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THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Let your speech be “Yes, yes: no, no”; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37) • November 2009

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PART 1

ON THE LIVING MAGISTERIUM AND LIVING TRADITION:

Towards a “Thomistic Reception” of Vatican II

A theological Congress, organized in May 2009 in Toulouse, tried to prove that it is possible to understand council Vatican II in a thomistic way.

From May 16-17, 2009, at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, a colloquium organized by the Revue Thomiste was held under the direction of Fr. Serge Thomas Bonino, O.P. The colloquium’s theme was “Vatican II: Rupture or Continuity—the Hermeneutics [that is, interpretations] Face to Face.” Around 100 people, mainly clerics, were in attendance. Fr. Bonino’s invitation already sufficiently explains the thrust of this initiative: “Our colloquium will focus on the ways in which Thomistic theology can contribute to a reception of Vatican II that honors the Council as an act of living Tradition.”

The method for reaching this goal is indicated:

It is a matter of laying stress on both the “memorial” aspect and the “novel” aspect of this major teaching of the Magisterium of the 20th century at one and the same time. This is the exigency Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in his address to the Roman Curia of December 22, 2005 when he proposed the distinction between the “hermeneutic of continuity” and the “hermeneutic of rupture.”

Starting with the fact that Pope Benedict XVI’s December 2005 address affirms the continuity of the teachings of Vatican II with the living Tradition of the Church, the colloquium’s organizers intended to consider the way in which Thomistic theology could prove this continuity in the framework of the hermeneutic proposed by Benedict XVI. Moreover, in the Pope’s intentions, this hermeneutic should prevail over the progressive extrapolations based on a hermeneutic of rupture, which the Address to the Curia forthrightly denounces. That is why, to return to Fr. Bonino’s proposal, living continuity ought to be defined as the synthesis of these two aspects: the memorial and the novel; or, to employ Benedict XVI’s expressions, far from any rupture, it should correspond to a synthesis of fidelity and dynamism. Theology’s task would be to elaborate the speculative elements of this synthesis, and the colloquium of Toulouse was meant to establish the outline of a Thomistic contribution to the Council’s hermeneutic.

Can such a proposition be warranted? To answer this question, we shall first examine whether Vatican II can be presented as “a major teaching of the Magisterium of the 20th century.” To do so, we shall scrutinize the magisterial worth of this Council (*Part 1*). Then we shall examine the precise meaning of the December 22, 2005 address. Therein we shall determine how Pope Benedict XVI conceives of the hermeneutic of the Council (*Part 2*). This will afford us an opportunity to come back to the definition of Tradition, which is the fundamental point upon which depends the solution of the grave difficulties raised on the occasion of the last Council.

PART 1:

The Magisterial Value of Vatican II

A. Some Elementary Distinctions

In the etymological sense of the word, magisterium is a function, the purpose of which

is teaching.¹ A distinction has to be made in using the word as it presents two analogous meanings: “scientific magisterium” and “ecclesiastical magisterium,” which is a particular instance of the attestative magisterium. In the case of ecclesiastical magisterium, one is dealing with the proposition of the object of faith, which is essentially obscure. In the case of scientific magisterium, one is dealing with a scientific demonstration, which results in the possession of knowledge or facts. The ecclesiastical magisterium is not a scientific magisterium because it does not *cause* knowledge. The ecclesiastical magisterium *bears witness*, and so doing it contributes to bringing about faith.

This ecclesiastical magisterium is “the activity of the pope and the bishops who, in virtue of the mission received from Jesus Christ, authoritatively propose the supernatural mysteries of the Faith and the natural truths revealed by Christ in the name of Jesus Christ in order to conserve the unity of faith in the Church and, so doing, to lead the faithful to eternal salvation.” In this definition, we can distinguish four distinct elements. *First*, the material cause, or the subject exercising the magisterium: The magisterium is the activity of the pope and the bishops. *Second*, the efficient cause, or the agent who institutes the magisterium: The magisterium is an activity that the pope and the bishops exercise in virtue of the mission received from Jesus Christ. *Third*, the formal cause, or the very nature of the magisterium: The magisterium is the act by which the pope and the bishops act as the authorized witnesses of the truths revealed by Jesus Christ and compellingly propose them to the belief of the faithful with the very authority of Jesus Christ. *Fourth*, the final cause: The Magisterium is an activity that the pope and the bishops must exercise in order to conserve the unity of faith in the Church and, so doing, to lead the faithful to eternal salvation.

