THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium in the Teaching of Vatican II

A DISSERTATION

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The Second Vatican Council taught in no. 10.4 of its *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (Dei Verbum) (1965) that “Scripture, Tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.” This sentence offers a particularly organic description of the relationship of these three things that reflects a development from selected preconciliar thought.

In his 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*, Pope Pius XII presented Scripture and Tradition as “sources” of revelation entrusted to the Magisterium. He did not explain their relationship or discuss a theology of Tradition. Gerardus Van Noort’s seminary manual *Dogmatic Theology* said the sources of revelation “mix” in the Magisterium which interprets them. The Council asserted a mutual interdependence of the three. It offered a more dynamic notion of tradition, one associated with a view of revelation as God’s self-disclosure. This view resembled those of Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, and Joseph Ratzinger. The Council presented Scripture and Tradition as expressions of one Word, served by the Magisterium.

*Dei Verbum* 10.4’s teaching was incorporated by Pope John Paul II into his encyclical *On the Relationship of Faith and Reason* (Fides et Ratio) (1998) Ch. 5. *Dei Verbum* had identified Scripture and Tradition as the rule of faith in no. 21. John Paul II cites *Dei Verbum* 10.4 in support of a teaching that the unity among them and the Magisterium constitutes the rule of faith. This teaching, along with the encyclical’s recalling of intellectual issues related to belief, a major preconciliar concern, suggests that John Paul II perceived a unity between these points and the Council’s emphasis upon a view of revelation as Divine-self disclosure.

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Dedicated to the memory of my mother, Kathleen S. Kruggel (1930-2011)
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Introduction

How is Divine Revelation communicated? The Second Vatican Council taught that Divine Revelation is communicated through Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium.¹ The Council’s *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)* described the interrelationship of these three means of communication as follows:²

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls (§ 10).

What is this interrelationship of Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium?

This dissertation answers this question by: (1) examining selected writings about Revelation, Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium in the period prior to Vatican II; (2) considering the teaching of *Dei Verbum* in regard to the mediation of Revelation through Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium; (3) examining the post-conciliar teaching of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio, On the Relationship of Faith and Reason* (1998).

The primary focus of this dissertation is Revelation, God’s self-disclosure to the human race. After the immediate events of divine disclosure, Revelation was subsequently mediated through Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church. Tradition begins

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¹ The words, Revelation, Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium, are capitalized in this dissertation, except in the case of direct citations, where the usage of each author will be followed.

the process of communicating Revelation: for example, a prophet communicating a divinely given message to the people or Jesus communicating the message of salvation to his disciples. Scripture is the collection of writings in which Revelation has been recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Magisterium or teaching office has the responsibility not only of authoritatively determining which writings are truly inspired, but also interpreting those writings. Accordingly, the communication of Revelation is channeled in three inter-linked ways: oral transmission, inspired writings, and authoritative interpretation. Although Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium are often treated as separate entities, their inter-action and inter-dependence is at the heart of the communication of Revelation.

The Second Vatican Council, in *Dei Verbum*, its constitution on Revelation, “intended to set forth authentic doctrine on Divine revelation and how it is handed on” (§ 1). After pointing out that “In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and make known to us the hidden purpose of His will” the Council highlighted the twofold nature of Revelation: God’s self-disclosure and the disclosure of God’s plan of salvation. God reveals by “deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them” (§ 2). The fullness of Divine Revelation came with Christ, who accomplished God's plan of salvation. Christ's words and deeds “fulfill and perfect” Revelation; accordingly, the Christian

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3 *DV* § 1: “genuinam de divina revelatione ac de eius transmissione doctrinam proponere intendit.”
4 *DV* § 2: “Haec revelationis oeconomia fit gestis verbisque intrinsece inter se connexis, ita ut opera, in historia salutis a Deo patrata, doctrinam et res verbis significatas manifestent ac corroberent, verba autem opera proclament et mysterium in eis contentum elucident.”
dispensation “is the new and definitive covenant” that does not pass away and so “we await no further new public revelation” before Christ comes again in glory.⁵

Vatican II emphasized that the appropriate human response to Revelation is “the obedience of faith”; by this obedience, believers commit themselves to God by “offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him” (§ 5).⁶ God also assists the believer: “To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving ‘joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it’.⁷ Assent to Revelation requires both the interior help of the Holy Spirit, and the external, sense-perceived signs manifest in history: “To bring about an ever deeper understanding of this revelation the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His gifts.”⁸

According to Dei Verbum, citing the First Vatican Council, Revelation is accessible to the human intellect by grace and God’s existence is demonstrable by the unaided light of reason: “. . . God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created reality by the light of human reason (see Rom. 1:20).”⁹ The Council distinguished between Revelation and what human beings can know on their own: on the one hand, God

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⁵ DV § 4: “Oeconomia ergo christiana, utpote foedus novum et definitivum, numquam praeteribit, et nulla iam nova revelatio publica expectanda est ante gloriosam manifestationem Domini nostri Iesu Christi (cf. I Tim 6, 15 et Tit. 2, 13).”
⁶ DV § 5: “Deo revelanti praestanda est oboeditio fidei (cf. Rom. 16, 26; coll. Rom. 1, 5; 2 Cor. 10, 5-6), qua homo se totum libere Deo committit «plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium» praestando et voluntarie revelationi ab Eo datae assentiendo . . .
⁷ DV § 5: “Quae fides ut praebatur, opus est praevnitente et adjuvante gratia Dei et internis Spiritus Sancti auxillis, qui cor moveat et in Deum convertat, mentis oculos aperiat, et det «omnibus suavitatem in consentiendo et credendo veritati».” Dei Verbum cited the Second Council of Orange, Canon 7 (Denzinger, 180/377) and the First Vatican Council (Denzinger, 1791/3010).
⁸ DV § 5: “Quo vero profundior usque evadat revelationis intelligentia, idem Spiritus Sanctus fidem iugiter per dona sua perficit.”
⁹ DV § 6: “Confitetur Sacra Synodus, «Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, naturali humanae rationis lumine e rebus creatis certo cognosci posse» (cf. Rom 1,20).”
“chose to share with them those divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind.”

On the other hand, “it is through His revelation that those religious truths which are by their nature accessible to human reason can be known by all men with ease, with solid certitude and with no trace of error, even in this present state of the human race.”

Although the Second Vatican Council broke new ground in its portrait of Revelation, the Council also reiterated several teachings of the First Vatican Council’s constitution, Dei Filius. Vatican I described a process whereby the human intellect arrives at faith and accepts Revelation. Vatican II, in contrast, emphasized that God the Father, out of love for fallen humanity, disclosed Himself to us through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. God revealed in order to draw us into a saving relationship that would make us sharers in the divine nature. Vatican II also emphasized the personal reconciliation that God effects and the Trinitarian nature of God's action.

Dei Verbum indicated that Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium, the teaching office of the Church, are all realities instituted by God. Dei Verbum also claimed that by divine design, Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium are so linked that one cannot stand without the others. This statement implicitly raises a series of theological questions about the nature and mutual relationship of these means of communication; for

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10 DV § 6: “...«ad participanda scilicet bona divina, quae humanae mentis intelligentiam omnio superant».” The phrase cited is from Vatican I, Dei Filius (Denzinger, 1786/3005; Tanner 806).

11 DV § 6: “... eius vero revelacioni tribuendum esse docet, «ut ea, quae in rebus divinis humanae rationi per se impervia non sunt in praesenti quoque generis humani conditione ob omnibus expedite, firma certitudine et nullo admixto errore cognosci possint».” The phrase cited is from Vatican I, Dei Filius (Denzinger 1786/3005).

12 DV § 10: “sapientissimum Dei consilium”; paragraph 10 in the Latin original has four sentences; the English translation (http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) enlarges these four sentences into five, by breaking the first sentence into two.

13 DV § 10: “inter se consociari, ut unum sine aliis non consistat.”
example, how can Tradition serve both as the source of Scripture and a norm for its interpretation? How does Scripture serve as a criterion of what constitutes doctrine or practice? How does the Magisterium exercise Christ’s teaching authority and authoritatively interpret Scripture and Tradition? In addition, one might ask how Dei Verbum’s presentation of Revelation compares with preconciliar theology? And what directions did Dei Verbum open for the future?

Dei Verbum taught that Tradition, Scripture, and Magisterium “all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”14 Presumably each of these three components makes a particular contribution to divine communication in a way that the others do not. In contrast to Vatican I, which emphasized that Tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium mediate truths, both natural and supernatural, that a human being can receive and to some extent understand, Dei Verbum framed Revelation more in terms of encounter and relationship. Revelation is not simply a truth that is known, but a word to be received and lived. Insofar as Revelation is depicted as both word and deed, as divine personal self-disclosure, how should Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium be understood?

Prospectus of this Dissertation

This dissertation will examine the inter-relationship and inter-action of Tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium in the mediation of Revelation in three steps. Part I will consider the treatment of this topic by representative theologians in the period preceding the Second Vatican Council. First is an examination of two examples of the Scholastic theology which was then predominant within the Roman Catholic Church: Chapter 1 discusses Pope

\[14\] DV § 10: “omniaque simul, singula suo modo sub actione unius Spiritus Sancti ad animarum salutem efficaciter conferant.”
Pius XII's encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950) and the historical and intellectual context it addressed; Chapter 2 examines Gerardus Van Noort’s treatment of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium in his *Dogmatic Theology*. Chapters 3 and 4 consider some representative theological trends that emerged in the decade before the Second Vatican Council: first, the key work of *ressourcement* by the French Dominican, Yves Congar, in his comprehensive study, *Tradition and Traditions*; second, the transcendental emphasis on an individual person’s reception of revelation and self-commitment to God, as presented by Karl Rahner in *Revelation and Tradition*, which was co-authored with Joseph Ratzinger.

Part II examines both the textual history and the doctrinal teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium: Chapter I treats the discussion on Revelation, Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium during the preparatory phase of the Council (1959-1962). Chapter 2 considers the extended discussion on Revelation and its mediation during the four sessions of the Council (1962-1965). Chapter 3 then examines the two key texts of the conciliar teaching on the mediation of Revelation: *Dei Verbum* (Chapter II) and *Lumen Gentium* (Chapter III, paragraph 25).

Part III examines the postconciliar encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (1988) of Pope John Paul II in order to ascertain both the impact of the teaching of Vatican II about the mediation of Revelation on current church teaching and possible changes in emphasis: does *Fides et Ratio* reflect a theological shift from *Dei Verbum*? Does *Fides et Ratio* suggest new directions for the future? Finally, a short conclusion summarizes the dissertation’s findings.
Part I: Representative Thinkers on Revelation Prior to Vatican II.

Chapter 1: Ecclesiastical Perspective: Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*

Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) discussed Revelation and the relationship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium in his encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950). As Giacomo Martina has observed, between 1945, the end of World War II, and 1959, the year that John XXIII announced the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, the world experienced rapid and significant changes. Among these changes were: first, the emergence of “Third World” nations from colonialism with the assertion of their own cultural values which often differed from those of their former colonial rulers; second, several strongly Catholic agricultural countries in Europe experienced rapid industrialization and secularization; third, the spread of television, which occurred after the writing of *Humani Generis* but before Vatican II, fostered consumerist attitudes in the West. This situation of rapid social and

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1 Eugenio Pacelli (1876-1958), who was ordained to the priesthood in 1899, entered the Papal Secretariat of State in 1901; he was consecrated Titular Archbishop of Sardes in 1917 by Pope Benedict XV and appointed nuncio to Bavaria, where he represented the Vatican in negotiations with Germany. In 1929, Archbishop Pacelli was named cardinal and became Papal Secretary of State in 1930; in that capacity he negotiated a series of concordats with the Hitler-government. Cardinal Pacelli was elected Pope on March 2, 1939, and took the name Pius XII (1939-1958). After his negotiations to avoid World War II failed, he helped keep Rome a non-militarized city; by opening the Vatican and religious houses to Jewish refugees, he aided thousands to escape the Nazi holocaust, although he made few public denunciations of Nazi policies.


3 Ibid., 6.
political change also fostered new theological and philosophical approaches to presenting the Gospel, as well as resistance to new catechetical approaches.

Pope Pius XII exercised an intellectually forceful and organizationally centralizing Magisterium; he internationalized the episcopate by consecrating indigenous bishops for non-Western countries; he called for local hierarchies in mission territories in *Evangelii Praecones* (1951). His governing style, according to Martina, was typified by his comment to the future Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Domenico Tardini (1888-1961), that he “did not want collaborators but simply executors.” The encyclicals of Pius XII, such as *Mystici Corporis* (1943) and *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), were based on scholastic doctrinal formulations, yet displayed interest in such areas as a sacramental approach to ecclesiology and historical-critical studies of Biblical texts. Pius XII relied closely upon a group of Jesuits, mostly German, at the Biblicum and the Gregorian University, who helped draft his most important documents: for example, Fr. Augustin Bea “played an important role” in drafting *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and Fr. Sebastian Tromp “was the main draftsman” of *Mystici Corporis*.

Pius XII was also concerned about new pastoral developments in the industrialized West. In 1941, “worker priests” in France began to minister among the working class; however, the Vatican became concerned about this movement and suspended it in 1959. In June 1949, the Vatican “refused sacraments to those who voted communist” in Italian elections” and excommunicated those who professed Communism’s “materialistic and

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4 Ibid., 14.
5 Ibid., 12-14.
6 Ibid., 14.
Several theologians came under scrutiny; for example, John Courtney Murray's discussion of religious liberty resulted in his silencing in 1953.

Another major concern of the Vatican was a group of French theologians, mostly Jesuits and Dominicans, who, around 1945, began advocating what they considered to be a less scholastic and more contemporary way of enunciating doctrine. Re-examining the rigorously analytical form of Scholasticism that had emerged in the previous century, these theologians wanted to express doctrine in a manner more appealing to people of the time.

These theologians were opposed by the Dominican Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange and a group of theologians at the Angelicum in Rome. According to Martina, *Humani Generis* was concerned about, yet had difficulty in addressing, this *nouvelle théologie*:

According to reliable witnesses, the drafting process of the encyclical was particularly difficult, with the elimination of various rather harsh expressions against the proponents of the new theology, and an orientation toward a calmer tone and more moderate declarations. It basically confirmed the central elements of Catholic thinking, avoiding explicit individual condemnation or extreme positions.

A key concern of the opponents of the *nouvelle théologie* was the role that existentialist philosophy played in the new movement. According to Gustave Weigel, the *nouvelle théologie* was dissatisfied with the traditional approach of scholastic theologians:

“Theyir object was to justify the accepted formulas syllogistically, and with this achieved,

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7 Ibid., 18-19. 
8 John Courtney Murray (1904-1967), a professor of theology at Woodstock College, the Jesuit theologate in Maryland, was a *peritus* at Vatican II, where he made a significant contribution to the writing of *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Council’s declaration on religious liberty. 
9 Martina, “The Historical Context,” 31. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964) entered the Order of Preachers in 1897 and became a professor at the Angelicum in Rome (1909-1960), where he was the *Doktorvater* of Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II). 
10 Ibid., 32.
they felt that their task was done.”\textsuperscript{11} In contrast, the Modernists of the first decade of the twentieth century felt that “Catholic dogmas . . . were symbols of a richer reality than history could discover, since they could be understood with an immediacy that was entailed in religious experience.”\textsuperscript{12} The subsequent condemnation of Modernism by Pope Pius X in \textit{Lamentabili} and his encyclical \textit{Pascendi} in 1907, had both a “salutary and purifying” yet also a chilling effect upon the willingness of the theology academy to explore new philosophical systems.\textsuperscript{13}

Nevertheless, the Modernists’ rejection of doctrinal realism had, according to Yves Congar, accelerated developments in understanding the theology of Tradition.\textsuperscript{14} A new theological view of Tradition and the Magisterium began to emerge at the time of the preparation of Pius XII’s declaration of the dogma of the Assumption of the Mother of God in 1950—the same year as the publication of \textit{Humani Generis}. This theological view “consists of two closely linked components: first, a theology of the ‘living Magisterium’” and second, the distinction between “historical tradition” and “dogmatic tradition.”\textsuperscript{15}

Yves Congar found that Johann Möhler (1796-1838), a theologian at the University of Tübingen, portrayed Tradition in terms of “living a continuous and living totality, as ever

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{11} Gustave Weigel, “Historical Background of the Encyclical \textit{Humani Generis},” \textit{Theological Studies} 12 (1951): 208-230, at 213; hereafter cited: Weigel, “Historical Background.”
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 213-214.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 214-215.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 189.
\end{flushleft}
the increasing stock of the expressions of the Christian genius. Tradition, then, would be
the living history of the Church animated by its own particular genius, its own spirit.”

He [Möhler] criticizes in particular the idea of a revelation handed on partly in texts
and partly by oral tradition. Tradition for him is a mode of communication which
covers the whole of Christianity and encompasses Scripture . . . . Scripture and
tradition are not two independent and parallel sources, they include, fulfil and
condition one another, the one living in the other . . . . Tradition contains and
preserves everything, it is the Gospel living in the Church.

Another 19th century theologian interested in the theology of Tradition was Johann
Baptist Franzelin (1816-1886), whose De Divina Traditio
ne et Scriptura (1870) made an
important distinction between objective and active Tradition: Tradition objectively
understood refers to “a deposit of doctrines or institutions handed on from the beginning and
to which there are witnesses, the records (“monuments”) of tradition”; Tradition actively
understood refers to “the acts of transmission.” For Congar, Franzelin’s definition
already indicates that the subject or organ of tradition in the full sense is not only the
hierarchical Magisterium. The whole body of the faithful guards the deposit with the
bishops, only the faithful, taken individually or collectively, have not the charge or
charism to teach The function of guarding is one thing; the function of teaching with
authority, another.”

Both the Magisterium and the faithful have roles in active tradition—a position that Vatican
I followed in its teaching that the doctrine of faith is “a divine deposit committed to the
spouse of Christ [the Church] to be faithfully protected and infallibly promulgated.”

16 Ibid., 192-193.
17 Ibid., 193.
18 Ibid., 197.
19 First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Catholic Faith (Dei Filius, 1870), Chapter 4: “ . . . fidei
doctrina . . . tamquam divinum depositum Christi sponsae tradita, fideliter custodienda et infallibiliter
declaranda” (H. Denzinger, Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum,
hereafter cited Denzinger). The English translations of Vatican I are from Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,
Volume II., edited by Norman P. Tanner, SJ, and translated by Ian Brayley, SJ (London: Sheed & Ward;
Washington: Georgetown University, 1990), 804-811, at 809; hereafter cited Tanner. Johann Baptist Franzelin
During the period between the First and Second World Wars, many theologians showed renewed interest in the dynamic and mystical aspects of revelation and ecclesiology. For example, according to Weigel, Pierre Rousselot (1878-1915) maintained that “for St. Thomas the intellectual assent in judgment was a dynamic grasp of the real, and not a mere ordering of concepts in a pattern.” Simultaneously, Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944) proposed a re-articulation of Thomistic epistemology in terms of “the idea of dynamism, i.e., the tension in thought toward reality by reason of its teleological drive, independently of conceptual structure, which Maréchal considered subjective.”

During the first half of the 20th century, some theologians felt that dogmatic theology should work both as a “positive theology of the sources” and as a “positive theology of the magisterium;” the latter’s value derives from the “divine assistance of which the magisterium is assured in matters of faith and morals.” On the other hand, Congar stressed that while the Magisterium gives authoritative expression to the faith, its charism is not creative:

In putting such emphasis on the activity of definition, which almost becomes an ideal in itself, there is a risk that the primacy due to the guarding of the deposit and to the apostolic witness may be forgotten . . . . The Magisterium is a channel by which revelation is presented to the faithful with the value of a rule of faith.

At the time of World War II, French theologians began drawing upon new philosophical currents to express Christian doctrine. According to Patrick Hamell, “the causes responsible for the attempts at a ‘new theology’ were in the main two—the impact of

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(1816-1886), who was named a Cardinal priest by Pope Pius IX in 1876, was a consultor at Vatican I and assisted in the preparation of the constitution *Dei Filius.*

20 Weigel, “Historical Background,” 215-216.

21 Congar, *Tradition and Traditions,* 204.

22 Ibid., 205.
modern philosophies, and the ardent, if imprudent, desire to develop new methods of winning to the true Church of Christ the masses who were only nominally or not even nominally Catholics.”

In a similar way, Eugene Burke noted that underlying the efforts of the nouvelle théologie has been the soundly Catholic conviction that neither economic rehabilitation, nor social planning nor military force suffice to heal the deeply rooted malady that infects the Western mind. At the same time it was felt that at heart the modern intellectual is eager for and open to a deeper appreciation of religion. What was needed therefore was a presentation of Catholic truth that would make vital contact with the modern mind, address his legitimate aspirations, and be capable of satisfying his needs.

Simultaneously, contact with non-Catholics through the resistance movement during World War II convinced many French theologians “that the only way non-Catholics could be attracted to the Church was by presenting her in terms of the vital and the existential”; in particular, Henri de Lubac and his book Le Surnaturel “became the concrete symbols of the movement.”

According to Weigel, Humani Generis was concerned not with specific figures so much as with the “inner life” of the movement—which was more a “mood” than a theological theory. Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), for example, “hated” the phrase “new theology” and said that “he and his friends were not rejecting an “old” theology to substitute

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23 Patrick J. Hamell, “‘Humani Generis’: Its Significance and Teaching,” Irish Ecclesiastical Record 75 (April 1951): 289-303, at 289; hereafter cited Hamell, “‘Humani Generis.’”
25 Weigel, “Historical Background,” 217-218; Weigel commented: “The [Second World] War stopped theorizing, but it influenced the French theologists, many of whom through the resistance movement were thrown into contact with non-Catholics. This encounter convinced them that the only way non-Catholics could be attracted to the Church was by presenting her in terms of the vital and the existential” (217).
a “new” one in its place.”  

According to Cardinal Jean Gerlier (1880-1965), Archbishop of Lyons, the diocese in which de Lubac taught:

For some time a sort of intellectual ferment has been seething in souls. Certain bold initiatives of thought have broken forth here and there. In the calm solicitude of the teaching office, the supreme Teacher intervenes . . . . The successor of Peter certainly does not wish to discourage [theologians] or to shackle their zeal; his aim is to guard them from dangerous deviations. Let no one utter a word that can sadden or embitter.  

Although these “new theologians” rejected the epistemology and metaphysics of existentialism, they “experienced it as a fact” in postwar France and as “a kind of reaction” to the rationalistic thought predominant in theology and secular French philosophy. In Weigel’s view, existentialism affected these “new theologians” more by its “inner logic” of a human striving to transcend oneself while simultaneously rejecting the rationalist concern for “confining reality in propositions.”  

In the existentialist view, Christian praxis takes precedence over the expressions of Revelation and the relationship of nature and grace is re-framed:

The actual religious strivings of the Catholics and the behavior resulting therefrom constitute the real Catholic Church of the moment. This is existential Catholicism. It is, of course, supernatural; but that term must not be understood as if there were two discontinuous levels of reality. All human life is supernatural in the sense that God always breaks into it, just as He did spectacularly in the Incarnation, which is only the high point of this breaking through. In some sense it is impossible for man to be without this constant visitation of God, who alone can be man’s satisfaction, to be achieved in the final act of transcendence wherein man will enter into the closest union of God, the union which will end isolation and loneliness, the union that is called the beatific vision.  

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26 Ibid., 219-220. Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), a Jesuit professor at the Catholic Faculties of Lyons, was created a cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 1983.  
28 Weigel, “Historical Background,” 221.  
29 Ibid. 222-223.  
30 Ibid. 227-228.
Weigel also noted that this vision of man’s relationship with God includes the corollary idea that man lives “a God-permeated existence” and that this existence has a Christocentric focus, because Christ lived a human life.

The existentialist proposal that God “always breaks into” human life does not deny the complete gratuity of grace; nonetheless, human beings can recognize God’s existence by the light of reason, yet such a recognition in no way prejudices the capability of human beings to receive God’s Revelation by grace. Revelation in the existentialist context must then be both transcendent and manifest in history. In an existentialist view, events function as disclosure symbols that engage the human person striving for transcendence. In contrast to existential encounters between God and human beings, propositions express only one aspect of revealed reality. The Church, which presents Revelation is not simply an office but, as Cyril Vollert indicated in his discussion of *Humani Generis*, “the living Church” which is “teacher and judge of the truths contained in revelation.”

**Vatican Interest in the Nouvelle Théologie**

The Vatican soon indicated its interest in the postwar theological ferment. In audiences with the General Congregation of the Jesuits on 17 September 1946, and with the General Chapter of the Dominicans on 22 September 1946, Pope Pius XII “urged both groups to be wary of innovations in theology which were antagonistic to the constant tradition of the Church.”

In setting forth questions, in developing arguments, and also in the choice of style, [theologians] should wisely accommodate their discourse to the mentality and tastes of their century. Much has been said, but not always with sufficient realization of

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32 Weigel, “Historical Background,” 219.
the implications involved, about a “new theology” which goes on evolving with the constantly evolving universe, so that it is always progressing without ever arriving anywhere. If such a view is to be admitted, what is to become of Catholic dogmas that can never change, what is to become of the unity and stability of the faith? . . . A friendly hand should be held out to those who are going astray, but no compromise can be made with error.33

Although this papal statement seems to have been a warning about the dangers of some new philosophical approaches, Burke noted that the practitioners of nouvelle théologie felt that the Greek philosophical orientation of Scholastic theology, which emphasizes object and understanding “attached no importance to history nor to the importance of the person in history and is unable to deal with it in terms of love, hate and value.”34

A few days later, in his address to the Dominicans, Pius XII emphasized the importance of the Thomistic synthesis for expressing Revelation.

The very foundations of our perennial philosophy and theology are being called into question . . . . Men argue about science and faith, their nature and mutual relations . . . They talk about the truths revealed by God, and question whether the mind with all its acumen can penetrate into them and deduce further truths from them. Briefly, this is at stake: whether the structure St. Thomas Aquinas erected beyond and above all time, by putting into an orderly synthesis elements supplied by those who in all ages have cultivated Christian wisdom, stands upon solid rock; whether it is still flourishing and valid; whether it can still defend and protect the deposit of Catholic faith and can, even in our day, serve to orientate the further progress of theology and philosophy. The Church certainly answers in the affirmative.35

35 Pius XII, Allocutio “Ad Patres delegatos ad Capitulum generale Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum,” Cyril Vollert, trans., AAS 38 (1946), 385-389, at 387: “Nunc vero agitur de ipsis philosophiae perennis et theologiae fundamentis, quae quaelibet ratio et diciplina, re ac nomine catholica aestimanda, agnoscit et veretur; agitur de scientia et de fide, de earum natura ac mutua ratione; agitur de scientia et de fide, de earum natura a mutua ratione; agitur de ipsa fidei basi, quam nullum censurae iudicium labefacet; agitur de veris a Deo patefactis, an
Pius XII, while admitting that the new approach had potential, emphasized that the approach of St. Thomas Aquinas will always remains valid. By implication, the “new theology” might draw transcendent principles from reflection upon contingent events. The fact that many theologians at the time of Humani Generis felt that an approach that adopted the concerns, if not the metaphysics and epistemology, of existentialism, would respond to a pastoral need of the time, did not mean that a more traditional Scholastic approach could no longer speak to people.

According to Weigel, early in 1950 there were “grapevine communications from all over Europe announcing that action was being taken in Rome against the new movement and that some kind of syllabus would be published.” However, Humani Generis “mentions no names and condemns no individual. Nor did any ecclesiastical censure fall on anyone after the document was published.”

Although some proponents of nouvelle théologie were replaced in their posts—Weigel did not name any—no one was silenced, no book was condemned by name, and none of the “new theologians” left the Catholic theological academy after the publication of Humani Generis.

According to Vollert, “the paternal spirit animating the encyclical has been recognized and expressed by commentators”; among these was Jean Levie, who stated:

It would be unjust to generalize geographically or to paint in the blackest possible colors the symptoms of this intellectual disorder. The Pope asserts clearly that there

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nempe mentis acies ea certis notionibus penetrare atque ex eis ulteriora colligere possit. Paucis dicimus: de hac re quaeritur, an videlicet quod S. Thomas Aquinas aedificavit, ultra et supra quodlibet tempus una compositis et compactis elementis, quae omnium temporum christianae sapientiae cultores suppedita verant, solida rupe innitatur, perpeuo vigeant et valeat, catholicae fidei depositum efficaci preasidio etiam nunc tueatur, novis quoque theologiae et philosophiae progressibus securus usui et moderamini sit. Id sane Ecclesia asserit, cum id sibi persuasum habeat hoc itinere ad veritatem cognoscendam et solidandum tuto procedi.”

36 Weigel, “Historical Background,” 219.
37 Ibid., 230.
is question only of an incipient disease . . . That is the purpose of the encyclical: to clear up confusion and thereby to restore intellectual serenity in regions where it had been disturbed. The Pope is not eager to condemn persons; he desires but to halt the spread of errors.\footnote{J. Levie, “L’Encyclique « Humani generis »,” \textit{Nouvelle revue théologique}, 62 (1950): 785-793, at 788. Cyril Vollert translated the following passage: “Il serait certes injuste généraliser géographiquement et de pousser au noir les traits particuliers qui expriment ce malaise intellectuel; le pape affirme clairement lui-même qu’il s’agit d’un début . . . . Là est le but de l’encyclique: faire la clarté et, par elle, rétablir la sérénité intellectuelle là où elle a été troublée.”}

For Vollert, “Any suspicion that \textit{Humani Generis} stifles theological initiative betrays gross misunderstanding of the bearing of the document. We can have certitude about truth and we can have certitude about error.”

Similarly, Gustave Weigel concluded:

Without exception, the Catholic theologians who commented on the pronouncement considered it most important, most timely, and most satisfactory. . . . The overall significance of the letter was expressed in contradicting rhetorics, but only the rhetorics were in conflict, not the inner conceptions.”\footnote{Gustave Weigel, “Gleanings from the Commentaries on \textit{Humani Generis},” \textit{Theological Studies} 12 (1951): 520-549, at 526-527; hereafter cited Weigel, “Gleanings.”}

According to Weigel, commentators from the “left” stressed the encyclical’s “permissive and positive” elements, while those from the “right” stressed its “restrictive and negative” elements.\footnote{Ibid., 529.}

For Victor Yanitelli, three elements are necessary in order to read \textit{Humani Generis} correctly. First, Catholic thought in France was more a “psychological than doctrinal” inclination to contemporary methods that tended to see itself as “a little in advance of the others”; their critics, however, considered this “apostolic” zeal insufficiently attentive to doctrine or Church authority. Second, the Magisterium should be seen “more as a guide-rein than a spur,” to give creative movements “authentic direction that guarantees that its progress will be a true moving forward” in a way not counter to Revelation. Third, the
encyclical rejected specific errors, not “an atmosphere of thought”: “The Church will condemn the logical extremes of a doctrine by showing the limits and the risks of an uninhibited drive towards a certain goal.”

In fact, the encyclical did not condemn the use of non-scholastic philosophical systems, rather it rejected specific forms of metaphysics and epistemology, which were deemed incompatible with Catholic doctrine. Although the encyclical did not specifically seek to stifle theological inquiry, many apparently believed that was its intention:

Although the juridical significance of the document may have been limited, its historical importance—in other words, its effective influence and practical consequences—was broad, and taken all in all may have been prevalently negative. . . . Pius XII complained to the head of Civiltà Cattolica about the efforts being made to minimize his document, which was not meant simply as a warning; the Pope had also complained that although he had spoken to the representatives of the Society of Jesus in September 1946, there appeared to be a lack of concern over the faithful following of Papal instructions.

The statements of Cardinal Gerlier and Monsignor Giovanni Montini that the encyclical simply pointed out dangers to be avoided were seemingly considered by Pius XII as “minimizing” the encyclical. \[44\] *Humani Generis* indeed did more than simply point out dangers to be avoided; it stated (§§ 10-13) that there were individuals guilty of the errors it rejected. Nonetheless, the encyclical was not an explicit condemnation of the *nouvelle théologie* in general nor of any specific person. As the editors of *Commonweal* noted, *Humani Generis* said

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\[43\] Lyons was where de Lubac and several other theologians of *nouvelle théologie* taught; Montini was the future Pope Paul VI.

\[44\] Martina, “The Historical Context,” 33.
much less than certain men would have liked. It is not the sweeping and reactionary document that they ardently wished. . . . [Rome] has sought in this document to recall to reason, without wounding them, a certain number of the faithful, lay and clerical, who seemed about to embark on roads that would lead them astray."

**An Analysis of *Humani Generis***

What did *Humani Generis* actually teach? *Humani Generis* began with an introductory section that a) deplored religious and philosophical disagreement and b) proposed key philosophical and theological principles of human knowledge (§§ 1-8). The encyclical then examined two sets of errors. The first section discusses two types of *errors of faith or theology*, especially about the “sources” of Revelation—Scripture and Tradition—and the Church’s authority to interpret Scripture and Tradition (§§ 9-21). The second section considered errors related to scriptural exegesis. The encyclical then summarized specific doctrinal errors that are the result of poor philosophical presuppositions and faulty exegesis (§§ 22-28). The encyclical’s second section then discussed two types of *errors of reason*: first those derived from philosophy (§§ 29-34) and then those derived from the physical sciences (§§ 35-43). The encyclical concluded with a benediction and promulgatory statement.

The encyclical’s style and structure may seem alien to readers in the 21st century. Pius XII not only used the pontifical “we” but also addressed himself only to bishops—rather than to theologians and the faithful. In addressing the alleged philosophical and theological errors of unnamed “Catholic theologians and philosophers,” *Humani Generis*

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46 References to the paragraphs of *Humani Generis* are given within parentheses in the text. *Humani Generis* had paragraphs (indicated by §), but not chapters or headings.
accused them of serious errors, even heresy, while speculating about their motivations.

Although the mainstream of Catholic theologians and philosophers, including those of the *nouvelle théologie*, did not seem to be promoting the errors castigated in the encyclical, Gustave Weigel noted:

> There was, therefore, a universal recognition that in the French “New Theology” there were elements of the “new theology” condemned by Rome. However, the pontifical epistle gives no one the right to identify the two theologies, in whole or in part, because it carefully refrains from naming names or indicating concrete works as expressing the condemned doctrines. . . . [Hugo] Rahner warned the theologians who wished to use the encyclical against individual French colleagues with these words: “It would be wholly against the mind of the encyclical itself to use it as a quiver supplying arrows for anyone feeling an eagerness to shoot.”

Weigel concluded that “the opinions under papal consideration had to be considered objectively in a pure state of abstraction from persons and places.” In addition, no writer “made any mention or even insinuation of collaborators” in spite of the Popes’ use of consultants to help draft encyclicals. Some American commentators observed that the ideas treated in the encyclical were much-discussed by European Catholics but had received little attention from Catholics in the United States.

The encyclical opened with the observation: “Disagreement and error among men on moral and religious matters has always been a cause of profound sorrow to all good men, but above all to the true and loyal sons of the Church, especially today, when we see the principles of Christian culture being attacked on all sides.”

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48 Ibid., 531-532.


50 Pius XII. *Humani Generis,* 1. 1950; the English translations, unless otherwise specified, are from: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis_en.html.
its intention of rejecting ideas that threatened not only the faith of individuals, but also
Christian culture in general.

The encyclical’s central thesis met with what Weigel termed “superficial disagreement.” Some thought that the encyclical meant that theologians must be

guided by the Magisterium in every step of their work. For others the [encyclical’s] central lesson was the rejection of relativism in theology and philosophy. . . . others felt that the great lesson was the defense of reason as a faculty of achieving objective, abiding truth.51

For example, A. C. Cotter’s brief assessment summarized the encyclical’s intentions: “It evidently deals with certain erroneous theories of the present time, their causes and effects, and the remedy for them;” for Cotter, this remedy is “the content of divine faith” taught by the Magisterium.52

_Humani Generis_ (§§ 2–4) spelled out both the key principles of philosophy and the apparent causes for the frequent rejection of these philosophical principles. Most commentators saw “nothing very significant about these paragraphs that was not said by the paragraphs themselves”; some, however, saw an implicit condemnation of Rousselot’s theories concerning faith.53 In fact, the encyclical stated: “Human reason can by its own natural force and light arrive at a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who by His providence watches over and governs the world, and also of the natural law, which the Creator has written on our hearts” (§ 2); however, due to the debilitating effect of sin upon the intellect and the disordereding effect of sin upon the passions, Revelation is morally necessary in order that all may know with certainty what God has revealed. In fact, many

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51 Weigel, “Gleanings,” 533.
people “experience difficulty” in coming to know the Catholic faith in spite of God's many signs (§§ 3-4).

