursuing his consultation with select Cardinals. In early July he met at the Belgian College with Döpfner, Montini, Siri, and Liénart, all of whom, he reported to the Pope on 4 July, warmly supported the idea that the Council have a broad and coherent plan, that the Council begin with doctrinal material in its first session, leaving pastoral topics to subsequent sessions, that the doctrinal section begin with a study "De Ecclesiae Christi mysterio, that the prepared texts not be sent out to the bishops pell-mell, and that Suenens should elaborate his plan to show how the prepared texts could be inserted within its general framework. With this letter Suenens enclosed a copy of this longer plan.<sup>22</sup>

Only days afterward, however, on 10 July, Felici sent Pope John the seven schemata that he proposed should form the first volume of documents for conciliar consideration. In the letter to Cicognani with which he sent these texts to the Pope, Felici explained that they had been discussed at the CPC, revised by the subcommission on amendments, and polished by Vatican Latinists. Felici's letter asked only for the Pope's permission to send these texts to the bishops.<sup>23</sup> No explanation appears to have been made as to why, out of all the texts so far discussed and revised, precisely these seven were chosen. If the selection of the first four of the eventual seven schemas could be motivated by a desire to put the chief doctrinal texts (except for the De Ecclesia, which was not yet complete) before the Council first, and if the choice of the text De sacra Liturgia would meet common expectations, what led Felici to choose, among all the texts on pastoral matters, the insignificant text on the communications media and, among the three texts on ecumenism, the OR's text De unitate Ecclesiae?

In an audience with Cicognani on 13 July, Pope John gave his approval that these seven texts be sent out to the conciliar Fathers. Since the permission was granted only three days after the Pope received the texts, one may wonder how carefully he was able to review them. Select marginal notations by the Pope have been cited as indications that he was generally pleased with the texts,<sup>24</sup> but it is not clear when he made these notes, which, it should also be observed, had no effect.<sup>25</sup> It appears that the Pope was presented with something like a fait accompli: could he have rejected these texts at so late a date and still be able to send other texts to the bishops in time for them to review them before the Council opened?

The obscurity that surrounds this crucial decision is only increased by a note made by the Pope's secretary, Capovilla, after a conversation on 6 September 1962. Speaking of the work of the first session, the Pope commented: "At least four schemata: Liturgy, Social Communications, Missions, Clergy."<sup>26</sup> Only the first two of these schemata were included in the volume sent out in

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<sup>22</sup> Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," 96-105.

<sup>23</sup> See V. Fagiolo, "Il cardinale Amleto Cicognani e Mons. Pericle Felici," in *Deuxième Concile du Vatican*, 233-35.

<sup>24</sup> See V. Carbone, "Genesi e criteri della pubblicazione degli atti del Concilio Vaticano II," *Lateranum* 44 (1978) 587-88; Fagiolo, "Il cardinale A. Cicognani," 234.

<sup>25</sup> In an audience on 27 July 1962, the Pope told the director of *La Civiltà Cattolica* of his dissatisfaction with some of the texts, which he was then reviewing and annotating; see Caprile, I/2, 279n. This date is noteworthy, coming two weeks after he had approved the sending of the texts to the bishops.

<sup>26</sup> See Capovilla's comments in *Giovanni Battista Montini Arcivescovo di Milano e il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II: Preparazione e primo periodo* (Brescia 1985) 341.

July; and it is striking that the four doctrinal schemata in that volume are absent from the Pope's list. By this time, of course, the Pope had received many criticisms of the preparatory schemata, particularly those on doctrine, and at least one proposal, from German bishops, that the opening of the Council be postponed because of the contrast between the schemata and the Pope's conciliar vision. Was the Pope's comment a last-minute hypothesis of a way to meet these criticisms?

A last effort to affect the Council's agenda can now be documented from the papers of Cardinal Léger, who had spoken often and critically during the sessions of the CPC and who was a member also of the subcommission on amendments.<sup>27</sup> Inspired in part by an apparently similar effort of Frings,<sup>28</sup> in August 1962 he prepared a twelve-page letter expressing both hopes and fears about the Council and which he hoped to send to the Pope over the signatures of several Cardinals. Léger declared his agreement with the Pope on the necessity of renewal in the Church, which must follow two basic norms: that it be faithful to Christ and the Gospel and that it meet contemporary needs of men. If Church renewal could not mean revolution or rejection of essential elements, neither could it be limited to "some rares and timids accommodations," to a restoration of the past, or to simple suppression of abuses and defence against danger. "The renewal that will make the Church fully faithful to its mission, is, in total fidelity to the Gospel and to the needs of men, 'an ardent and deep renewal of soul,' an adaptation of the Church's magisterium to contemporary needs, a transformation of institutions that will put it in perfect correspondence with the complex realities of life." More particularly, it would be important for the Council to distinguish between the absolute and the relative, the universal and timeless and the particular and time-bound; total fidelity to Christ would have to be accompanied by "a total, comprehensive openness, a deeply generous attitude toward all authentic human values;" and, finally, genuine renewal of the Church must subordinate what is juridical to the demands of charity and to pastoral exigencies.

