

DRAFT OF A DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT

1. Prologue: The Plan of God the Father.

After the human race had, through the sin of the first parent, Adam, wretchedly fallen from the state of original justice, the eternal Father of the only-begotten Son, in the utterly free and secret plan of his wisdom, determined to redeem it through the death of his incarnate Son and to bring it into his Kingdom.¹ Thus, when the fullness of time had come,² he sent his Son, who, by offering himself through the Holy Spirit as a spotless victim to God,³ would cleanse a people acceptable to himself.⁴ For it pleased the Father that the redeemed, especially in the new and eternal covenant, would not stand before him to be sanctified simply as individuals, unrelated and unconnected, but rather that, called from among the many, they should constitute a new chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the new Israel,⁵ under one Head, Jesus Christ, by whose power all would together be not only redeemed, but, by perpetuating the saving work of Christ, redeemers.⁶

2. The Son's Fulfilment of the Father's Plan.

When, therefore, the only Son of God, born of a woman, dwelt among us,⁷ constituted as the new Adam, head of the whole human race, he obeyed his Father's will.⁸ He discharged for us the tasks of Teacher,⁹ Priest,¹⁰ and King,¹¹ and in many ways he sanctifies and wisely governs the People of God¹² towards salvation, not only by himself but also by overseers chosen by himself. For he appointed such overseers among his people and endowed them with the offices of preacher, priest and king, to be exercised under Peter, saying, "All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Mt 28:18-20); and, "Going into the whole world, preach the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:15-16).

This new people of God, therefore, which the Apostle Paul called the Israel of God,¹³ does not advance like a disorderly mob, but like a disciplined army nourished by spiritual food and drinking from the spiritual rock that follows them;¹⁴ victoriously opposing the gates of hell¹⁵ and the snares of the devil, one and unique in spirit and in love, it will endure till the end of the world in unity of faith, in the communion of the sacraments, and in apostolicity of government.

3. The Nature of the Israel of God as Expressed in the Word "Church" and in Various Figures.

Just as Moses called the Israel according to the flesh,¹⁶ which wandered about in the desert, "the Church of God",¹⁷ so also did Christ proclaim the Israel of God, which marches forward in this world in pursuit of the lasting city that is to come,¹⁸ to be "the Church;" indeed he

declared it to be his Church,¹⁹ not only because he acquired her by his own blood,²⁰ but also because he carefully endowed her with the means necessary for its purpose and built her upon Peter²¹ and upon his successors, in whom Peter would live on with his perpetual authority.

In order more clearly and more definitely to reveal the character and nature of his Church, Christ, either by himself or through the Apostles, represented her in various images and called her by various names by which her social and mystical aspects are particularly described. Thus what is proclaimed to be God's kingdom,²² house,²³ and temple²⁴ is also declared to be a flock or a sheepfold,²⁵ the Bride of Christ,²⁶ the pillar and ground of truth.²⁷

4. The Figure of the Body of Christ.

But of all the figures, because it more clearly expresses the social element along with the mystical, the principal one is the figure of the body which, at Christ's inspiration,²⁸ Paul used: "And he is the Head of the Body of the Church" (Col 1:18); "which is his Body and the fulness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23). For all those who have entered the Church through baptism²⁹ and have put on Christ in the communion of the saints,³⁰ since they share in the one eucharistic bread, are made perfect³¹ in the unity of the one Body: "Because there is one bread, we, though many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

5. Explanation of the Figure of the Body.

By the very fact that she is a body, the Church is seen by the eyes, something suggested by other images as well. It is, moreover, a structure of many members, not, of course, all equal,³² since some members are subordinate to others and since there are in the Church clergy and laity, superiors and subjects, teachers and pupils, and different states too, over all of which Christ the Head is superior in position, perfection and power.