The other introductory paragraphs (§§ 5-8) summarized the effects of this current situation upon both the Church and the world: people of good will may sometimes believe falsehoods such as dialectical materialism, idealistic existentialism, historicism, or a materialistic view of evolution. Garrigou-Lagrange, for example, described the commonality in these four condemned ideas as “a flux philosophy which refuses to admit any metaphysical stability and identifies being with becoming.”

_Humani Generis_ then discussed Catholic theology and its treatment of “moral and religious matters” (§ 8); this discussion provided the context for the encyclical’s later discussion of the “sources” of revelation and their role in the mediation of revelation to believers (§§ 18, 21).

In all of this confusion of opinion it is some consolation to Us to see former adherents of rationalism today frequently desiring to return to the fountain of divinely communicated truth and acknowledge and profess the word of God as contained in Sacred Scripture as the foundation of religious teaching.

This sentence was the encyclical’s first reference to Revelation as being mediated through Scripture. Although this sentence referred only to the Word of God in Scripture, other paragraphs referred to the Word of God contained in both Scripture and Tradition (§§ 18, 21).

_Humani Generis_ (§ 8) then mentioned two rationalistic errors:

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55 Pius XII, _Humani Generis_, _AAS_ 42 (1950): 561-578, at 563: “In hac tanta opinionum confusione aliquid solaminis Nobis affert eos cernere, qui a «rationalismi» placitis, quibus olim institute errant, hocie non raro ad veritatis divinitus patefactae haustus redire cupiunt, ac verbum Dei in Sacra Scriptura asservatum agnoscre ac profiteri, utpote disciplinae sacrae fundamentum.”
But at the same time it is a matter of regret that not a few of these, the more firmly they accept the word of God, so much the more do they diminish the value of human reason, and the more they exalt the authority of God the revealer, the more severely do they spurn the teaching office of the Church, which has been instituted by Christ, our Lord, to preserve and interpret divine revelation.\textsuperscript{56}

Both Weigel and Cotter saw in this paragraph a condemnation of the dialectical theology of Barth and Brunner, insofar as they denied reason a role in the reception of Revelation.\textsuperscript{57}

According to the encyclical, the Magisterium would be pointless, unless it addresses people whose faculty of reason is involved in the reception of Revelation. Accordingly, the teaching Church, \textit{ecclesia docens}, does not seem to have autonomous authority over the learning Church, \textit{ecclesia discens}; nonetheless, the \textit{ecclesia discens} must respect the authoritative teachings of the \textit{ecclesia docens}. \textit{Humani Generis} (§ 8) thus suggested that the “learning faithful” (\textit{ecclesia discens}) should be active recipients; their reception of Revelation should not be one of mere “acceptance.”\textsuperscript{58}

\textit{Humani Generis} next discussed philosophy in relation to errors of faith (§§ 9-28) and errors of reason (§§ 29-34). The encyclical emphasized that Catholic theologians need to understand these faulty theories in order to appreciate their truths and to oppose their errors. However, the encyclical warned that some theologians, out of fear of being considered ignorant or through misguided zeal for souls, have suggested discarding scholastic

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 563: “At simul dolendum et haud paucos istorum, quo firmius verbo Dei adhereant, eo magis humanem rationem adimere, et quo libentius Dei revelantis auctoritatem extollant, eo acerius Ecclesiae Magisterium aspemari, a Christo Domino institutum, ut veritates divinitus revelatas custodiat atque interpreteretur.” These two errors figured prominently in the encyclical’s later discussion of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium (no. 18-22).

\textsuperscript{57} Weigel, “Gleanings,” 535; Cotter, “\textit{Humani Generis},” 61.

\textsuperscript{58} Pius XII in his encyclical, \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu} (3) referred to Pope Pius X’s commendation of the St. Jerome Society, which encouraged the faithful to read and meditate upon the Scriptures, “to dissipate the idea that the Church is opposed to or in any way impedes the reading of the Scriptures in the vernacular”; the statement of Pius X appeared in a letter to Cardinal Cassetta, \textit{Qui Piam}, 21 January 1907 in \textit{Pii X Acta} IV, 23-25. Pius XII mentioned that Pope Benedict XV repeated this commendation in his encyclical \textit{Spiritus Paraclitus}, IV-5.
methodology, the permanent meaning of dogmatic formulations, and magisterial authority. In addition, some theologians were depicted as seeking to reconcile Catholic teaching with faulty theological doctrines in the name of “eirenism” for the purpose of “repelling the attacks of atheism” (§§ 10-13).

According to contemporary commentators, few Catholic theologians and philosophers were actually guilty of these errors, rather these were dangers to be avoided. David Greenstock, however, provided one example of a thinker who apparently thought that the Church was going to relinquish the methods of Aquinas:

On the twenty-third of November 1949, the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, speaking to a packed audience in the Barceló cinema, Madrid, declared that European Idealism as a philosophical system had been overcome and superseded by another and a more modern system, so too had Aristotelianism. He then continued, “I am able to announce to you that the Roman, Catholic, Apostolic Church is about to relinquish both Aristotelianism and Thomism; and that a new theology is being forged which is in close relationship with that of the Greek Fathers.”

In an address to the First International Congress of Religious on 8 December 1950—some four months after the publication of the encyclical—Pius XII again discussed how Catholic theologians and philosophers should react to modern thought:

If you wish to walk in the footsteps of your fathers, follow their example, do as they have done. Study the opinions, judgments of your contemporaries in the milieu in which you are living. Whatever you find there that is good and just, take for your own. You have no other means of enlightening them, helping them, comforting them, directing them.

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60 Pius XII, “Address to the First International Congress of Religious” (December 8, 1950), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 43 (1951): 25-35, at 33-34: “Quodsi vultis patriis inistere exemplis, eo modo quo ipsi se gesserunt, ita et vos agite. Aequalium vestrorum, inter quos vivitis, scrutamini opiniones, iudicia, mores et, si ibi particulae boni et iusti inveniantur, pretiosis hisce elementis potimini; aliter eos collustrare, iuvare, sublevare, ducere non valetis” (Victor Yanitelli, trans.).
This assessment of the negative effects of contemporary philosophies (§§ 9-17) on theologians back-dropped the encyclical’s treatment of Revelation and provided the context for the encyclical’s view of doctrine and its discussion (§§ 18-21) of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium.61

Dogmas, according to *Humani Generis*, express mysteries of faith in verbal propositions whose validity is unchanging. Dogmas do not exhaust the mysteries they express, rather the Church has utilized terminology borrowed from Greek and Medieval systems of philosophy, as a way of appropriately expressing these mysteries (§§ 14-15). This philosophy, which starts by observing the created world, allows every person to deduce facts that enlighten the mind in matters of philosophy and theology. Such Greek philosophical concepts, refined by Scholastic theology, are well suited for expressing the principles and concepts appropriate for theology. In addition, the Church’s Magisterium has continuously polished and perfected this language as an expression of doctrine. Any attempt to re-express doctrine in a manner that would exclude such realism would lead to dogmatic relativism (§ 16). According to Cotter, “the encyclical does not give a list or examples of what terms are specifically objected to, but we may think of substance, person and nature, transubstantiation, eucharistic species, form and formal cause, *ex opere operato*, etc.”62

Weigel thought that *Humani Generis* (§§ 14-17) did not prevent theologians from drawing upon new philosophical currents to help express doctrine; however to reject “indifferently” the received Scholastic methodology would mean that “the synthesis of any moment did not grow out of the continuous past but abruptly arose from the contingent

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61 Weigel, “Gleanings,” 536. Some sections (§§ 14-17), according to Weigel, were widely perceived as directed at the *nouvelle théologie* in spite of the pope’s decision not to name specific thinkers or works.

62 Cotter, “*Humani Generis,*” 68.
exigencies of a new historical context.”\textsuperscript{63} In regard to new theological and philosophical approaches, Yanitelli thought that the “condemnation of specific errors does not necessarily imply the reprobation of \textit{moderated tendencies} of which these errors are the immoderate excesses.”\textsuperscript{64} According to \textit{Humani Generis}, “rejecting, neglecting, or devaluing” Scholastic terminology would weaken speculative theology and “make dogma a reed shaken by the wind” (§ 17).

The encyclical (§ 18) then pointed out that the rejection of scholasticism often leads to the rejection of the Church’s Magisterium:

Un fortunately these advocates of novelty easily pass from despising scholastic theology to the neglect of and contempt for the Teaching Authority of the Church itself, which gives such authoritative approval to scholastic theology. This Teaching Authority is represented by them as a hindrance to progress and an obstacle in the way of science.\textsuperscript{65}

New philosophical approaches, even if they are used to complement Scholastic terminology, must respect the teaching authority of the Church and not consider it an obstacle to the theologian’s work. Yanitelli concluded that “the Pontiff does not intend \textit{a priori} to banish all modern thought into exterior darkness. The attitude recommended here is one of prudence.”\textsuperscript{66}

According to \textit{Humani Generis}, the Magisterium has a key role in guarding and interpreting the sources of Revelation:

And although this sacred Office should be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ the whole deposit of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{63} Weigel, “Gleanings,” 537.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Yanitelli, “Catholic Climate Abroad,” 129; emphasis in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{65} \textit{AAS} 42 (1950), 567: “Utique, proh dolor, rerum novarum studiosi a scholasticae theologiae contemptu ad neglegendum, ac vel etiam ad despicienda facile transeunt ipsum Magisterium Ecclesiae, quod theologiam illam sua auctoritate tantopere comprobat.”
\item \textsuperscript{66} Yanitelli, “Catholic Climate Abroad,” 130.
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faith—Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition—to be preserved, guarded and interpreted, still the duty incumbent on the faithful to flee those errors which more or less approach heresy ... is sometimes as little known as if it did not exist (§ 18).⁶⁷

Thus, the Magisterium, insofar as it preserves, guards, and interprets Revelation, is a “proximate and universal” norm for the work of theologians, in a way that the Scripture and Tradition are not.⁶⁸

_Humani Generis_ then discussed Scripture and Tradition in terms of “the whole deposit of faith.” The encyclical did not take up the question of the relationship of Scripture and Tradition nor the sufficiency of either as a “source” of doctrine. The earlier reference (§ 8) to Scripture as the “container” of the Word of God” made no reference to Tradition and did not indicate the relationship of the two. The main emphasis (§ 18) was the Magisterium’s primary role as the authoritative preserver, guardian, and interpreter of Revelation.

_Humani Generis_ (§§ 19, 20) next discussed the Pope’s teaching office in terms of ordinary and extraordinary teaching authority. The encyclical indicated that in regard to ordinary papal teaching indicated that certain matters “no longer admit of discussion” even though they have not been taught with the highest degree of papal teaching authority:

Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in encyclicals does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme

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⁶⁷ *AAS* 42 (1950), 567: “Et quamquam hoc sacrum Magisterium, in rebus fidei et morum, cuilibet theologo proxima et universalis veritatis norma esse debet, utpote cui Christus Dominus totum depositum fidei—Sacras nempe Litteras ac divinam «traditionem»—et custodiendum et tuendum et interpretandum concredidit, attamen officium, quo fideles tenentur illos quoque fugere errores qui ad haeresim plus minusve accedant ... nonnunquam ita ignoratur ac si non habeatur.”

⁶⁸ Accordingly, Scripture and Tradition are “more remote” norms for theology, in spite of the fact that they are the expressions of Revelation; this position was developed in more detail in _HG_ § 21.
power of their Teaching Authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary
teaching authority of which it is true to say, “He who hears you, hears me.”

Weigel reported that “this part of the message was considered by all commentators, who did
little else but assent to it fervently.” Cotter, for example, commented:

This is technically known as “religious assent.” It is a true internal assent, not a
mere silentium obsequiosum such as the Jansenists were willing to give to the papal
decrees issued against them. Yet it is not the assent of either divine or ecclesiastical
faith; its motive is not the authority of God speaking nor the infallibility of the
Magisterium, but the official position of the living Magisterium in the Church
assigned to it by Christ.

On the one hand, Humani Generis emphasized the importance of ordinary papal teaching:

But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a
matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the
mind and will of the Pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to
discussion among theologians (§ 20)

On the other hand, the encyclical did not define the kind of assensus required by the
teaching presented in an encyclical.

The teaching of Humani Generis on ordinary papal teaching contrasted with the
teaching of the First Vatican Council about the papal exercise of infallibility:

When the Roman pontiff speaks ex cathedra, that is in the exercise of his office as
pastor and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he
defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he
possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility
which the divine Redeemer willed His church to enjoy in defining doctrine
concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of

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69 AAS 42 (1950), 568: “Neque putandum est, ea quae in Encyclicis Litteris proponuntur, assensum per se non
postulare, cum in is Pontifices supremam sui Magisterii potestatem non exerceant. Magisterio enim ordinario
haec docentur, de quo illud etiam valet: «Qui vos audit, me audit» . . . .”

70 Weigel, “Gleanings,” 537.

71 Cotter, “Humani Generis,” 76.

72 AAS 42 (1950), 568: “Quodsi Summi Pontifices in actis sui de re hactenus controversa data opera
sententiam ferunt, omnibus patet rem illam, secundum mentem ac voluntatem eorumdem Pontificum,
quaeestionem liberae inter theologos disceptationis iam haber non posse.”
themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable.\textsuperscript{73}

In comparison with \textit{Pastor Aeternus}, which described a papal exercise of infallibility in defining doctrine (\textit{doctrinam definit}), \textit{Humani Generis} spoke of ordinary papal teaching as passing judgment (\textit{sententiam ferunt}). In contrast to Vatican I, which described papal definitions under infallibility as “irreformable,” \textit{Humani Generis} taught that the pope may use an encyclical to issue authoritative judgments about doctrinal matters. Thus, encyclicals, even if not an exercise of infallibility, have a role in resolving doctrinal questions. Weigel pointed out a further implication to ordinary papal teaching (§§ 19-20):

The encyclical indicates the two kinds of authoritative direction: in one case a question is closed by answering the question officially; in the other the debate is closed, even though the question itself be left open, either to die of inanition or to be reopened by the Magisterium itself according to its norms at some possible future date. In either case, the theologian, by the rationale of his discipline and by his place among the discente of the Church, accepts wholeheartedly and without resistance.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Humani Generis} then discussed the Magisterium in its relationship to Scripture and Tradition (§ 21): “It is also true that theologians must always return to the sources of divine revelation: for it belongs to them to point out how the doctrine of the living Teaching Authority is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and in Tradition.”\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73} Tanner, 816, Denzinger 3074: “Romanum pontificem, cum ex cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium christianorum pastoris et doctoris munere fungens, pro suprema sua apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide vel moribus ab universa ecclesia tenendam definit, per assistentiam divinam, ipsi in beato Petro promissam, ea infallibilitate pollere, qua divinus Redemptor ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque eiusmodi Romani pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae irreformabiles esse.”

\textsuperscript{74} Weigel, “Gleanings,” 537.

Cotter pointed out that the encyclical eschewed the plural “traditions” used by Trent and adopted “ Tradition”—singular with a capital-T:

This change represents a difference in point of view, not in doctrine. If we speak of traditions, we emphasize the revealed truths which are handed on in the Church; if we speak of Tradition, we shift the emphasis to the mode or institution by which these truths are handed on, which is the ever living Magisterium and its teaching.  

Weigel cited Cavallera, who described the emphasis on the Magisterium as follows:

the Magisterium has only one function: to teach efficaciously the full revelation of Christ in any age to all people. The function of the Magisterium is not to develop dogma but to preserve it intact without blur.

If the understanding of doctrine develops, the Magisterium’s role in this process is not creative but expressive: to give authoritative expression to what is understood. Patrick Hamell described *Humani Generis*’ teaching on this point:

No formula fashioned by man can exhaust or perfectly convey divine truth. Christ appointed the teaching authority of the Church to be the guardian and interpreter of revealed truth, and this Teaching authority, in the infallible exercise of its commission, interprets and formulates the truths entrusted to it. 

*Humani Generis* used the word *fontes* to refer to the “sources” of Revelation; previously the encyclical used the word *haustus* to discuss Revelation as a whole. *Haustus* images Revelation as a fountain or “drink of water” which is expressed in two *fonts*: written Scripture and unwritten Tradition. The encyclical, however, did not discuss the nature of these fonts nor their relationship; those questions would be considered at Vatican II. Moreover, the terminology of the encyclical did not rule out a *partim-partim* view of

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76 Cotter, “Humani Generis,” 78.
77 Ibid., 78.
79 Hamell, “‘Humani Generis’”, 290.
Scripture and Tradition; rather, *Humani Generis* described Scripture and Tradition as the places where theologians would find the doctrines found in the deposit of faith:

Besides, each source of divinely revealed doctrine contains so many rich treasures of truth, that they can really never be exhausted. Hence it is that theology through the study of its sacred sources remains ever fresh; on the other hand, speculation which neglects a deeper search into the deposit of faith, proves sterile, as we know from experience.\(^{80}\)

The encyclical did not explicitly acknowledge that the Magisterium uses the work of theologians in the process of preparing its documents. Although there is a link between the work of theologians and that of the Magisterium—both can engage in an articulation of the content of Scripture and Tradition—only the Magisterium can teach authoritatively, in matters of faith and morals:

For, together with the sources of positive theology, God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church. But if the Church does exercise this function of teaching, as she often has throughout the centuries, either in the ordinary or extraordinary way, it is clear how false is a procedure which would attempt to explain what is clear by means of what is obscure. Indeed, the very opposite procedure must be used.\(^{81}\)

Although Magisterial documents are resources for theological study, they are not inspired—as is the case with Scripture. As Cotter explained:

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81 Ibid., 569: “Una enim cum sacris eiusmodi fontibus Deus Ecclesiae suae Magisterium vivum dedit, ad ea quoque illustranda et enucleanda, quae in fidei deposito nonnisi obscure ac velut implicite continentur. Quod quidem depositum nec singulis christifidelibus nec ipsis theologis divinus Redemptor concredidit authentice interpretandum, sed soli Ecclesiae Magisterio. Si autem hoc suum munus Ecclesia exercet, sicut saeculorum decursu saepenumbero factum est, sive ordinario sive extraordinario eiusdem muneris exercitio, patet omnino falsam esse methodum, qua ex obscuris clara explicentur, quin immo contrarium omnes sequi ordinem necesse esse.”
It is the office of theologians to show that the latest pronouncements of the Magisterium, especially the solemn definitions, are contained in the sources of revelation “in the same sense” in which they are now proposed. That does not mean in the same words or with the same clarity and precision; for there is dogmatic progress. It does mean the same idea, the same truth, the same dogma.\(^82\)

A theologian can take a magisterial statement as a reliable measuring stick to show how a doctrine is anteriorly contained in the sources of Revelation. By the help of what is more clear, a theologian can “bring out of obscurity” doctrines expressed in Scripture or Tradition. As the encyclical stated,

Hence Our Predecessor of Immortal Memory, Pius IX, teaching that the most noble office of theology is to show how a doctrine defined by the Church is contained in the sources of revelation, added these words, and with very good reason: “in that sense in which it has been defined by the Church” (§ 21)\(^83\)

Accordingly, Cyril Vollert maintained that the Magisterium’s teaching office is one of the basic principles of theology.

No science may deviate from its principles—theology less than any; for its principles are articles of faith entrusted to the Church and guaranteed by the prerogative of infallibility. The limits of theology are as wide as the limits of truth. Far from constricting liberty, submission to the magisterium aids liberty, because it increases efficacy of study. By saving us from meandering down wrong paths it perfects our liberty, for it guards us against making bad choices and guides us in making right choices; and that is the purpose of liberty. The theologian is in quest of truth; what better fortune can befall him than to find it?\(^84\)

In an article published in 1964, at the time of the discussion of *Dei Verbum* at Vatican II, George Tavard claimed that the use of the word *fons* in *Humani Generis* reduced Revelation to its “containers” of Scripture and Tradition:

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\(^82\) Cotter, “*Humani Generis,*” 79.
\(^83\) *AAS* 42 (1950), 569: “Quare Decessor Noster imm. mem. Pius IX, docens nobilissimum theologiae munus illud esse, quod ostendat quomodo ab Ecclesia definita doctrina contineatur in fontibus, non absque grave causa illa addidit verba: «eo ipso sensu, quo ab Ecclesia definita est».”
\(^84\) Vollert, “*Humani Generis,*” 22.
The revelation in this case is not God’s self-revealing, but its sequel, the constitution of a deposit of revealed doctrines and commands. The “source” is not a spring but a well. The word “Deposit” implies the idea of a container in which revelation has been left; of a jar where wine is preserved; of a treasure chest out of which things old and new may be drawn. The use of the word “source” has become metaphorical rather than analogical. . . . And one should beware the loss of substance that may take place when an analogical reality is replaced by a metaphorical concept. The passage of fons from analogy to metaphor implies a definite impoverishment, for it substitutes a noetic for a kerygmatic standpoint.  

Although Tavard focused on the use of the word fons, the encyclical used the word haustus (§ 8) to describe Revelation as a spring coming from God, while fontes (plural) was used to refer to Scripture and Tradition.  

Joseph Komonchak has observed that in the two centuries preceding Humani Generis, popes began making frequent use of their teaching authority and issued documents of much greater detail than had been common in prior centuries. In addition, the popes used the arguments of particular theological schools to a greater degree than previously:

The increased attention to the ordinary papal magisterium accompanied an extraordinary increase in its exercise. Since 1740, when Benedict XIV began the series, 235 papal encyclicals have been issued [to the time of this article’s publication in 1978] . . . . The frequency of these interventions was matched by the range of topics they covered and the authority that was gradually claimed for them. . . . These ordinary, “noninfallible” interventions, moreover, benefited from the aura which Vatican I's definitions of papal primacy and infallibility had helped to create; and it was not uncommon for the careful limits within which the Council had confined its definitions to be forgotten or overlooked.  

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86 *Pace* Tavard’s description of Scripture and Tradition as “containers,” Scripture and Tradition in the encyclical, in spite of the use of the word continentur, seem to function like “sources” or channels through which Revelation is mediated. The word veritas (§ 21) referred to the “truth” expressed by the “sources”—Scripture and Tradition; earlier in the encyclical, veritas (§ 8) referred to Revelation in general; here (§ 21), veritatis divinitus patefactae haustus indicates the fountain of divinely communicated truth.  
According to Komonchak, this development had two effects: first, “the tendency of the ordinary papal magisterium to overshadow the magisterial role of the local bishop and of the universal episcopate ... the effect was to make the Pope appear to be the single great teacher in the Church.” Second, “since Leo XIII, the popes increasingly concerned themselves not simply with settling disputes or judging in controversies, but also with actively promoting theological developments ... the result was to introduce official papal authority into the course of theological development at stages where once issues were considered to be the object of free debate.”

Komonchak concluded that these developments came to their “apogee” in Humani Generis (§ 20). In fact, Pius XII “repeated or applied this teaching several times in the years that followed”. The practical effect of the First Vatican Council’s definition of “the infallible magisterium of the Roman Pontiff” and other historical factors such as the Modernist crisis, may have created conditions that favored greater activity on the part of the papal teaching office. Thus, contemporaries could certainly find Humani Generis intimidating in a context where new theological approaches such as the “neo-Patristic” theology of Henri de Lubac or Jean Daniélou were not universally favored.

Encyclicals, such as Humani Generis, while not invoking infallibility, were usually considered an ordinary use of magisterial authority even if not explicitly stated. Thus, encyclicals, as documents of the papal magisterium, “demand assent” (assensum per se postulare). Although Humani Generis did not employ Vatican I’s terminology of tenenda for “matters that must be held” and credenda for “matters that must be believed,” the First

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88 Ibid., 225-226
89 Ibid., 226.
Vatican Council’s limitations upon the authority of magisterial teaching would seem applicable. Assent to the teaching of an encyclical, like assent to other ordinary teaching of the Magisterium, is not irrevocable unless the teaching involves a doctrine that already calls for an assent of “divine and Catholic faith.”\(^{90}\) In addition, the encyclical’s many references to the Church’s magisterial office in general suggest that the papal office is situated in the larger context of the successors of the apostles as a college.\(^ {91}\)

Komonchak expressed concern about the teaching of *Humani Generis* that the Magisterium is the “proximate and universal criterion of truth” (§ 18) and that Scripture and Tradition are to be considered “obscure” or remote in comparative ease of appropriation (21):

As Bernard Sesbouë has pointed out, this theological method is a one-way street, from the magisterium to the “sources” of revelation but not back again. The magisterium illumines the Scriptures and tradition, but the obscure cannot throw light on the clear. When, in the extreme, the magisterium is thought to be *sibi fons veritatis*, the constitutive authority of the Scriptures and tradition is threatened, and the regulative function of the apostolic faith is in danger of being absorbed or overshadowed by that of the bearers of the apostolic office.\(^ {92}\)

Similarly, Yves Congar observed that from the Modernist crisis to the time of Pius XII, theologians often “introduced the Magisterium into the definition of Tradition” in such a

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\(^{90}\) See Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, chapter 3: “Porro fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continetur et ab Ecclesia sive solenni judicio sive ordinario et univerali magisteiro tanquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur” (Tanner, 807; Denzinger 3011).

\(^{91}\) Whether individual bishops in 1950 exercised their teaching office within their own dioceses is a question outside the scope of this dissertation; in any case, the encyclical does not specifically exalt the Papal office above, or isolate it from its basis in, the wider apostolic succession.

way that the Magisterium itself could be seen as a source of truth in a manner similar to the Scripture or Tradition.\footnote{Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 201; Congar identified: J. V. Bainvel, De Magisterio vivo et Tradizione (Paris, 1905); W. Wilmers, Lehrbuch der Religion, 7\textsuperscript{th} ed., (Deneffe, ed., 1922); and B. Bartmann, Lehrbuch der Dogmatik (7\textsuperscript{th} ed., 1928), as examples.}

One might ask whether in these conditions the Magisterium does not become the one and only \textit{locus theologicus}, the one and only source for the knowledge of revealed truth. . . . Theologians who go as far as this, however, still use the expression ‘remote rule’ for the monuments of tradition and for Scripture. These are not without their usefulness, but their role is rather to bear witness to the living Magisterium and justify it.\footnote{Ibid., 201; Congar cited Billot and Bainvel as examples.}

Congar noted the use of the phrase \textit{proxima et universalis veritatis norma} in \textit{Humani Generis} (§ 18); however, the encyclical did not equate the Magisterium with Scripture or Tradition, but presented the Magisterium as the authoritative preserver, interpreter, and guardian of Revelation (§18). God has entrusted the deposit of faith to the Magisterium as “itself the source of truth” (\textit{sibi fons veritatis}) in the sense that it articulates revealed truth. The “remoteness” of Scripture and Tradition, however, necessitates and justifies the need for a “living Magisterium”—an authoritative interpreter and clear teacher of the deposit of faith. Thus, Scripture and Tradition may be described simultaneously as “more excellent” than Magisterial teaching yet more difficult for the fallen human intellect to penetrate, even with the aid of grace.\footnote{The structure and tone of \textit{Humani Generis} make it easy to misinterpret: Scripture is cited in only two of the encyclical’s thirteen footnotes and few Scriptural images are used in the text. Whatever the reason for the absence of Scriptural citation, the use of technical theological terminology without biblical images may give the impression that \textit{Humani Generis} was proposing that the Magisterium has an authority completely autonomous from the sources of Revelation that it is charged to preserve, guard, and interpret.}

The address of Pius XII on 31 May 1954, to the prelates who had gathered the previous day for the canonization of Pope Pius X, suggests that however strongly Pius XII emphasized the teaching authority of the Papal office, he saw papal authority in the context
of the authority of the bishops as a group. Pius XII, after cautioning against “a certain
spiritual contagion”—presumably the fallacious philosophical and theological
presuppositions mentioned in *Humani Generis*—described the Papal office in relation to the
bishops:

Christ our Lord entrusted the truth which He had brought from heaven to the
Apostles, and through them to their successors. . . . The Apostles are, therefore, by
divine right the true doctors and teachers in the church. Besides the lawful successors
of the Apostles, namely the Roman Pontiff for the universal church and Bishops for
the faithful entrusted to their care (cf. can. 1326), there are no other teachers divinely
constituted in the Church of Christ.  

The Pope and bishops may “associate” others (such as theologians) with their
teaching office. When individual bishops undertake the “supervision of doctrine,” they are
“guilty of no offense to any of those to whom [they have] given a canonical mission” and
such supervision “does not imply distrust or suspicion.” The divinely instituted office of
teaching resides with the bishop and “the fact that the office of teaching has been bestowed
implies confidence, high regard, and honor shown the person to whom the office has been
entrusted.”  

Pius XII, referring to his description of erroneous thinking in *Humani Generis*,
then recalled two principles taught by Pope Benedict XV:

We wish this maxim of our elders held in reverence: *Nihil innovetur nisi quod
traditum est* [Let nothing new be introduced but only what has been handed down]; it
must be held as an inviolable law in matters of faith, and should also control those

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96 Pius XII, “Address to Cardinals and Bishops” (May 31, 1954) in *AAS* 46 (1954), 313-317, at 314: “Christus
Dominus veritatem, quam e caelis attulit, Apostolis et per ipsos eorum successoribus concreditid; . . . .
Apostoli igitur iure divino sunt in Ecclesia statuti veri doctores seu magistri. Praeter Apostolorum autem
legitimos successores, scilicet Romanum Pontificem pro universa Ecclesia, Episcopos vero pro fidelibus suis
curis commissis, alii magistri iure divino in Ecclesia Christi non habentur; . . . .” The English translation is

97 Ibid., 315: “Neque haec legitimi Magisterii providentia et circumspectio quidquam habet diffidentiae vel
suspicionis . . . .e contrario, collata docendi facultas sapit fiduciam, bonam aestimationem, honorem exhibitum
ei, cui eadem conceditur.”
points which allow of change, though in these latter for the most part the rule holds: *Non nova sed noviter* [Not new things but in a new way].

Pius XII then applied these principles to what he called “lay theology” and to the role of catechetical work and other activity of the laity in the Church:

As for the laity, it is clear that they can be invited by legitimate teachers and accepted as helpers in the defense of the faith. It is enough to call to mind the thousands of men and women engaged in catechetical work and other types of lay apostolate, all of which are highly praiseworthy and can be strenuously promoted. But all these lay apostles must be, and remain, under the authority, leadership, and watchfulness of those who by divine institution are set up as teachers of Christ’s church. In matters involving the salvation of souls, there is no teaching authority in the Church not subject to this authority and vigilance.

*Humani Generis*, however, did not discuss the role of the laity. Komonchak has observed that the encyclical, by stressing the papal teaching office so strongly, downplayed most of the means by which the faith is transmitted to the average believer:

[The transmission of faith] is accomplished through the interworking of a whole complex of “bearers” of authority: the Scriptures, the tradition, the magisterium, the *sensus fidei*, holy living, the liturgy, theological scholarship, etc. All of these are community realities, and it is only within the community of faith which they all mediate and realize that any one of them—including both the Scriptures and the magisterium—works effectively or is accepted as an authority. They are interrelated organically and not hierarchically. . . . No one of them is more “remote” or more “proximate” than the others; they “mediate” one another, in the sense that they all provide the intelligible and vital context outside of which no single one of them can exist or function properly.

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98 Ibid., 316: “«Sanctam haberi volumus eam maiorum legem: Nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum est; quae lex tametsi inviolate servanda est in rebus fidei, tamen ad eius normam dirigenda sunt etiam, quae mutationem pati possunt; quamquam in his ea quoque regula plerumque valet: *Non nova, sed noviter*».”

99 Ibid., 316: “Ad laicos quod attinet, a legitimis Magisteris in fidei defensione eosdem quoque adiutores et adiutrices vocari vel admitti in aperto est. Sufficit memorare Christiane doctrinae institutionem, in quam tot milia virorum multierumque incumbunt, necnon alias formas apostolatus laicorum. Quae omnia eximie laudanda sunt omnique conatu promoveri possunt et debent. At omnes hi laici sint et maneant oportet sub auctoritate, ductu atque vigiliantia eorum, qui divina institutione magistri in Ecclesia Christi statuti sunt. Nullum est enim in Ecclesia, in rebus ad salutem animarum spectantibus, magisterium quod hic potestati ac vigilantiae subductum sit.”

100 Komonchak, “*Humanae Vitae*,” 230.
The allocution of Pius XII to the bishops in 1954 seemingly envisioned the teaching of the laity in terms of an “organic” “interworking” with the Magisterial office; nonetheless, this charism is one that is really exercised within a community of believers and is a vital vehicle of the local bishop’s teaching charism as well as, in a more remote way, that of the Pope.

After discussing the effects of erroneous philosophical presuppositions about dogmatic theology, *Humani Generis* turned to the question of exegesis and pointed out that some people hold theories opposing the divine authorship of Scripture (§§ 22-24). In opposition to the teaching of the First Vatican Council that God is the primary author of Scripture,

> They put forward again the opinion, already often condemned, which asserts that immunity from error extends only to those parts of the Bible that treat of God or of moral and religious matters. They even wrongly speak of a human sense of the Scriptures, beneath which a divine sense, which they say is the only infallible meaning, lies hidden (§ 22)\(^\text{101}\)

Implicitly, *Humani Generis* raised the issue of whether Scriptural inspiration covers only matters of faith and morals, or also extends, at least to some extent, to natural matters such as history. What needed clarification is the meaning of “the human sense” and its correlation with “the divine sense.” In any case, the encyclical stated that the failure to understand this relationship correctly has led to misinterpretations of Scripture:

> Thus they judge the doctrine of the Fathers and of the Teaching Church by the norm of Holy Scripture, interpreted by the purely human reason of exegetes, instead of explaining Holy Scripture according to the mind of the Church which Christ our

\(^{101}\) *AAS* 42 (1950), 569: “... atque sententiam, iam pluries reprobatam, renovant, secundum quam Sacrarum Litterarum immunitas errorum ad ea solummodo, quae de Deo ac de rebus moralibus et religiosis traduntur, pertineat. Immo perperam loquuntur de sensu humano Sacrorum Librorum sub quo sensus eorum divinus lateat, quem solum infallibilem declarant.”
Lord appointed guardian and interpreter of the whole deposit of divinely revealed truth (§ 22).  

The encyclical rejected the opinion that the autonomous human mind is a sufficient principle by which to interpret Scripture, without any need of the “mind” of the Church as preserved in Tradition and expressed by the Magisterium. Finally, the encyclical developed and defended the Church’s traditional view of the senses of Scripture. In particular, the literal sense is a doorway through which all other senses are accessed. In contrast, “according to their fictitious opinions, the literal sense of Holy Scripture and its explanation, carefully worked out under the Church’s vigilance by so many great exegetes, should yield now to a new exegesis, which they are pleased to call symbolic or spiritual” (23).  

Although the new typological exegesis practiced by proponents of the nouvelle théologie emphasized drawing out the spiritual sense of Scripture, this passage seemingly was addressing the decision to abandon traditional literal-sense-based exegesis but did not reject the search for the spiritual senses of Scripture. The encyclical then noted that such principles are foreign to three earlier encyclicals treating biblical studies: Providentissimus Deus of Leo XIII (1893), Spiritus Paraclitus Benedict XV (1920) and Divino Afflante Spiritu of Pius XII (1943).  

According to Ralph Russell, Pius XII was not denying that there are symbolic or spiritual senses in Scripture:

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102 Ibid., 569: “. . . ita ut Sanctorum Patrum et sacri Magisterii doctrina quasi ad trutinam Sacrae Scripturae, ratione mere humana ab exegetis explicitae, sit revocanda, potius quam eadem Sacra Scriptura exponenda sit ad mentem Ecclesiae, quae a Christo Domino totius depositi veritatis divinitus revelatae custos ac interpres constituta est.”