Léger then used these criteria to evaluate the preparatory work as it had passed before the CPC. Among them he had words of praise for the schemas on the liturgy, on the apostolate of the laity, on religious freedom (the text of the SCU), on relations between bishops and the Roman Curia. But he was apprehensive about several other texts which he found lacking in "the deep orientation which Your Holiness himself has wanted to give to the coming Council: the renewal of doctrine and institutions by a return to the most authentic sources and in a welcoming attention

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<sup>27</sup> See Gilles Routhier, "Les réactions du cardinal Léger à la préparation de Vatican II," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France* 80 (1994) 281-302.

<sup>28</sup> In a letter to Frings, 17 Aug 1962, Léger speaks of having received from the German Cardinal some days earlier "a very suggestive text designed to illumine the Holy Father and the members of the Central Commission on the aims of the Council and on the matters that ought to be treated there." This would seem to refer to a text Frings had brought to the last meeting of the CCP. Among Léger's papers is found a six-page typed Latin text on which Léger has written "Ordo du Concile - Frings." It bears the date, added later: 11 October. The first three pages set out an introduction to the entire work of the Council as the response of faith to contemporary conditions: the renewal of the Church's inner life and the adaptation of the apostolate to modern needs. The last pages supply a list of specific topics grouped under six major headings: I. Veritates fundamentales; II. De formatione laboratorum et collaboratorum apostolicorum; III. De ipso apostolatu Ecclesiae; IV. De Ecclesia orante; V. De Ecclesia sanctificante; VI. De caritate et adiutorio sociali. Whether this is the text to which Léger was referring remains to be verified.

to the realities of our times."

Several schemata consider the Church too much as an institution under siege which the Council must defend; they do not see in it enough the radiant depository of the salvation to be shared. In them the Church has the aspect of an institution more juridical than missionary. They don't show the courage to turn frankly to the present world, toward its needs, toward its new and legitimate demands. They seem to believe, instead, that it will be enough to repeat, with more insistence but without deepening the doctrine, formulas which already the world no longer can understand. They seem to believe that the losses of faith, the deterioration of morality, the failures of the apostolate have no other causes than the inattention of men or the malice of the times; they do not ask if the obsolete character of certain forms of the Church's thought and action also play some role in it.

Léger then exemplified these comments by criticisms of the schemas on the religious life, on the Church (except for the chapters on the laity and on authority and obedience in the Church), on the deposit of faith, on the doctrine of St. Thomas, on Church and State, on the social order, on Catholic schools, and on the communications-media.

Léger ended this letter to the Pope with two requests. The first was that only texts which make a real contribution and address the needs of the day be presented to the Council. While some schemata met these criteria, others did not, and Léger thought it unlikely that the Council itself could make the necessary changes. The second request was that the Pope repeat once again to all those involved in the Council "the urgent, overriding need for the Council undertake really and with the courage of fidelity to Christ and to the eager expectation of all men the work of renewal in which the Church will rediscover the purest traits of its youth."

In mid-August Léger sent this text to seven other Cardinals, soliciting their signatures: Frings, Liénart, Döpfner, Montini, Suenens, Alfrink, and König. He received the agreement of all except Montini and Alfrink.<sup>29</sup>

Léger sent his paper, co-signed by Frings, Döpfner and König, to the Pope on 11 September 1962; a week later he sent another copy with Liénart's signature. In the accompanying letters Léger repeated his anxiety and fear of great disappointment if the Council were to proceed as prepared.

On 17 September Cicognani wrote to Léger to inform him that the Pope had received the texts and that he "appreciated your gesture and thanks you greatly for this filial communication." This rather non-committal reply may reflect the fact that it was by now too late to change the agenda set by the transmission of the seven texts to the bishops. By then the Pope had already given his 11 September radio-address in which he adopted some of the language and orientation of Suenens' project in restating his vision of the Council against the larger backdrop of contemporary developments in the world. Léger's initiative may have helped, however, to sustain

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<sup>29</sup> Frings said that he agreed with the general tenor of the paper, if not with every detail. Liénart and Döpfner said they were in full agreement, but the latter was worried that it would have little effect, "given the form of the schemata proposed for the first period of the conciliar sessions." Montini was unable to reply until 19 September, by which time he thought the effort might be "untimely, after the Holy Father's message of September 11." Still he thought Léger's letter contained "so many good things, which could be recalled during the Council." Suenens sent his own signed response directly to the Pope. Alfrink's response is not known.

the Pope's confidence as he prepared his speech for the opening of the Council which would have the character of the appeal Léger desired and would in fact liberate the conciliar Fathers to assume responsibility for their own work, to be critical, now publicly, of much of the preparatory work, and to orient the Council in a direction much closer to the Pope's own vision.