Distinctions are necessary when using the word “magisterium.” It is of particular interest to us to note that this word can be understood in three senses: *First*, it can designate *the subject* who exercises the magisterium (that is, the pope and the bishops); *second*, it can designate *the act* of the magisterium properly so called (that is, the preaching carried on by word or in writing); *third*, it can designate *the object* of the magisterium (that is, the revealed truth taught during preaching).

B. The Magisterium Understood in the Second Sense: The Act or Exercise of the Power of Magisterium

The act of magisterium consists in making use of Christ’s divine authority to conserve, explain,

or impose on the assent of the faithful the truths divinely revealed by Christ. To accomplish this act it is necessary and sufficient to be in possession of the divine authority of Christ and to intend to use it within the limits granted to it, namely, to propose for belief divinely revealed truths. The first condition (to be in possession of the divine authority of Christ) is fulfilled by the pope, the successor of St. Peter, and by the bishops, successors of the apostles, as well as by all the ministers (priests or deacons) to whom the pope and the bishops can delegate their authority. The second condition (to have the required intention) deserves further explanation.

A fundamental distinction must be made between *two types of intention*. There is, on the one hand, the intention to fulfill an office, or intention pure and simple; on the other hand, there is the intention to fulfill the same office for a praiseworthy or upright motive. The first intention corresponds to what the theologians call the “*finis operis*,” and it is required for the existence pure and simple or for the validity of the act: it is the *objective* intention. The second intention corresponds to the “*finis operantis*,” and it is required for the act to be meritorious: it is *subjective* and *accidental* to the act, even if it can sometimes change the nature of the act. For example, the intention to do what the Church does is required for the validity of a sacrament, while the intention to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls (and not to earn money or men’s esteem) is required for the merit of the minister giving the sacrament.

For validity, some external acts require *the objective intention of the agent understood in the first sense*. This is the case for the sacraments. A sacrament is valid if and only if the minister confecting it (for all the sacraments) or the person receiving it (except for the Eucharist) has the objective intention of doing or of receiving the benefit of the sacrament, the exterior act willed as such by the Church.² The exercise of authority is valid and legitimate if and only if the person exercising it has the objective intention of accomplishing the act required for the common good of society.³ Ordinarily, this intention is presumed. But it can no longer be presumed when proof to the contrary is at hand in the party’s declaration of a different intention.⁴

It is not difficult to understand why this is so. Man always acts as such, that is, as a rational and free agent. He has to perform all his actions with full knowledge of the facts, and willingly. He must therefore have knowledge of the nature of the action and wish to perform it as he conceives it. To say that human authority or a human minister is an intermediary between God and men does not mean that God utilizes this intermediary like a machine, which would always function according to

the same sedate mechanism, regardless of the man called to exercise the authority or the ministry. The instrument God employs is not an inanimate one; on the contrary, it is intelligent and free. Even in the case of mediation *ex opere operato* proper to the exercise of the sacraments, the intention of man is still absolutely required. This is even more so in the case of mediation *ex opere operantis*, proper to the exercise of authority.

If a holder of authority manifests in one way or another that he does not have the intention required for the exercise of authority, the actions he performs pursuant to this habitual intention will not be acts of legitimate authority so long as the required intention has not been clearly manifested. How much more would this be true were the holder of authority to adopt an intention contrary to and incompatible with the required intention⁵; for the exercise of authority to be valid, this contrary intention would have to be retracted. For example, a professor who would indicate his intention to teach a course in modern philosophy based on the principles of the Enlightenment would by the very fact exclude the intention of teaching Thomistic philosophy, since Enlightenment thought and St. Thomas’s are incompatible. None of the professors’ students would be gullible.