103 Ibid., 569: “Ac praeterea sensus litteralis Sacrae Scripturae eiusque expositio a tot tantisque exegetis, vigilante Ecclesia, elaborata, ex commenticiis eorum placitis, novae cedere debent exegesi, quam symbolicam ac spirituallem appellant; et qua Sacra Biblia Veteris Testamenti, quae hodie in Ecclesia tamquam fons clausus laetant, tandem aliquando omnibus aperiantur.”
By maintaining the primacy of the literal sense we do not reject a ‘spiritual’ sense. The timely warnings of *Humani generis* are intended to safeguard genuine theological thought, foster it by showing up aberrations, and safeguard it from the lazy-minded or innovators who seek to avoid the duties imposed by Papal pronouncements and to pass over all the solid work of centuries.  

According to Russell, the encyclical was not intended to discourage renewed interest in the spiritual senses of Scripture, but to correct abuses.  

The theological section of *Humani Generis* concluded with three paragraphs listing Christian doctrines with which these theories were supposedly incompatible. First, the interpretation of a text may not be in conflict with philosophical doctrines such as the rational demonstrability of God’s existence and the distinction between matter and spirit. Second, a theologian’s views must not be in conflict with theological doctrines such as the personhood of angels, transubstantiation, the mystical body of Christ and the Catholic Church. Third, there should not be a rejection of the principle that there is “no salvation outside the Church” as “a meaningless idea” nor acceptance of the view that the Christian faith is not credible. The remainder of the encyclical discussed truths and methods related to reason (§§ 28-45). According to Weigel, this section “was necessary because the ‘new theology’ was disdainful of metaphysical philosophy in general and of Scholasticism in particular”; in this “new position, theology could use any kind of philosophy for the purpose of expressing revelation . . . for reasons of efficiency and vitality he should use the one in vogue rather than some form that was démodé.”

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105 Russell also commended de Lubac’s *Histoire et Esprit*, Daniélou’s *Études sur les Origenes de la Typologie Biblique* and Joseph Coppens’ *Les Harmonies des deux Testaments* as examples of inquiry into the spiritual sense that reflect the teaching of *Humani Generis* on the primacy of the literal sense (ibid., 3).  
106 Weigel, “Gleanings,” 540. The treatment of Weigel and Vollert of the nouvelle théologie’s use of existentialist thought-forms, discussed above, suggests that its practitioners were not rejecting a realist
Humani Generis, after reiterating the Church’s regard for reason and its ability to demonstrate the existence of one personal God, noted: “For this philosophy, acknowledged and accepted by the Church, safeguards the genuine validity of human knowledge, the unshakable metaphysical principles of sufficient reason, causality, and finality, and finally the mind’s ability to attain certain and unchangeable truth” (§ 29). Thus, Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium work together to disclose knowledge that is accessible to the human mind, even if the revealer is impenetrable. Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium mediate the Revelation of a personal God and provide an intelligible articulation of divine mysteries.

Humani Generis then critiqued what it considered some faulty presuppositions in contemporary philosophy:

They allege, finally, that our perennial philosophy is only a philosophy of immutable essences, while the contemporary mind must look to the existence of things and to life, which is ever in flux. . . . No Catholic can doubt how false this is, especially where there is question of those fictitious theories they call immanentism, or idealism, or materialism, whether historic or dialectic, or even existentialism, whether atheistic, or simply the type that denies the validity of the reason in the field of metaphysics (§ 32).

Thus human reason can know both material things and truth about reality beyond the physical: meta physika. Humani Generis objected to the view that reality consists only of

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worldview or the belief that Christianity makes metaphysical claims; apparently, however, there was concern that they might move in that direction.

107 AAS 42 (1950), 572: “Quae quidem philosophia in Ecclesia agnita ac recepta, et verum sincerumque cognitionis humanae valorem tuetur, et metaphysica inconcussa principia—rationis nempe sufficientis, causalitatis, et finalitatis—ac demum certae et immutabilis veritatis ascensionem.”

108 Ibid., 573-74: “Opponunt deinde philosophiam perennem nonnisi philosophiam immutabilium essentiarum esse, dum hodierna mens ad «existentiam» singulorum spectet necesse est et ad vitam semper fluentem . . . quod quidem falsum omnino esse, cum praeertim de commentis illis agatur, quae vel «immanentismum» vocant, vel «idealismum», vel «materialismum», sive historicum, sive dialecticum, ac vel etiam «existentialismum» sive atheismum profitentem, sive saltem valori ratocinii metaphysici adversantem, catholicus nemo in dubium revocare potest.”
the material or limit spiritual realities to what might be described by philosophically materialistic or immanentistic language. This knowledge of the immaterial is the departure-point for an analogy of being, a doctrine needed to ground a person’s reception of Revelation.

The encyclical also distinguished between the use of Thomism in magisterial documents, the use of Thomism in teaching theology, and the question of a particular form of Thomism. According to Weigel, several Jesuit commentators (Hayen, Cotter, Bea) argued that the encyclical did not teach a particular form of Thomism: “Even that outstanding Thomist, P.M. Labourdette, stated that the encyclical did not canonize any philosophy, not even the doctrine of St. Thomas, in the sense of making it the doctrine of the Magisterium.” Rather, in Weigel’s view, those who teach theology in the Church’s name are called to rely upon Thomism as a reliable means for presenting doctrine. Yet this recommendation is not a proscription of the use of other philosophical approaches to express the Church’s doctrine;\(^\text{109}\) as Hayen concluded:

> In sum, the encyclical demands an intense effort of progress, hedged about by all the guarantees of prudence. It insists above all on the importance of these guarantees, searched after with a serene confidence in truth and in the unity of intelligence.\(^\text{110}\)

Then, in making a transition from a discussion of philosophy to a discussion of the physical sciences (§ 35), *Humani Generis* taught that doctrine has primacy in conflicts with theories of physical sciences: “If such conjectural opinions are directly or indirectly opposed


to the doctrine revealed by God, then the demand that they be recognized can in no way be admitted."111 What Scripture and Tradition mediate and what the Magisterium teaches, has noetic content that is intellectually accessible and illuminates the field in which the natural sciences work.

Finally, in discussing evolution, *Humani Generis* insisted that while elements of ancient Middle Eastern pagan religious thought are found in the Old Testament writings, such elements do not compromise its revealed or historical nature. These elements within Scripture “must in no way be considered on a par with the myths or other literary types, which are more the product of an extravagant imagination than of that striving for truth and simplicity” in which the Old Testament writers excelled in contrast to profane writers of the time (§ 39).112 Accordingly, the thought-forms and language from natural religion can be helpful in expressing Revelation, indeed, God and the human authors may have used them to do so.

**Summary**

At the time that Pope Pius XII published *Humani Generis*, French intellectuals were interested in the philosophy of existentialism; accordingly, theologians tried to use existentialist notions in articulating Christian doctrine. Concern developed in the decade prior to the publication of *Humani Generis* that use of existentialist thought could lead to the importation of faulty philosophical presuppositions into Roman Catholic theology and catechesis. In response, *Humani Generis* strongly reaffirmed the permanent validity and

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111 *AAS* 42 (1950), 575: “Quodsi tales coniecturales opiniones doctrinae a Deo revelatae directe vel indirecte adversentur, tum huimusmodi postulatum nullo modo admitti potest.”

112 Ibid., 577: “. . . ea cum mythologiis alisive id genus minime aequanda sunt, quae magis ex effusa imaginatione procedunt quam ex illo veritatis ac simplicitatis studio . . . .”
pastoral usefulness of Scholastic thought for presenting doctrine. Nonetheless, the encyclical condemned neither the work nor individual theologians of the *nouvelle théologie* that engaged existentialist thought. Contemporary commentators suggested that the encyclical strongly cautioned yet simultaneously called for continued study in presenting doctrine in the modern world. Some people, however, believed that *Humani Generis* condemned the *nouvelle théologie*.

The encyclical taught that Scripture and Tradition are the sources of the one Word of God (§ 8) and a fountain (*haustus*) from which thinkers can draw in order to express doctrine. The encyclical situated the Magisterium’s office of authoritatively interpreting doctrine within the Church as a whole, but its description of the Magisterium as a “proximate criterion of truth” for theology, coupled with the teaching that the Scripture and Tradition are more “obscure” than the Magisterium could easily give the impression that theology—“if it is to “remain ever fresh”—depends on the Magisterium, rather than on Scripture and Tradition which “contain so many rich treasures of truth, that they can really never be exhausted” (§§ 21, 18). What is most notably absent from *Humani Generis* in a discussion of the mediation of Revelation to the believer is the role of the Church as a whole: the liturgy, catechesis, parish life, and individual study of the Faith. But in an encyclical intended to address a specific problem in the academy, this omission is not as surprising as it would have been, for example, in a Conciliar constitution seeking to address the question of Revelation as a whole.
Chapter 2: Gerardus Van Noort’s Dogmatic Theology

Gerardus Van Noort’s Dogmatic Theology was a theological manual that was widely used in seminaries prior to the Second Vatican Council. Van Noort wrote this ten-volume work between 1898 and 1908, while he was a professor at the seminary in Warmond, Netherlands; subsequently his Warmond colleague J. P. Verhaar updated and revised later editions. John J. Castelot and William R. Murphy, who translated and edited the first three volumes into English, stated:

Since some complain that dogmatic theologians and scriptural scholars are uncooperative, we thought that it would be wise to have a professor of Scripture [Castelot] and a professor of dogmatic theology [Murphy] join forces in bringing Van Noort's work to the English speaking world. As an exegetical discussion of all the scriptural texts involved would have rendered this volume exceedingly cumbersome, we have been content to incorporate the conclusions of such discussion.

The translators-editors also mentioned that they “pruned” some points that “seemed no longer useful, rearranged and enlarged some sections, and incorporated both in the text and in the notes much new matter that was totally absent from the original.” Nonetheless,

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1 Gerardus Cornelius Van Noort (1861-1946), a native of Hageveld, Holland, studied at Hageveld and Warmond and was ordained a priest in 1884. After serving as a chaplain in Medemblik and Amsterdam (1884-1892), Van Noort was a professor of dogmatic theology at the seminary of Warmond (1892-1908), where he wrote a ten-volume manual of dogmatic theology, Tractatus apologetici et dogmatici (Leyden 1898-1908). Van Noort was suspected of Modernism and had to resign his teaching position in 1908. From 1908-1926, Van Noort was a pastor in Amsterdam; in 1926, he was named a canon of the cathedral chapter of Haarlem. After receiving a Roman doctorate honoris causa from the Gregorianum in 1930, he was appointed a domestic prelate by Pope Pius XI in 1934. See J. J. Castelot, “Van Noort, Gerard,” New Catholic Encyclopedia, Second Edition (2003), 14: 385; hereafter cited: NCE. See also B. Voets, “Noort, Gerardus Cornelis (1861-1946),” Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland 2 (The Hague, 1985), updated March 13, 2008.
2 Gerardus Van Noort, Dogmatic Theology, Volume I, The True Religion, Sixth Edition, edited by J. P. Verhaar, translated and revised by John J. Castelot and William R. Murphy (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1955), vi; hereafter cited Van Noort, True Religion. According to Castelot (NCE 14: 385), Van Noort’s Dogmatic Theology was “brought up to date by J. P Verhaar, also of the Warmond faculty, and in an English edition (of the first three volumes)” by Castelot and Murphy. Castelot and Murphy noted in their introduction to the first volume of the English edition: “In our revision of the work, we have maintained the substance of the original. Revisions have been made only when called for by more recent pronouncements of the Church, or by the growth due to recent scholarship in Scripture and the other branches of positive theology. Most of these revisions will be found in the notes” (pp. v-vi).
they claimed: “In doing so, we have tried to alter as little as possible the author's original framework and substance because it still seemed to us to be basically sound.”

In spite of such editorial privilege (or license), Edwin Kaiser was of the opinion:

The Van Noort texts in their day—the progress in theology has left them very much outmoded—enjoyed a great vogue largely because of the fine organization of the materials and the extraordinary clarity of the exposition. The present work in English, fortunately much more a revision than a translation, has lost nothing of this excellence. The additional material is immense. The arrangement is most suited to the student of theology who is concerned with fluent English even in the translation of the ponderous Latin technical terminology. He should be grateful for the traditionally dogmatic approach aimed above all at forthright presentation and defence of the Catholic position.

Yves Congar has described the theological manuals that were in use between the two Vatican Councils as emphasizing two key ideas. First, dogmatic development became an accepted notion in theology after the publication of Johann Baptist Franzelin’s *De Divina Traditio et Scriptura* in 1870.

Second, three dogmatic definitions—the infallible magisterium of the Roman Pontiff at Vatican I in 1870, the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the Assumption in 1950—focused attention on papal authority.

According to Congar, the manualist treatment of Tradition took one of two emphases: some authors, including De Groot, Tanquerey, Pohle, and Van Noort,

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emphasized objective Tradition, so that “objective tradition and Holy Scripture were
presented as constituting the remote rule of faith, whilst the Church, or more precisely the
Magisterium of her pastors, was its proximate rule.” Other authors, including Bainvel and
Billot, emphasized the active Tradition of the Church as it is exercised by the Magisterium:

“Tradition” in itself only indicates doctrine communicated by the living word. To
possess the quality of a rule of faith, it must be communicated by a Magisterium.
Thus the active tradition practised “by the Church,” the praedicatio ecclesiastica, or
more exactly its selective proposition by a Magisterium invested with authority, has
a formal role in relation to the deposit. It constitutes it as normative.

Accordingly, the Magisterium could easily be seen as “the one and only locus theologicus,
the one and only source of the revealed truth.” Tradition, which is even less “fixed and
definite” than Scripture, especially needs interpretation by an authoritative source. For these
authors, “at any given time in history, tradition is identified with the authentic Magisterium,
the proximate and immediate rule of our faith.”

**Volume I: The True Religion**

In his first volume, *The True Religion*, Van Noort described theology as a
“supernatural science which treats of God and of creatures in their relationship to God”;
thus, God is the primary and creatures are the secondary material objects of theology. The
goal of fundamental theology is to “gain a deeper and more precise knowledge of the
arguments which guarantee certitude in religious matters, and a better understanding of the
reasonableness of faith” and “to learn how to show unbelievers the truth of the Catholic

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9 Ibid., 201-202.
Religion and to solve their difficulties.”\textsuperscript{11} Van Noort considered several philosophical presuppositions necessary in order to present the truth of Catholicism. First, he maintained that reason can arrive at truth in the metaphysical, moral, and historical orders; in addition, reason can demonstrate the existence of one transcendent God. Van Noort also presupposed the “authenticity, truthfulness, and substantial integrity” of the New Testament.\textsuperscript{12} For Van Noort, the decision to believe in Catholicism merits careful consideration of evidence, in a manner similar to that used in other branches of inquiry.

In the first chapter of Section I, which was devoted to “A Scientific Analysis of Religion, Considered Abstractly,” Van Noort emphasized that religion is rooted in the human ability to gain objectively true knowledge of God. A person is bound to practice religion in an external, public manner. Religion is the “moral relationship by which a rational creature, who recognizes his dependence upon God and the duties which follow from that dependence, pays honor to God in theory and in practice.”\textsuperscript{13}

The second chapter considered revealed religion. God has revealed truths which exceed the natural human ability to perceive; God may reveal to an individual or to many people; God may reveal immediately (e.g., to a prophet) or mediately (to others through a prophet).\textsuperscript{14} Through Revelation, God discloses mysteries: “truths which by their very nature lie completely beyond the grasp of unaided human reason.” In regard to the recognition of Revelation, Van Noort also considered motives of credibility, including both internal criteria, such as the truthfulness and sublimity of a doctrine, and external criteria such as the holiness of the herald, as well as miracles and prophecies.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., xlviii.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. xlix.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 33.
For Van Noort, a miracle is “an effect perceptible by the senses and beyond the range of all nature” intended to authenticate divine testimony.\(^\text{15}\) Miracles were considered revelatory actions, while prophecy was described as “the sure and definite prediction of some future event which could not be foreseen through natural causes.”\(^\text{16}\) Van Noort’s understanding of prophecy differed from that of St. Thomas Aquinas, who considered prophecy as knowledge, supernaturally given to an individual, about matters beyond the human capacity of reason, for the good of the community and confirmed by miracles.\(^\text{17}\) Van Noort’s understanding of prophecy also differed from that of many modern biblical scholars, who consider prophecy a divine communication to the human world.\(^\text{18}\)

Van Noort’s next section on “The Truth of the Christian-Catholic Religion” sought to demonstrate through an examination of the life and work of Christ, as presented in Scripture and in the Fathers of the Church that: a) Christ established Catholicism and b) the Catholic Church is the true church.\(^\text{19}\) Van Noort considered “The Sublimity of the Christian-Catholic Religion” sufficient evidence of its truthfulness: something complete, holy, beautiful, and happy in its results, and not attributable to solely human power.\(^\text{20}\)

Van Noort’s subsequent chapter on “Christ’s Divine Mission” maintained that Christ’s testimony is true on the basis of His holiness, prophecies, miracles, and His...

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 68.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 87.
\(^{18}\) See for example, Robert R. Wilson’s description of “prophet” in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, edited by Paul J. Atchemeier (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 826: “prophet (Heb. nabi’, Gk. prophētēs), a person who serves as a channel of communication between the human and divine world. The biblical prophets played a crucial role in the development of Judaism and Christianity and influenced later Western thought by becoming the paradigm for identifying authentic divine messengers.”
\(^{20}\) Ibid., 120-123.
resurrection. Van Noort emphasized that Christ proclaimed His divinity in words and actions:

Christ openly and continuously proclaimed Himself before friends, before the general populace, and before the doctors of the law and the public officials, as a messenger from God to man. He also taught that He was the Son of God, and Himself true God. The Divinity of Christ is mentioned at this point only because Christ asserted and performed some things which no mere messenger of God could ever dare to assert or do.\(^{21}\)

Thus, Van Noort considered that Christ’s miracles were accurately recorded in the New Testament and so offer demonstrable proof for Christianity. Christ is then the primary agent of God’s revelatory action in the world.

In sum, the first volume of Van Noort’s *Dogmatic Theology* presented Revelation primarily as doctrinal truth about mysteries, truth communicated by the Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man. Citing the writings of the Fathers and magisterial documents, Van Noort presupposed that Scripture is a source of Revelation. For Van Noort, Christianity is historical fact and so requires attention to historical witnesses and decisions about their reliability. Unlike the French existentialism described by Weigel,\(^{22}\) Christianity requires openness to the possibility of direct divine action in history.

**Volume II: Christ’s Church**

In his second volume, *Christ’s Church*, Van Noort maintained that Christ established a Church which communicates His Revelation until His return. All people are called to belong to the Catholic Church. As was the case with Volume I, Castelot and Murphy included new material, particularly a chapter on the Mystical Body, while “the chapters on the members of the Church and the necessity of the Church for salvation have both been

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\(^{21}\) Ibid., 131.

revised in the light of [Pope Pius XII's encyclical] *Mystici Corporis* [1943] and recent ecclesiological writing.”^{23}

In the introduction to this volume, Van Noort described Christ’s Church:

Christ's Church, then, indicates in a general way the whole host of people who join themselves to God through Christ. Since this group includes some who are living in triumph in heaven, some who are suffering in purgatory, and others who are fighting life’s battle on earth, the Church in this broad sense consists of three parts: the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Militant.^{24}

According to Van Noort, the Church Militant “may be defined as follows: the society of men who, by their profession of the same faith and by their partaking of the same sacraments, make up, under the rule of apostolic pastors and their head, the kingdom of Christ on earth.”^{25} Intended as an apologetical view of the Church, Van Noort’s first chapter considered the Church primarily as a true society founded by Christ, “a permanent assembly of many people united for the attainment of a common goal.”^{26} The purpose of this Church is that human beings should practice the Christian religion and be made holy.

The next chapter discussed the nature of the Church. Christ bestowed upon the apostles a share in His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king and willed that the apostolic college should continue throughout history. A monarchial succession and a juridical authority are rooted in these elements. Christ bestowed upon Peter “a primacy of real and strict jurisdiction.”

The true Church of Christ is none other than the Roman Catholic Church. Surely, if Christ entrusted His universal Church to Peter and to Peter's successors in perpetuity,
and if the Roman pontiffs are Peter’s successors, then the true Church of Christ is the one which gives steadfast obedience to the Roman Pontiffs.\textsuperscript{27}

In virtue of infallibility, the Church “can neither deceive nor be deceived in matters of faith and morals.” Van Noort described active infallibility as “the privilege by which the teaching office of the Church, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, is preserved immune from error when it defines a doctrine of faith or morals.” In contrast, by passive infallibility

. . . the faithful are kept free from error in religious matters only by loyally following their rulers. Consequently, it is limited by the same restrictions as is active infallibility, and it will therefore suffice to treat only the latter.\textsuperscript{28}

Describing infallibility as a “property of the Church,” Van Noort situated it within the Church as a whole; nonetheless, “when the teaching office of the Church hands down decisions on matters of faith and morals in such a way as to require of everyone full and absolute assent, it is infallible.” The primary object of infallibility is “each and every religious truth contained formally in the sources of revelation.”\textsuperscript{29} Secondary objects of infallibility include “those matters so closely connected with the revealed deposit that revelation itself would be imperiled” without them.\textsuperscript{30} Under the secondary object, Van Noort included such matters as theological conclusions, dogmatic facts, the general discipline of the Church, approval of religious orders, and the canonization of saints. Infallibility was viewed as a privilege exercised by the help of the Holy Spirit, a supernatural gift, not a habit. The translation of Van Noort reiterated the teaching of \textit{Humani Generis} (§ 18) that the Word of God in Scripture and Tradition is the remote rule of

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 83-84.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 102-103.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 110
faith, and that “the preaching of the ecclesiastical magisterium” is the proximate rule of faith.\textsuperscript{31}

Van Noort then considered the four marks of the Church;\textsuperscript{32} these marks are essential and distinguishing qualities, more visible than the reality itself. Not unexpectedly, only the Catholic Church possesses all of these marks. For Van Noort, only such an institution is an adequate mediator of Revelation, which flows primarily to people through the Church’s head, Peter, and through the bishops in a lesser way without the charism of infallibility, unless the bishops act together in union with the Pope. For Van Noort, the Petrine office is “the principle and foundation” of the Church’s unity.\textsuperscript{33}

The second section, which examined “The Church Viewed from Inside (Dogma)” began by considering the Catholic Church as the body of Christ, which is “united in an intimate and indissoluble union with Christ, its invisible Head. . . . who exercises constant influence on it.”\textsuperscript{34} The chapter on the Mystical Body, which was apparently written by Castelot and Murphy,\textsuperscript{35} employed the analogy of a person, whose head is: a) of the same nature as the members, but b) is superior in dignity, position, and in perfection of sensory activity; and c) is so intrinsically connected with the members as to form a totality. In addition, sanctifying grace is the first gift that comes to the Church from Christ; the Holy Spirit is its soul.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{31}{Ibid., 122.}
\footnotetext{32}{Ibid., 125-132.}
\footnotetext{33}{Ibid., 130.}
\footnotetext{34}{Ibid., 217.}
\footnotetext{35}{Ibid., 216}
\footnotetext{36}{Ibid., 224-225.}
\end{footnotes}
This chapter then stipulated the conditions for membership in the Church: baptism, profession of faith, and hierarchical communion.\(^{37}\) The Church was seen as necessary for salvation both by precept (moral obligation) and as means (positively leading to salvation) even if only by implicit desire.\(^{38}\) In accord with Vatican I, Van Noort maintained that the Roman Pontiff’s primacy is real, universal, ordinary, direct and episcopal, supreme, and absolutely complete in itself.\(^{39}\) The Pope “possesses in himself alone the plenitude of supreme power.”\(^{40}\) Finally, Van Noort considered the role of bishops: by Divine law, each bishop possesses ordinary, complete jurisdiction over his diocese. Only the Pope has authority over other bishops; he grants their jurisdiction directly. Collectively, bishops can teach infallibly on matters of faith and morals in council or even when they are dispersed if they are “morally united” to the Pope.\(^{41}\)

**Volume III: The Sources of Revelation and Divine Faith**

Van Noort’s third volume of *Dogmatic Theology* contained two treatises: one on the sources of Revelation and a second on faith. Castelot and Murphy revised this section, but essentially preserved Van Noort’s presentation.\(^{42}\) Christ “designed” the Church and her teaching as the norm of faith “for each generation.”\(^{43}\) Tradition is the way doctrine is handed from generation to generation, but it has various meanings. Objectively, Tradition refers to

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 258.
\(^{38}\) Ibid., 264.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 281.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 281.
\(^{41}\) Van Noort, *Christ's Church*, 331.
\(^{42}\) Van Noort, *Sources of Revelation*, vi: “The places where emendations have been made are too numerous to be specifically singled out, but a more than casual glance at the text and notes on the treatment of ‘inerrancy’ or ‘theological notes,’ for example, will suffice to indicate the general tenor of revisions made in other places.” Castelot and Murphy also pointed out: “In the field of Scripture, for example, developments during the past forty years have been so extensive that one could not possibly hope to incorporate matters which are best treated in the field of Scripture itself. But we do hope that we have given sufficient indication in notes and references of where such specific treatment may be found” (Ibid., iv-v).
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 3-6.
the doctrine handed down; actively, Tradition refers to the acts by which doctrine is
handed down. For Van Noort, the Church’s preaching is the proximate rule of faith,
“because all the faithful, as such be they uneducated or learned, can safely and directly
determine the material object of their belief on the basis of that preaching.” Scripture and
Tradition comprise the remote rule of faith, because “they regulate directly, not the belief of
the faithful, but the preaching of their teachers.” For Van Noort, the dependence of the
faithful upon the Magisterium for the reliable articulation of Revelation is substantial
enough to consider these expressions of Revelation remote sources for an individual’s faith.

Van Noort rejected the theory (partim-partim) theory that separated Scripture and
Tradition into two distinct sources; rather, he considered Tradition the basic source of
Revelation:

We must not, however, imagine Scripture and Tradition to be like two distinct
reservoirs receiving the waters of divine truth from two distinct and separate springs.
There is in a sense but one source of revealed truth, viz. Divine Tradition. . . . the
peculiar character and importance of Scripture—the written part of this divine
Tradition—derives solely from the fact that it is the inspired word of God. The two
streams of oral Tradition and Scripture happily mix, for in the living magisterium of
the Church these are living waters springing together unto life everlasting. It is the
Church, the holder of Tradition, that gives life to the dead letter of Scripture.

Van Noort then insisted that only in the life of the Church does Scripture “become
living and effectual, more piercing than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). Tradition only
exists in a living line of authorized bearers; Tradition and Scripture “mix” in the Church’s
Magisterium, which as the authorized living teacher, provides authoritative decisions about
the one Word revealed through Scripture and Tradition. Scripture and Tradition serve as

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44 Ibid., 7.
46 Ibid., 6.
“loci” or “storehouses” of Revelation; they are “the remote rule of faith.” The supernatural nature of Revelation does not render it completely impenetrable to grace-aided believers, who, however, may find it difficult to understand, since their intellects are affected by sin.

In his section on “Sacred Scripture,” Van Noort described Scripture as “the collection of books which, written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have God as their Author and as such, have been handed down to the Church itself.” In specifying the canonicity of Scripture, the Church simply confirms the prior reality of a book’s inspiration; thus, canonicity is the visible judgment that a book is inspired. For Van Noort, the only adequate criterion for believing that a book is inspired is “divine testimony given by an authoritative spokesman and promulgated in a trustworthy document,” such as the Tridentine Canon.

According to Van Noort, Inspiration involved human authors acting freely: “God's gentle Providence decreed that Scripture be composed in such a way that its books would be not only divine, but at the same time truly human”— including all the literary forms employed in human communication. God is the principal author of Scripture. Man is the free, instrumental author who writes according to personal temperament and education. Accordingly, Van Noort seems to have been comfortable with imperfections in the text:

Obscurities, stylistic imperfections, and barbarisms which can be found in Scripture, (cannot) be attributed to the Holy Spirit . . . defects of this sort do not at all thwart the purposes of Scripture, the inspiration of the faithful; hence, the divine influence does not necessarily prevent them.

47 Ibid., 7, 9.
48 Ibid., 14.
49 Ibid., 30-31.
50 Ibid., 45.
51 Ibid., 60.
Van Noort concluded that everything contained in a passage of Scripture is the word of God and so is infallibly true. Simultaneously, “with all due reverence for inerrancy, a hagiographer no less than a secular author could pose as someone else, so long as he used such a literary fiction for an honorable purpose . . . and used it in such a way that his readers would not necessarily be duped.”

Van Noort then examined the senses of Scripture and distinguished between a literal sense, “which the words themselves in this precise context directly express,” and a typical sense, which “the words express, not directly but through the medium of the objects which they signify.” This typical sense “is grounded on and presupposes” the literal sense. The Magisterium respects exegetes’ freedom to explore the text: “if biblical studies among Catholics sometimes lagged rather badly, the blame lay with the unfavorable conditions of the times or with the indolence of men.”

In the following section on “Sacred Tradition,” Van Noort categorized objective oral Tradition as “that collection of speculative and practical truths communicated vivavoce to the Church by Christ and the Apostles as organs of revelation” and “the collection of revealed truths which the Church has received through the apostles in addition to inspired Scripture and which it preserves by the uninterrupted continuity of the apostolic teaching office.”

In fact, many words and deeds of our Lord Himself, and, even more so, of the apostles, could have passed into oblivion without the loss of anything taught, commanded, or instituted by Christ or by the Holy Spirit. Granted, then, that those

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52 Ibid., 73-74.
53 Ibid., 100-101.
54 Ibid., 111; it is unclear whether this comment about Catholic Biblical studies “lagging” behind that of Protestantism was an addition by Castelot and Murphy.
55 Ibid., 134.
things which everyone must explicitly believe are to be found in Scripture, it does not at all follow that the rest are matters of historical, rather than of religious, interest. For a) many of these other things are necessary for the Church to carry out its mission successfully, and b) whatever Christ revealed, even things which are merely useful, must be faithfully treasured by the Church and believed implicitly by all and explicitly by those who have knowledge of them.  

In contrast to those Protestants who view “inherent and declarative Tradition” as more clearly expressing doctrines contained formally in Scripture, Catholics understand by the term “declarative Tradition” also, and in fact, especially that tradition which objectively or materially complements the teaching found in Scripture, i.e., in all the passages containing matter pertinent to a specific subject. It complements Scripture by offering more information than the latter does on the same subject.  

For Van Noort, Protestants consider declarative and inherent Tradition to be the same, while Catholics understand Tradition to “go beyond the data of Scripture without proposing a doctrine altogether foreign to it, it is as a matter of fact constitutive.” For Catholics, “Scripture and inherent Tradition are two distinct sources for the same truths;” however, Tradition is the primary source, and Scripture is the secondary source. Nonetheless, when theology manuals discuss doctrine, “one will not find therein many theses which take their proof from the data of Tradition alone without an appeal to Sacred Scripture for at least the first steps of the demonstration.”  

For Van Noort, “tradition exists as a source of revelation distinct from Scripture and goes beyond the data of Scripture.” Christ “personally established a permanent living magisterium to be heeded by all and gave not the slightest intimation that books were to be written or that they would one day constitute an exclusive source of information.”  

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56 Ibid., 140-141.  
57 Ibid., 141.  
58 Ibid., 142.  
59 Ibid., 146.
Fathers considered Scripture an adequate source “only if one presumes the preaching and interpretation of the Church,” by which Scripture is “clarified, not to say enriched.”

Moreover, “when all the apostles had died, the charism of revelation did indeed die with them, but not the charism of truth, the gift of infallibility.”

Really, Tradition must not be thought of as a long, confused conglomeration of statements which depend upon human memory for continued existence, but rather as a compendium of Christian faith and living which is included for the most part in the day by day profession of that faith, in liturgical and disciplinary custom, and in Christian practices themselves and finds varied and gradually clearer expression as the needs of times and locales demand.

First, “the chief means or organ for the preservation of Tradition is the unbroken continuance of the Apostolic teaching office. . . . he [Christ] saw to it, too, that the Holy Spirit would always assist this enduring magisterium by steering it away from error and guiding it to the truth.” Second are various “monuments,” which help the Magisterium to preserve Tradition, including: creeds and definitions; acts of councils and popes; liturgical books; acts of the martyrs; writings of fathers and theologians; records of Church history; and Christian art. For Van Noort, Tradition is conveyed primarily in action—in the Magisterium’s grace-aided perseverance in truth, in worship and in daily living of the lay faithful.

Considering “Specific Documents of Tradition,” Van Noort described “symbols of faith” as “brief summaries of the truths of faith; more developed formulae are called not symbols but professions of faith.” The Fathers in the broad sense were “ecclesiastics who, in the early ages of the Church, recorded Catholic doctrine and explained and defended that

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60 Ibid., 154.
61 Ibid., 158.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 158-159; these aids are the subject of the next proposition.
64 Ibid., 168.
doctrine by their writings.” In the strict sense, Fathers were “outstanding for orthodoxy, holiness and antiquity, and are acknowledged as such by the Church.” Van Noort concluded that “the unanimous agreement of the fathers on a doctrine as revealed is a sure argument for divine Tradition.”

In his second Treatise, Divine Faith, Van Noort stated that “faith” can refer to several things including: the will’s faithfulness to promises or trust in another; the intellect; assent to an obscure matter; assent based upon a subjective basis, or upon testimony. An assent of faith is “an act of the intellect firmly assenting to a truth, given because of someone’s authority and at a command from the will.”

In the section on “The Object of Divine Faith,” Van Noort discussed the material object of faith and the content of faith, as well as the formal act, the factor that differentiates the act of faith from other types of assent and moves the will to assent. The formal object of faith, according to Vatican I, is God revealing. The Church’s teaching is “nothing more than the normal means by which the truths contained in the treasury of Scripture and Tradition are made known to us in a secure fashion so that we may cling to these truths exclusively by the authority of God revealing.” Van Noort added the problematic corollary that “children and uneducated people who would accept the dogmas of the faith exclusively because of the authority of their parents or of a parish priest, would not produce an act of divine faith.” Van Noort maintained that in order to have divine faith, such persons should

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65 Ibid., 170
66 Ibid., 173.
67 Ibid., 185-187.
68 Ibid., 197; see First Vatican Council, Dei Filius (First Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith), Chapter 3, in Henricus Denzinger, editor, Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, 40th Edition, edited and translated by Peter Hünermann (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), § 3008; hereafter cited: Denzinger.
69 Ibid., 201.
cultivate “an habitual knowledge of the authority of God as the motive of faith” so that they could reply if questioned, “because God who is truthful has said so.”

Next Van Noort discussed the subject matter or material object of divine faith: “all and only those things which have been revealed by God form the subject matter (material object) of divine faith.” The primary object is God Himself, our supernatural goal. The secondary object includes “revealed truths about the means by which men are orientated toward God and are helped toward the attainment” of eternal life. The accidental object “comprises all such matters as do not directly (per se) belong to religion, and yet nonetheless are contained in Scripture, matters falling under inspiration only accidentally.”

The subject matter of “Divine and Catholic faith” are “all those truths proposed by the magisterium for our belief as divinely revealed . . . either by solemn decree or by the Church’s ordinary and universal teaching.” Van Noort understood a dogma as a truth revealed by God and proposed as such for our belief by the Church. . . . If the proposal is made by a solemn decree it is labeled a defined dogma; if proposed by the ordinary and universal magisterium it is described as a nondefined dogma, i.e., not defined solemnly.