In this structured body of members, besides the connection deriving from social, juridical, and ministerial bonds, there is also another connection that is completed by the growth,³³ the acts,³⁴ and sufferings³⁵ of the members. Indeed, it is that very conformity of nature and of life which the Lord illustrated when he compared himself to a vine and us to branches: "I am the vine and you the branches; whoever remains in me and I in him bears fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

As Christ is the Body's Head, so also the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the Head and in the members,³⁶ is its Soul. Since the Spirit is one, he establishes and maintains the whole Body in unity;³⁷ and to all the members, in accordance with the measure of Christ's giving,³⁸ he distributes grace and gifts and confers charisms.³⁹ For this reason, the Church is said to be in Christ Jesus one person, a mystical person, of course: "For you are all one [person] in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

In the body, however, not all members flourish in holiness, for within it there are sick members, who, though without grace and charity, are joined to Christ the Head at least by the virtue of faith.⁴⁰ The sins of such members do indeed offend the Church but they do no injury to her essential holiness; for the Church is holy principally because, as Christ's Bride, since she has been established in holiness,⁴¹ she gives birth unto holiness to her members, she is never without members outstanding in holiness,⁴² and, furthermore, she not only curbs the sins of her members but also by her ministry restores her sick members to their original and, at times, to a richer holiness. For the Church is a devoted Mother, who not only conceives her members by the

preaching of the word and gives them birth in baptism, but also feeds them with the food of saving truth and of the sacraments and every day unites them more closely to the divine life.

6. The Church Society is the Mystical Body of Christ.

Since the Holy Spirit bestows on the Church, in the various offices and ministries, many charisms corresponding to her social character and to her divine mission, so that those who are endowed with them may, as God's helpers,⁴³ work along with him to build up the Body of Christ,⁴⁴ it is false to say that the hierarchical Church, the Church of law, really differs from the charismatic Church, or the so-called Church of love. For that reason, the Church society and the Mystical Body of Christ are not two realities, but only one, which presents both a human and a divine aspect, and which, therefore, by no slight analogy, is compared to the mystery of the Incarnate Word.⁴⁵

For as in the Incarnate Word the human nature served as a living instrument of his divine nature for our and the whole world's salvation, and continues so to serve in heaven, so the Church society is equipped with the charisms of preacher, priest and king so that she might serve the Spirit of Christ in the building up of Christ's Body; for these charisms, no less than others given by the Spirit, are to be exercised as a service and ministry of truth and love, so that the salvation gained by Christ as well as all the benefits that derive from it might be spread to all men and to all ages.⁴⁶

7. The Catholic Roman Church is the Mystical Body of Christ.

The holy Synod teaches and solemnly professes, therefore, that there is only a single true Church of Jesus Christ, that Church which in the Creed we proclaim to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic,⁴⁷ the Church which the Savior acquired for himself on the cross⁴⁸ and joined to himself as body to head and as bride to bridegroom, the Church which, after his resurrection, he handed over to be governed to St. Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs.⁴⁹ Therefore, only the Catholic Roman is rightly called the Church.⁵⁰

NOTES

1. See Col 1:13.
2. See Gal 4:4.
3. See Hb 9:14.
4. See Tit 2:14.
5. See 1 Pet 2:9 and Gal 6:16.
6. See Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7,2; Pius XII, Enc. *Mystici Corporis*, AAS, 35 (1943), 221.
7. See Gal 4:4.

8. See Phil 2:8.

9. See Mt 23:8-10; Jn 13:13-14.

10. See Hb 4:14; 5:10; 9:11-14.

11. See Lk 23:3; Jn 18:37. On the threefold messianic role, see also Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, I,3 (PG 20, 68-73), and his *Demonstr. Evang.*, IV,15 (PG 22, 290-91); John Chrysostom, *In 2 Cor.*, Hom. 3,5 (PG 61, 411); *Fastid. Britt. De Vita Christi*, 1 (PL 50, 384); St. Thomas, *Ad Rom.*, Lect I, and *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 31, a. 2; *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, I, ch. 3, 7. To these can be added many pontifical documents of Leo XIII, St. Pius X, and Pius XII.