In these conditions, it is easy to understand the intention required for the exercise of the magisterium: it is quite simply the intention to make use of the divine authority of Christ to conserve, explain, and propose to the assent of the faithful the truths divinely revealed by Christ.

C. The Magisterium Understood in the Third Sense: The Proper Object of Ecclesiastical Preaching

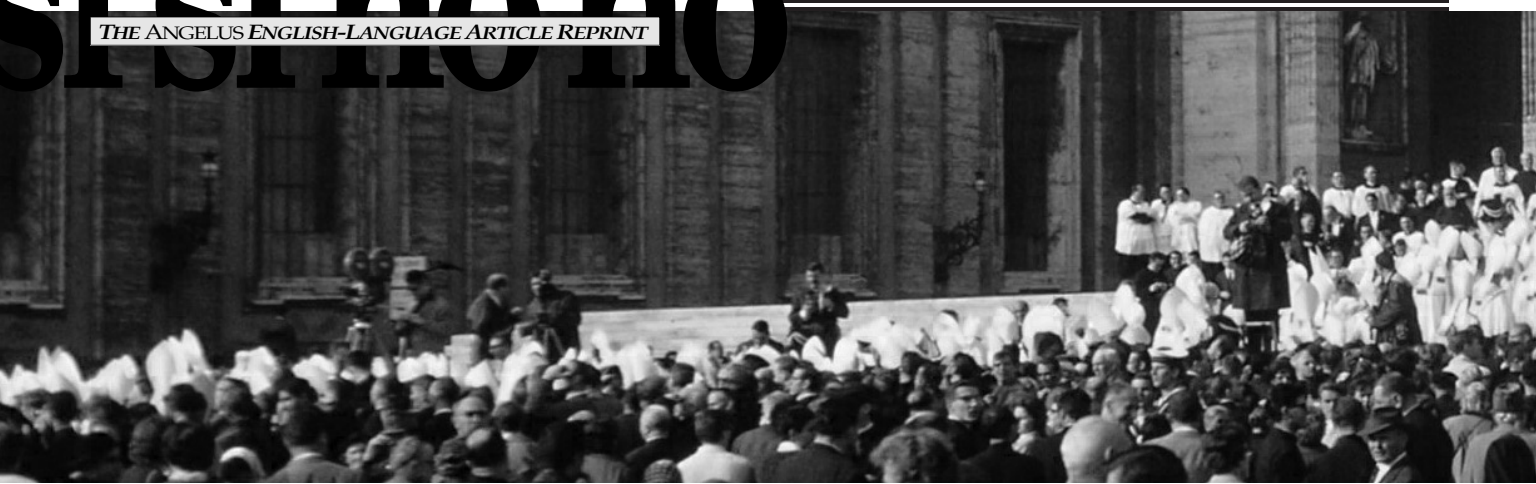
The proper object of the magisterium is the Revelation transmitted by the apostles, that is, the deposit of faith to be sacredly guarded and faithfully explained. The First Vatican Council taught us this on two occasions: first, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* on the Church:

...the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by His revelation they might disclose new doctrine, but that by His help they might guard sacredly the revelation transmitted through the apostles and the deposit of faith, and might faithfully set it forth⁶;

and second, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius* on the Catholic Faith:

...the doctrine of faith which God revealed has not been handed down as a philosophic invention to the human mind

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to be perfected, but has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted.⁷

To designate the proper object of the act of magisterium, Vatican Council I uses two expressions: “the Revelation transmitted through the apostles,” and “the deposit of faith.”

The Revelation transmitted through the apostles is the totality of truths necessary for salvation which were revealed to the apostles by Christ until His Ascension and by the Holy Ghost from Pentecost to the death of the last of the apostles. Revelation was definitively closed with the apostles.⁸ Thus, the role of the magisterium is to guard and transmit it, and not to receive new revelations.