For Van Noort, “The term dogma is fairly frequently used in a looser sense to describe . . . every truth contained in Scripture or Tradition.” Regarding dogmatic progress, he held that after the death of the last apostle, the material object of faith does not increase objectively, only relatively; that is, our understanding increases. Some truths are only obscurely

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70 Ibid., 201.
71 Ibid., 205-207.
72 Ibid., 214.
73 Ibid., 220-221.
74 Ibid., 227.
75 Ibid., 229.
76 Ibid., 235.
contained in the sources of Revelation and the apostles typically did not systematize their writing.\textsuperscript{77}

“Dogmatic progress” or “increase of the subject matter of Catholic faith” proceeded after the death of the last apostle in what Van Noort called a “relative sense,” through “the clearer, more explicit teaching of the Church.”\textsuperscript{78} This “relative progress” consisted mainly of three things: in a more finished exposition of dogmas the gist of which had always been taught explicitly; in the explicit proposal of dogmas which formerly been taught implicitly in other dogmas; in the clear-cut proposal of dogmas which formerly were proposed in less obvious fashion.\textsuperscript{79}

The Church may also “determine more accurately the meaning and express in more scientific terminology dogmas which she had formerly taught explicitly but in more popular language and consequently more vaguely.”\textsuperscript{80} Van Noort also noted: “We do not mean to imply that only speculations of the intellect contribute to this progress; actually the whole Christian life and practice contributes to it.”\textsuperscript{81}

Van Noort distinguished revealed truths of faith from “theological truths,” that is, truths that are not revealed but are “intimately connected with revelation and command a fitting assent.”\textsuperscript{82} He listed various types of assent to theological truths. The first type of assent is to “truths so necessarily intertwined with revelation that to deny or doubt them would cause injury to revelation itself;”\textsuperscript{83} examples include necessary presuppositions for faith, or syllogistic deductions which are theological conclusions. All these theologically certain truths are to be held with what Van Noort called “theological assent”, once one

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{77} Ibid., 240.
\bibitem{78} Ibid., 231.
\bibitem{79} Ibid., 242.
\bibitem{80} Ibid., 242.
\bibitem{81} Ibid., 245.
\bibitem{82} Ibid., 260.
\bibitem{83} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
perceives their “necessary connection with revelation.” The second type of assent, he explained, is to “theological truths which the magisterium of the Church teaches infallibly”; these truths “must be held with an assent of ecclesiastical faith.” Van Noort preferred the term “ecclesiastical faith” since these truths are known primarily through the Church’s testimony. The third type of “theological truths which the Church’s magisterium teaches merely authentically, must be held with a religious assent.” Van Noort observed that just as non-divine, internal revocable assent is given to assertions of experts in various fields; a similar principle holds in the case of ordinary magisterial teaching. Finally, the fourth type of assent “must be given to theological truths which theologians commonly and constantly propose as certainly to be held.” Moral agreement not only within, but among, schools of theology (Thomist, Scotist, etc.) is needed on points necessarily connected with Revelation. Because these truths are mediated, they admit of degrees of assent, depending on the evidence, the material communicated, and the degree of authority intended.

The final chapter treated an individual believer’s “act of Divine faith”: “the act of saving faith is elicited by the intellect, at the command of the will, and under the help of Divine grace.” Van Noort first considered the subjective principles which produce the act of faith. Grace elevates or “supernaturalizes” the act of faith, which, in and of itself does not require charity. The steps of faith include: the certitude that God is truthful, that God has spoken; the judgment that it is prudent and reasonable to accept truths solely upon the basis of God’s authority; recognition that one is obliged to assent to what God has revealed; the

84 Ibid., 262-264.
85 Ibid., 260.
86 Ibid., 267.
87 Ibid., 270.
88 Ibid., 276-277.
89 Ibid., 295.
90 Ibid., 296.
ordering of one’s intelligence to accept God’s Revelation (the “pious will to believe”)\textsuperscript{91} and the intellectual acceptance of what God has revealed.\textsuperscript{92}

Then Van Noort examined the preparation for the act of faith. First, intellectual preparation is required: “With us, to whom God does not speak directly . . . it is necessary for both the formal and material object of faith to be personally applied to us, or rendered present to our understanding.”\textsuperscript{93} One must have “certitude about the fact of revelation” in order to be a “knowing subject” whose will can command the act of “divine-catholic faith.” Any “species of certitude about the act of revelation,” that is “every determination of the intellect to one side, so long as it actually excludes fear of the opposite side, suffices.”\textsuperscript{94} There are different types of certitude: for example, moral certitude that “presupposes the stability of the moral order;” “absolute popular certitude” that can “demonstrate the objective truth of the matter;” and “respective or relative certitude” based upon arguments either “not necessarily connected” to the truth in question, but are sufficient for an “uncritical” or “prejudiced” mind, or a child.\textsuperscript{95} All Christians need to have certitude “proportionate to their intelligence and culture . . . [by] a number of motives of credibility which are absolutely sufficient in themselves,” such as the marks of the Church and the miracles of Christ. One moves next to the judgment of the credibility of the Christian faith—that the Christian faith is “believable”—and then to its credentity—that a person ought to believe this teaching.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 306.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 308-309.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 312.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 313. Van Noort explained: “The reason is this: as often as you have present a conviction of this sort, the act of the will commanding faith to be given is always prudent and reasonable.”
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 314-315.
In order to prepare the will for the act of faith, one must overcome obstacles such as pride, worldliness, undisciplined passions, or prejudices. The will cooperates “by applying the intelligence to the arguments of credibility, by sustaining and directing its efforts until it reaches the judgment of credibility.”\(^96\) Once the judgment of credibility is reached, the will cooperates with the intellect to elicit the formal act of faith. Van Noort noted that the motives attracting the will can be varied and “those are not mistaken who say ‘the heart too has its reasons for believing,’ and who insist that in apologetics, whether scientific or popular, one must not neglect the affective preparation of the person.”\(^97\) Thus, Van Noort left room for factors such as spiritual experience, in the process of judging that Catholic faith is true.

Van Noort then considered the properties of faith. The first is truthfulness: an individual makes a real act of faith only by assenting to actual revealed truths of faith.\(^98\) Second, faith is obscure, because the mysteries of faith “so excel the created intellect” that they remain veiled until we reach the Beatific Vision.\(^99\) Faith is also obscure because its formal object is God’s authority, which is not penetrable by the human mind and because its material object surpasses reason. Third, even after one has reached the judgment of credenity, faith is still a free command of the will. The more perfect the evidence of God’s truthfulness and the fact of Revelation, the greater liberty of exercise one has for faith. Finally, the firmness of faith means the exclusion of doubt. The mind’s firmness in clinging to truth does admit of degrees. A believer may later renounce his faith, insofar as faith may

\(^{96}\) Ibid., 329.
\(^{97}\) Ibid., 331.
\(^{98}\) Ibid., 351.
\(^{99}\) Ibid., 353.
only be considered “irrevocable” in a moral, not absolute, sense. The virtue of faith can be more perfect in one person than in another.\textsuperscript{100}

Finally Van Noort considered the questions: who has faith? and is faith necessary? According to Van Noort, only Catholic believers and the majority of non-Catholic Christians, who “without any serious fault of their own have left the church—purely material heretics,” could make an actual act of faith.\textsuperscript{101} Thus, it is necessary for a person to make an act of faith in order to be saved. In the end, a person who truly has faith is one who believes correct doctrine. The means through which God mediates Revelation to people—Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium—are together the means whereby one comes to a true and intellectually responsible act of faith.\textsuperscript{102}

\textbf{Summary}

In his \textit{Dogmatic Theology}, Van Noort made a case for the reasonableness of believing in Christian revelation and understanding the components of faith. Like Pius XII, Van Noort believed that painstaking attention to the issues of philosophical presuppositions, the analysis of a believer’s act of faith, and the role of the Church as divinely-instituted mediator, were all relevant to Revelation—which is mediated by Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. Van Noort considered Revelation as basically knowable through the cooperation of faith and reason, aided by grace. For Van Noort, God’s self-disclosure brings believers into a personal saving relationship through the One Word, Jesus Christ, who reveals Himself through Scripture and Tradition. Neither Van Noort nor Pius XII maintained that Revelation is simply noetic in nature; however, both emphasized the intellectual aspects

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 364-66.  
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 373-374.  
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 375-377.
of Revelation. Van Noort, however, framed the discussion in the Scholastic terms which he apparently believed to be best suited to responding to the philosophical questions raised by the Enlightenment.
Chapter 3: New Perspectives on Divine Revelation – Yves Congar

After considering some examples of the predominantly scholastic manner of viewing Revelation before Vatican II, this chapter considers new perspectives that were beginning to emerge. Yves Congar made a major contribution to the pre-conciliar discussion about Revelation with his book *Tradition and Traditions*.\(^1\) The first part of this work, “An Historical Essay,” considered the idea of Tradition in Scripture, the Fathers and the early Church, the Middle Ages, Reformation, Trent and post-Tridentine theology until 1950;\(^2\) in the second part, “A Theological Essay,” Congar developed his own understanding of Tradition.

The first two (of the seven) chapters of Part II provided “a kind of inventory or classification” of the elements of Tradition; the remaining five chapters “are devoted to the main aspects of the question, considered theologically, but they are not meant to constitute a rigorously ordered didactic treatise.”\(^3\) Congar agreed with G. Boas that “at present [1960] Tradition looms large, but no one exactly knows why it should.”\(^4\) Congar was of the opinion that the “theological notion” of Tradition “derives . . . from a religion which has transcended the purely cultic level and is now at the level of a common faith, based upon a

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\(^1\) Yves Congar (1904-1995), a native of Sedan/Ardennes, France, was ordained a Dominican priest in 1930. Drafted into the army in 1939, he was a prisoner of war until 1944. A teacher at Le Saulchoir from 1945 to 1954, he served on the Doctrinal Commission at Vatican II. Believing that he “had a divine vocation to work for the reunion of Christians,” Congar published major works on ecumenism, the laity, and tradition. “He was one of those considered to indulge in the false irenicism condemned by *Humani Generi*” but “was later to find many echoes at Vatican II.” After Vatican II, he published major works on the history of Medieval and Augustinian ecclesiology and a three-volume work on the Holy Spirit. Congar was named to the College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II in 1994. See Joseph A. Komonchak, “Yves Marie-Joseph Congar,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (2003), 4: 101-103.


\(^3\) Ibid., 234.

revelation made at a given point of time to men.” Trade in the singular “designates a reality which is too large, a concept too dense, to be formulable in a concise definition.” Congar considered this book as a work of ressourcement or a retrieval of a reality that thinkers since the Reformation, in his opinion, had treated inadequately.

In contrast to Van Noort, who considered Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium from a Scholastic perspective, Congar structured Tradition and Traditions as a reflective study in a new ecumenical context: “Tradition is no longer being considered as a part of controversy or apologetics, or even ‘fundamental theology,’ but is reassuming its place among those Christian mysteries which it is the task of dogmatic theology to study.” In contrast to Van Noort, who considered Tradition primarily as a collection of truths communicated by Christ’s living voice to the Church, Congar framed Tradition as primarily a mystery that is best explored by reflecting upon its various “elements” and then sketching a portrait.

**The Idea of Tradition**

In his initial chapter, “An Analysis and Synthesis of the Idea of Tradition,” Congar indicated that his “first concern” was “to determine the place of tradition (i.e. the handing on of things received) in the whole complex of the plan whereby God’s mystery is made known to men.” God has initiated a new relationship that is beyond human powers yet includes our rational nature:

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5 Ibid., 234.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 235.
this elevation takes into account our rationality and respects its structures. It is proposed to us in human terms, in a communication of knowledge. This communication we call revelation.\textsuperscript{10}

Congar framed Revelation in terms of mystery, but, like Van Noort, believed that Revelation has noetic content. Christ entrusted His Church with the mission of communicating Revelation. Living witnesses transmit living truth to others, by teaching or living the mystery of Tradition. Communion among the recipients of revelation is a result. By means of baptism and creedoal profession, individuals are joined to the communion of Apostolic faith, which is “the beginning of salvation” and also “the completion, at one and the same time, of a catechesis and a mystagogy, a pedagogy and a conversion.”\textsuperscript{11}

The Apostolic faith is actively transmitted and received and creates an interpersonal relationship initiated by grace. Keeping the faith is a matter of both (a) intellectual fidelity and (b) personal response through a changed life. Faith binds individuals into a mystical body.\textsuperscript{12}

The covenant that makes the people of God becomes a spiritual marriage, and thus a sharing, a reciprocal relation, ultimately “one flesh”, one body of Christ.

Each soul is a bride; the Church, too, is a bride. Each of the faithful is a member, the Church the body. The dialogue with the Word is realized in each Christian, but it is incomplete and only fully what God wishes it to be when realized within the whole body. It is towards the building up of this body that the personal fidelity of the members and the work of the Church’s ministers are geared (Eph 4:12-13).\textsuperscript{13}

God entrusted “saving faith” to the apostles, who were charged with passing on this faith to others, whose reception of faith is an ongoing historical process: “Saving faith is received by minds which must consider it not merely as something absolute, but as a deposit given once and for all by the apostles, and consequently to be referred to them ‘without

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 237.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 248-249.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 254.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 255.
adding or talking away anything’.” Yet, while human beings are “situated in time and affected by temporality,” they also transcend time; this historical yet transcendent dynamic is evident in the case of the Church, which “is made up of men, but in a radical sense it is not of human making; it belongs to the order of mystery, of the supernatural.”

For Congar, “Sacred history is both divine and human”: as divine, “God has progressively constituted the religious relationship with mankind by a series of interventions in history.” This salvific relationship has been definitively determined by the events of salvation—the life and death of Jesus, the sending of the Spirit and the completion of the apostolic witness: “after Pentecost and the death of the last apostle, there are no new additions, in the sense that all was given and virtually present in Jesus Christ.” By means of Tradition, which is continually renewed, the Holy Spirit makes past saving events alive in the present. Tradition also relates the present to the future, by bringing our relationship with God to fruition.

Tradition “is also the explanation which is made of this deposit as a result of its being lived and defended, generation after generation, by the People of God.” People can only grasp the meaning of Tradition within the Church, a living communion “whose richness can only be partially expressed at the level of explicit understanding.” In contrast to Pius XII and Van Noort, who emphasized that the judgments of the Magisterium focus

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14 Ibid., 256.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 257.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 258-259, at 259.
19 Ibid., 267.
20 Ibid., 269.
mainly on the noetic expression of doctrine, Congar emphasized what might be called the functional dimension of the Magisterium:

The magisterium is a power of making distinctions, since it has received an authentic teaching mission from Christ. It is not, itself, a source of revelation and enjoys no autonomy in respect of the deposit of which it is only an agent.

Congar pointed out that the Council of Trent described three historical phases of the Gospel as: (1) “promised by the prophets in Scripture;” (2) “formally proclaimed” by Jesus Christ; and (3) given by Jesus to his apostles to be preached to every creature. The Gospel is “the charter for the religious covenant relationship, renewed for all time in Christ.” “All of these preliminaries, permit us to give to the text of Trent a deeper meaning, written as it was in the light of a still current line of thought.” The Council of Trent considered the Gospel the source of Apostolic Christianity, “a stream whose life-giving waters were afterwards transmitted through the different forms of Scripture and the traditions.”

The Council of Trent presented the “Gospel” as “the announcement of salvation under its aspects of truth and law; this Gospel is the source of everything in the Christian’s life at the level of truth and law, handed on to him since the time of the apostles, either by way of their writings or in unwritten traditions.”

How are Tradition, Scripture and traditions interrelated? First of all, “Jesus gave everything to his apostles, but nothing in writing”; accordingly, “the Gospel existed in its fullness before the individual gospels and epistles were written down.”

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22 Ibid., 269-70.
24 Ibid., 271.
25 Ibid., 274.
26 Ibid., 283.
27 Ibid., 284.
distinguished between Tradition and traditions. Traditions are “determinations, normative in conditions . . . and not contained formally in the canon of Scripture”; in terms of their origin, traditions may be “divine, apostolic or ecclesiastical”; in terms of duration, traditions “may be permanent or temporary in character.” In contrast, Tradition has three “aspects or meanings”: (1) “the transmission of the whole Gospel . . . in any form”; (2) “the content thus transmitted,” including Scripture, sacraments, and institutions, and their interpretation or meaning; and (3) “a whole series of fixed testimonies, whether in writings or monuments: institutions, liturgy, art, customs, etc.”

One then can speak of “Apostolic tradition”—“when the idea which is expressed in an institution is traceable to the apostles.” Nonetheless, Patristic and Medieval writers “did not feel any difficulty in accepting at once both the absolute character of the divine or apostolic institution, and the relative element of historical determinations.” At Trent, “fidelity to the unwritten apostolic traditions is placed within the general framework of complete fidelity to the apostolic inheritance.”

Scripture, in contrast, has “an absolute dignity and value . . . from the fact of its institution by Christ, since God willed that this text should exist, and produced it by a

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28 Ibid., 287; see: “Les traditions: ce sont des déterminations qui sont normatives dans des conditions qui restent à préciser et qui ne sont pas contenues formellement dans les Écritures canoniques. Elles peuvent émaner, soit de Jésus, soit des Apôtres, soit de l’Église, et donc être divines, apostoliques ou ecclésiastiques. Elles peuvent être durables ou précaires” (56).
29 Ibid., 287-288; see: “La Tradition: qui présente trois, ou même quatre aspects ou sens: 1) La transmission de tout l’Évangile, c’est-a-dire, du mystère chrétien, sous quelque forme que ce soit . . . 2) Dans le contenu ainsi transmis, c’est-a-dire la vérité du mystère chrétien ou de l’alliance en Jésus Christ, on peut distinguer entre les choses (Écriture, sacraments et institutions; Écriture surtout) et leur interprétation ou leur sens . . . . 3) une suite et dans un ensemble de témoignages fixés, soit dans des écrits, soit dans d’autres monuments: institutions, liturgie, art, coutumes, etc.” (56-57).
30 Ibid., 289.
31 Ibid., 290.
32 Ibid., 291.
special grace.”33 Indeed, Scripture has three advantages: (1) “its public character;” (2) its “permanence and solidity, and hence certainty”; and (3) its “verification or indisputable references.”34 These characteristics mark an important difference between Scripture and Tradition:

In the Church Scripture represents a norm which, though indeed it does require interpretation, forces itself upon our attention as a fixed and steady criterion. It is much more difficult to specify the normative content of Tradition, than that of Scripture.35

Congar concluded his initial chapter by emphasizing the complementarity of Scripture and Tradition: “Scripture and Tradition appear to us not as opposed but as mutually implying and supporting each other.”36

The Notion of Tradition

Congar began his second chapter—“An Attempt to Clarify the Notion of Tradition: Its Various Aspects & Meanings”—by characterizing Tradition as “a transmission from person to person;” accordingly, “tradition is not primarily to be defined by a particular material object, but by the act of transmission, and its content is simply id quod traditum est, id quod traditur.37 One then can distinguish between “objective” or “passive” tradition, “that which is transmitted”—whose content may or may not be written down—and “active tradition,” which is “the act of transmitting, formally considered.”38 Congar, however,
cautioned that these are not two traditions, but “two aspects of a single tradition, each implying the existence of the other.”

Understanding Apostolic Tradition as “the tradition that has the apostles as its transmitting subjects,” Congar distinguished between Active and Objective Tradition. In the case of Active Tradition: “With the apostles, the act of transmission from person to person has always a divine guarantee, because they were collectively and individually both revealers and founders through the grace of the Holy Spirit”\(^\text{40}\) — “this is what is most commonly understood by Tradition.”\(^\text{41}\) In regard to Objective Tradition: “Everything the apostles have passed on to help the People of God to live in the truth of the divine covenant relationship which has sprung from Jesus Christ is apostolic tradition in the primary and total sense.”\(^\text{42}\)

While acknowledging that Objective Tradition is recorded in “\textit{Writings and other monuments},” Congar highlighted its dynamism: “Tradition is not an idle capital, mechanically accumulated: there is development and expansion; it enriches itself from within.”\(^\text{43}\) Simultaneously, Congar compared Tradition “\textit{pure and simple, unwritten}” with “the role individual self-awareness plays in a person’s life”; or as “it has been termed the Catholic sense, \textit{sensus fidei}.”\(^\text{44}\) Thus, “Whatever objective tradition, whether apostolic or

\(^{39}\) Ibid.  
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 300.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 301.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 300.  
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 304.  
\(^{44}\) Ibid., 304, 305.
ecclesiastical, has given *expression* to, constitutes really the *monuments of tradition*, understood in its full sense."\(^{45}\)

**“The Subject of Tradition”**

In his third chapter, “The Subject of Tradition,” Congar pointed out that the originating subject of Tradition consists collectively of those persons through whom God revealed Himself: Christ, prophets, and apostles. The second or transmitting subject is the Church. The transcendent subject is the Holy Spirit present and active in the Church.\(^{46}\) Their common mission is an external cause that makes them one moral subject or messenger. This mission exemplifies the Jewish notion of *saliah*, in which the messenger forms one person with the sender.\(^{47}\) Congar considered “it necessary to restore alongside the notion of infallibility, which has been, especially since the nineteenth century, too frequently and abundantly employed, the notion of indefectibility.”\(^{48}\) In any case, the inner principle of the unity of the subjects of Tradition is the Holy Spirit, who inhabits and animates the Church as she carries out her mission. Thus the Spirit both inspired Scripture and assists the Church in interpreting it.\(^{49}\)

How is the Church the subject of Tradition? The Church holds one faith as a community of believers (objective sense); similarly, faith confers unity upon individuals (subjective sense). Believers profess that faith by believing it and conforming themselves to it.\(^{50}\) Congar distinguished the *sensus fidei* in the Church from Newman’s illative sense. The former is “a faculty for grasping the implications, as yet not elucidated of a reality which is

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 305-306; also see the “schematic account” in the table on 307.  
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 308.  
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 311, 313.  
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 313.  
\(^{49}\) Ibid., 314.  
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 318.
already in its possession;” the latter “a faculty for seeing results.”51  Although Newman, like Aquinas, “limited his considerations to the individual believer, . . . modern theologians have extended the notion to the whole community of the faithful in space and time, and have seen the sensus fidei as a principle of development and a fruit of fellowship in the Church.”52

Indeed, theologians both past and present “often speak of the sensus fidei Ecclesiae in terms of ‘consciousness’;” accordingly, “Tradition is thought of as the Church’s consciousness or self-awareness, again under two aspects, the subjective and the objective, as an act or faculty and as a content.”53 In regard to content, the objective aspect, the Church “preserves and repeats the living memory of what it has received, the present and freshness of which are continually renewed in it by its Spouse and Lord”; in regard to the subjective aspect, the members of the Church “are conscious not of their personal opinions but of the teaching of the Church that derives from the apostles”; thus, the “unity of persons in the Church is not a ‘fusion’, but a ‘communion’.”54

The Church, for Congar, is an “organic reality.”55 Members have received gifts that help them bear witness to the faith, preserve the Tradition entrusted to them, and serve the world. The faithful as a body “preserves Tradition, primarily in living out its fidelity to the covenant.” Nonetheless, “the definition of Tradition . . . has always been the task of the

52 In addition to the authors cited by Congar, see Frederick D. Aquino, “Modalities of Reasoning: The Significance of John Henry Newman’s Thought for Shaping Accounts of Rationality,” The Downside Review 121 (2003), 79-104.
53 Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 319.
54 Ibid., 320.
55 Ibid., 321.
bishops and was traditionally exercised in a solemn way in the councils.” The faithful, who “are, in their own way, a subject of Tradition,” are “secondary witnesses of Tradition” and, when unanimous in receiving Magisterial teaching, possess a “passive infallibility, whereby the laity are disposed by God’s grace to receive the teaching of the magisterium, which is itself possessed of active infallibility.” Although Congar’s view of passive infallibility resembled Van Noort’s in regard to the faithful reception of teaching, Congar’s view differed in stressing the faithful’s role in preserving and transmitting Tradition, through teaching, education, witness and profession.

Just as “God does not reveal the saving truth to each person individually,” but has “entrusted its transmission or dissemination to a group of messengers,” in a similar way, while “the whole ecclesia is the subject of Tradition,” in the Church, “the ordained ministers, following on in succession to the apostolic ministry, are the subject of Tradition in a special and particularly qualified way.” Accordingly, in contrast to the Fathers, for whom the regula fidei referred to “the doctrine we must profess in order to receive baptism,”

For modern authors, regula fidei means the magisterium. The majority of these authors say that the objective expressions of belief, even Scripture, make up a remote or material rule, but the magisterium’s actual teaching is the proximate and formal rule.

Although “the magisterium is normative for believers only in passing on the object of Faith,” on occasion, the church’s pastors “intervene to make an addition to the basic

56 Ibid., 322.
57 Ibid., 323, 325.
59 Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 328.
60 Ibid., 329.
61 Ibid., 331.
62 Ibid., 332.
authority of truth, that is of the Word”:

What they add is in the nature of a legal obligation, possibly accompanied by a sanction. The declaration of the truth which they make thus takes on, in addition, the character of a law for the Christian community; it becomes a *dogma.*

Accordingly, “To the extent that the magisterium of the pastors, the leaders who have jurisdiction over the faithful, is a capacity to impose under obligation a certain interpretation or way of acting, it is truly a rule.”

Although the Magisterium can be characterized as a rule of faith, Congar posed important questions about the way that the Magisterium could best function. On the one hand, Congar thought that the Magisterium best fulfills its juridical role, in serving “the unadorned content of the Gospel, in which area this Magisterium serves simply as *minister objecti;*” indeed, the “primary emphasis” of the Magisterium should be on “the aspect of witness, rather than to that of ‘definition’ or exercise of authority.”

On the other hand, while the Magisterium “must always seek to transmit this deposit [of faith] in its purity and in its fullness,” Congar pointed out that “All today would admit that there have been momentary lapses or occlusions in the dogmatic consciousness . . . .”

While acknowledging that “Theologians do not belong to the ‘teaching Church’ in the dogmatic sense,” Congar thought that “they do occupy an important place in the Church’s teaching function”.

It is not only the task of the theologians to justify the magisterium’s actual teaching from Tradition . . . , but also to clarify the actual practice and words (not yet fixed in dogma) of the Church, in the light of that Tradition.

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63 Ibid., 333.
64 Ibid., 334.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., 334-335.
67 Ibid., 335.
Nonetheless, the Magisterium should not be identified with Tradition, rather the Magisterium “must refer back to Tradition as to the source of its teaching and, as such its objective rule”:

It is not possible to justify, by a *sensus fidei* or a charism of the magisterium which are practically autonomous, the definition as *de fide* of truths which are not really present in revelation and Tradition; moreover, the Catholic magisterium has always affirmed that it defines nothing not contained therein.\(^{69}\)

Congar concluded this section with a cautionary note: “to say that God communicates his revelation by the Church, through the preaching of a ministry with a divine commission . . . is not the same as to identify the Church’s authority with God’s . . . .”\(^{70}\) Rather, the Magisterium holds a place “assigned by the Word of God in the revelation of salvation.”\(^{71}\)

Congar then turned his attention to the Holy Spirit as “the Transcendent Subject of Tradition,” present in the Church.\(^{72}\) From the Patristic period until the Reformation, thinkers recognized a permanent “inspiring” action of the Spirit in both Christians and their pastors. The Council of Trent and Counter-Reformation thinkers attributed to the Holy Spirit the apparent “additions” that the Church has made to Scriptural statements. Subsequently, the 19\(^{th}\)-century Tübingen school, especially Johann Adam Möhler, held that the Spirit unifies the Church through Tradition.\(^{73}\)

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68 Ibid., 336. Like Pius XII (*Humani Generis*, §21), Congar envisioned the theologian’s office as justifying doctrine from Tradition.  
69 Ibid., 337.  
70 Ibid., 337-338.  
71 Ibid., 338.  
72 Ibid.  
73 Ibid., 342, 189-196. According to Congar, in the early 19\(^{th}\) century, the Catholic theology faculty of the University of Tübingen, where Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) taught, applied the Romantic movement’s interest in human “genius,” along with increased interest in the philosophy of history, to theology; the School developed a notion of “living tradition” which held that the Spirit unifies the Church through Tradition.
Reflecting on the biblical description of the Holy Spirit in light of the history of theology, Congar pointed out that “The role thus vested in the Holy Spirit is the actualizing and interiorizing of what Christ said and did.”\footnote{Ibid., 342.} This process takes place not only in the Church as a whole, but within each individual: “In our faith there are joined together an historical transmission of the pattern of belief and a spiritual ‘event’ which the Spirit brings about in each consciousness.”\footnote{Ibid., 343.} Although Catholics are convinced that “Christ never ceases to teach his Church by the gift of the Spirit, such a belief “does not mean that everything that occurs in the Church’s historical life is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.”\footnote{Ibid., 344.}

**Tradition and the Life of the Church**

In his fourth chapter, “Tradition and the Church’s Life,” Congar considered Tradition as “a Unique Means of Communication”: Tradition is far greater than the written text; Tradition implies a “personal entrusting”:

Tradition is a treasure, a deposit, which a text could never fully represent, and which can only be preserved in a living subject. The Gospel written in men’s hearts goes far beyond the written text, despite the fact that what is written is itself, in a sense, inexhaustible.\footnote{Ibid., 348.}

Congar substantiated this view by citing “the facts” of Christianity; first of all, “Jesus Christ himself left nothing in writing, but he bequeathed to us Christianity: not doctrinal statements alone, but the reality of salvation and of communion, the reality of the New Covenant.”\footnote{Ibid., 350.} “Thus, the faith of the Church does not rest simply on texts, but on the mystery communicated through Tradition. An example in point is the Eucharist, which was “celebrated for about thirty years before any text existed to make mention of it: it was *par
excellence an object of ‘tradition’.” The example of the Eucharist is indicative of a wider principle: “There are many things that Christians have understood and that they continue to understand when they read the apostolic writings or the earliest witnesses, because they possess the reality of which the texts speak.” Accordingly, “the Church’s faith like its life, is governed immediately and in the first place by the Christian reality contained in the totality of Tradition and only in the second place, although still immediately, by the apostolic writings.”

In concluding his discussion of “the facts” about Tradition, Congar cited two of his contemporaries: first was a statement of Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960):

Tradition in the Church will, thus, not be just a few unwritten truths transmitted by word of mouth, but in a quite special way the Church’s ordinary life, its way of acting, its structures, discipline, sacraments, prayer, its faith as lived through the centuries: a faith in the scholastic sense, exercita, or set to work in the whole of the Church’s life.

Consequently, alongside sacred Scripture, Tradition is that universal consensus of the Church, that general manner in which the whole Church since apostolic times and under the direction of its pastors, professes its faith, lives, organizes itself and prays.

Congar then quoted a corroborating citation from Maurice Blondel (1861-1949):

... tradition conveys in a literal, not a metaphorical sense, more than ideas which can be given a logical form: it embodies a life which includes at one and the same time feelings, thoughts, beliefs, hopes and actions. It passes on by a kind of fertilizing contact what successive generations must make their own, and must in turn bequeath as a permanent condition for life, to be continually and inexhaustibly shared by individuals. As a result, it implies the spiritual communion of souls that feel, think and will within the unity of one and same patriotic or religious idea; ...
After an extended discussion of the writings of Blondel, Congar provided the following appraisal: “Tradition is the grasp, varying in the means and resources it employs, of the treasure which living Christianity has possessed as a reality from the beginning, and which passes progressively, as a result of reflection, from the level of the implicit (l’implicite vécu) to that of the expressly known (l’explicite commun).”

Again emphasizing that “the spoken word and personal contact with the life of a master” as “more important than what is written,” Congar criticized the leaders of the Reformation for failing to “take the time to go back to a patient exploration of the living sources of Christianity . . . .” In effect, the Reformers failed to recognize that a “little child has need, a physical need, of affection as much as of food;” in other words: “There are affective conditions for the bringing up of children which are as necessary as the bodily ones.” Similarly, “Tradition, too, seen under the aspect or in the dimension according to which it could be identified with the community life of Christians, renewing itself through the continual succession of the generations, fills the role of an educational milieu.” This dynamic aspect of Tradition is exemplified in the fact that “Education is distinct from instruction and is not given by courses in morals and deportment but by a living communion, a kind of infectious contact with living models.”

For Congar, this view was corroborated by Aquinas’s discussion of Jesus as teacher: . . . it was fitting that Christ, as the most excellent of teachers, should adopt that manner of teaching whereby his doctrine is imprinted in the hearts of his hearers; . . .

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84 Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 361-368, at 363; nonetheless, Congar was critical of Blondel’s views (366-367).
85 Ibid., 368-369.
86 Ibid., 370.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
Christ . . . did not teach by means of writings because he is the supremely perfect teacher.  

For Congar, “What is important is that the teaching should reach the deeper level—beyond that at which ideas are simply understood and remembered—, the level of those inner drives which are at the roots of our behaviour.” Unfortunately, this aspect of Tradition was misunderstood by the Reformers, because of their “exaggeratedly intellectual theory of religious knowledge.”

Congar then questioned whether “ Tradition also has a maternal, feminine role”:

Is it not specifically the woman’s task to create the milieu in which human life will retain its vital warmth: the womb, maternal tenderness, the home? . . . Man is committed more to productive work and activity; women is closer to the sources of life, and more immediately devoted to its fostering.

Recalling the role that “the faithful share in the preservation and transmission of Tradition,” especially the role of Christian parents in passing on the faith, Congar observed:

And among parents it is above all wives and mothers who create the Christian milieu, by a living synthesis of convictions and attitudes, thoughts and feelings, thanks to which one learns the faith within the framework and the forms of human life itself; and this is the secret of the Christian spirit.

In concluding this chapter, Congar emphasized that the Gospel “is delivered in two forms and according to two modes: document and education, the written text and the living

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89 Ibid., 372; Congar cited Summa Theologiae III, q. 42, a. 4c: “It was fitting that Christ should not commit His doctrine to writing. First, on account of his dignity: for the more excellent the teacher, the more excellent should be his manner of teaching . . . . Secondly, on account of the excellence of Christ’s doctrine, which cannot be expressed in writing . . . . Thirdly, that His doctrine might reach all in an orderly manner: Himself teaching His disciples immediately, and they subsequently teaching others, by preaching and writing.” Congar pointed out that “St Thomas places the oral apostolic traditions in the category of private personal instruction rather than in that of public teaching (372, n.1). (This translation by the Father of the English Dominican Province, Summa Theologica (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947), 2: 2248-2249.
90 Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 372.
91 Ibid., 373.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 374.
Accordingly, just as one must recognize “eucharistic communion under both kinds,” similarly, one must recognize that there is “a communion with the Gospel under the two kinds—of the text, and of life in the Church.”

“Scripture and Tradition in Relation to Revelation and to the Church”

In his fifth chapter, “Scripture and Tradition in Relation to Revelation and to the Church,” Congar first considered what he termed “the True Position of the Fathers.” In his view, the Fathers and scholastics had an “ever so much wider and deeper” vision of the Scripture-Tradition relationship than did post-Reformation thinkers: “Scripture contains all of the truths it is necessary to believe; but it can only be read and understood properly in and with the Church’s Tradition” which includes “the genuine understanding of Scripture.” In early Christianity the Scripture-Tradition relationship was not at issue; rather, “Scripture, Tradition, the Church were three inseparable terms . . .”. For example,

Irenaeus neither subordinates Tradition to Scripture, nor Scripture to Tradition. They are two expressions or tracings of the saving revelation which is entrusted to the Church and is found in it; this revelation comes to men by the preaching of the apostles preserved in Tradition, in the Church’s teaching and in Scripture.