12. See 1 Pet 2:10.

13. See Gal 6:6.

14. See 1 Cor 10:3.

15. See Mt 16:18 and Eph 6:11.

16. See 1 Cor 10:18.

17. See Nb 20:4; Deut 23:2.

18. See Hb 13:14.

19. See Mt 16:18.

20. See Acts 20:28.

21. See Mt 16:18.

22. See Mt 16:19; see Leo XIII, Enc. *Satis cognitum*, ASS, 28 (1895-96), 724.

23. See 1 Tim 3:15; Mt. 16:18; see Leo XIII, l.c.

24. See 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21.

25. See Jn 10:16; 21:15-17; 1 Pt 5:2-3; Lk 12:32; Mt 26:31; see Leo XIII, l.c.

26. See Rev 21:9; 22:17; Eph 5:22-32. The preaching of Christ is described as spousal in Mt 9:15; Mk 2:19; Lk 5:34; Jn 3:29.

27. See 1 Tm 3:15.

28. See Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14; see Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, l.c., p. 193.

29. See Jn 3:5.

30. See Gal 3:27.
31. See Jn 17:23.
32. See Rm 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; Eph 4:11-16. see Leo XIII, Enc. *Sapientiae christianae*, ASS, 22 (1889-90), 392, and *Satis cognitum*, l.c., pp. 710 and 724f.; Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*, l.c., pp. 199-200.
33. See Eph 4:11-14.
34. See 1 Cor 12:18-30.
35. See 1 Cor 12:26, collated with Col 1:24; 2 Tm 2:10.
36. See Rm 8:11.
37. Leo XIII, Enc. *Divinum illud*, ASS, 29 (1896-97), 650; Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, l.c., pp. 219-20; St. Thomas, *In Col.* I, lect. 5: "As a body is constituted as one reality by the unity of its soul, so is the Church by the unity of the Spirit."
38. See Eph 4:7.
39. See 1 Cor 12:4-11, collated with 1 Cor 12:28 and Eph 4:11-12.
40. See the Council of Trent, Session VI, *De iustificatione*, ch. 15 and canon. 28 (Dz. 808 and 838); Pius V, *Errores Baii*, prop. 63-64 (Dz. 1063-64); Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Eph.*, ch. 6, hom. 22,4: "For many are united to Christ but without loving him" (PG 62, 161); Augustine, *Sermo* 349,2 (PL 39, 1530), teaches that even in the Body of Christ the love of a prostitute leads to hell; in his *De abstinentia*, ch. II, he compares the Church with the flesh lusting against the spirit, insofar as, because of the sickness in its members, it does not yet have peace: "Thus, why may we not admit that in spiritual people the Church is subject to Christ, but in those of the flesh it still lusts against Christ?... These lusts Christ heals in those who are his own, but he loves them in no one. Thus as long as the Church also has such members, it is not yet without spot or wrinkle" (PL 40, 366).
41. See Eph 5:26-27.
42. See Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, l.c., p. 201.
43. See 1 Cor 3:9.
44. See Eph 4:11-16.
45. See Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, l.c., p. 712.
46. See Pius IX, Epist. *La Chiesa di Dio*, ASS, 6 (1870), 267; Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, l.c., p. 710; Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, l.c., p. 206-7; St. Thomas, *In Eph.* 4, lect. 4; *Quodlib.* VII, q. 6, a. 2, ad 5.

47. See *Symbolum Apostolicum* (Dz. 6-9), *Symbolum Nic.-Const.* (Dz. 86), collated with *Prof. Fidei Trid.* (Dz. 994 and 999).

48. See 1 Pt 2:9; Acts 20:28; Eph 2:15-16; and the hymn for Vespers on the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart.

49. On the identity of the Catholic Church and the Mystical Body, see Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, l.c., p. 221ff; *Humani generis*, *AAS*, 42 (1950), 571. Pius XII is following in the footsteps of many of his predecessors.

50. The Church is Catholic Roman: see *Prof. Fidei Trid.* (Dz. 999); Vatican Council I, *De fide cath.* (Dz. 1782). The First Vatican Council deliberately said "Catholic apostolic Roman" and not "Roman Catholic," because the latter smacks of the doctrine of the three branches.