The expression “deposit of faith” is used by St. Paul on four occasions: twice using the same terms and twice in reference to the same idea: in I Tim. 6:20 (“Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called”) and in II Tim. 1:13-14 (“Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me: in faith and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us”). The idea is expressed in II Tim 2:2 (“And the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also”) and in II Tim. 3:14 (“But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and which have been committed to thee. Knowing of whom thou hast learned them”). This expression must be understood metaphorically. A thing received in deposit is another’s property in one’s own keeping that must be returned to its owner substantially intact.

Likewise, the totality of objective Revelation is God’s truth, which has been placed in the magisterium’s keeping and which must be transmitted in its essential integrity. In the two passages in which the expression is used, St. Paul also emphasizes the words (*vocum* and *verborum*) which are the expression required for the substantial

integrity of truth. Neither the sense of the words nor the words themselves should be changed. Dogma being to objective Revelation what words are to truth, the integral transmission of the deposit is equivalent to the transmission of dogma, that is, to the transmission of immutable expressions used to designate truth.

D. One Consequence: Ecclesiastical Magisterium Is a Traditional Magisterium

Ecclesiastical magisterium is by definition a traditional and constant magisterium. In effect, it is a very particular function of teaching, because it has as its object guarding and transmitting without any substantial change⁹ the unalterable deposit of truths revealed by Jesus Christ. This traditional magisterium is distinct from the scientific magisterium, which proceeds by means of experiment, and whose object is the discovery of new truths. The ecclesiastical magisterium does not have as its object the discovery of new truths; it must transmit the definitively revealed truth without any substantial change being possible.

Of this we are absolutely sure. First, because Christ Himself affirmed it in the Gospel. Wishing to guarantee the perpetuity and the diffusion in every place of the Revelation He had come to give to the world, He spoke to the apostles, whom He had established as His vicars on earth to accomplish His work, and told them:

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations....Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Mt. 28:18-20).

It is in this passage that the divine institution of the ecclesiastical magisterium is to be found; and we can see that this magisterium is established by Christ for the faithful transmission of Revelation. Second, the teaching of Vatican Council I explicitly affirms the traditional nature of the Church’s magisterium.



In the Constitution *Dei Filius* on the Catholic Faith, the Council convoked by the authority of Pope Pius IX affirmed:

Understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church *has once declared*; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding [can. 3]. “Therefore...let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding [St. Vincent of Lerins].”¹⁰

Pius IX also declared during the same Council in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (this time on the Church):

[O]ur predecessors always gave tireless attention that the saving doctrine of Christ be spread among all the peoples of the earth, and with equal care they watched that, wherever it was received, it was preserved sound and pure.¹¹

E. The Magisterium of Vatican II: In What Sense?

To apply these distinctions to Vatican II, it may be said that the Council is in any case a work of the magisterium *in the first sense*; that is to say, it represents the hierarchical subject (the pope and bishops) in possession of the divine authority of Christ and capable of making an act of the magisterium should the occasion arise since it was a legitimately convoked council. It may then be said that Vatican II was not wholly and entirely a work of the magisterium *in the third sense*. In effect, the documents of this council are full of ambiguities and equivocations, language that is a far cry from the clear and precise expression of dogma and of truth. They abound in a vague, indeterminate loquacity of expressions purportedly adapted to the modern world. This imprecise language permits every interpretation and allows free rein to error and moral laxity. The very foundations of the Church and of Revelation are seriously shaken. On the other hand, on some points, this Council even proposed

expressions that explicitly contradict the teaching of the previous magisterium (as, for example, No.2 of *Dignitatis Humanae*, which contradicts the teachings of Pius IX in *Quanta Cura*).¹²

Lastly, it may be said that Vatican II was not wholly and entirely a work of the magisterium *in the second sense*, for the same reason, since an act of the ecclesiastical magisterium must be defined in relation to its proper object: without the object there is no corresponding act. One might even say that Vatican II was not a work of the magisterium at all in the second sense since the intention clearly manifested at the Council was not to use the authority of Christ to propose for assent truths revealed by Christ; it was rather to present revealed truth in terms of the categories of modern thought for the sake of being able to carry on a dialogue with the world.¹³ This Council can be considered still less the legitimate source of magisterial Tradition. Those who declare their loyalty to the Council, Pope Benedict XVI prominently among them, conceive this Tradition in a way which would be quite difficult to reconcile with the definition of ecclesiastical magisterium, that is to say, in an evolutionist and relativist sense of a living Tradition.