Thus, “Scripture and Tradition have the same content, but under two different aspects and in two states.” In contrast to Post-Tridentine theology, which sometimes considered Scripture and Tradition as independent fonts, for Congar:

All things necessary for faith could indeed be found, one way or another, in Scripture; but for a proper understanding of Scripture, . . . something beyond

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94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., 375.
96 Ibid., 376-379.
97 Ibid., 377.
98 Ibid., 378.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
Scripture was necessary, namely, the authentic knowledge of its real meaning: the letter alone would not suffice.\textsuperscript{101}

Congar next turned his attention to the “relation between Scripture, Revelation, Church and Tradition.”\textsuperscript{102} First, he pointed out “Scripture’s sufficiency”:

. . . it is in a very real sense that Scripture contains everything, according to the Fathers and the medieval writers; in it, God has given us everything necessary or useful for the conduct of our lives. It includes in itself the whole of saving truth.\textsuperscript{103}

In contrast, “Our analytical approach has lost something of the freshness with which the Fathers were able to see the very presence of Christ assimilating us to Himself: the body of Christ, in fact. It is through Scripture that Christians are what they are.”\textsuperscript{104}

However, if Scripture is self-sufficient, it is not self-explanatory. On the one hand, the authors of heresy “invariably took their stand on Scripture, often claiming to recognize this as the sole court of appeal;” on the other hand, “the defenders of the Catholic faith accused the heretics of misuse of Scripture.”\textsuperscript{105} For Congar, this dichotomy indicates the need for church guidance in matters of faith:

The fact that all authors of new doctrines appeal to the Bible and yet fail to agree among themselves proves that the preservation of the faith is not governed simply by the individual’s reading of Scripture, even presupposing the interior guidance of the Holy Spirit: what is required is Church guidance, the Catholic sense, or the ecclesial understanding of Scripture . . . .\textsuperscript{106}

How then is the meaning of Scripture to be ascertained? Congar first proposed a general principle: “Scripture must be read by the light of the same Spirit as has inspired its writing.”\textsuperscript{107} Then he pointed out the need for what biblical and patristic writers “called

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 379.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 379-409.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 381.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 382-383.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 384.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 387
\end{itemize}
*gnosis* a spiritual gift which has for its object or content the knowledge of the ways of God, the understanding of the great saving acts accomplished by Christ, and of their proclamation in Scripture."\(^{108}\) This “spiritual gift of understanding enables us to enter into the depths of a text”; accordingly, Scripture can be seen as “a kind of sacrament with its inner and outer reality, and the believer was invited to pass from the first to the second with the aid of God’s revelatory action.”\(^{109}\) In particular, this *gnosis* provides “a Christological reading of the Old Testament which allows us to grasp the *consonantia* of the two Testaments.”\(^{110}\)

Recognizing the need to distinguish the true *gnosis* from spurious claims,\(^{111}\) Congar emphasized that the Church is “The ‘locus’ of God’s self-revelatory action, and of his communication of the understanding of the Word”\(^{112}\); accordingly, the genuine “‘gnosis’ is given to the souls who are converted to Jesus Christ”\(^{113}\) and so the correct understanding of Scripture requires a *sensus ecclesiasticus*.\(^{114}\) The lack of such a *sensus* has resulted not only in misinterpretations among Protestants, but also in defective understandings “among the more plodding type of controversialist in the post-Tridentine period.”\(^{115}\)

For Congar, the consensus of the Fathers “or of the *Ecclesia* clearly indicates a ‘locus’ of the divine action.”\(^{116}\) Indeed, “[u]nanimous patristic consent as a reliable *locus theologicus* is classical in Catholic theology”; nonetheless, “[a]pplication of the principle is

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\(^{108}\) Ibid., 388.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 388-389.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 389.

\(^{111}\) For example, see Congar’s description of the “error of the Gnostics” who made “a selection from Scripture, a text here, and a text there, without reading it within Tradition, that is, with the awareness of its complete meaning, as inherited by the Church from the apostles” (390).

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 391.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 395.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 394.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., 396.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 397.
difficult”: “In regard to individual texts of Scripture total patristic consensus is rare.”¹¹⁷

In fact, “the theological weight of the consensus Patrum is subject to so many conditions
that it cannot be easily assessed.”¹¹⁸ What then is the purpose of patristic consensus? Just
as “the child needs to form its own conclusions in a milieu which provides him with
security,” similarly, “it is fundamentally the role of the consensus of the Fathers to provide
such an element in the Church.”¹¹⁹

Tradition, however, has a distinct function in the life of the Church, since “Scripture
does not yield its meaning entirely by itself;”¹²⁰ rather, the scriptural text must by
complemented by a living interpreter:

Fundamentally, Scripture is only a witness to a revelation that has been made, and a
means given by God for the revelation he wishes to make to us of himself and his
salvation. This revelation is only fully itself when it is made to someone, when it is
actually received by a living mind in the fact of faith which demands an action, in us,
of the living God bearing witness to himself . . . .¹²¹

Thus, the Church’s Tradition should be conceived “not just as a material object but as the
active presence of revelation in a living subject, by the power of the Holy Spirit . . . .”¹²²

Correspondingly, the “Church is both transmission and life, both repetition and reissuing, a
response given on the basis of the one and only text to the ever new questions asked by
time.”¹²³

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 398.
¹¹⁸ Ibid., 399.
¹¹⁹ Ibid., 400.
¹²⁰ Ibid.
¹²¹ Ibid., 401.
¹²² Ibid.
¹²³ Ibid., 402.
Congar then pointed to a “sacramental structure” in the Word of God that can be found even in the Old Testament: “The Word of God was seen throughout [the Old Testament] as a sign of divine saving action, an efficacious sign, a sign of grace: and these are also the marks of a sacrament.” This sacramentality of the Word of God contrasts with a tendency that Congar detected in Protestantism “to link the Christian life to the Bible rather than to the living Christ.” Such a literalistic tendency, however, fails to “recognize that there are two acts of God: the first, accomplished once and for all and constitutive of the forms of salvation; the second, ceaselessly renewed and making present the fruits that the forms once constituted in the past are meant to produce in living men.”

Linking past and present, “Tradition is constituted by the stored-up aggregate of the witnesses left us by those whom the Spirit of revelation has moved all throughout the course of history.”

Yet the recognition of the sacramental character of Tradition raises an important question: “What can this Tradition add to Scripture?” For Congar, Tradition provides “an understanding of the scriptural meaning, a penetration of its content and implications, and the need there is to formulate the Christian message throughout human history, and to answer the questions raised by the needs of the times, their errors, their discoveries, etc.” In contrast to Protestant fundamentalists, who “fasten on one text, which they interpret narrowly, sometimes . . . without seeing its connexion with other texts, or with the totality of the Christian mystery,” Congar emphasized that “the Church gradually acquired an

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124 Ibid., 403.
125 Ibid., 404.
126 Ibid., 405.
127 Ibid., 406.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid. Italics are in the original.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid., 407.
awareness, sometimes one that went beyond the explicit letter of the text, of the content of the Christian mystery by which it lives.”\textsuperscript{132} In succinct terms, the scriptural “text regulates the Church, but the Church in turn casts light on the text . . . .”\textsuperscript{133}

Congar then turned his attention to “Scriptura Sola.”\textsuperscript{134} After emphasizing that “There is no one who holds that the letter of the Text alone is sufficient,” Congar considered the “material sufficiency of canonical Scripture” understood as meaning that “Scripture contains, in one way or another, all truths necessary for salvation.”\textsuperscript{135} After pointing out that “the apostolic heritage has come to us through unwritten traditions, as well as by Scripture,” Congar observed that patristic writers and medieval theologians asserted both that “all is contained in Scripture” and also that “the Church believes certain things by unwritten tradition.”\textsuperscript{136} Such a position has been summarized by the formula—\textit{Totum in Scriptura, totum in Traditio}: “In fact, the Church holds no truth from Scripture alone, and none from tradition alone, without Scripture.”\textsuperscript{137} As cases in point, Congar noted: “The modern Marian definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, appeal simultaneously to the teaching and to the faith of the Church, to Tradition and to sacred Scripture.”\textsuperscript{138}

Accordingly, for Congar, there is a reciprocity, not a rivalry, between Scripture and Tradition: “Scripture must be read within the Church, that is to say within Tradition.”\textsuperscript{139} Nonetheless, not only are there “apostolic traditions which are not recorded in the writings of the apostles,” one “cannot say \textit{a priori} that among these there are not certain articles of

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{132}] Ibid., 408.
  \item[\textsuperscript{133}] Ibid., 409.
  \item[\textsuperscript{134}] Ibid. (chapter 5, section 3), 409-422.
  \item[\textsuperscript{135}] Ibid., 410.
  \item[\textsuperscript{136}] Ibid., 412-413.
  \item[\textsuperscript{137}] Ibid., 413.
  \item[\textsuperscript{138}] Ibid., 414.
  \item[\textsuperscript{139}] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
faith.” In support of this position, Congar maintained that “the existence of traditions unrecorded in the apostolic writings appears still more likely if we consider the occasional nature of those apostolic writings, especially the epistles.” A particularly important example is the Eucharist—a doctrine that is known through select scriptural texts, but whose actual manner of celebration is a matter of Tradition.

Another example “of immense dogmatic import not to be found in Scripture is the scriptural canon itself.” The “principle of canonicity”—in contrast to the actual determination of the canon—may be seen in the fact that “the Church from the beginning recognized that each testimony from an apostle had a certain regulative value, whether it was actually written down by the apostle himself, or drawn up by some disciple with the apostolic guarantee.” Congar indicated two criteria of canonicity: (1) “the historical criterion of apostolic origin;” and (2) “the dogmatic criterion of conformity to the Church’s kerygma, a continuation of the apostolic kerygma.” Accordingly, the “early Church first regarded as normative or canonical that which came from the apostles”; second, “recourse was had in solving doubtful cases to the criterion of agreement with the Church’s doctrine or preaching in which the apostolic kerygma was continued.”

While Congar insisted that “in the establishment of the canon three elements unite: Scripture, Tradition, and the Church,” he also emphasized that the action of the Church “does not imply that the Church could create the normative value of Scripture; it can only

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140 Ibid., 415.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., 417.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid., 418; Congar later discussed the relationship of liturgy and Tradition in depth (427-435).
145 Ibid., 418.
recognize it.”

“Without the Church, the Bible could be known as a remarkable book”; without the Church, no one would know which books should be included in the Bible and which should not. While some Protestant theologians have proposed a Christological criterion as the basis for determining whether a particular book should be included in the canon of Scripture, “almost all Protestants, in preaching and in theological writing, do in fact follow the traditional canon . . .”

Following an extensive discussion of the material sufficiency of Scripture, Congar concluded his treatment of “Scriptura Sola” with a few brief remarks about the formal insufficiency of Scripture. Congar again insisted that patristic and medieval theologians held that Scripture “does not itself suffice to yield its true meaning; it must be read within the Church, within Tradition.” In this regard, Congar pointed to an anomaly among some Protestants, who on the one hand insist on “the complete sufficiency of Scripture alone,” while issuing “confessions of faith” binding on their members. Congar maintained that some Protestants did not recognize “the traditional thesis on Scripture-Tradition-Church” because of “the absence in Protestant thought of a genuine ecclesiology.”

In his conclusion to Chapter 5, Congar characterized Scripture and Tradition as “two modes by which the apostolic heritage is communicated to men.” Scripture “governs Tradition and the Church, whereas it is not governed by Tradition or by the Church.” In addition, “Scripture is fixed” and “is thus superlatively qualified to act as the unalterable

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146 Ibid., 419.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., 420.
149 Ibid., 421.
150 Ibid., 422.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
‘witness’ . . . to which “both the Church and Tradition are seen to be subject—.”

Although it is “always possible in practice to isolate one element and give to it an exclusive kind of centrality,” Congar insisted on both the inter-relationship and inter-dependence of Scripture, Tradition and the Church:

These three realities are thus insufficient, even inconsistent, when separated from each other for they entail one another, beneath the causality of the Holy Spirit which is common to all three. They represent the means laid down by God in order to link us, under the Holy Spirit’s ever-present and active influence, to the revelation given once and for all to the apostles.

Congar concluded this chapter by quoting Louis Bouyer:

To the Christians of antiquity, the Bible is so inseparable from Tradition as to be, in fact, part of it, its essential element, its nucleus, so to say. . . . It is the Bible and nothing but the Bible; but it is the whole Bible, not its letter only, but with the Spirit who dictated it and does not cease to inspire the reading of it. . . . Catholic Tradition, far from diminishing (as is too often believed) the unique importance of Holy Scripture, alone preserves its full value by preserving its full meaning.

“The Monuments of Tradition”

For Congar, the monuments or documenta “of Tradition are not Tradition itself; they are expressions in which Tradition is, at least partially, fixed and contained, and in which as a result it can be grasped and analysed.” Congar located these monuments within a two-part Theological Criteriology or loci theologici: the first part is the “objective rule or material content (quod) of the Church’s life of faith”; the second is the “Subject of Tradition (= quid sit Ecclesia vivens in fide).” Under the first heading, Congar enumerated five monuments of Tradition: teaching of the magisterium, Liturgy and the Church’s practice,

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153 Ibid.
154 Ibid., 422-423.
155 Ibid., 424. Congar cited Bouyer’s La Bible et l’Évangile . . . (Lectio Divina, 8), Paris, 1951; Congar did not list either the publisher or the full title. This work appeared in English as The Meaning of Sacred Scripture (London, 1958), 1-2; Congar did not list the British publisher; an American edition was published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 1958.
156 Congar, Tradition and Traditions, 425.
157 Ibid., 425-426.
Fathers and doctors, sacred canons, and theologians (and the use of reason).\textsuperscript{158} Congar then focused his attention on the “three main monuments in which Tradition’s character as an educational milieu is particularly in evidence: these are the liturgy, the Fathers, and the ordinary expressions of the Christian life.”\textsuperscript{159}

In regard to the liturgy, Congar emphasized: “For the Church, the liturgy is not a dead monument, a kind of Pantheon to be visited as one visits a museum, but a home which is always lived in, the conditioning envelope or atmosphere of its whole life.”\textsuperscript{160} Characterizing the liturgy as “a lived action and as a ritualized action,” Congar stated that “the liturgy preserves and hands on to us elements which are much more numerous than were realized by those men who performed and preserved the rites, and actually handed them on to us . . . .”\textsuperscript{161}

Turning to “the famous axiom \textit{Legem credendi statuit lex orandi},” Congar stated that “the liturgy is the privileged \textit{locus} of Tradition, not only from the point of view of conservation and preservation, but also from that of progress and development.”\textsuperscript{162} Pivotal for Congar is the fact that the liturgy “does not insert Christ’s work merely by proclamation and teaching but, through the unique and \textit{sui generis} reality of the sacramental order, it is able to assume the form of a present reality, at once hidden and revealed, and active, though never automatically so”; accordingly, the liturgy has “in another manner the same content as Scripture.”\textsuperscript{163} The liturgy’s biblical aspect is most evident insofar as it “is woven out of

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 426.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 427.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 428.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 429.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 430.
scriptural texts and allusions . . . .”  Thus, the liturgy is a “living commentary [that] places the texts in relation to one another and to their center, Christ, in his paschal mystery. . . . The liturgy is itself completely centered upon the paschal mystery, which is its heart because the Eucharist is its heart.”  By following Scripture, “the liturgy applies to man in his daily life the reality of Christ which it makes known, celebrates and shares.”

Congar insisted that liturgy is Christological insofar as “each liturgical renewal is accompanied by a refocusing of faith on Christ as the center.”  In addition, the liturgy has a Catholic character because it “is not enough for the liturgy to recall the biblical statements together with the events of sacred history: these must find their fulfillment in the hearts of men.”  Accordingly, the liturgy necessarily includes participants: “without Christians, Christ would not be present.”  This presence of Christians in the liturgy includes not only those present at the liturgical celebration, but also “the mystery of the saints and the communion of saints,” especially “holy Mary, the Mother of God.”

Finally, the “liturgy communicates our relation to God in its fullness,” because “it is the special property of action, as also of symbols and rites, to embody the whole of a reality in a more complete way than the mind can grasp, even confusedly.”  Like “milk for the newly born child,” the liturgy is “a complete food.”  Since “the liturgy is in the highest degree synthetic,” on the one hand, “a mass of questions are resolved in a sane, Christian

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164 Ibid., 431.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid., 432.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid., 432-433.
171 Ibid., 433.
172 Ibid., 434.
manner sometimes before they are even put”; on the other hand and more importantly, “the liturgy is ‘the principal instrument of the Church’s Tradition’.\textsuperscript{173}

As the second monument of Tradition, Congar considered “The Fathers”: “those who have contributed a decisive element to the Church’s life, either in its faith, its discipline, or its general attitude.”\textsuperscript{174} The Fathers have a decisive and permanent role in the life of the Church, “because they were ‘inspired’, raised up, enlightened, guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{175} While acknowledging “The Fathers’ special value and historical importance,” Congar also emphasized that, like Scripture and the Church, “the tradition of the Fathers is a very human thing.”\textsuperscript{176} Such humanness is evident in the fact that their thought was “largely conditioned by the culture of their times, its rhetorical procedures, its general, non-technical Platonism suggesting an opposition between the perceptible and the ideal, etc.”\textsuperscript{177} As a result, patristic exegesis is often “excessively allegorical with a naïvety verging on the unacceptable, but which also lacks the historical perspective, philological resources, and knowledge of literary contexts, sources, and analogues which we possess today.”\textsuperscript{178}

Accordingly, Congar was critical of those who over-privileged “the return to the Fathers.” As Georges Florovsky once pointed out, one should not think of the “Church of the Fathers” as if “the Holy Spirit had spoken” in the Church “only up to a certain time in the past” but since then the Church “has known no creative visitation by the Spirit of God, and is only able to repeat and comment on the ‘inspired’ texts of the Fathers and the early

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 438. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 439.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 440. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
In effect, an overemphasis upon the Fathers could seriously harm the “Church’s missionary character” to make the Gospel present to all times: “What the Fathers achieved, in proclaiming and explaining the Gospel according to the *logos* of ancient civilization must be done today, too, and will be necessary again tomorrow for other cultural periods.”

Nonetheless, the Church of the Fathers has a privileged place insofar as it represents “the moment when the deposit of apostolic faith was given an exact form with a view to excluding certain interpretations rejected as heretical.” It was “the Fathers who gave the Church its canonical tradition”; “it was in the age of the Fathers that the forms of liturgical celebration were fixed, in all essentials . . . .” Thus, the Fathers determined “the Church’s character and structure at a time when its past consisted only of the apostles, their disciples and the martyrs.”

Thus, one encounters in the Fathers “the purity of a stream at its origin”: “They are still in direct contact with Christian fundamentals, their theology centres on what is essential, whereas scholasticism was to add a great number of peripheral questions . . . .” Accordingly, one can recognize several “**Characteristic features of the Fathers**”: (1) they were pastors who addressed the needs of their times, in sermons, catechesis and instructions; (2) they “were committed to the proclamation, exposition, and defense of the Christian mystery”; (3) through their prayer, fasting, and penance, the

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181 Ibid., 444.
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid., 446.
184 Ibid., 447.
theology of the Fathers had “a quality of totality,” that enabled them always to “see the unity of faith and Christian life.”

After an extensive treatment of both liturgy and the Fathers as monuments of Tradition, Congar only summarized the third monument: “Ordinary expressions of the Christian life”—which includes “the actions and customs expressive of the Christian spirit . . .” One of the few examples mentioned by Congar is the lives of the saints who “help us to understand Scripture, as they are under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit” who inspired Scripture. Another example is Christian art “in its origins,” which “makes up to some extent for the scarcity of Texts. Christian art at that time is focused on what is essential and wholly related to salvation by faith in Christ, in the Church.” Each of these expressions of the Christian life “has its value as a witness and monument of Tradition.”

In the final section of Chapter 6, Congar considered the “Relation between Tradition and its Monuments.” Just as it is untenable to equate Revelation with the Bible, similarly, Tradition should not be identified with its monuments. Rather, “the monuments of Tradition are objective historical realities; but Tradition is a theological reality which supposes an action of the Holy Spirit in living a subject [sic], and this subject is the Church, the People of God and the Body of Christ.” Accordingly, it is necessary to distinguish between

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185 Ibid., 448-449.
186 Ibid., 450.
187 Ibid., 451.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid. 452.
“historical tradition” and “theological traditions”: “the former is the series of accessible
documentary witnesses, the second the belief preached and professed by the Church.”

Congar illustrated the difference between the *depositum fidei* and the Magisterium by
comparing them to human experience in which no one expression can exhaust the content of
our consciousness.

Congar pointed out that “Historical tradition,” like Scripture and Dogma, has its
fragmentary and uncertain elements: there are gaps, vacillations, uncertainties, perhaps even
contradictions . . . .” For example, “Dogmatic tradition emerges rather slowly and
arduously as a simple and clear affirmation”; although Dogmatic tradition “has support in
historical documentation,” one must concede that “the human bases of faith always have
their unsatisfactory elements.”

The question of the relationship between Historical and
Dogmatic Tradition became particularly crucial at the time of the proclamation of the dogma
of the Assumption—whose scriptural warrants seemed questionable to many.

In contrast to what Congar considered the “onesided” fideistic explanations of some
theologians, he maintained: “The connexions between dogmatic and historical tradition,
the Church’s Tradition and that of the historian, are not a matter of short and easy transition
from one level to another.” Accordingly, Congar insisted that “the Church must seek out

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191 Ibid. 454. Congar cited Walter Kasper, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der römischen Schule* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962), 256, as pointing to Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876) and Carlo Passaglia (1827-1887) as examples of theologians who made this distinction; Congar also noted that a similar distinction was made by Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816-1886), Matthias Scheeben (1835-1888) and August Deneffe (1875-1943).


193 Ibid., 455.

194 Ibid.

195 Ibid., 218-219.

196 Ibid., 456-457; Congar mentioned two examples: first, Jean Leclercq, “Catholica unitas,” in *Communion des saints* (*Cahiers de la Vie Spirituelle*, Nos. 4-5), Paris 1945, 44; second, Hugo Rahner, in the journal *Orientierung*, 1949, 11, without giving the full citation.

and procure the services of those functions which, within its own structure, are devoted specifically to the tasks of tracing Tradition in its monuments—the task of positive theology—or of showing to the reasonable man that faith is not unreasonable nor Tradition without documentary support.” On the one hand, it must be recognized that the Magisterium “has no creative powers and can only state and interpret this deposit” of faith. On the other hand, the Magisterium may need to exercise a “supervisory function which entails constant attention to any overluxurious growth of piety in the Church, as also to what is said and preached in the Church, all from the standpoint of the fullness and purity of the original deposit.” In sum, for Congar:

Tradition is ultimately synthetic in its method of growth: it contains both documents and objective facts, both original data and life given through the Holy Spirit, an objective external norm together with a living subject. We could not give an adequate account of Tradition if we were to reduce it to any single one of these constitutive elements.

Summary

Instead of viewing Tradition as a collection of truths, Congar attempted to “retrieve” a view of Tradition as a revelatory reality that is a mystery—a view which he associated with the Church Fathers. By self-revealing, God initiated a relationship that exceeds, yet includes, our rational nature. For Congar, Tradition has noetic content yet is also a living truth communicated by living believers throughout history and so results in an interpersonal relationship and communion. Congar distinguished between objective tradition that is transmitted and the active process of transmitting. The originating subjects of Tradition are the persons to whom God self-revealed and the transmitting subject is the Church as a

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198 Ibid., 457-458.
199 Ibid., 457.
200 Ibid., 458.
201 Ibid.
whole. The Holy Spirit is the Transcendent Subject of Tradition, present in the Church. Scripture, which has a sacramental quality as an effective sign, is self-sufficient, but needs the living Church, the locus of God’s communication of knowledge of the Word, for authentic interpretation. Scripture and Tradition are two channels by which the apostolic heritage is communicated in the Church. Scripture, Tradition, and the Church, are insufficient and inconsistent when separated, because all three involve the causality of the Holy Spirit who links us to the Revelation given to the Apostles. For Congar, the three main monuments of Tradition are the liturgy, the Church Fathers, and the ordinary expressions of the Christian life.
Chapter 4: Conciliar Perspectives on Divine Revelation:
Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger

In 1965, the year that the Second Vatican Council ended, two conciliar periti, Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, co-published a small book, *Revelation and Tradition*. Rahner contributed the first chapter, “Observations on the Concept of Revelation,” and Ratzinger contributed the second chapter, “Revelation and Tradition,” and the third chapter, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition.” Both authors treated a number of themes that appeared in *Dei Verbum*.1

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3 Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, *Revelation and Tradition*, translated by W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966); original edition: *Offenbarung und Überlieferung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965); the foreword was dated October 1964, during the final deliberations on *Dei Verbum*.

4 Rahner’s discussion of the historical mediation of revelation resonated with *Dei Verbum* §§ 3 and 4; Ratzinger’s discussion of Revelation, Tradition and Scripture resembled *Verbum* §§ 7-9.
Karl Rahner: “The Concept of Revelation”

In his essay, Rahner claimed that the Church was in the process of developing a view of Revelation that could answer the questions raised by the Modernists, who at the turn of the twentieth century, proposed a distorted view of Revelation: \(^5\)

For Modernism, at least if we are to judge by the systematic summary presented in the Church’s condemnations, revelation was another word for the inevitable development, immanent in human history, of man’s religious needs, in the course of which these needs find objective expression in the manifold forms taken by the history of religion, and slowly grow to greater purity and comprehensiveness, until they attain their objective correlate in Christianity and the Church. \(^6\)

In Rahner’s opinion, what Modernism really opposed was “an extrinsicism in the concept of revelation which was not the official doctrine, but was tacitly assumed by average theology.” \(^7\) If “the Church at that time presumably had no clear answer” to the Modernists’ questions about Revelation and if “Modernism gave a false or overhastily decided and heretical answer,” the Church presently is in a position to provide “a correct and full understanding of the concept of revelation.” \(^8\)

Accordingly, Rahner sought to articulate a view of Revelation that overcame the disjunction between the extrinsicism of traditional Roman Catholic theology and the immanentism of the Modernists. How, Rahner asked, can Revelation be “identical with the universal history of mankind, without ceasing to be the unique, special grace of God?” \(^9\) The First Vatican Council, in its constitution, Dei Filius, replied to this question by framing Revelation in terms of: (1) the general natural Revelation in creation and (2) the specific

\(^5\) Rahner, “Observations on the Concept of Revelation,” Revelation and Tradition, 10-11; hereafter: “Observations.” Some of those who were accused of Modernism maintained that the “errors” rejected in Lamentabili, a decree issued by the Holy Office on 8 July 1907, and in Pascendi Dominici Gregis, the encyclical issued by Pope Pius X on 8 September 1907, did not accurately represent their views.

\(^6\) “Observations,” 10.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid., 10-11.

\(^9\) Ibid., 11.
Rahner, however, questioned how it was possible to blend the universality of Revelation through creation with the particularity of Christian Revelation:

How can revelation be present always and everywhere so that salvation can be present always and everywhere, without its ceasing on that account to be here and now, in the flesh of Christ, in the words of the prophet actually speaking in a particular place, in the letter of scripture?\(^\text{11}\)

For Rahner, this dichotomy can be transcended by the realization that “history must in the highest degree be both the act of God and of man, if it is to constitute the highest reality in the being and becoming of the world.”\(^\text{12}\) The grounding for this view is the immanence of God, who “confers on finite beings themselves a true active self-transcendence in their change and becoming, and is himself ultimately the future, the final cause, which represents the true and effective cause operative in all change.”\(^\text{13}\) Thus, “the real coming into being of what is higher through the effective self-transcendence of an inferior cause and enduring creation from above, are simply two sides, equally true and real, of the one marvel of change and history.”\(^\text{14}\)

Rahner accordingly conceived the history of Revelation as “the historical self-unfolding in predicamental terms, or, more simply, the history of that transcendental relation between man and God which is constituted by God’s self-communication, of a supernatural kind,


\(^{11}\) Ibid., “Observations,” 11.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 12.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
made to every mind by grace, but inescapably and always, and which in itself can rightly be termed revelation.” For Rahner, the revelatory event always has a double aspect:

On the one hand, it constitutes man’s supernaturally elevated transcendence as his permanent though grace-given destiny, always and everywhere operative, present even by the very fact of being rejected / even in the form of being rejected [auch im Modus der Ablehnung noch vorhandenes Existential] . . . . On the other hand, the revelation event is also the historical mediation, the objective, explicit expression of the supernaturally transcendental experience.16

For Rahner, the history of revelation is really “the history of the true self-unfolding of the supernaturally transcendental experience.” Yet, unlike those Modernists who considered Revelation to be an ongoing process, Rahner envisioned Revelation as God “communicating himself in absolute, merciful presence as God, that is, as the absolute mystery”17 and so achieving its ultimate configuration in Christ:

The unique and final culmination of this history of revelation has already occurred, and in it is revealed the absolute and irrevocable unity of God’s transcendental self-communication to mankind and of its historical mediation in the one God-man, who is at once God himself as communicated, the human acceptance of the communication, and the final historical manifestation of this communication and acceptance.18

According to Rahner, “in this unity of God’s transcendental self-communication and its final historical mediation and manifestation, the fundamental mystery of the triune God is also revealed”:19

Inasmuch as history mediates transcendence, the Son sends the Spirit; inasmuch as transcendence makes history, the Spirit effects the incarnation of the Logos; inasmuch as appearance in history signifies the manifestation of reality, the incarnate Logos is revealed as the self-utterance of the Father in truth; inasmuch as God’s

15 Ibid., 13.
16 Ibid., 13-14. The German citation is from p. 15 of that edition; the second translation of the phrase “even in the fact . . .” was suggested by John Galvin.
17 Ibid., 14.
18 Ibid., 14-15.
19 Ibid., 15.
coming among us in the centre of our personal life signifies his love and ours, the
Pneuma is revealed in own proper self as Love.\textsuperscript{20}

To elucidate this “fundamental idea of revelation,” Rahner proposed “a few rather random
reflections.”\textsuperscript{21} The first is that “the history of supernatural salvation is operative everywhere
is history”\textsuperscript{22}:

\ldots every human being is elevated by grace in his transcendental intellectuality in a
non-reflex manner; this “entitative” divinization—which is proffered to freedom,
even if it is not accepted freely in faith—involves a transcendental divinization of the
fundamental subjective attitude, the ultimate horizon of man’s knowledge and
freedom, in the perspective of which he accomplishes his life.\textsuperscript{23}

Although Rahner acknowledged that this “transcendental \textit{a priori} openness of man to the
God of eternal life and of absolute self-communication” might be either “very explicit” or
“quite anonymous,” he insisted that this “transcendental divinization” was not “non-
historical, isolated, pursuing some mystical existence or other of its own in individualistic
introspection outside history.”\textsuperscript{24}

After mentioning that an “encounter with the word of God, preached or written” must
“finally meet with the transcendental side of the revelation event,”\textsuperscript{25} Rahner turned his
attention to the messengers of revelation whose testimony is often evaluated by their
“miracles in the presence of hearers summoned to believe”; regrettably, such a perspective
effectively overlooks or underplays “the question of the revelation-occurrence in the bearer
of revelation.”\textsuperscript{26} Observing that “the transcendental side of the original reception of
revelation and that of faith coincide,” Rahner emphasized that “man is constituted through

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 19.
grace as affected by God’s ontological self-communication and in radical freedom accepts this constitutive feature of his human reality.”

Rahner next raised the question of demythologization—an area where Catholic theology “is still largely concentrated in the concrete problem of whether what fundamental theology calls miracles are possible, what their significance is and whether they can be recognized.”

Rahner contended that both those who demythologize and those who absolutize “mediation through the bare fact of so-called objective reality and mediation through the interpretative representation of that bare fact” are at fault for missing “the ontological difference and unity between what is predicamental and what is transcendental, as well as the different yet indestructible unity between the mediation of so-called historical fact and its interpretation.” For Rahner, the mediation of Revelation, “being an historical one, is necessarily always social; it is ‘ecclesial’ in the deepest sense of the word.”

Granting that the “belief of the Church is always, whether in the Church or in the individual, a unity of sign and truth beyond man’s disposal or decision,” Rahner indicated the need for Catholic theology to recover the idea of *fides implicita:*

Fundamentally it means that all categorically explicit faith, as such, lays hold of a sign and is, therefore, truly faith only if it grasps the sign through being itself held in the grasp of the unutterable mystery of the presence of God mercifully communicating himself, and only if it is always aware that the finite mediation has the character of a sign, and one that belongs to the Church and is found in the Church.

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 20.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 21.
Accordingly, Rahner stressed that “the ‘implicit’ character of what is really revealed in
the word of revelation, and the character of one’s own faith as ‘implicit’ in that of the
Church, both belong to the very nature of revelation and faith.”

Responding to the “continually renewed attempt to reduce the totality of the many-sided
and extensive dogmatic theology and institutions of a religion to a kernel, to what alone is
truly important,” Rahner acknowledged that “such a single essential element in religion does
exist.” On the one hand, Rahner pointed to “Christ as the mediator and bringer of
salvation in such a way that he integrates in himself, in his truly corporeal nature present in
this world, every conceivable mediation by all that is real, so that he relativizes and at the
same time definitively posits this.” On the other hand, Rahner hypothesized that “the
definitive revelation in Christ . . . may still be mirrored even now . . . in the tragical history
of divided Christendom, whose divisions reflect the genuine multiplicity of the many
mediations of the one revelation, and while they accuse us, nevertheless promise us the
grace of God.”

Finally, critiquing the pre-conciliar Catholic analysis of faith, Rahner pointed out its
failure to take into consideration the “a priori capacity to believe” as well as its tendency to
think of the motive of faith—the “authority of God”—“as mediated empirically by a
posteriori cognition, and so determined by the horizon of human knowledge.” As a
solution, Rahner proposed:

But if when revelation and faith occur, God himself in his own self-communication
is what is believed and is the a priori principle of belief, and if the logic of faith is

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., 22.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 23.
not a predicamental logic learnt from without, but, like the natural logic which is spontaneously exercised, is the intrinsic ontological structure of the act of faith itself, and if the external message of faith does not supply the *a posteriori* motive of faith, but brings the *a priori* motive directly into relation with itself, then the problem in question disappears.\(^{38}\)

The transcendental quality of Revelation thus corresponds to a person’s transcendental capacity to allow that person, in history, to receive Revelation. For Rahner, the primary motive for faith, the authority of God revealing, is often thought of as mediated by “*a posteriori* cognition and so determined by the horizon of human knowledge.”\(^{39}\) In this way, “a materially false act of faith can be genuine act of faith and not just a human act of recognition of a formal object grasped *a posteriori* under merely human mental conditions.”\(^{40}\)

Rahner concluded his essay by characterizing his “suggestions” as “some pointers to the direction in which a solution may be found to a problem which has seemed topical since the days of Modernism and which nonetheless appears in some way to have been evaded.”\(^{41}\) Finally, he pointed out that “all *theologia mentis* cannot be more than an assistance to the *theologiae cordis et vitae*, and that all theology is in fact simply an attempt to build a way which loses itself in the mystery of God, where there is no way, but who nevertheless lets himself be found.”\(^{42}\)

In sum, Rahner’s essay was primarily concerned with the transcendental aspects of the mediation of Revelation to believers, rather than the relationship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. Nonetheless, Rahner expressed a number of key themes in the

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 23-24.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 23.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) Ibid.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 25.
theology of Revelation: all of history is seen as a means which God can use to self-communicate; however, the history of Israel and the event of the God-man are the particular places where God’s self-disclosure first approached and then achieved perfection. Thus, the Christ event perfects human self-transcendence via an experience of God’s presence that discloses the Trinity. Simultaneously, the Christ-event is inherently ecclesial, since faith in Christ is mediated to individuals through the historical faith of the Church, which is expressed in both Scripture and Tradition.

Rahner’s short essay, however, did not address certain aspects of Revelation that were proposed by the First Vatican Council; for example, the Council contrasted natural and supernatural Revelation, while Rahner spoke of divine self-communication as either “very explicit” and “quite anonymous.” In addition, Vatican I emphasized the role of supernatural grace in the act of faith, while Rahner spoke of “entitative divinization.” Finally, Rahner’s essay did not address the role of the Magisterium in the mediation of Revelation.

Joseph Ratzinger: “Revelation and Tradition.”

Ratzinger’s treatment of “Revelation and Tradition” began with a “statement of the problem”: “one of the fundamental questions which split Christendom in the age of the Reformation” was “the way in which the word of revelation uttered in Christ remains present in history and reaches men.” In the Medieval Church, “innumerable things, some

43 See Dei Filius, Chapter 2 (Denzinger, §3008); an English translation is available in Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, edited by Norman P. Tanner, SJ and translated by Ian Brayley, SJ (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington: Georgetown University, 1990), 2: 804-811; hereafter cited: Tanner.
44 Rahner, “Observations,” 17. The question of the availability of revelation outside of Christianity, and the particular role of Christian revelation, was not explicitly addressed.
45 Ibid., 16.
edifying, others surprising,” had come to be considered part of “tradition.”  