In short, Vatican II was a Council that did not pass into act. The exercise of its magisterium was paralyzed by prelates already won over to the cause of modernism and by theologians who, like Yves Congar, profited from the circumstance to revise the official schemas prepared under Cardinal Ottaviani's direction and to substitute their own ideas (already condemned by Pius XII in the Encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950).¹⁴ We have, then, rather serious reasons for challenging the magisterial worth of Vatican II if we consider the acts properly so called, taking the word *magisterium* in the second sense.

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ecclesiology] by clarifying the authentic meaning of some ecclesiological expressions used by the magisterium which are open to misunderstanding in the theological debate.”²²

On the second point, Pope Benedict XVI’s preaching, which aims to be in perfect continuity with that of his immediate predecessor, also reasserts, with an equally remarkable constancy, the principle of religious freedom as it was proposed by Vatican II in the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*. For three years, Benedict XVI has expressed himself nearly 80 times on the new social doctrine of the Church as it should be understood since Vatican II. If you go through all 75 issues of the *Documentation Catholique* stretching from April 2005 to November 2008, Nos. 2337 to 2411, one comes up with 87 excerpts that bear on this subject, that is to say, on the place of the Church in the modern world, with the double principle of religious freedom and State secularism.²³

A contradictory explanation

If one considers that the teachings of Vatican II are part of the magisterium properly so-called, even if non-infallible and simply authentic, it seems very difficult to question them. As we have shown, relying on the teaching of popes and the common doctrine of theologians, the non-infallible magisterium is a magisterium properly so-called, perfectly complete in line with the magisterium. In order to be able to consider the simply authentic magisterium as an incomplete or improperly so-called magisterium, it would be necessary to begin by implicitly presupposing that the only genuine magisterium complete and worthy of the name would be the infallible magisterium.²⁴ But this goes against the constant teaching of the Sovereign Pontiffs from Pius IX to Pius XII.²⁵ On the other hand, we can see that the post-conciliar teaching absolutely does not come across as incomplete. The official reminders of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith we referenced above on the new ecclesiology and ecumenism, the ordinary preaching of the Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI on religious freedom and the new social doctrine of the Conciliar Church leave nothing to be desired: we have in them the full and complete expression which purports to be in perfect continuity with the conciliar teachings, on the points which are most patently contrary to Catholic Tradition. If one grants the hypothesis that Vatican II represents the exercise of the “ordinary and manifestly authentic” magisterium,²⁶ it is not clear how it would be possible to rectify or critique the teachings relative to ecumenism, religious liberty, or the status of the non-Christian religions. Far from having to do with the rectification of an unfinished teaching, we have before our eyes, on the contrary,

F. The Advantages of These Distinctions: A Critique Based on Serious Doctrinal Grounds

If we distinguish between the three different senses of the word *magisterium*, we are in a position to make a profound, serious critique that gets to the crux of the problem posed by the last Council. It is not enough simply to say that Vatican II was not an infallible Council or that this Council, which was meant to be “pastoral,” did not proceed according to the solemn manner of a dogmatic magisterium compelling assent to proclaimed dogmas, and that it remained at the simple level of the authentic magisterium. After all, the non-infallible and simply authentic act of the magisterium also obliges in the internal forum; it is compelling. Certainly it does not demand an act of obedience (the famous “internal religious assent”) under pain of grave fault. Pope Pius IX even goes so far as to say that one cannot refuse adherence to the teachings of the simply authentic magisterium “under pain of sin and loss of the Catholic profession.”¹⁵ The theologians¹⁶ are unanimous in saying that these non-infallible teachings of an act of the simply authentic magisterium oblige in conscience and cannot be made the object of positive critique without great reserve.¹⁷