Consequently, “Luther, struck by the simplicity of the gospel . . . could see nothing but frivolity in all those ‘traditions’.”  

Thus, for the Reformers:

Tradition is a human invention, by which man hides himself from God or, rather, rebels against him in order to take his salvation into his own hands instead of hoping for it from the favour of the Lord which cannot be claimed or extorted.

Accordingly, Tradition seemed at odds with “the great article of the gospel” that “we obtain the grace of God through faith in Christ without merit on our part and do not merit it by a service of God, instituted by men.”

What basically alienated the Reformers from the Roman Catholic Church was their perception that “the word of God is fettered in the Catholic Church through its connection with the authority of the ministry.” In contrast, the Reformers insisted that “the word is the criterion of the ministry.” As a result, the Reformers repudiated ecclesiastical authority and espoused the principle of *sola scriptura*:

For rejection of the ministry as the criterion of the word logically meant the reduction of the word to scripture as its own interpreter, and scripture now remained as the only authentic form of the word and tolerated no independent reality, “tradition”, beside it.

In response, the Council of Trent insisted that “the word is not a reality standing independently above the Church, but that it is delivered by the Lord to the Church.”

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48 Ibid., 26-27.
49 Ibid., 26; a similar view was expressed in the Augsburg Confession; accordingly, Medieval *consuetudines* were rejected as “devil’s doctrines” (ibid., 26-27).
50 Ibid., 27-28.
51 Ibid., 28
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 29.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 30. See the Council of Trent, First Decree, “Acceptance of the Sacred Books and Apostolic Traditions” (8 April 1546) in Denzinger, §1501.
Tridentine fathers “were indubitably certain that the Lord who instituted the Church as his Body is also able to preserve it for his word.”\footnote{Ibid., 30.}

According to Ratzinger, this conflict between Trent and the Reformers continues to the present. On the one hand, Protestants pose the following question to Catholics: “Can the word be given over to the Church without fear that it will forfeit its own power and vitality under the shears of the magisterium or in the rank growth of the sensus fidelium?\footnote{Ibid., 31.} Catholics, on the other hand, ask Protestants: “Can the word be posited as independent without thereby delivering it up to the caprice of exegetes, evacuating it of meaning in the controversies of historians and so robbing it entirely of binding force?”\footnote{Ibid.}

Although these two positions have hardened during the centuries since the Reformation, “the distance so created permitted greater objectivity” and “there is an increasing tendency for each to break out of its own special history and to make contact again with the other.”\footnote{Ibid.} A significant break-through from the Catholic side came with Josef Rupert Geiselmann’s “new interpretation of the pronouncements of the Council of Trent on the nature of tradition.”\footnote{Ibid., 32. Josef Rupert Geiselmann (1890-1980) was the author of Die Heilige Schrift und die Tradition: zu den neueren Kontroversen über das Verhältnis der Heiligen Schrift zu den nichtgeschriebenen Traditionen (Freiburg: Herder, 1962); hereafter cited: Die Heilige Schrift und die Tradition.} The Tridentine statement that “the truth of the gospel is contained \textit{in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus}” had often been interpreted to mean that “scripture does not contain the whole truth of the gospel, and that consequently no \textit{sola scriptura} is possible because part of the truth of revelation is conveyed to us solely through tradition.”\footnote{Ibid., 32.} Geiselmann’s historical investigation, however, led him to conclude that Trent
“had turned away from the idea of a division of revealed truth between two separate sources or at least had not expressly defined it;” accordingly, “even as a Catholic theologian one can hold the view of the material sufficiency of scripture.”

Ratzinger, however, contended that there are both historical and theological grounds for questioning the material “sufficiency of scripture”—because no Catholic dogma “is to be had sola scriptura, neither the great dogmas of Christian antiquity, . . . nor even less, the new ones of 1854 and 1950.” Accordingly, “what sense is there in talking about the sufficiency of scripture?” For Ratzinger, “recourse has to be had to such a wide sense of the term ‘sufficiency’ that the word loses all serious meaning.” Nonetheless, the “question of the sufficiency of scripture is a purely secondary problem”; the real question is “the relation between the authority of the Church and the authority of holy scripture.”

Ratzinger accordingly proposed five theses to resolve the question of the relation between Revelation and Tradition. His first thesis was that Revelation and Scripture are not identical; rather, Revelation “is more than scripture to the extent that reality exceeds information about it.”

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62 Ibid., 32-33.
63 Ibid. 33: 1854 was the year of the definition of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX; 1950 was the year of the definition of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII.
64 Ibid., 33.
65 Ibid., 34.
66 Ibid., 34.
67 Ibid., 34-35.
68 Ibid., 35-49.
69 Ibid. 35.
itself known to man in faith, it also extends beyond the fact of scripture which serves to mediate it.  

Accordingly, “Scripture is not revelation but at most only a part of the latter’s greater reality.”

Ratzinger’s second thesis proposed that there is a “different significance of scripture in the old and new covenants.” The difference is Christological: “in the New Testament view the Old Testament appears as ‘scripture’ in the proper sense, which reached its true meaning through the Christ-event, by being drawn into the living sphere of the Christ-reality.”

This Christological view of Scripture led Ratzinger to his third thesis on “Christ the revelation of God”: only the Christ-reality is sufficient to communicate revelation, because “the reception of revelation is equivalent to entering into the Christ-reality.” Moreover: “In this process, the reception of individual propositions is secondary; they are only meaningful at all as ways of rendering explicit the one mystery of Christ.” Thus, this “reception of revelation, in which the Christ-reality becomes ours, is called in biblical language ‘faith’.” Insofar as “faith is entry into Christ’s presence,” and insofar as “the presence of revelation is essentially connected with the two realities ‘faith’ and ‘Church,’ then “revelation goes beyond scripture in two respects, in relation to God and in relation to its human recipient.” As a result, scripture cannot be self-sufficient.

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70 Ibid., 36. Ratzinger’s statement that “There can be scripture without revelation” (36) is ambiguous.
71 Ibid., 37.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 39.
74 Ibid., 40.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., 40.
78 Ibid., 41.
Ratzinger’s fourth thesis considered “the nature of tradition.” First, the “explicitation of the Christ-reality” occurs in two ways: (1) as “an interpretation of the Old Testament on the basis of the Christ-event and as oriented towards that event”; and (2) as “an interpretation of the Christ-event itself on the basis of the pneuma, which means on the basis of the Church’s present” [sic]. Historically speaking, immediately after Pentecost, the Apostles “at first did not undertake a mission to the gentile nations but endeavoured to convert Israel.”

It was only the shock of various historical events, especially the execution of Stephen, that of James, and decisively, the arrest and flight of Peter, which brought the original community . . . to recognize the failure of the attempt to convert Israel as definitive, and consequently to go to the pagans and so create the Church instead of the kingdom. They did this . . . as a new decision in the Holy Spirit. By doing so they opened out that new interpretation of the message of Christ which is the essential basis of the Church.

Accordingly, the “definitive establishment of the Church rests on a decision in the Holy Spirit”—a pneumatological decision that has four implications:

(i) There is an Old Testament theology of the Old Testament, which the historian draws out from the Old Testament itself.

(ii) There is a New Testament theology of the Old Testament which . . . is a new interpretation in the light of the Christ-event which does not arise from the purely historical consideration of the Old Testament alone; . . . such a re-interpretation . . . does not do something which is completely alien to the nature of the Old Testament . . . .

(iii) There is a New Testament theology of the New Testament . . . which the historian as such can derive from the New Testament itself.

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79 Ibid., 41-42.
80 Ibid., 42.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 43.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., 44.

Ratzinger thus envisioned the process of the Church’s interpretation of the Christ-event as beginning in the New Testament and extending from the New Testament as dogmatic theology, which includes “in addition to the Church’s interpretation of the New Testament, the private theology of individual theologians.”87 However, Ratzinger pointed out that “in a precise sense we could designate only dogma as such as the Church’s theology of the New Testament.”88

Ratzinger then summarized “the several sources of the reality called ‘tradition’”:

First source: The extent to which the reality of “revelation” is more than “scripture.”

Second source: The specific character of New Testament revelation as pneuma, as opposed to gramma, and consequently . . . the impossibility of objectivizing it. This state of affairs has been expressed in the Church’s practice . . . by the placing of fides above scriptura, that is to say, of the creed as rule of faith above the details of what is written.

Third source: The character of the Christ-event as present and the authoritative enduring presence of Christ’s Spirit in his Body the Church and . . . the authority to interpret Christ yesterday in relation to Christ today . . . .89

“Corresponding to these three sources of the concept of tradition,” Ratzinger delineated four “strata in tradition”:90

(i) At the beginning of all tradition stands the fact that the Father gives the Son over to the word . . . .

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86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 45.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 45-46.
(ii) Tradition then exists concretely as presence in faith . . . .

(iii) The organ of tradition is the authority of the Church . . . .

(iv) Tradition also exits, however, as actually expressed in what has already become a rule of faith (creed, fides quae) by the authority of faith.\textsuperscript{91}

Ratzinger’s fifth thesis considered “the function of exegesis.” Like preaching (which is also always interpretive), “Tradition by its very nature is always interpretation, does not exist independently, but only as exposition, interpretation ‘according to the scriptures.’”\textsuperscript{92} Tradition, like the preaching of Jesus Christ himself, “does not come with something absolutely new, . . . but proclaims the reality of what was written and awakens this to a new life, which the mere historian was not in a position to derive from it.”\textsuperscript{93} The Church has “a duty of vigilance in the exegesis which investigates the literal sense, and so guards the link with the sarx of the Logos, in opposition to all gnosis”; thus one can claim that “there exists something like a certain independence as a separate, and in many respects perfectly unambiguous, criterion in the face of the Church’s magisterium.”\textsuperscript{94} This view, which “was undoubtedly a correct insight on Luther’s part,” has “not always been sufficiently clearly perceived” by Catholics.\textsuperscript{95}

Ratzinger then pointed to “a double criteriology in matters of faith”: on the one hand “there is what the ancient Church called ‘the rule of faith’, and with it the regulative function of the official witnesses as against scripture and its interpretation, that praescriptio of the rightful owner of scripture, and this, as Tertullian rightly noted, excludes any wilful playing

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
off of Scripture against the Church. “On the other hand, there is also the limit set by
the littera scripturae, the historically ascertainable literal meaning of scripture which . . .
certainly represents no absolute criterion subsisting in and for itself within the counterpoint
of faith and knowledge, but does nevertheless represent a relatively independent criterion.” 97

There is then a reciprocal relationship between Scripture and the Magisterium: “What
can be unambiguously recognized from Scripture, whether by scientific methods or by
simple reading, has the function of a real criterion, the test of which even the
pronouncements of the magisterium itself have to meet.” 98 In this interaction between
knowledge and faith, the Magisterium has less authority than Scripture:

Certainly it is a question here of the lesser component, that of knowledge; it does not
sit in judgment on faith, but it nevertheless continues to exist in faith as a critical
court of appeal and as such has an urgent task, that of guarding the purity of the
testimony once given, and of defending the sarx of history against the caprice of
gnosis which perpetually seek to establish its own autonomy. 99

Accordingly, Ratzinger saw the Scripture-Magisterium relationship in a new perspective that
might result in a reformation within the Church:

Incorporated into the Church’s authoritative ministry of giving testimony which
draws its right and force from the presence of the Spirit and from Christ’s perpetual
presence, by which he is ever the Christ of today, the function of bearing witness,
which belongs to the unique word of scripture set down once and for all, will have to
be restored to its full rights and force. 100

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96 Ibid. Ratzinger did not give a reference to Tertullian.
97 Ibid., 48-49.
98 Ibid., 49.
99 Ibid., 49; italics in the original.
100 Ibid. At least one aspect of Ratzinger’s view of Tradition resembles that of Pope Pius XII (Humani Generis
Joseph Ratzinger: The Tridentine Decree on Tradition

In the third and final essay of *Revelation and Tradition*, Ratzinger offered additional reflections about the relationship of Scripture and Tradition. At the time of writing, there was widespread discussion about Geiselmann’s historical study of how the Council of Trent had changed its original description of the relationship of Scripture and Tradition from *partim-partim*—Revelation is contained *partly* in Scripture and *partly* in Tradition—to *et*—Revelation is contained in Scripture and *Tradition*. Ratzinger was concerned that this interest had “resulted in undue narrowing of the inquiry,” which “to a large extent obscures the real background to the Tridentine decree.”

In his appraisal of the Tridentine discussion, Ratzinger first considered the pneumatological view of Tradition found in the speech of Cardinal Legate Cervini on 18 February 1546, which proposed “three principles and foundations of our faith”: first, the inspired Scripture; second, the Gospel implanted in human hearts; third, the Holy Spirit who reveals God's mysteries in the hearts of the faithful and leads the Church into all truth until the Parousia. Accordingly, there are “not two but three principles” in the communication of revelation: “scripture—gospel—revelation of the Spirit in the Church.” Ratzinger emphasized that “the more comprehensive concept of ‘gospel’ . . . includes what is written

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102 Ibid., 50; see: Geiselmann, *Die Heilige Schrift und die Tradition*.
103 “Interpretation,” 51; during the Council of Trent, Marcello Cervini (1501-1555), a papal legate and Cardinal was elected Pope on 9 April 1555, and took the name Marcellus II, but died three weeks later (1 May 1555). According to Francesco Cesareo, Cervini, a reformer who wanted to restore the papacy to moral leadership, did not fit neatly into either an “intransigenti” approach of confrontation with Protestants, nor a “spirituali” approach of conciliation. See Francesco Cesareo’s book review of William V. Hudon’s Marcello Cervini and Ecclesiastical Government in Tridentine Italy in *The Catholic Historical Review* 79/2 (April, 1993): 338-339.
104 Ratzinger, “Interpretation,” 51. Cervini pointed out that God self-revealed in three ways: first to the patriarchs, then in Christ who taught his Gospel orally, then by the Holy Spirit (ibid., 52).
105 “Interpretation,” 52.
and what is inscribed in the hearts of the faithful”; thus, “the gospel as such by its very
nature can only partly be written.” Accordingly, Tradition is not one principle:

Its basis is in fact divided between two contrasted principles: “gospel” as a principle
which is always only partially transposable into scripture, and the operation of God’s
Spirit in the age of the Church. Accordingly, Tradition is not one principle:

Tradition then is not to be understood simply as verbal; what is at issue is “a real tradition,
as the surplus of reality over the word which bears witness to it.” Thus, Ratzinger
described Tradition as “the pneumatological component of the Christ-event.”

Although Ratzinger conceded that “this triple conception is very faint in the official
decree on tradition,” he pointed to other texts where “the actual activity of the Council is
described as tradere” with a twofold meaning: (1) “instruction given by Jesus and the
apostles” and (2) “instruction by the Holy Spirit.”

Ratzinger also detected this “threefold conception” of Tradition “in the background
of the decree on tradition”: first, the decree “attaches the term holy scripture in the narrower
sense to the Old Testament”; second, “two kinds of apostolic traditions are distinguished,
those which derive from Christ, and those which derive from the inspiration of the Holy
Spirit”; and third: “Tradition is now described as vel oretenus a Christo vel a Spiritu Sancto
dictatas et continua successione in Ecclesia catholica conservatas.” Ratzinger’s
historical findings led to a question about the “pneumatological conception” of tradition:

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106 Ibid., 53.
107 Ibid., 53.
108 Ibid., 53-54.
109 Ibid., 55.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., 56: “as either spoken by Christ or dictated by the Holy Spirit, which have been preserved in unbroken
sequence in the catholic church” (Denzinger, 1501; Tanner, 663). The Council referred to “written books and
unwritten traditions (sine scripto traditionibus); Ratzinger referred to tradition in the singular.
“how the idea—a surprising one for us—of continuing *revelatio* can be given an intelligible meaning in view of the uniqueness and historical links of revelation”?

Ratzinger then returned to a discussion of the Tridentine debates—this time on “the connection between tradition and the life of the Church.” Basing his conclusions on “the treatise on tradition composed for the council Fathers by Seripando,” Ratzinger held that “there are traditions *in scripture*” and there are also “traditions which are not contained in the Bible”—some of the latter “are partly apostolic or owed their origin to General Councils” and “partly local traditions and, therefore subject to change.” After pointing out that “Tradition is not what is unwritten, but is found in scripture and outside it,” Ratzinger characterized Tradition as referring to “the *institutio vitae*, to the mode of realization of the word, in actual Christian living.” In other words, the intention of the Tridentine Fathers “was certainly not to define an historical viewpoint,” but rather to insist “on the reality of the *institutio vitae christianae*, the form of human existence actually current and valid in the Church’s present, and which alone provides for scripture the place where it assumes reality.” Accordingly, Tradition is “something which is living and which is more extensive than scripture, it is fundamentally apostolic, though in details it is, of course, changeable like everything living.”

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112 Ibid., 57.
113 Ibid., 57-62 (Section 2).
114 Ibid., 58. Girolamo Seripando (1492-1563), a vicar-general of the Augustinians and an opponent of Luther, was counselor to Cardinal Cervini at Trent. Seripando, who was Pope Paul IV’s legate to Trent, oversaw its third session. In 1562, he was the center of controversy over allegations that he believed that divine law obligates a bishop to reside in his diocese. Seripando was consecrated Archbishop of Salerno in 1554 and created a cardinal by Pope Pius IV in 1561. See H. D. Jedin, “Seripando, Girolamo,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition (2003), 13: 17-18.
115 “Interpretation,” 58, 59.
116 Ibid., 60.
117 Ibid., 60-61.
Ratzinger then considered “Tradition and the Church’s dogma.” After contrasting consuetudines, observationes, institutiones, and traditiones caeremoniales, with traditiones ipsas tum ad fidel tum ad mores pertinentes, he concluded that “tradition, operative chiefly through the conciliar practice of the Church, is of fundamental importance for fides, too, for the doctrine which is believed, not simply for pious practice, the ‘caeremonialia’.”

In concluding the third essay in this small co-authored book, Ratzinger discussed the meaning of the Tridentine decree on Tradition, which brought together “three different theological conceptions”:

1. the pneumatological conception that stressed “the dynamic character of the Christ-reality present in the Church, and so understood tradition primarily as the reality of the institutio vitae christianae under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

2. the ceremonial view that regarded “tradition essentially as the domain . . . of consuetudines, as the usus ecclesiae, which the Reformers wrongly attempted to reject as abusus.”

3. the dogmatic view that “emphasized that the phenomenon of traditio extends to the domain of fides also.”

Ratzinger observed that the (2) ceremonial and (3) dogmatic views were “set against . . . [the] pneumatological perspective, based on the perpetual presence of salvation, a more historical view, centred on the transmission of what is unique,” focused on what is once and for all. For Ratzinger, both the pneumatological and historical elements are “essential”:

It is well to understand the text as requiring precisely that we should regard both elements as essential and so recognize that both go to constitute the Christian reality,

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118 Ibid., 61-62 (Section 3).
119 Ibid., 62: “traditions concerning both faith and conduct”
120 Ibid. 62-66 (Section 4).
121 Ibid., 62-63.
122 Ibid., 63.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid., 64.
and even that part of it which we call tradition—both the presence of the Spirit and the link with the unique events that once occurred in history.\textsuperscript{125}

In this perspective, Ratzinger found his answer to the question of understanding “the view of the Council of Trent as a whole”.\textsuperscript{126}

The first and most important fact seems to me to be that the Council still very clearly perceived the connection of the concept of tradition with that of revelation. This in turn is connected with the fact that . . . it still conceived the notion of revelation in a far less material way than was subsequently the case. Only in that way is the idea of the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Church to be understood.\textsuperscript{127}

Accordingly, Ratzinger thought that “revelation is indeed closed as regards its material principle, but is present and remains as regards its reality.”\textsuperscript{128} What was accomplished once for all through the Christ-event and the preaching of the apostles “remains perpetually living and effective in the faith of the Church, and Christian faith never simply refers to what is past but equally to what is present and to what is to come.”\textsuperscript{129}

Ratzinger concluded his reflections by pointing out that “four strata in all of the concept of tradition can be discerned in the Tridentine debates”:\textsuperscript{130}

1. The inscription of revelation = the gospel, not simply in the Bible but in men’s hearts;

2. the Holy Spirit speaking throughout the whole age of the Church;

3. the conciliar activity of the Church;

4. liturgical tradition and the whole tradition of the Church’s life.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 64-65.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. Ratzinger observed that “the thesis that revelation closed with the death of the last apostle must have appeared far too unqualified” (ibid., 65).
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. 65-66.
For Ratzinger, “In these four strata . . . there is expressed the one reality of the Christian present in which . . . the whole post-apostolic past of the Church . . . is also present as the totality of the Church’s life, in which scripture is a central, but never the only, element.”132 Ratzinger emphasized that “Trent presents a much richer testimony that was perceived during the centuries that followed, so that theological work today . . . can receive from it new stimulus, confirmation and guidance in its endeavours.”133

Summary

Ratzinger’s reflections on Revelation in this book took as their point of departure, the classical controversy about sola scriptura that had recently re-surfaced through the historical studies of Josef Rupert Geiselmann, who proposed that there is a sense in which Catholic theologians could defend the material sufficiency of scripture. Such a position seemed problematic to Ratzinger, who considered Revelation a multi-faceted reality that reaches its culmination in the Christ-event. As such, Revelation is necessarily greater than Scripture, which can never hope to enunciate all the aspects of Revelation. Ratzinger viewed Tradition in a comparable way: rather than being merely verbal, Tradition has a pneumatological dimension insofar as it is an on-going interpretation of the Christ-event for the present—an interpretation guided by the Holy Spirit through the Magisterium. Nonetheless, Ratzinger, like Rahner, did not provide a detailed treatment of the role of the Magisterium in the mediation of Revelation, as that was not the purpose of the book.

Rahner’s point of departure was that human beings are hearers of the Word, individuals who become conscious of the Word of God disclosed in Christ in which God self-communicates. Rahner discussed the transcendental conditions of the human being’s

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132 Ibid., 66.
133 Ibid., 66.
reception of the word—primarily through the notion of entitative divinization—to
answer the question, how do we hear the Word? Rahner was not as concerned about the
historical events in a person’s reception of the Word. In contrast, Ratzinger identified
Revelation most completely with the Christ-event, a reality disclosed in the historical Jesus
Christ. As a result, the receiver of Revelation is called into a mutual indwelling, where each
person is in Christ, and vice versa.
Part II

Vatican II on the Mediation of Revelation

The Second Vatican Council presented its teaching on the relationship of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium in two constitutions: Dei Verbum and Lumen Gentium. The texts of these documents were developed in three stages: first, a preparatory stage (1959-1962) prior to the opening of the Council (1962); this stage included various preconciliar documents as well as addresses given by Pope John XXIII. The second stage included the drafting of a series of documents about Revelation (Figure 1). The third stage was the Council’s teaching about Revelation as it emerged in the discussion that led to the promulgation of Dei Verbum (Chapter 2, §§ 9 and 10) and Lumen Gentium (§ 25).
**Figure 1: Schemas Related to Development of *Dei Verbum* (See Sigla below Figure)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Key Dates</th>
<th>Supplementary Document(s)</th>
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<td>---</td>
<td><em>Brief Outline of a Constitution On the Sources Of Revelation</em></td>
<td>To TC from Ottaviani September 1960</td>
<td><em>Brief Outline of a Constitution on Defending the Deposit of Faith</em></td>
<td>September 1960</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td><em>de Fontibus Revelationis</em></td>
<td>Completed by TC September 1961</td>
<td><em>de Deposito Fidei Pure Custodiendo</em></td>
<td>Presented to CPC January 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><em>de Fontibus Revelationis</em></td>
<td>Presented to CPC 9 November 1961</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><em>de Fontibus Revelationis</em></td>
<td>Discussed In Council Nov 1962; Removed Discussion halted by John XXIII 21 November 1963</td>
<td><em>de Deposito Fidei pure custodiendo</em></td>
<td>As Amended March 1962 Not discussed at Council Discussed at CPC June 1962; Not Discussed In Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td><em>de Divina Revelatione</em></td>
<td>Approved by CC 27 March 1963 Not Discussed in Council</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td><em>de Divina Revelatione</em></td>
<td>Approved by DC 7 June 1964 Discussed in Council 30 September - 6 October 1964</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td><em>de Divina Revelatione</em></td>
<td>Produced by DC November 1964 Discussed by Council 5-7 Septembeert 1965</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td><em>Dei Verbum</em></td>
<td>Completed by DC October 1965 Approved by Council 18 November 1965</td>
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**Sigla:**
- TC: Theological Commission
- MC: Mixed Commission
- CPC: Central Preparatory Commission
- DC: Doctrinal Commission
- CC: Coordinating Commission
Chapter 5: The Preparations for Vatican II

Pope John XXIII announced the convocation of a general council in an address on 25 January 1959, the feast of the conversion of the Apostle Paul, at the close of the Chair of Unity Octave. After noting that Rome had developed into a modern metropolis and after praising the priests and Cardinal vicar of Rome for their ministry to the city, the Pope pointed out the need for “the fervor of a more fruitful parochial and diocesan life.”

According to John XXIII, the people of the world were hungry for the spiritual food of grace, which could bring them into relationship with Jesus Christ, their shepherd. The Pope saw the world as filled with human shortcomings due to the fact that people devote themselves to seeking “the so-called goods of the earth.” On the one hand, God reveals himself in Christ, and redeems human beings by grace, uniting them with the Triune God.

On the other hand, the “prince of darkness . . . organizes the contradiction and struggle

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1 Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (Pope John XXIII) was born at Sotto il Monte, Italy, in the Diocese of Bergamo, on 25 November 1881. After studies at the Pontifical Roman Seminary, he was ordained a priest in 1904. The following year, he was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Bergamo and also taught at the diocesan seminary. At the beginning of World War I in 1915, Roncalli was drafted into the medical corps of the Italian army as a chaplain. In 1919, after the war, he was appointed spiritual director at the diocesan seminary; in 1921, Pope Benedict XV appointed him president of the Italian society for the Propagation of the Faith. In 1935, Roncalli was consecrated bishop and named apostolic delegate to Bulgaria; he subsequently served as the Vatican representative in Greece and Turkey; in 1944, he was appointed papal nuncio to France. In 1953, he was named a Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice. Elected Pope on 28 October 1958, he summoned a Roman Synod, established the commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law, and convened the Second Vatican Council. He died on 3 June 1963—after the first session of the Council.


3 Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II Apparando (ADA) 1-I, 3-6, at 4: “Accade per altro di dover constatare che l’episodio evangelico delle turbe chiamate e seguire il Signore e ad accostarsi a Lui, ma incapaci ed impotenti a trovarsi il cibo nutriente della grazia, si rinnova e tocca il cuore ansioso del pastore. Pochi pani, pochi pesci: « quid sunt inter tantos? ». Con questo accenno è detto tutto: quanto ad un incremento di energie, di coordinazione di sforzi individuali e collettivi atti a produrre, con l’aiuto del Signore, una coltivazione spirituale intensa, per una produzione più copiosa e felice di frutti benefici e santi nel senso dell’«adveniat regnum tuum», in un fervore di vita parrochiale e diocesana più feconda.”

4 Ibid., 4: “E triste dall’altra innanzi all’abuso e al compromesso della libertà dell’uomo, che non conoscendo i cieli aperti, e rifiutandosi alla fede in Cristo Figlio di Dio, redentore del mondo e fondatore della Santa Chiesa, si volge tutto alla ricerca dei cosiddetti beni della terra.”
against the truth and the good” and intensifies the division between the Church (City of God) and the civil polis (City of man).\(^5\) At the conclusion of his address, Pope John mentioned another key reason for calling a council.

Of them all we beg that those important proposals may begin well, be carried through, and have a happy outcome, for the enlightenment, edification, and joy of the entire Christian people, for a renewed invitation to the faithful of the separated communities also lovingly to follow us in this search for unity and grace to which so many souls all over the earth aspire.\(^6\)

Pope John XXIII wanted the Council to proclaim the message of Revelation to four groups: 1) practicing Catholic Christians; 2) fallen-away Catholics; 3) non-Catholic Christians; and 4) non-Christians. The Council should do this by “recalling certain ancient forms for stating doctrine and making wise provision for Church discipline.”\(^7\) As Giuseppe Alberigo has commented, for the Council to accomplish this mission, the Church needed new ways of relating to the world.\(^8\)

Some six months later, Pope John XXIII, in his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram* (26 June 1959), listed “three objectives” to advance his service in the “apostolic office”: truth, unity, and peace.\(^9\) Although the main part of the encyclical was devoted to the topic of

\(^5\) Ibid., 4-5: “Principe delle tenebre . . . organizza la contraddizione e la lotta contro la verità e contro il bene.”

\(^6\) Ibid., 6: “Da tutti imploriamo un buon inizio, continuazione, e felice successo di forte lavoro, a lume, ad edificazione ed a letizia di tutto il popolo cristiano, a rinnovato invito ai fedele delle Comunità separate a seguirci anch’esse amabilmente in questa ricerca di unità e di grazia, a cui tante anime anelano da tutti i punti della terra.”

\(^7\) Ibid., 5: “Per il richiamo di alcune forme antiche di affermazione dottrinale e di saggi ordinamenti di ecclesiastica disciplina.” Later addresses would develop the implications of this sentence.

\(^8\) Giuseppe Alberigo, “The Announcement of the Council,” Chapter I, *History of Vatican II: Volume I*, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak and Giuseppe Alberigo, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, and Leuven: Pieters, 1995), 1-50, at 19; hereafter cited: Alberigo, “Announcement.” After the announcement, “there was a widespread sense that a profound change was taking place at the heart of Catholicism, with each individual imagining the substance of the change and the most desirable ways for it to develop.” Alberigo (p. 2) maintained that Pope John “had shown himself fully aware of the extraordinary character of his action, that is he thought of it as an exercise of an essentially primatial responsibility.”

\(^9\) Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *On Truth, Unity and Peace in a Spirit of Charity, Ad Petri Cathedram* (1959); Latin original and English translation available at:
Church unity, the pope pointed out that the basis of such unity is Revelation.\textsuperscript{10} The encyclical’s first chapter emphasized that both natural and revealed truth bring people and societies happiness. Jesus Christ is the truth enlightening and saving individuals:

\begin{quote}
Let us all attain to unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the son of God . . . that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, according to the wiles of error. Rather we are to practice truth in love, and grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ. For from him the whole body (being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part) derives its increase to the building up of itself in love. \textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

The encyclical characterized Unity as the fruit of accepting God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ, who makes the recipients of Revelation a body of which He is head. The members of His body grow towards spiritual maturity by growing in charity and attaining salvation. Pope John XXIII concluded the first chapter by observing that whether people attack truth or disregard it,

\begin{quote}
they act as though God had given us intellects for some purpose other than the pursuit and attainment of truth. This mistaken action leads directly to that absurd proposition: one religion is just as good as another. \textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

The Pope’s concern for unity was rooted in a strong commitment to proclaim the self-disclosure of God to the Church in Jesus Christ.

\begin{itemize}
\item \url{http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/index.htm}; hereafter cited: John XXIII, \textit{Ad Petri Cathedram}.
\item Alberigo, “Announcement,” 41.
\item John XXIII, \textit{Ad Petri Cathedram} 9: “. . . Occurramus omnes in unitatem fidei et agnitionis Filii Dei . . . Ut iam non simus parvuli fluctuantes, et circumferamur omni vento doctrinae in nequitia hominum, in astutia ad circumventionem erroris. Veritatem autem facientes in caritate, crescamus in illo per omnia, qui est caput Christus; ex quo totum corpus compactum et connexum per omnem iuncturam subministrationis, secundum operationem in mensuram uniuscuiusque membris augmentum corporis facit in aedificationem sui in caritate” (\textit{Eph} 4,13-16).
\item Ibid., 17: “Non desunt praeterea qui, etsi veritatem consulto data opera non impugnant, neglegentia tamen atque incuria summa erga eam laborent, quasi mentem nobis ad pervestiganda et assequenda vera Deus non dederit. Qui pravus agendi habitus ad hanc usque prono quodam itinere perabsurdam adducit sententiam: cunctarum nempe religionum aequam habendam esse rationem sublato scilicet veri falsique discrimine.”
\end{itemize}
In the encyclical’s second chapter, Pope John XXIII developed his portrait of unity among societies, classes, and nations:

Once we have attained the truth in its fullness, integrity, purity and unity should pervade our hearts minds and actions. For there is only one cause of discord, disagreement, and dissension: ignorance of the truth, or what is worse, rejection of the truth once it has been found.13

Peace, harmony, and prosperity in societies are only attainable in light of “loving the truth sincerely” (§ 21).

In the encyclical’s third chapter, Pope John XXIII emphasized that unity is a mark of the Church, which is called to be “one fold with one Shepherd”:

The Catholic Church teaches the necessity of believing firmly and faithfully all that God has revealed. This revelation is contained in sacred scripture and in the oral and written tradition that has come down through the centuries from the apostolic age and finds expression in the ordinances and definitions of the popes and legitimate Ecumenical councils.14

Whenever a man has wandered from this path, the Church has never failed to use her maternal authority to call him again and again to the right road. She knows well there is no truth other than the one she treasures; that there can be no “truths” in contradiction of it. Thus she repeats and bears witness to the words of the Apostle: “For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.” (2 Cor. 13:8)15

Revelation, “oral” as well as written, is found in Scripture and in Tradition. Over the centuries, the Church has given new expressions to Revelation through the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils and other Magisterial documents. When people have not accepted

13 Ibid., 20: “Ex hac adepta veritate—quae sit plena, integra, sincera—in mentes, animos actionesque nostras unitas scatere atque emanare debet. Omnes enim discordiae, disconventiones, dissectionesque ex hoc, veluti ex prima scaterea, profiscuntur:

14 Ibid., 69: “Etenim Catholica Ecclesia ea omnia firmiter fideliterque credenda esse decernit, quae divinitus revelata sunt; quae nempe in Sacris Litteris continentur, aut oretenus vel scriptus sunt tradita, atque inde ab apostolica aetate, per saeculum decursum a Summis Pontificibus et a legitimis Conciliis Oecumenicis sancta ac definita sunt.”

15 Ibid., 70: “Quotiescumque aliquid ab hac via aberravit, eum etiam atque etiam materna auctoritate sua ad rectum iter revocare numquam destitit. Ipsa siquidem probe novit ac retinet unam tantum esse veritatem, atque adeo contrarias «veritates» haberi non posse; ipsa gentium Apostoli sententiam ut suam asseverat ac testatur: «Non enim possumus aliquid adversus veritatem, sed pro veritate» (2 Cor 13,8).”
Revelation, the Church has considered itself obliged as part of its mission to summon people back to the truths of Revelation.

**Preparations for the Council**

On 17 May 1959, Pentecost Sunday, Pope John XXIII established an Ante-Preparatory Commission, under the presidency of the Vatican Secretary of State, Domenico Cardinal Tardini, to plan the work of the Council.\(^{16}\) Tardini invited the Curial Congregations to submit proposals; he also sent a letter to 2593 prelates seeking their recommendations and invited the rectors of the Catholic universities in Rome and the deans of 62 theological faculties in Rome and worldwide for suggestions. The responses—which were intended “to serve as the basis for the work of the future preparatory commissions”—were collected in sixteen volumes of nearly 10,000 pages.\(^{17}\)

The following Pentecost, 5 June 1960, Pope John XXIII reviewed the work of the antepreparatory period:

The ideal of every redeemed person, the final ideal of every society on earth—family, nation, entire world—the ideal, above all, of the holy catholic and apostolic Church, to which an ecumenical council can aspire and collaborate, is the triumph of Christ Jesus. It is in the growth of Christ in us, “doing the truth in love,” that we find true definitive progress. Recall the uplifting words of St. Paul to the Ephesians: “He, Christ, is the Head, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.” (Eph. 4:15-16) . . . In the phrases of this citation of St. Paul it is easy for us to discern the chief points from which should emerge the beauty and complete splendor of the Catholic Church . . . Truth and love. Christ at the summit and the head of the Mystical body, which is the Church, a body joined and knit together, with all its joints, each in its proper place. All this for the upbuilding and growth of fraternal love, of holy and blessed peace.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{17}\) Ibid., 21. This work was completed over the course of one year.

Christ the head builds up this Mystical Body from individuals through fraternal love based upon shared truth and grace-aided peace of life. God self-reveals in Christ by means of the Holy Spirit, who

is Lord insofar as he belongs to the Holy Trinity: “With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.” He is Lord and life-giver insofar as by His power he penetrates both Testaments, Old and New, insofar as he multiplies his works of power, gentleness, and grace in Holy Church, his beloved bride.19

The Spirit preserves Revelation as a “sacred deposit” in spite of the fact that the Church’s leaders are “prone to the prevarication of error and sin.”20 On the same day as this speech, Pope John XXIII launched the second phase by establishing twelve preparatory commissions and three secretariats, under a Central Preparatory Commission with the Pope as president and Monsignor Pericle Felici as Secretary General.21

In an address on 14 November 1960, John XXIII stated that God reveals Himself and His plan of salvation to the Catholic Church for the benefit of all people.

Every believer therefore belongs to the whole of catholicity, as does every priest and, with proper distinction of tasks, every bishop, and all this within the divine framework which Jesus, the Son of God and founder of the Church, impressed upon his institution, established for all of humanity and for all times.22

19 Ibid., 523: “Signore in quanto appartiene alla augusta Trinità. Cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificantur. Dignore e vivicatore in quanto penetra della sua virtù i due Testamenti, l’Antico e il Nuovo: in quanto continua moltiplica la sua operazione di forza, di soavità e di grazia nella Santa Chiesa, che è la sua Sposa benedetta.”
20 Ibid., 524.
21 Wiltgen, 21. The Preparatory Commission had three subcommissions.
The Church has a universal mission, which is not limited to any age nor to any group. The purpose of Revelation is “the reward of eternal life in Christ Jesus, glorious and immortal King of all ages and of all peoples.”

On 25 December 1961, John XXIII, in his address convoking the council, pointed out that a major challenge to the Gospel is Communism—“militant atheism operating all over the world.” He viewed Communism as a false religion that harms not only its subjects, but also threatens all people. The pope also noted that the Church “knows that by giving light to the temporal order by the light of Christ, she is also revealing men to themselves, leading them to discover in themselves their own nature, their own dignity, their own purpose.” Yet, as Henri Daniel-Rops noted in a volume published during the preparatory period, the intention of the pope’s speech was not so much to suggest that the Council was convoked either for attacking the Church’s adversaries or “building up defenses,” but for the Church to “find solutions” to contemporary problems in light of the Gospel, the Church’s own true interest, and the common good of mankind—three “coalescent” ends.

In his broadcast to Catholics of the world on 11 September 1962, a month before the opening of the council, Pope John pointed out that some doctrines are contrary to Revelation and so a threat to all people:

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Episcopus: idque profecto compagem illum contingit, qua filius Dei Fundator Ecclesiae corpus a se conditum coagmentavit, tum generis humani universitatem intuitus, tum futurum, quod fine caret, aevum.”

23 Ibid., 1014.


25 Ibid., 10: “Novit eadem se, cum Christi luce homines collustret, id conferre, ut iidem se ipsi penitus agnoscant. Nam illuc eos perducit, ut intellegant, quid ipsi sint, qua dignitate excellant, quem finem prosequi debeat.” Yet, as Alberigo has noted, although Pope John “did not underrate the importance of this struggle [against Communism], he relativized it, for in his view the historical horizon of the Church's activity is much broader and more complex.” See Alberigo, “Announcement,” 52.

26 Daniel-Rops, 121.
Doctrines which foster religious indifferentism or deny God and the supernatural order, doctrines which ignore Providence in history and exalt out of all proportion the person of the individual, with the danger of removing him from social responsibilities, must hear again from the Church the word which was expressed in the important document, Mater et Magistra, where the thought of two thousand years of Christian history is summed up.27

False doctrines—both Communism’s denial of God and His Lordship over creation and the radical individualism that can be associated with capitalism—are threats to societies. God directs history and creates persons who are part of a community and responsible for each other. All must be free to respond to Revelation:

Religious freedom is not simply freedom of worship . . . it is an essential and irreplaceable element of the plan of Providence to place man upon the path of truth. Truth and freedom are the building-stones upon which human civilization is raised.28

On 11 October 1962, in his opening speech to the Council (Gaudet Mater Ecclesia), John XXIII described the Council’s principal task as promoting and defending doctrine by “more effective” presentation, not by resolving theological disputes nor simply restating existing formulations:

What instead is necessary today is that the whole of Christian doctrine, with no part of it lost, be received in our times with a new fervor, in serenity and peace, in that traditional and precise conceptuality which is especially displayed in the acts of the

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28 Ibid., 682. Uno dei diritti fondamentali cui la Chiesa non può rinunciare è quello della libertà religiosa, che non è soltanto libertà di culto . . . ma è elemento essenziale ed insurrogabile del disegno di Provvidenza, per avviare l’uomo sul cammino della verità. Verità e libertà sono le pietre dell’edificio su cui si estolle la civiltà humana.” According to Andrea Riccardi, John XXIII received “some very worried notes from cardinals frightened by the idea of a rapid and mainly ceremonial council that would issue condemnations,” rather than “renewing the mission of the Church in the face of the world’s problems, poverty, and desire for world peace.” See Andrea Riccardi, “The Tumultuous Opening Days of the Council,” Chapter 1 in History of Vatican II, Vol. II, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak and Giuseppe Alberigo (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis and Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 1-67, at 5; hereafter cited Riccardi, “Tumultuous Opening Days.” In response to these concerns, Pope John described revealed truth as an integral element of the Church’s ability to speak to the world in order “to cooperate in the triumph of peace, thus to make earthly existence more noble, more just, and more deserving for all.” AAS 54 (1962), 683, Joseph A. Komonchak, trans. “Per cooperare nel trionfo della pace a rendere più nobile, più giusta e meritoria per tutti l’esistenza terrena.”
Councils of Trent and Vatican I. . . . [Doctrine should] be investigated and presented in the way demanded by our times. For the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our venerable doctrine, are one thing; the fashion in which they are expressed, but with the same meaning and same judgment, is another thing. This way of speaking will require a great deal of work and, it may be, much patience: types of presentation must be introduced which are more in accord with a teaching authority which is primarily pastoral in character.29

John XXIII thought that a new method of presentation was needed to address a world that was no longer familiar with Christian doctrine as taught by earlier councils, as well as a new means of presenting Revelation to the non-Christian world.30

John XXIII observed that the Church needed to present Revelation in a manner suited to the times, rather than condemning errors:

The Church in every age has opposed these errors and has even condemned them and indeed with the greatest severity. But at the present time the spouse of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity; and, she thinks that she meets today’s needs by explaining the validity of her doctrine more fully rather than by condemning.31

The pope then stated that presenting Revelation in terms tailored to the twentieth century would be the most expeditious way of converting people to Christ and the Church:

29 AAS 54 (1962), trans. Joseph A. Komonchak, 786-796, at 791-792. Verumtamen in praesenti oportet ut universa doctrina christiana, nulla parte inde detracta, his temporibus ab omnibus accipiatur novo studio, mentibus serenis atque pacatis, tradita accurate illa ratione verba concipiendi et in formam redigendi, quae ex actis Concilii Tridentini et Vaticani primi praeordet elucet; . . . oportet ut haec doctrina certa et immutabilis, cui fidele obsequium est praestandum, ea ratione pervestigetur et exponantur, quam temporae postulant nostra. Est enim alius ipsum depositum Fidei, seu veritates, quae veneranda doctrina nostra continetur, alius modus, quo eadem enuntiantur, eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia. Huic quippe modo plurimum tribuendum erit et patienter, si opus fuerit, in eo elaborandum; scilicet eae inducendae erunt rationes res exponendi, quae cum magisterio, cuius indoles praesterrim pastoralis est, magis congruant.”

30 Riccardi, “Tumultuous Opening Days,” 15-16. In Riccardi’s view, the pope’s address indicated that “the age of the Catholic state and a Christian regime was no golden age of the Church in the history of the world, after which Christian life had progressively declined,” so he did not suggest a return to that “golden age.” While various governments were interested in the Church’s affairs, there was no governmental interference in the work of the Council: “the celebration of the Council manifested the freedom of the Church from civil authorities.”

31 AAS 54 (1962), 792. “Quibus erroribus Ecclesia nullo non tempore obstitit, eos saepe etiam damnavit, et quidem severitate firmissima. Ad praesens tempus quod attinet, Christi Sponsae placet misericordiae medicinam adhibere, potius quam severitatis arma suspicere; magis quam damnando, suae doctrinae vim uberius explicando putat hodiernis necessitatis esse consulendum.”
[False doctrines] so openly conflict with the right norms of honesty and have borne such lethal fruits that today people by themselves seem to condemn them and in particular those forms of life which disregard God and His laws, excessive confidence in technological progress, and a prosperity consisting only in the comforts of life. More and more they are coming to know that the dignity of the human person and his appropriate perfection are a matter of great importance and most difficult to achieve. What is especially important is that they have finally learned from experience that imposing external force on others, the power of weapons, and political domination are not at all sufficient for a happy solution of the most serious questions which trouble them.\(^{32}\)

For John XXIII, the world, which since the Fall has been tormented by strife, appeared ready to receive the Gospel of Christ. The horrors of two World Wars, the Holocaust, and the nuclear arms race signaled a new era in which people would be satisfied only by the truth revealed in Christ and proclaimed by the Church and would be willing to struggle to live according to that truth. John XIII emphasized that Christ and the Church are the real answers to humanity’s problems. After World War II a new historical situation had dawned in which people had “learned” that sin leads to destruction, because they had experienced the horrors inflicted by secular ideologies. As Étienne Fouilloux observed, the decolonization of much of the Third World was “a moment full of hope,” because (with exceptions like Vietnam and Algeria) it was happening with little conflict.\(^{33}\)

In the Pope’s view, people would welcome conciliar pronouncements whose “pastoral” quality would focus on the beauty, truth and charity of God and of the Church, as

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 792. “Non quod desint fallaces doctrinae, opinationes, pericula praecavenda atque dissipanda; sed quia haec omnia tam aperte pugnant cum rectis honestatis principiis, ac tam exitales peperere fructus, ut hodie homines per se ipsi ea damnare incipere videantur, ac nominatim illas vivendi formas, quae Deum eiusque leges posthabeant, nimiam in technicae artis progressibus positam confidentam, prosperitam unice vitae commodis innixam. Ipsi magis magisque norunt, humanae personae dignitatem eiusque congruam perfectionem negotium esse magni momenti et ad expediendum perarduum. Quod autem maxime interest, idem experimento tandem didicerunt, externam vim aliis imposatam, armorum potentiam, politicum dominatum minime satis esse, ad gravissimas, quae eos angunt, quaestiones feliciter dissolvendas.

well as on human dignity. John XXIII recognized that human beings are afflicted by sin and in need of redemption and salvation. Jesus Christ offers the true answer to humanity’s ills. Accordingly, a presentation of the Gospel that stressed Christ’s ability to respond to the deepest human desires and social needs was God’s desire for the Council. Pope John believed that the world would respond to a proclamation of the Gospel that addressed human hopes and sufferings, rather than only matters of doctrine. According to Daniel-Rops, the Pope, in convoking the council, saw himself acting in profound continuity with tradition, under the guidance of providence to “respond to the exigencies of his own day in accordance with the age-long experience of the Church.”34 Although there was not an “interior crisis” such as had prompted the convocation of the Council of Trent, “it was beyond question that the world had moved on, that it had changed perhaps even more since 1870 than during the three hundred years which lay between” Trent and Vatican I.35

The Theology of Revelation at the Time of Vatican II

Joseph Ratzinger has commented that “the idea of having a Constitution on the themes of revelation, Scripture, and tradition goes back to the early beginnings of the preparation of the Council.”36 Bernard-Dominique Dupuy pointed out that Vatican II dealt with the key theological debates of the time: the relationship of Scripture and Tradition, the historical-critical methods to be used in the study of Scripture, and the role of atheism.37 Karl Rahner observed in 1969 that the scientific revolution had eroded people’s willingness

34 Daniel-Rops, 14.
35 Ibid., 58.
to believe in an omnipotent Creator God and led to atheism; people could now only discern God’s reality through their interior spiritual hunger for the divine.\(^{38}\)

Ratzinger identified a set of questions about Revelation that paralleled some of the issues that surfaced in the drafting of *Humani Generis*.\(^{39}\) First, beginning in the early 19\(^{th}\) century, a new view of Tradition and dogmatic development had emerged; this took from Romantic philosophy the notion that traditions are part of an organically developing process. In addition, the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854—which drew more from Tradition than from Scripture—showed that Tradition “could not be understood as a simple passing on of something that had been handed down once and for all, but had to be understood in terms of the categories of growth, progress, and the knowledge of faith that Romanticism had developed.”\(^{40}\)

Ratzinger also mentioned another set of questions that stemmed from preconciliar theological discussions about the material sufficiency and interpretation of Scripture.\(^{41}\) At the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, the Modernist crisis had led to considerable suspicion about the use of historical-critical methods in interpreting Scripture. Three encyclicals—*Providentissimus Deus* of Leo XIII (1893), *Spiritus Paraclitus* of Benedict XV (1920), and *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of Pius XII (1943)—had endorsed such methods. In addition, these methods were approved during the Council by the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s

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40 Ibid., 156. The declaration of the dogma of the Assumption in 1950 fostered a similar discussion.

41 Ibid., 157. The Conciliar discussion of Tradition was concerned with the question of replacing “partim-partim” by “et”; i.e., with the question of the material sufficiency of Scripture. The so-called conservative group energetically sought a condemnation of this idea, while the so-called progressive group energetically called for the question to be left open.
Nonetheless, the atmosphere at the time of the Council was still one of wariness about historical-critical methodology. Ratzinger saw the Biblical movement as a development, which fostered “a fundamentally new attitude to Scripture in large areas of Catholic Christendom, giving rise to a new familiarity with it and an ever-increasing tendency, both in theology and piety, to go back to it.”

Simultaneously, Bernard-Dominique Dupuy pointed out that a debate had arisen about the nature of Tradition: on the one hand were those who supported ressourcement (return to Patristic sources) on the grounds that such an approach preserved both the equilibrium between the apophatic and cataphatic aspects of theology as well as the contemplative aspect of theology; this neo-patristic approach seemed a better way both of viewing theology as an inquiry into revealed mysteries and of addressing each person’s spiritual needs and moral concerns. On the other hand were those who insisted on the precision of scholastic terminology and wanted theological explanations that defined Tradition and responded to the intellectual concerns of the 20th century. For Dupuy, “what is necessary as a general rule is the fair application of the sensus fidelium and the living tradition in order to proceed to a definition.” He noted that the Council was interested in defining the Magisterium more specifically and that even the minority at Vatican II (who favored scholastic terminology) wanted the Council’s pronouncements to be “less oriented towards a dogmatic definition, of a more pastoral character, manifesting a closer

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43 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 157-158. In Ratzinger’s view, both those who wanted to emphasize the divine author and infallibility, and those who wanted to discuss the role of the human author, brought to the Council “a strong sense of the sacredness of Scripture . . . (and) concern for the dignity of Scripture.”
44 Ibid., 158.
preoccupation with the body of the faithful as a whole.”

Dupuy also thought that Catholic exegesis was beginning to change: “Inquiry concerns itself no longer only with the given itself, and the movement of reflection concerns no longer only the revealed given expressed in Scripture and Tradition, and definitively, in the definitions of the Magisterium.”

Another issue mentioned by Dupuy was atheism, which he believed was manifested both by Communism and by “experts of suspicion” such as Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud: “They signal the birth of a new age of the world and they mark the appearance of a [type of] thought which we have not yet measured the implications, the fruitfulness nor the limits.”

Dupuy thought that “the rejection of Revelation by a number of contemporary authors rests on a change from the classical universe based on creation and the order of nature . . . [in which modern] man has lost his place at the heart of nature which was the great certitude of medieval man.” Man has retrogressed to become “the vagabond of the universe.” Thus, by the same blow is simultaneously attacked, both man’s faith in God and man’s faith in man. To a doubtful nature [is added] a doubtful God but also a man in doubt.

46 Ibid., 10. [Et qu’il est nécessaire en règle générale de faire appel au sensus fidelium et à la tradition vivante pour procéder à une définition.] and [de caractère plus pastoral, et manifestant des préoccupations plus proches de celles du corps des fidèles.]
48 Ibid., 14-15: “Ils signalent la naissance d’un nouvel âge du monde et ils marquent l’apparition d’une pensée dont nous ne mesurons encore nettement ni la portée, ni la fécondité, ni les limites.”
49 Ibid., 15: “... il faut noter que le rejet de la Révélation repose chez nombre d’auteurs contemporains sur une modification de l’univers classique, fondé sur la création et sur l’ordre de la nature.
50 Ibid., 15-16: “Il est redevenu le vagabond de l’universe.”
51 Ibid., 16: “Et du même coup s’est trouvée atteinte, en même temps que la foi de l’homme en Dieu, la foi de l’homme dans l’homme. A nature douteuse, Dieu douteux mais aussi homme douteux.”
Karl Rahner’s essay—“The Man of Today and Religion”—published shortly after the end of the Council, summarized the relationship of contemporary atheism and anthropological-centered philosophical idealism. This issue, which the Council treated in the introductory chapter of *Gaudium et Spes,* relates directly to the human ability to receive Revelation and the way that Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium function together in that process of reception.

For Rahner, modernity consisted primarily of “man’s entry into the phase of a peculiar creativeness and becoming the rationally planning master of action and power with regard to himself and with regard to his environment.” Modernity contrasts sharply with Christianity which sees nature, the context in which man lives, as “majestic and . . . powerful, something clothed directly with the simultaneously repelling and attracting splendor of the numinous, which according to its own law nourishes, preserves, is wrathful and destructive”; the rule of God and the rule of nature are seen as united: nature is God’s viceroy. Rahner pointed out that Christians were unaware that modernity saw the world differently. To people today, the idea of an all-powerful natural cosmos is a

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In addition, the question of humanity’s openness to God in a technological age was a major concern for John XXIII.
55 Ibid., 5-7.
residue, an island of folklore from past ages. . . . We no longer live in nature, we are changing it . . . this nature has been degraded to being the matter and tool of man’s creative activity. 56

Philosophically speaking, “he is a man who has carried through the Copernican revolution from ‘cosmocentrism’ to ‘anthropocentrism’ not merely as a thinker and not merely in a religious attitude but in practical life itself”; man has come to see himself as mere material to form according to his own autonomous purposes; “he is almost like his own Creator and God.” 57

For Christianity, man believes he has mastership over nature. He is to impose his image upon nature wisely and well: “nowhere more than in the Christian religion is man the free partner of God, so much that he does not passively undergo his eternal salvation but must earn it in freedom.” 58 Human beings realize their relationship with God not only “in the interiority of faith, conscience and prayer, but in and by means of the world itself.” 59 But people who no longer see themselves as part of a coherent, divinely-governed cosmos no longer have a context for their suffering and their powerlessness. “The free man experiences himself in his very freedom as someone condemned to freedom, as someone who freely inaugurates the uncontrollable.” 60 Men no longer turn outward to find God in the glory of a providentially governed creation. The human desire for God emerges from within.

If the absolute, silent, and infinite secret no longer comes to him [man] so clearly and directly from his natural surroundings, it now breaks out of his own being. We call this secret God. 61

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56 Ibid., 8.
57 Ibid., 8.
58 Ibid., 10.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 13.
61 Ibid., 14
In this new situation, man can enslave himself, as a “corporation man” who makes material pursuit his ultimate end. Or, man can actualize his freedom by pursuing God. For Rahner, Christianity demythologizes the world and makes it the material of the human person; technology and scientific discovery are the means. Christ, the God man, “reaches eternally into the life of God himself and has become his history” among humankind.\(^\text{62}\) The Church should respond by teaching that God sanctifies the profane world by grace. But grace is hidden to allow freedom in our stewardship of the world. God’s grace in Christ is greater than human guilt. Finally the Church should dialogue with “the existential understanding of the man of this world” and “give up a lot of historically sacralized ground which she has in the past rightly cultivated but which does not belong to her forever”; but she should not “capitulate in the face of the autonomous understanding of man.”\(^\text{63}\)

These three concerns—the relationship of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium; the historical-critical study of Scripture; and modern man’s view of God—all would be evident in the Council’s articulation about the mediation of Revelation.

**Two Pre-Conciliar Schemata (1960):**

**“The Sources of Divine Revelation” and “Defending the Deposit of Faith”**

The preparatory Theological Commission that was established in 1960 began the conciliar discussions about Revelation. On 5 June, Pope John XXIII issued his Motu Proprio, *Superno Dei nutu*, which opened the preparatory phase of the Council and charged the newly established Theological Commission with the task of “investigating questions

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 14-18.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 19-20.
concerning Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, faith and morals.”

Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, secretary of the Holy Office, was appointed president of the Theological Commission and Fr. Sebastian Tromp, a professor at the Gregorian University, was named secretary. They established a “prior subcommission” of several men, all associated with the Holy Office, to prepare the work of the Theological Commission. According to Daniel-Rops, the Motu Proprio established “laboratories of theological research” that included Henri de Lubac, S.J. and Yves Congar, O.P, who were previously “outcasts”; however, John XXIII believed that they added to the Commission’s “breadth and depth.”

During the summer of 1960, the Theological Commission considered discussing Revelation as part of the schema on the Church, but the proposal “was immediately dropped.” By 13 July, at Ottaviani’s request, Tromp had prepared three draft schemata for dogmatic constitutions: one on the Church, another on the deposit of faith, and a third on the

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65 Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979), a native of Rome, was ordained a priest in 1916. After working for the Vatican Secretary of State (1929-1935), he was named Assessor at the Holy Office, then assistant secretary (1953), and later secretary (1959). He was appointed titular bishop of Berrhoea in 1962, and made a cardinal in 1963. From 1966-1968, he was pro-prefect of the Commission on Faith and Ethics. In 1960, he was appointed head of the preparatory Theological Commission for Vatican II, and from 1962, he was head of the Council’s Doctrinal Commission. See: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfredo_Ottaviani
66 Sebastian Tromp, S.J. (1889-1975), a native of Beek, Netherlands, was ordained a priest in 1922, and in 1926 became a professor at the Gregorian University in Rome. He contributed significantly to Pius XII’s encyclical Mystici Corporis and assisted with the writing of Mediator Dei and Humani Generis. He served on both the Theological Commission and the Doctrinal Commission at Vatican II. “Tromp served in this capacity until 1966 and hand-wrote in Latin a detailed diary report . . . . These diaries indicate the extent of his influence on textual development of the constitutions.” (see Alexandra von Teuffenbach, http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/t/tromp_s.shtml; translation mine).
68 Ibid., 227.
69 Daniel-Rops, 111-112.
70 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 159.
The Pope insisted that Scripture be discussed as a separate topic. Accordingly, Tromp, in collaboration with Monsignor Salvatore Garofalo, rector of the College of Propaganda Fide, prepared an additional text about the sources of Revelation.

Three of these schemata discussed the interworking of Revelation, Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium. First, the 13-paragraph Schema compendiosum Constitutionis de fontibus Revelationis (“Summary Draft of a Constitution about the Sources of Revelation”) was presented to the Central Preparatory Commission on 27 October 1960. The first paragraph asserted the divine inspiration of Scripture. The second paragraph explained that in addition to Scripture, there is “the divine Tradition by which Sacred Scripture is explained, [and] there is also the Divine Tradition of truths which are not contained in Sacred Scripture.” The next seven paragraphs (3-9) discussed inerrancy, the role of literary genres, Scripture in the economy of salvation, the historicity of the Gospels, and the Church’s proprietorship of Scripture. The fifth paragraph stated that when “ecclesiastical tradition” and the “customs of the time” of a book's composition, do not offer support for an interpretation, “only the Church’s Magisterium can settle the matter.”

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71 Riccardo Burigana, La Bibbia Nel Concilio: La redazione della costituzione «Dei verbum» del Vaticano II (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 59; hereafter cited: Burigana, La Bibbia Nel Concilio. According to Burigana, Ottaviani and the Roman theologians on the Theological Commission declined to produce a schema about the sources of Revelation because “they considered the topic marginal not because there was disagreement regarding the formulation of the quaestiones, rather due to the fact that it seemed more opportune to treat such questions in the De Deposito Fidei Pure Custodiendi, the document intended to deal with the errors of doctrine and the errors of the modern world, that the Council needed to condemn.” (Il gruppo di Ottaviani ritenesse il tema marginale né che vi fosse un dissenso rispetto alla formulazione delle quaestiones; dipendeva piuttosto dal fatto che sembrava più opportuno trattare tali questioni nel De deposito fidei custodiendo, destinato a raccogliere gli errori della dottrina e del mondo moderno, che il concilio doveva condannare.” The English translations from this book are mine.) See also Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 229.

72 Fouilloux, “Antepreparatory Phase,” 140.

73 The four “Brief Outlines” are not available in a published volume. The translation of the outlines is by Joseph A. Komonchak. The schemata were discussed at a subcommission meeting on 21 July and revised on the basis of the discussion at the meeting, and then printed in a brochure and mailed to members of the Theological Commission in late September 1960. See Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 228-230.

74 Ratzinger, “Revelation” 159.
eleventh paragraph observed: “A theology which relies only on the documents of Sacred Scripture while neglecting Sacred Tradition and the Church’s Magisterium threatens the Church with the danger of Protestantism; an explanation of the books that is merely philological or literary or critical exposes her to the danger of rationalism.” The twelfth paragraph asserted the Church’s primacy in interpretation, and the thirteenth and final paragraph asserted the primacy of the Vulgate.

The *Schema Compendiosum Constitutionis de Ecclesia* discussed the magisterial office of the Church in its fifth paragraph, which consisted of three items (a, b, and c). Item a stated that “only the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops are the subjects of the authoritative magisterium. It is explained in what sense theologians, pastors, preachers, charismatics, the simple faithful exercise a magisterium.” Item b stated that “The object of the authoritative magisterium does not extend merely to matters of faith and morals to be believed by faith.” Item c stated that the Magisterium can “authoritatively explain” Scripture and Tradition.

The thirteen paragraphs of the *Schema Compendiosum Constitutionis de Deposito Fidei Custodiendo* treated the form and content of Divine Revelation. This *schema*, which closely resembled *Humani Generis* in its emphasis on defending truth from error, pointed out that the Pope and bishops must faithfully defend Revelation, as presented in Scripture and Tradition, against errors and novelties. Revelation is considered objective truth—to which the human mind has direct access in the natural order and analogical access in the supernatural order. Paragraph 2 taught “the existence of a truly personal God and the

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75 Subiectum magisterii authentici sunt tantum Romanus Pontifex et Episcopi. Explicatur quo sensu magisterio potiantur theologi, parochi, praedicatorum, charismatici, simplices fideles.
76 Obiectum magisterii authentici non extenditur solum ad res fidei ac morum de fide crendendas.
77 Sacra Scriptura et Sacra Traditio a solo Magisterio Ecclesiae authentice explicantur.
78 The English citations of this document are from a translation by Joseph A. Komonchak.
effectiveness of demonstrations” of his existence by reason.\textsuperscript{79} The “true concept of revelation implies the manifestation of not only a personal God but also of the supernatural and natural truths of religion (§ 5)\textsuperscript{80} Revelation is supernatural and gratuitous and “Natural knowledge of divine things” has “analogical validity.” People know Divine Revelation by faith, through submission of the will and intellect to God who reveals (§ 7). Finally, there is “no revelation of new truths after the close of the Deposit of faith,” although our understanding of doctrine may develop (§ 9).\textsuperscript{81} Scripture and Tradition, which together comprise a single deposit of faith, disclose objective truths. The reception of these truths involves both the intellect, which knows doctrinal truth by means of analogy from natural things, and the will, which commands the intellect to believe revealed doctrine. The one personal God is the primary object of revelation. The Church and individuals believe Revelation upon God’s authority.

**Proposed Formula for the Profession of Faith**

The Theological Commission also discussed Revelation in proposing a new formula for the Profession of Faith,\textsuperscript{82} whose content, according to Komonchak “provides a useful summary of the vision of the faith that the leaders of the TC [Theological Commission] believed it necessary to present in response to the doctrinal crisis they saw all around them and which they would unfold at greater length in their several schemata.”\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79} *Existentia Dei vere personalis et efficacia demonstrationum.* Datur cognitio certa et vera demonstratio, ex mera luce rationis, ex rebus creatis, visibilius (Italics in original).

\textsuperscript{80} *Conceptus verus revelationis.* Implicat non solum manifestationem Dei personalis, sed etiam veritatum supernaturalem et veritatum naturalium religionis (Italics in original).

\textsuperscript{81} *Nulla revelatio novarum veritatum post clausum depositum fidei.* Doctrina certa de fide. Depositum clausum obiective, apertum interpretationi et explicationi seu progressu dogmatico (Italics in original).


\textsuperscript{83} Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 237-238, 240. The Theological Commission discussed a new formula at its first plenary session on 27 October 1960, without reaching a decision. Ottaviani sent the proposal to Pope John XXIII in December; Pope John approved it and on 6 January 1961, Ottaviani assigned the task of
Revelation was discussed in § 12-16 of the 18-paragraph document. Paragraph 12 required an acknowledgment of “the external arguments for revelation, especially miracles and prophecies, as most certain signs by which the divine origin of the Christian religion can be irrefutably demonstrated;” such arguments are “still suitable today to human understanding.”\textsuperscript{84} The Church with its four marks, its “fruitfulness” and “wondrous extension and unconquered stability” were considered a motive of belief and testimony to the Church’s divine origin.\textsuperscript{85} Paragraph 13 stipulated that Christians should “sincerely receive the doctrine of faith handed down to us with the same sense and meaning from the Apostles and through the orthodox fathers”; dogmatic developments do not add “another meaning other than the one the Church once taught.”\textsuperscript{86} Paragraph 14 taught that the deposit of faith, “the Word of God both written and handed down, was completed with the Apostles;” believers must also “firmly hold that the Sacred Scriptures are exempt from any error \textit{[a quovis errore immu
\textsuperscript{nem}]} and that, under the leadership of the Magisterium of the Church, they are to be explained according to the Tradition and by the analogy of faith.”\textsuperscript{87} Paragraph 15 indicated that faith is not a blind sense of religion or merely an affection of soul, but a true assent of the intellect to truth extrinsically received by hearing, an assent whereby what has been

\footnote{drafting to the subcommission on \textit{De Deposito Fidei}, with Tromp as the final readactor. Tromp worked on the formula during the spring and had a draft ready in late July. After discussion at the plenary session of the Theological Commission in September, the draft was approved on 18 September; the final text was sent to the Central Preparatory Commission on 4 October.\\%84\textit{ADA} II-III-I, 12: “Externa revelationis argumenta, imprimisque miracula et prophetias agnosco tamquam signa certissima, quibus divinitus orta Christiana religio invicte demonstratur, eademque retineo etiam hodie humanae intelligentiae esse accomodata.”\\%85 Ecclesiam ipsam, in se consideratam, propter suam catholicam unitatem, eximiam sanctitatem et inexhaustam in omnibus bonis foecunditatem, ob mirabilem propagationem invictamque stabilitatem perpetuum esse motivum credibilitatis et divinae suae legitimae testis testimonium irrefragabile.”\\%86 Ibid., 12. [Fide doctrinam ab Apostolis per orthodoxos Patres eodem sensu eademque sententia usque ad nos transmissam sincere recipio.] and [alium sensum transsentium ab eo quem semel docuit Ecclesia.]\\%87 “Depositum fidei, seu verbum Dei cum scriptum tum traditum cum Apostolis completum esse retineo. Sacram Scripturam, a quovis errore immunem, ductu Magisterii Ecclesiae, ad normam Traditionis et secundum analogiam fidei explicandam esse firmiter teneo.”}
revealed and attested by a personal God we believe to be true because of the
authority of the supreme truth, to whom by believing we offer full submission of
intellect and will, under the prompting and assistance of God’s grace.  

Finally, paragraph 16 stated: “I also profess without doubt all the other things defined and
declared by Ecumenical Councils, especially by the Council of Trent and the First Vatican
Council, particularly with regard to the jurisdictional primacy and infallible magisterium of
the Roman Pontiff”; in addition, the profession of faith called for the rejection of the
teachings condemned in *Pascendi* and *Humani Generis*.  

**Draft Constitution De Fontibus Revelationis (Forms A, B) 1961**

A special sub-commission of the Theological Commission prepared the schema *De
Fontibus Revelationis* (“Concerning the Fonts of Revelation”); this sub-commission began
working shortly after the Theological Commission’s plenary session in October 1960. In
February 1961, the sub-commission presented a schema of six chapters to the Theological
Commission, which reviewed the work at its second plenary session that month. The
subcommission “did very little work for the next two months; resuming work in late April,
the subcommission worked very rapidly and finished its work on 23 June.”

Shortly after the Theological Commission was established in 1960, Pope John
established the Secretariat for Christian Unity under the leadership of Augustin Cardinal

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88 Ibid., 13: “Fidem non esse caecum sensum religionis vel solum animi affectum profiteor, sed verum
assensum intellectus veritati extrinsecus acceptae ex auditu, quo nempe quae a Deo personali revelata et testata
sunt, vera esse credimus propter Dei auctoritatem summe veracis, cui credendo plenum obsequium intellectus
et voluntatis, adspirante et adiuvante Dei gratia, praestamus.”

89 Ibid., 13: “Caetera item omnia ab Oecumenicis Conciliis ac praecipue a Sacrosancta Tridentina Synodo et ab
Oecumenico Concilio Vaticano I, definita ac declarata, praeertim de Romani Pontificis primatu iurisdictionis
et infallibili magisterio, indubitanter profiteor, sicut damno et reicio ea quae in iisdem Concilis et Encyclicis
Litteris, nominatim *Pascendi* et *Humani generis*, damnata atque reiecta sunt.”

90 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 274.

91 Burigana, *La Bibbia nel Concilio*, 69. According to Burigana, there was minor controversy about returning
to the sources of Christian Tradition in discussing Scripture. Garofalo, for instance, favored basing the
discussion of Scripture upon recent papal documents in order to avoid confusing the faithful and to minimize
error among exegetes.

92 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 274.
The Commission and the Secretariat developed contrasting visions for the Council’s treatment of Revelation, specifically in regard to the Word of God and its role in the Church’s approach to the world. One disputed issue between the scholastic and apologetics-minded Commission-group and the more biblical and ecumenism-minded Secretariat-group was the “material sufficiency” of Scripture to express Revelation. In the 1950s, a theological dispute had broken out over the question: are some revealed truths found only in Tradition, or are all revealed truths in some way contained in Scripture? The dispute was still unresolved, when theological Commission prepared Form A of De Fontibus in September 1961 with Tromp’s language. Several members sought a return to Trent’s language, but the Commission approved Form A with slight alterations and sent it as Form B to the Central Preparatory Commission where it was discussed on 9 November.

The subcommission’s completed schema was printed and distributed for the September plenary meeting of the Theological Commission, which approved the text. A

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94 Ibid., 272. According to Komonchak, the Theological Commission under Ottaviani saw itself as possessing exclusive authority to compose documents and did not think that the Secretariat for Christian Unity had such authority: “Nowhere else was it as clear that the history of the preparatory period was not simply an institutional tug-of-war but also a struggle over the definition of the nature and mission of the Church in the modern world.”

95 Ibid., 275. According to Komonchak, two different views of Revelation and Tradition were at issue. One group including Tromp, Garofalo, and many members of the Theological Commission, wanted the Council to teach explicitly that “there is also the divine Tradition of Truths which are not contained in Scripture.” Another group, including some members of the Theological Commission such as Lucien Cerfaux and Michael Schmaus, argued that Tradition is necessary for a full and accurate interpretation of the Bible, if not to remedy a material doctrinal insufficiency. Other members such as D. Unger and Domenico Bertetto argued that Tradition had to supply for the material insufficiency of Scripture.