The constancy of conciliar teachings

In point of fact, we see that the teachings of Vatican II, non-infallible as they are, have been imposed in the framework of a new constant tradition that corresponds to the preaching of the post-conciliar magisterium. Two examples bear witness to this, and the value of these two indications is all the more important in that they correspond to the two teachings of the Council most evidently in opposition to the entire Tradition of the Church: the new ecclesiology and ecumenism on the one hand, and the new social doctrine and religious freedom on the other.

On the first point, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has never ceased reaffirming for the last 40 years—with great clarity and remarkable constancy—the meaning of the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* on the Church (No.8) and of the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* on Ecumenism (No.3). On four occasions, in 1973,¹⁸ 1985,¹⁹ 2000,²⁰ and 2007,²¹ the organ of the Holy See intervened in official documents to recall the doctrine that should be accepted in the Church. The last document, dated 2007, even states that “the Congregation wishes to respond to these questions [concerning diverse aspects of

the most faithful echo of the fully expressed conciliar teaching.

The critique's real point of departure

The critique of the teachings of the Council is then possible if and only if it is established that with Vatican II we are not dealing with the exercise of a genuine magisterium (infallible or not). An act of the magisterium is defined by its object, and, as we have explained above, this object is Revelation transmitted through the apostles, that is to say, the deposit of faith to be sacredly guarded and faithfully explained. That is why the ecclesiastical magisterium is traditional and constant. If, as did Vatican II, truths are proposed that are in manifest opposition to truths already taught as revealed by the Church, this proposition cannot be the *exercise* of a magisterium worthy of the name. Undoubtedly we find a magisterium in the first sense of the word at the Council (the subject of the magisterium: the pope and bishops); however, this hierarchy was as if paralyzed by the warped intention that animated it and that led it to wish to set forth the doctrine of

the Church “following the research methods and literary forms of modern thought, adapting them to the needs of a magisterium of an especially pastoral character.”²⁷ The same reasons that render the conciliar magisterium incapable of engaging its infallibility also render it incapable of speaking authoritatively in the *exercise* of an act of the magisterium (in the second sense).

Because they are not the expression of a true act of the magisterium, the teachings of Vatican II may be judged in light of the magisterium of all time, in light of the Church's immutable Tradition. This is, moreover, how Archbishop Lefebvre conceived of the critique of the Council.

To say that we judge the documents of the Council in the light of Tradition means, obviously, that we reject those teachings that are contrary to Tradition, that we interpret ambiguous teachings according to Tradition, and that we accept those that are in conformity with Tradition.²⁸

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¹ Joachim Slavery, S.J., *De Ecclesia*, thesis 12, no.503, in *Sacra Theologiae Summa*, tome I: *Theologia Fundamental*, Library of Christian Authors (Madrid, 1962), pp.654-5.

² For example: 1917 *CJC*, canon 742, §1; canon 752, §3; DS 1017; DS 1262; DS 1312; DS 1315; DS 1352; DS 1611; DS 1617; DS 1685; DS 1998; DS 2328; DS 2382; DS 2536; DS 2835; DS 2838; DS 3100; DS 3104; DS 3126; DS 3318; DS 3874; DS 3928.

³ For example: DS 1309; DS 1406; DS 1407; DS 1434; DS 1519; DS 2399; DS 2509; DS 2729; DS 2750; DS 2885; DS 3007; DS 3120; DS 3202; DS 3400; DS 3428; DS 3440; DS 3448; DS 3518; DS 3793.

⁴ *CJC*, canon 830; canon 1086.

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.104, Art.5.

⁶ Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Chapter 4 in DS 3070 (Dz. 1836).

⁷ Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filii*, Chapter 4 in DS 3020 (Dz. 1800).

⁸ Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Franzelin, *La Tradition (Courier de Rome)*, 2008), Thesis 23, Appendix, No.499, pp.350-1.

⁹ We shall explain in Part 3, §c) to what degree it remains possible for there to be a certain accidental change, an *extrinsic* progress, to the degree that the magisterium expresses the same truth in more explicit terms in order to enable the minds of the faithful to grasp it with greater penetration.

¹⁰ Constitution *Dei Filius*, Chapter 4 in DS 3020.

¹¹ Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, DS 3069 (Dz. 1836).

¹² On this subject, the reader may refer to *Si Si No No* [Italian], July-August 2008.

¹³ John XXIII, Opening Speech, October 11, 1962, and allocution to the Sacred College, December 23, 1962.

¹⁴ Testimony to this is given in the speech Cardinal Ottaviani, president of the Commission *de doctrina fidei et morum*, made during Vatican II on the occasion of the 31st general congregation of December 1, 1962, submitting the schema on the Church to the assembly's examination: “Those who have finalized this schema were careful to impart to it as pastoral and as Biblical a turn as possible, and to make it accessible to the simple faithful by avoiding the use of Scholastic expressions and instead employing a language readily understood by all in our time. I am saying this because I expect to hear the usual jeremiads from the Conciliar Fathers: This isn't ecumenical, it's scholastic! It isn't pastoral, it's negative; and so on. What's more, I have something to confide to you. I think that I and the other reporters will be speaking in vain, for the issue has already been decided. In effect, those who are always telling us, “Withdraw this schema, withdraw it!” are ready for battle. Here is a little revelation: even before the schema was distributed—listen well, listen well—before it was distributed, they were already in the process of drafting another schema to replace it. [*Vobis revelationem quamdam facio: antequam schema istud distribueretur—audite! audite!—antequam distribueretur, jam conficiebatur*

schema substituendum.] That is why, even before having been scrutinized, our text was already judged. There is nothing left to me than to be quiet, since, as Sacred Scripture says, “If someone will not listen to you, don't bother opening your mouth: I have spoken.” (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, vol. I, pars 4 [Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1971], p.121.)

¹⁵ In the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* (December 8, 1864), Pius IX says precisely this: “Neither can We pass over in silence the audacity of those who, not enduring sound doctrine, assert that ‘the judgments and decrees of the Holy See, the object of which is declared to concern the general welfare of the Church, its rights, and its discipline, do not claim acquiescence and obedience, under pain of sin and loss of the Catholic profession, if they do not treat of the dogmas of faith and of morals. How contrary is this doctrine to the Catholic dogma, of the plenary power divinely conferred on the sovereign Pontiff by Our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide, to supervise and to govern the Universal Church, no one can fail to see and understand, clearly and evidently.’” In the Letter *Tuas Libenter* (December 21, 1863) the same Sovereign Pontiff had already expressed the same idea: “But, since it is a matter of that subjection by which in conscience all those Catholics are bound who work in the speculative sciences, in order that they may bring new advantages to the Church by their writings, on that account, then, the men of that same convention should recognize that it is not sufficient for learned Catholics to accept and receive the aforesaid dogmas of the Church, but that it is also necessary to subject themselves to the decisions pertaining to doctrine which are issued by the Pontifical Congregations, and also to those forms of doctrine which are held by the common and constant consent of Catholics as theological truths and conclusions, so certain that opinions opposed to these same forms of doctrine, although they cannot be called heretical, nevertheless deserve some theological censure.” [Dz. 1684] In the *Motu Proprio Praestantia Scripturae* (November 18, 1911), St. Pius X said: “Therefore, we see that it must be declared and ordered as follows: We do now declare and expressly order, that all are bound by the duty of conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Pontifical Commission, both those which have thus far been published and those which will hereafter be proclaimed, just as to the decrees of the Sacred Congregations which pertain to doctrine and have been approved by the Pontiff; and that all who impugn such decisions as these by word or in writing cannot avoid the charge of disobedience, or on this account be free of grave sin; and this besides the scandal by which they offend, and the other matters for which they can be responsible before God,

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especially because of other pronouncements in these matters made rashly and erroneously.” [Dz. 2113]

¹⁶ Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Franzelin, *La Tradition*, No.254-5, pp.166-8; Fr. Dublanchy in *DTC*, s.v. “*Infailibilité du pape*”; Fr. Straub, *De Ecclesia*, No.968ff.; Fr. Reginald-Marie Schultes, *De Ecclesia Catholica (Lethielleux, 1925)* pp.620-2; Lucien Choupin, S.J., *Valeur des décisions doctrinales et disciplinaires du Saint-Siège* (Beauchesne, 1928), p.91.

¹⁷ For example, in the article cited in *DTC*, Fr. Dublanchy makes the following remarks: “Against the moral certitude with which the [simply authentic] pontifical teaching presents itself to the intellect, normally there can only be groundless or imprudent doubts or suspicions, which must be rejected either with the aid of motives of an intellectual nature on which the moral certitude of the teaching rests, or by the influence of the will, which must, out of deference to authority, incline the intellect towards an assent judged practically to be very prudent. If in a particular case doubts which seem well founded arrest the mind and prevent its assent to the proposed teaching, one should, in order to bring an end to this mental state, submit one’s doubts to capable guides to enlighten the mind, or submit them to the authority itself.”

¹⁸ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [hereafter, CDF], the Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, of 24 June 1973, in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church Against Certain Errors of the Present Day (English translation available online at www.saint-mike.org/library/Curia/Congregations/Faith/Mysterium_Ecclesiae.html.)

¹⁹ CDF, Notification on the *Boo Church: Charism and Power—An Essay on Militant Ecclesiology* by Father Leonardo Boff, O.F.M. (Issued March 11, 1985).

²⁰ CDF, the Declaration *Dominus Jesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church (October 1, 2000).

²¹ CDF, Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church (June 29, 2007).

²² CDF *ibid.* (English version online at www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents).

²³ One can see, for example, that during his trip to the United States, the Pope positively encouraged religious pluralism in the schools: “Today, in classrooms throughout the country, young Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and indeed children of all religions sit side-by-side, learning with one another and from one another. This diversity gives rise to new challenges that spark a deeper reflection on the core principles of a democratic society....I therefore invite all religious people to view dialogue not only as a means of enhancing mutual understanding, but also as a way of serving society at large....A concrete example of the contribution religious communities make to civil society is faith-based schools. These institutions enrich children both intellectually and spiritually. Led by their teachers to discover the divinely bestowed dignity of each human being, young people learn to respect the beliefs and practices of others, thus enhancing a nation’s civic life.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Representatives of Other Religions, “Rotunda” Hall of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center of Washington, D.C., Thursday, 17 April 2008.)

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²⁴ In his treatise on Tradition, Cardinal Franzelin proves in detail the existence of the non-infallible magisterium, by explaining the actual thinking of Pope Pius IX and the theologians (Suarez, Gotti, Benedict XIV, Cappellari, the future Gregory XVI, Zaccaria), so as to defend it against the deformations inflicted on it by the Jansenists of Utrecht. They could only conceive of the exercise of the magisterium as infallible. Cf. Franzelin, *La Tradition*, Thesis 12, 3rd corollary to the 7th principle, No. 254-72, pp.166-83.

²⁵ In the Encyclical *Humani Generis* (August 12, 1950), Pius XII said in effect: “And although this sacred Office of Teacher in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded and interpreted, still the duty that is incumbent on the faithful to flee also those errors which more or less approach heresy, and accordingly “to keep also the constitutions and decrees by which such evil opinions are proscribed and forbidden by the Holy See.” [CJC, canon 1324] is sometimes as little known as if it did not exist.”

²⁶ Paul VI, Audience of January 12, 1966, in *D.C.*, No.1466 (March 6, 1966), col.418-20.

²⁷ John XXIII, Speech to the Sacred College, December 23, 1962, in *DC*, No.1391 (January 6, 1963), col.101.

²⁸ Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Conference at Ecône, December 2, 1982, in *Vu de Haut*, No.13 (Fall 2006), p.57.