96 Ibid., 275-76.

97 Ibid., 274.
month later, the text was sent for review by the Central Preparatory Commission. On 4 October 1961, the document was reduced to five chapters. The draft of the Preparatory Theological Commission was presented to the Central Preparatory Commission on 9 November and discussed the next day and revisions were made in light of the discussion.

Form A, the first draft of the *Constitutio de Fontibus Revelationis*, which was prepared by the subcommission of the Theological Commission and completed in September 1961, had five chapters:

1) The twofold source of Revelation;
2) The inspiration, inerrancy, and literary composition of Sacred Scripture;
3) The Old Testament;
4) The New Testament
5) Sacred Scripture in the Church.

Form B was the same text, slightly altered and presented to the Central Commission on 9 November 1961. Most of its discussion about the mediation of revelation was in Chapter 1, but Chapter 5 also treated the topic.

The first two of the six paragraphs of Chapter 1 resembled Chapter 1 of *Dei Verbum* in discussing Revelation as coming through the covenants, which are a primary vehicle of salvation history: “The revelation, which in his wisdom and goodness, God deigned to

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98 Ibid., 273-74.
100 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 276. According to Ratzinger (“Revelation,” 159), the legal validity of the suggested revisions made to the Central Preparatory Commission “was not clarified;” the subcommission continued to work autonomously and the members incorporated suggestions as seemed best to them.
101 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 165, drew from the taxonomy of Alois Grillmeier (“Die Wahrheit der Heiligen Schrift und ihre Erschliessung. Zum dritten Kapitel der Dogmatischen Konstitution ‘Dei Verbum’ des Vatican II,” Theologie und Philosophie 41 [1966]: 161-87). This taxonomy is used here because it arranges documents in terms of their relationship to *Dei Verbum*. Forms A-C are the drafts of *De Fontibus Revelationis*, which represented a more or less similar outlook until Pope John’s intervention in November 1962, which took the text off the Council’s agenda. The schema *De Deposito Fidei pure custodiendo* was the first supplementary text to forms A-C, and the short schema *De Verbo Dei*, the second supplementary text. Forms D-F were the drafts of the revised schema *De Divina Revelatione*, whose first version was distributed to the Fathers on April 22, 1963. Form G is *Dei Verbum*, approved by the Council Fathers and promulgated by Pope Paul on November 18, 1965.
bestow upon man, comes to us in the economy (oeconomia) of the Old and New Covenants.” The “initial spreading (prima diffusione) of the New Covenant’s revelation was chiefly spread by preaching and received by listening (per praedicationem sparsa est auditu recepta),” because “Christ the Lord revealed the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven to the children of Israel by word of mouth” (filiis Israel arcana regni coelorum viva voce manifestavit); after his resurrection, Christ “commanded his apostles to preach to every creature (see Mk. 16:15).” The paragraph concluded by observing that the Apostles are, by Divine commission, the preachers of the Gospel.

Paragraph 3 made a transition from the giving of Revelation to its transmission:

Throughout the centuries, the ministry of the Word which Christ and the Apostles inaugurated has always been preserved in the Church. Bishops, who succeed to the place of the Apostles in the Church, have always by their preaching handed on that doctrine and authoritatively interpreted it. Some of the Apostles or apostolic men, under divine inspiration, also put the revelation into writing; but the living preaching of the Apostles was neither annulled nor diminished by these writings; it was rather strengthened, preserved more securely, and authoritatively explained.

The subcommission emphasized authoritative interpretation and recognized the New Testament’s redactional history by mentioning “apostolic men” (apostolici viri). The
subcommission presented Revelation as primarily a preaching of faith and morals—without speaking of Revelation as a personal self-disclosure that establishes a relationship.

The fourth paragraph, “The twofold source of revelation,” stated: “The complete revelation is contained in Scripture and in Tradition as in a twofold source, although in different ways.” The books of the Old Testament and New Testament were written “under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that they have God as their author.” Tradition was described as a living channel of Revelation:

But truly Divine Tradition, preserved in the Church by a continuous succession, contains all the matters of faith and morals which the Apostles received either from the mouth of Christ or from the suggestions of the Holy Spirit (suggerente Spiritu Sancto) and which they transmitted outside Holy Scripture as it were by hand to the Church so that in it they might be handed on further by the Church’s preaching. Therefore, the things which divine Tradition contains by itself are not drawn from books, but from the Church’s living preaching, from the faith of believers, and from the Church’s practice.

The fifth paragraph on “the Relationship between the Two Sources” observed that Tradition is neither to be considered of “inferior worth” (exinde minoris facere) in relation to Scripture nor denigrated (aut ei fidem derogare audeat) because Tradition provides a divine instrument for expressing and illuminating the truths of faith, still its meaning can only be clearly and fully understood or even presented only by means of the Apostolic Tradition. Indeed, Tradition and it alone is the way in which some revealed truths, particularly those concerned with inspiration, canonicity, and the integrity of each and every sacred book, are clarified and become known to the Church.
Accordingly, Tradition is necessary for understanding doctrine to the extent that some doctrines could not be known without Tradition.

The sixth and final paragraph of Chapter 1 discussed “The Relationship of Each Source to the Magisterium.” The role of the Magisterium was viewed as stewardship:

In order that the two sources of revelation might harmoniously and more effectively work together for the salvation of man, the provident Lord handed them over, as a single deposit of faith to be kept safe and defended and authoritatively interpreted, not to individual believers, however learned, but to the Church’s living Magisterium alone.\textsuperscript{110}

Although the opening paragraph described Revelation as communicated through two covenants, the succeeding paragraphs described Revelation as a deposit of doctrine found “in different ways” in two sources.\textsuperscript{111} In addition, the Magisterium has the responsibility of defending and interpreting Revelation:

It is the responsibility of the Church’s Magisterium, as the proximate and universal norm for believing, not only to pass judgment, in matters directly or indirectly concerning faith and morals, on the meaning and interpretation of both the Holy Scriptures and also of the documents and monuments in which the Tradition has in the course of time been recorded and manifested, but also to illustrate and to explain those things which are obscurely and implicitly contained in each source.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 16: “Ut autem ambo fontes revelationis concorditer et efficacius ad salutem hominum concurrent, providus Dominus eos tanquam unum fidei depositum ad custodiendum et tuendum et authentice interpretandum non singulis fidelibus utcumque eruditis concredit, sed soli vivo Ecclesiae Magisterio.”

\textsuperscript{111} This reliance on “two sources” gives plausibility to the opinion of Gregory Baum (“Constitution on Revelation,” 53) that the text taught the idea of \textit{partim-partim}.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{AD} I-III-II, 16: “Magisterii Ecclesiae ergo est, qua proximae et universalis credendi normae, non modo iudicare in is, quae sive directe sive indirecte ad fidem et mores spectant, de sensu et interpretatione cum Scripturae Sacrae tum documentorum et monumentorum quibus temporis decursu Traditio consignata est et manifestata, sed ea quoque illustrare et enucleare quae in utroque fonte nonnisi obscure ac velut implicite continetur.”
For the subcommission, Scripture and Tradition were seemingly less intelligible than the non-inspired texts of the Magisterium. Accordingly, the Magisterium articulates the doctrines in order that people may more easily appropriate Divine Revelation.

The fourth chapter presented the Magisterium as a more proximate norm of faith than Scripture and Tradition, even though these sources—not Magisterial documents—are sources of revelation. In interpreting Scripture, the Magisterium uses Tradition by consulting its “documents and monuments”—which presumably would include conciliar teaching, liturgical texts, encyclical letters, and other statements issued by the Magisterium.

The fifth chapter, “Holy Scripture in the Church,” opened with a paragraph discussing “The Church’s care for Holy Scripture”:

The heavenly treasure of the sacred books, which the Holy Spirit in his great charity and generosity handed over to men through the Church, has never lain hidden away in the Church. Right from the beginning, Christ’s Church has guarded the divine writings with the greatest reverence and vigor, has defended them from any false interpretation, has made careful use of them for the salvation of souls, especially in sacred preaching, and has never ceased daily to present them to all in its liturgy.

Although Dei Verbum later ascribed these activities specifically to the Magisterium (§ 10), De Fontibus did not mention the teaching office.

De Fontibus Revelationis Form B was not well received by the Central Preparatory Commission at its meeting in November 1961, although some defended the document’s

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113 The idea that the teachings of the Magisterium are clearer than the sources of Revelation is found in Humani Generis 22.
114 Ibid., 21 [De curis Ecclesiae circa S. Scripturam]: “Caelestis sacrorum Librorum thesaurus, quem Spiritus Sanctus summa caritate et liberalitate per Ecclesiam hominibus tradidit, numquam in Ecclesia latuit; etenim, inde ab initio Ecclesia Christi maxima reverentia et alacritate divina eloquia custodivit, a quavis falsa interpretatione defendit, ad salutem animarum in sacra praeertim praedicatione sollicite adhibuit, atque in sua liturgia quotidie omnibus proponere non desit.”
highlighting of the role of Tradition. According to Komonchak, Tromp could not accept Döpfner’s proposal that the text speak of the Scriptures as the chief source of Revelation:

For many reasons Sacred Scripture is not the principal source. For tradition is prior in nature; it is the source from which alone the inspiration of all Scripture can be definitively proved; it is the source from which we know the Canon with certainty; it explains scripture; finally, the Church existed without the New Testament Scriptures, but not without the New Testament tradition.117

According to Komonchak, Tromp was willing to accept about half of the proposed changes, including some “not insignificant changes in the treatment of inspiration, inerrancy, and the historicity of the Gospels.” But Tromp insisted that the text’s character was “constructive and positive . . . obvious to anyone who read it without prejudice.” In any case, the Secretariat for Christian Unity seemingly did not have the opportunity to comment on the text submitted to the Central Preparatory Commission in November.118 At the time that the Theological Commission discussed this schema—almost a year before the Council opened—the preparatory Commissions had discussed the topic of Revelation extensively and produced outlines plus two forms of a Constitution on Revelation. While the documents up to this time reflected the views of the Theological Commission, the Secretariat on Christian Unity had a different perspective. According to Komonchak, the

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116 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 306. Seventy of the 77 present voted placet iuxta modum, to revise the text; 53 members cited Cardinal Bea’s objections: “the defensive character of the schema, and its restrictive character towards the work of Catholic exegetes.” According to Burigana, Cardinals Bernard Alfrink of Utrecht, Franz König of Vienna, Julius Döpfner of Munich, and Bea “denounced” the presentation of the view of one school about the transmission of Catholic doctrine while passing over other views with “total silence”; the cardinals thought the schema was not representative of the plurality of Catholic on revelation. See La Bibbia Nel Concilio, 81.

117 Ibid., 307-308. A comparison with the final text reveals that the subcommission on amendments generally accepted Tromp’s guidance on almost all significant issues; there are some changes that cannot be explained by reference either to the summary of the CPC [Central Preparatory Commission] comments or to Tromp’s reply. Bea may have exercised some influence on the subcommission, but not enough to alter substantially the content or the tone of the text of the TC [Theological Commission]. The votum of the SCU [Secretariat for Christian Unity] on the relationship between Scripture and Tradition was completed only after the subcommission had finished its revision of the text, whose position on the subject remained the same as that of the text submitted to the CPC.
“counterpositions between the TC [Theological Commission] and the SCU [Secretariat for Christian Unity] on the Word of God are significant on several counts”:

There is first of all the great difference in the fundamental problematic. For the TC [Theological Commission] revelation was the communication of a set of doctrines, guaranteed in their origins by divine authority, interpreted by the magisterium, and now to be defended from various errors. For the SCU [Secretariat for Christian Unity] revelation was a salvific encounter by which God brings light and life to men and which has an intrinsic power of its own because of the truth it enshrines.  

For the Secretariat for Christian Unity, the Word of God expressed in Scripture and Tradition “stands over against the Church” for which it is a source of life. In contrast, the Theological Commission emphasized the role of the Magisterium and its most recent statements so strongly that Scripture and Tradition “recede into the background.” The Secretariat for Christian Unity wanted to “engage a contemporary audience” including Biblical and historical scholars, while the Theological Commission prioritized the defense of the faith, while “ignoring” contemporary questions except errors seen as needing rebuttal.  

According to Ratzinger, the text of De Fontibus Form B was concerned with “deciding academic controversies,” although its authors seemed unaware of this fact:

“Anything that could not be fitted into the antitheses of ‘Thomism,’ ‘Scotism,’ ‘Molinism,’ etc., was not known as a ‘theological school’ and therefore did not come under the protection enjoyed by the difference of the ‘schools.’” According to Ratzinger, only the historical

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119 Ibid., 284.
120 Ibid., 284.
121 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 160. The Theological and Central Commissions did not include in their considerations prior to July 13 the report of subcommission XIII of the Secretariat for Christian Unity “On Tradition and Scripture.” This votum was “a summation of a theological consciousness that had left behind the climate of controversy and would in its substance be ratified in the Constitution Dei Verbum.” See Ruggeri, “First Doctrinal Clash,” 241.
experience of the Council would “bring home” to the bishops the fact that new schools of
thought had emerged and that their work was legitimate theological inquiry.\(^{122}\)

**Draft De Fontibus Revelationis (Form C) 1962**

In the summer of 1962, the Central Preparatory Commission again revised the
schema before concluding its activity on 20 June.\(^{123}\) Form C of the *Schema Constitutio*
*Dogmatica De Fontibus Revelationis* was then sent to the Fathers. Some of the
Commission’s members were strongly opposed to the draft, but others strongly supported
it.\(^{124}\) In between these blocs “stood the great majority of members of the CPC [Central
Preparatory Commission], whose positions, less often reflected in formal statements than in
brief comments attached to their votes, are more difficult to characterize.”\(^{125}\) *De Fontibus*
was one of seven schemata approved by Pope John XXIII for distribution to the Fathers in
July and was placed first in the volume of texts.\(^{126}\) Pope John XXIII approved the draft
schema of the Central Preparatory Commission on 13 July 1962, and it was sent out to all of
the Council Fathers ten days later. According to Ratzinger, the schema-treated “all relevant
questions . . . in a purely defensive spirit: the greater extent of tradition in comparison with
Scripture, a largely verbalistic conception of the idea of inspiration, the narrowest conception

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\(^{122}\) Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 160.
\(^{124}\) Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 304. Members opposed included Cardinals Alfrink, Döpfner, Frings, König, Léger (Montréal), Liénart (Lille), Suenens (Brussels), Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV, Archbishops Montini (Milan) and Hurley (Durban). The most vocal defenders were Cardinals Ottaviani, Ruffini (Palermo), and Siri (Genoa), along with the Dominican Master General, Michael Browne, and Archbishop Lefèvre (Dakar).
\(^{125}\) Ibid., 304, 306-307. The Subcommission on Amendments, whose short meeting schedule in 1962 “could hardly permit serious study or debate,” reviewed the Theological Commission’s *De Fontibus* Form B and sent it to the Central Preparatory Commission with few changes; the subcommission “in general accepted Tromp’s guidance on almost all of the significant issues.”
of inerrancy (*in qualibet re religiose vel profana* [sic]), a conception of the historicity of the Gospels that suggested that there were no problems, etc.”

**Draft Constitution De Deposito Fidei**

The Theological Commission’s *Schema Constitutionis dogmaticae de deposito Fidei* also discussed Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium in relation to Revelation. This schema drew criticism; De Lubac and Congar thought that the chapter on revelation and faith reflected “formalism and extrinsicism.” The draft of *De Deposito Fidei* presented to the Central Preparatory Commission in January 1962, consisted of a preface and eleven chapters:

1) the knowledge of truth;  
2) God;  
3) the creation and evolution of the world;  
4) on revelation and faith;  
5) the development of doctrine;  
6) the distinction and harmony of the natural and supernatural orders;  
7) “spiritism” and the last things;  
8) original sin;  
9) the unity or the original community of the human race;  
10) the fate of infants who die unbaptized;  
11) the satisfaction of Christ.

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127 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 159.  
128 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 241. The Theological Commission did not act upon requests “to give the schema *De Deposito* a more positive orientation and synthetic character” and so followed Tromp’s outline.  
129 Ibid., 241-242, 302. Tromp and the Subcommission redacted the document during the winter; the first four chapters were almost finished at the end of April 1961. The entire text was completed by 13 July and was printed for the Theological Commission, which discussed the text in plenary meetings from 25 to 28 September. At Subcommssion meetings it was extensively revised. Tromp and Ciappi approved the text in October and it was sent to the Central Preparatory Commission, which discussed it at their meeting in January 1962.
The headings of Chapters 1-9 and 11 were topics discussed in *Humani Generis*.

According to Grillmeier and Ratzinger, *De Deposito Fidei*, chapters 4 and 5 constituted the first of two supplementary texts to *De Fontibus Revelationis* Form C.\(^{130}\)

After discussing *De Deposito Fidei* at its meeting in January 1962, the Central Preparatory Commission sent it along with 83 pages of comments to the Theological Commission, which considered it in February, March, and April. The subcommission on amendments reviewed *De Deposito* in April and May 1962, and changed it more than any other text.\(^{131}\) As Ratzinger remarked, the Theological Commission “had taken *Humani generis* as its guide in its chapters on the foundations of faith and did not wish in any way to indulge in that inferiority complex towards non-Catholic philosophy which regards Christian philosophy ‘as a Cinderella’ and opens the way to a dangerous laicism in Philosophy.”\(^{132}\)

Chapter 1 (§§ 2-5) discussed “The Knowledge of Truth” in primarily intellectual terms:

> By his nature man enjoys the sublime ability to attain the truth, since, if this ability is denied, human reason itself falls and indeed revelation and faith perish. But, taught by the Spirit of truth, the Church not only firmly acknowledges that man enjoys the ability to understand things as they are in themselves, but also believes that the human intellect can be and in fact is so elevated by God that, illumined by faith, it can know truths which surpass the grasp of any created mind, until in heaven it gazes face to face upon the First Truth, God One and Three, in the light and clarity of the beatific vision (§ 3)\(^{133}\)

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\(^{131}\) Ibid., 308, 310-311. The document was reduced to ten chapters by combining 8 (original sin) with 9 (common origin of humanity); chapter 7 on Spiritism was divided and the last things given their own chapter. Other material was expanded to make Chapter 6, “Private Revelations.” Some titles were changed; Chapter 3 became “Creation and Evolution of the World;” Chapter 4 became “Public Revelation and Catholic Faith;” and Chapter 7 became “Natural and Supernatural Orders.” The chapter on infants dying without baptism was dropped because it was approved by only a minority of the Central Preparatory Commission. The revised text “does nuance the philosophical assertions of the first chapters and the discussion of revelation and faith as well.”

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 308-309.

\(^{133}\) *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II I-IV* (*AS*), (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1966), 653-694, at 654. All English citations from this document are from a translation by Joseph A. Komonchak. “Hominem natura sua gaudere sublimi facultate adipiscendae veritatis, quandoquidem, si haec
The Theological Commission acknowledged a relational aspect to Revelation in describing heavenly relationship of human beings with God as face to face, and truth in its ultimate form as the (tri)personal God.\textsuperscript{134}

Chapter II (§§ 6-11) taught that knowledge of God is the ultimate human goal. Human reason may demonstrate God’s existence with certainty and arrive at some knowledge about God, such as the divine unity and personal nature, but through Revelation God self-discloses in a more perfect way (§§ 6-7). After reviewing various philosophical proofs for God’s existence and after condemning subjectivistic views, the draft called upon the faithful to believe, value, defend, and live by the revealed doctrine of the Church.

Finally, the Holy Council warmly encourages the faithful to value above all other goods the correct doctrine about God which they have received, to guard it carefully, to defend it from attacks, to take it as a norm for their whole life, and not to devote their energies to beclouding the arguments by which the human mind is raised to God, but rather to work at explaining them. Lastly, they should always remember that they were all baptized in the name of the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that they might believe in and serve the God who in his great love revealed himself to us in the Lord Jesus (see 1 Jn 1:1-3; Eph 2:4) (§ 11).\textsuperscript{135}

Although \textit{De Deposito} emphasized the need for protecting the deposit of doctrine, there was some awareness on the Commission’s part that there is a personal aspect to Revelation.

\textsuperscript{134} Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 243. Some participants “questioned whether it was the role of an ecumenical council to address these issues philosophically and enter into questions that were freely debated even among Christian philosophers;” De Lubac argued that a council should not discuss proofs for God’s existence.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{AS} I-IV, 658: “Demum Sacra Synodus fidele enixe hortatur ut rectam quam acceperunt de Deo doctrinam quibuslibet bonis antepotant, sollicitce custodian, ab impugnationibus defendant, tamquam totius vitae normam assumant atque ingenii vires non in omnubilandis rationibus, quibus mens humana ad Deum elevatur, sed iis elucidandis potius impendant. Denique semper meminerint omnes se esse baptizatos in nomine Dei vivi, Patris, et Fili, et Spiritus Sancti, ut Deo, qui propter nimiam caritatem se manifestavit nobis in Domino Iesu, credant eique servant” (cf. I Io. 1, 1-3; Eph. 2, 4).
Chapter IV opened with a definition of Revelation:

The external and public revelation by which the object of Catholic faith was divinely communicated to the Church is that act of speaking by which the most kind God, once through the prophets and last of all in the Son, testified to the mysteries of salvation and to related truths, prescribing for all “the obedience of faith.” To the gift of external revelation, God, who also teaches interiorly, so that individuals may be able to receive “the word of salvation” (Acts 13:26) as they should, adds the illumination and inspiration of grace to make it a joy to consent and believe in the truth (§ 17).  

The Commission viewed Revelation as primarily a body of truths or mysteries, which are primarily communicated in speech. The most important objects of Revelation are “the series of saving events which finally reaches its summit in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ” which are taught through the words of Christ, the apostles, and their successors (§ 18). Revelation “also contains universal truths (continent etiam veritates universales) of both the natural and supernatural orders” which the First Vatican Council called “the doctrine of the faith” (§ 19). Christ the Son of God is the fullness of Revelation, who through both His teaching and life, revealed the way of salvation and God’s nature.  

An individual Catholic’s faith should include  

both an acknowledgement of the teaching authority of God and an assent, because of his authority, to the revealed truths as they are presented for belief by the Church. But this faith, perfected by charity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 2: 16) to a deeper understanding of revealed truths and indeed by an obscure enjoyment of the mystery of the Son of God, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dwells in the souls of the just (§ 20).  

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138 AS I-IV, 664: “Quin potius catholica fides complitur et agnitionem magisterii Dei et assensum, propter ipsius auctoritatem, veritatibus revelatis, prout ab Ecclesia credencae proponuntur. Eadem autem fides, caritate
The Church communicates Revelation by teaching revealed truths; the believer may enter into the “obscure enjoyment” of the mystery of Christ through faith in these truths. The theological virtue of charity and spiritual gifts condition a person’s ability to accept these truths. Although the human relationship with God in this life occurs through faith, the focus was upon the reception of doctrine—an approach, which for Komonchak “echoed a first-year course in a seminary.”\(^\text{139}\)

The chapter next condemned several positions:

1) God “cannot communicate with man by means of express words or in Sacred Writings (non posse communicare cum hominibus prolatis verbis aut Sacris etiam Litteris) [§ 21];
2) texts of other religions are produced by Divine Revelation in the same way as the Bible is;
3) the “relativistic” notion that “the statements and concepts by which, even though incompletely and imperfectly, revealed truths are communicated, are incapable of utterly truly expressing divine realities (impares esse ad res divinas omnino vere significandes)” [§ 22].

Rather, God and the Church “do not intend to speak only symbolically but also properly and truly and therefore demand a full and immutable assent to the doctrine of faith, understood in that sense which their words and statements present” (§ 21-22).\(^\text{140}\) The chapter then noted that the internal aids of the Holy Spirit enlightening the mind are joined by external signs of Revelation,

befitting the public nature of revelation and the social nature of those called to faith. And these signs make it possible for right reason to prove with certain arguments the divine origin of revelation (§ 23).

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\(^{139}\) Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 244.
\(^{140}\) AS I-IV, 664-665; see the condemnation of relativism by Pius XII in *Humani Generis* 42.
Miracles and prophecies are pre-eminent among these signs, especially the Resurrection and post-Resurrectional appearances of Christ. Prophetic fulfillment, Jesus’ wisdom as teacher, and the existence and gifts of the Church are also signs of the truth of Christian Revelation. One receives faith by grace: “we do not embrace divine revelation until it has been presented, as something we must believe, in a judgment that proceeds from the divine light” (§ 28). A person relies upon God as an infallible teacher, affirms God in revealed doctrine, and is freely moved by a holy desire for the saving God. The body and its senses are essential to a human and reasonable assent to Revelation, as is the will responding to external and internal evidence.

The draft’s fifth chapter, “The Development of Doctrine,” maintained that Revelation was completed at the time of the Apostles and cannot be increased; accordingly, the Church must faithfully proclaim the Gospel which the Apostles handed on. The Magisterium helps individuals appropriate Revelation:

This treasure is not effectively and fruitfully defended merely by preserving books or repeating words. It needs the living Magisterium by which the Church truly directs faith and morals, as this may be required for a genuine understanding of the things revealed, by the efforts of Christian piety to explore the riches of Christ more deeply, by the attacks of mistaken men, or even by the needs of the times and new questions. For these reasons, the Sacred Council teaches that the very nature of the sacred magisterium entails both the study of the sources of revelation and careful, reverent, and serious reflection on the mysteries themselves (§ 30).

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141 Ibid., 665.
142 Ibid., 667.
143 Ibid., 672: “Hic autem thesaurus efficaciter fructuosque non custoditur quidem mera librorum conservatione et verborum repetitione, sed viventi magisterio, quo Ecclesia fidem et mores reapse dirigat, prout sane postulent tum sincera revelatorum intelligentia, tum fidelium pietas ad altiorem divitiarum Christi investigationem impellens, tum errantium impugnationes, tum demum novae temporum necessitates novaque quaestiones solvendae. Quamobrem docet Sancta Synodus ipsam naturam sacri magisterii secum ferre et investigationem revelations fontium, et sedulam ac piam sobriamque ipsorum fidei mysteriorum perscutitionem.”
The deposit of faith requires a living human teaching authority, which “is to examine and explain the riches hidden in revelation itself” (§ 30). Accordingly, doctrinal development really occurs in the sense of an increase in human knowledge about revelation, and not in the growth of the deposit itself. For the deposit remains in itself immutable, since any truth which may be proposed newly by the Church, is contained therein at least implicitly and therefore is supported by divine Authority (§ 31). The Deposit of Faith thus transcends time. The truths the Magisterium teaches are immutable parts of Revelation. New situations and challenges only call for new applications of the same unchanging revealed truth.

During the late preparatory period in 1962, both De Fontibus and De Deposito were “much criticized [in the Central Preparatory Commission meetings] for their negative character, for their neglect of specifically Christian and theological arguments and motives, and for attempting to settle legitimately disputed questions.” Although both documents had a primarily apologetic and controversial character and did not consider new movements in Biblical study or theology, neither “neglected specifically Christian and theological arguments” as critics charged in the Central Preparatory Commission. Both documents maintained that Revelation was given by God in Scripture and Tradition and taught authoritatively by the Magisterium. Neither De Fontibus nor De Deposito offered the more developed theology of Revelation that eventually emerged in Dei Verbum. Both texts treated

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144 Ibid., 672-673: “Sed illum tantum legitimum declarat, qui incremento humanae de dumtaxat congnitionis de revelatione consistit, non vero in ipsius depositi augmento. Illud enim in seipso immutatum permanent, cum quaelibet veritas quae ab Ecclesia noviter proponatur, saltem implicite ibidem contineatur, ideoque auctoritate divina fulciatur.”

145 Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 304.

146 Ibid., 304. Although individual critics are not mentioned, Komonchak (306) noted that König, Döpfner, Bea, Hurley, and Alfrink criticized “the defensive character of the schema De Fontibus and its restrictive character towards the work of Catholic exegetes” at the CPC’s meeting in November 1961.
Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium as means by which God communicates Himself and His plan of salvation.

**Draft Constitution De Ecclesia**

According to Fouilloux, a great question left hanging at the end of the First Vatican Council, which was prorogued before it could address ecclesiological questions other than the primacy and the infallible magisterium of the Roman Pontiff—was: “what position do the bishops have alongside the Pope?”¹⁴⁷ When the Theological Commission was established, it was instructed to complete Vatican I’s Constitution *De Ecclesia* by treating such topics as the Mystical Body, the episcopate, and the laity.¹⁴⁸ According to Daniel-Rops, during the preparatory period, Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis* “loomed as a lighthouse” on the topic of the Church.¹⁴⁹ According to Daniel-Rops, the Papal primacy did not lead to a “dead-leveling, wholesale centralization” but allowed lawful diversity within unity. In addition, the Church is a community and in a world disposed to “planetary thinking,” the Council should “take note of all those cultural expressions which can be used to support and to serve the body of revelation,” not just those of the West.¹⁵⁰

During 1961 and 1962, the subcommission’s work on the document proceeded slowly and the draft of the schema *De Ecclesia* was not completed until 19 May 1962. The Central Preparatory Commission, after reviewing the text at its meetings in May and June

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¹⁴⁷ Fouilloux, “Antepreparatory Phase,” 63. Komonchak has noted that “From the time Pope John announced the Council, nearly everyone recognized that one of its chief tasks would be to articulate the nature and mission of the Church.” (“Preparation of Vatican II,” 285.)
¹⁴⁹ Daniel-Rops, 132.
¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 133. See Komonchak, “Preparation of Vatican II,” 285-86. Many people expected that the subcommission on the Church would be headed by Tromp, who had prepared the *schema compendiosum* and “whose role in the writing of *Mystici Corporis* was well known;“ but Cardinal Ottaviani appointed Fr. M. R. Gagnebet after receiving complaints which alleged that Tromp would use the post to “try to impose his own views.”
was apparently dissatisfied: “so much work was needed to revise the text again that it was only ready to be distributed to the bishops in November 1962, after the Council’s work had already begun.”

The discussion of De Ecclesia by the Central Preparatory Commission at its May and June meetings generated 197 pages of criticisms. On two especially disputed questions, the Theological Commission insisted that the text should affirm traditional positions: first, the Mystical Body of Christ should be identified as the Catholic Church; second, the text should emphasize the juridical over the mystical aspect of the Church; Christ gave His grace to the Church “as a social, juridical, heterogeneous organism. We are united to Christ because we are united at least by desire with the Church, and not vice-versa.”

The Theological Commission, however, did agree to many changes, which were accepted by the subcommission on amendments.

Conclusion: Divergent Views about Revelation

As the preparatory period ended, the documents produced by the Theological Commission concerning Revelation diverged from the theological vision presented in the addresses of Pope John XXIII during the antepreparatory and preparatory periods. Although the schemata contained a few references to the personal nature of Revelation, they clearly emphasized the noetic and doctrinal aspect of Revelation; in addition, the presentation of

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151 Ibid., 286-87. The Theological Commission refused requests by the Secretariat for Christian Unity for a joint commission to prepare De Ecclesia, because Ottaviani and Tromp did not want to jeopardize the Theological Commission’s independence.
152 Ibid., 311-12. The Theological Commission committee charged with revising the document before October, defended its “unique authority” by stating that the Central Preparatory Commission “lacks both juridical and practical competence. For it has no doctrinal authority.”
153 Ibid., 312.
154 The only notable change was a statement in the original draft that said that both ordination and a juridical mission confer together all three of a bishop’s offices (teaching, sanctifying and governing). The eleven chapters of the schema De Ecclesia covered topics which would later be divided between several Council documents: Chapters 1-8 would eventually be incorporated into the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium. See AS II, I-IV, 12-91.
Revelation was characterized by defensive and apologetic concerns. Although, as Pope Pius XII pointed out, the Scholastic method has permanent value in presenting Catholic faith, Pope John XXIII and theologians such as Rahner, Ratzinger, and Congar offered substantial reasons for a personalist view of both Revelation and doctrine. Yet, in the early stages of the Council, the Secretariat for Christian Unity seems to have been unable to advance this personalist dimension.

Komonchak has observed that Pope John XXIII was ultimately responsible for the structure and tenor of the council preparations and took several steps—such as insisting that the antepreparatory consultation “be as broad as possible.” The pope apparently entrusted “concrete supervision” of the preparatory work to Felici and visited meetings of the preparatory commissions, but it is not clear how closely the pope followed their work. “For whatever reasons,” Komonchak concluded, “Pope John seems to have preferred to intervene by way of his formal statements, which throughout the preparatory period continued to call for a profound and broad conciliar program, rather than to act decisively to ensure that such a program would guide the preparations.” In the case of Revelation, decisive action by Pope John XXIII would only come after the Council convened.

155 Pius XII, Allocutio “Ad Patres delegatos ad Capitulum generale Ordinis Fratrum Preadicatorum,” trans. Cyril Vollert, AAS 38 (1946), 385-389, at 387. “Briefly, this is at stake: whether the structure St. Thomas Aquinas erected beyond and above all time, \( (\text{ultra et supra quodlibet tempus}) \) by putting into an orderly synthesis elements supplied by those who in all ages have cultivated Christian wisdom, stands upon solid rock; whether it is still flourishing and valid; whether it can still defend and protect the deposit of Catholic faith \( (\text{catholicae fidei depositum efficaci preasidio etiam nunc tuneatur}) \) and can, even in our day, serve to orientate the further progress of theology and philosophy. The Church certainly answers in the affirmative.”


157 Ibid., 352.

158 Ibid., 356.
Chapter 6: Conciliar Discussion of Revelation

The Council opened on 11 October 1962, with the text of the Constitution on Revelation already in its third draft. Simultaneously, there was continued divergence among Council leaders about what direction the Council should take. According to Andrea Riccardi, Cardinal Giuseppi Siri of Genoa feared that a Council “would produce conflicts and confusions that would contrast with the clarity and simplicity he wanted Catholicism to have in the modern world”; Siri was especially concerned about the French and German bishops whom he believed to be affected by “Protestant pressure” to modernize Catholic doctrine.¹ French theologian Jean Daniélou was concerned that the doctrinal schemata were “devoted to academic discussions and lacking any evangelical perspective and any sense of the needs of the present time.”²

At the first general congregation on October 13, Pope John XXIII followed the suggestion of Cardinal Achille Liénart of Lille (France) to grant the Council fathers three days, not just the one day that had originally been scheduled to select 160 members for the Council’s commissions.³ In contrast, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, who had circulated a list of

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³ Achille Liénart (1884-1973), a theologian and biblical scholar, was appointed bishop of Lille in 1928 and named a cardinal by Pope Pius XI in 1930. He promoted Catholic Action as bishop, and condemned both atheistic materialism and economic liberalism. According to F. Murphy, he was “mainly responsible for the
proposed members whom the Holy Office considered “safe,” had wanted an immediate selection. The pre-conciliar Theological Commission was succeeded by the Doctrinal Commission with Ottaviani as its head, while Cardinal Augustin Bea served as head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. Jan van Dodewaard of Haarlem, John Dearden of Detroit, André-Marie Charue of Namur, and Marcos McGrath of Panamá were among the elected members of the Doctrinal Commission. Fifty-seven percent—of those elected to the Commissions had participated in the preparatory phase. On October 22, John XXIII, contrary to the desires of Cardinal Siri, elevated the Secretariat for Christian Unity with all of its pre-conciliar members from the status of a “technical organ” to a Conciliar Commission, with the right to present schemas in the Council’s general congregations.

According to Gerald Fogarty, many of the Council Fathers wanted to discuss the theology of the Church and the office of bishops and were annoyed that these matters were not on the agenda at the time of their arrival. In addition, many bishops and theologians were unhappy with the four doctrinal schemata prepared by the Theological Commission; the German bishops wanted to replace them with a single alternative schema. Karl Rahner, a peritus of Cardinal Franz König of Vienna, urged that the Council fathers set aside the schema De Fontibus Revelationis. Cardinal Bernard Alfrink and fellow Dutch bishops Jean

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5 Ibid., 41, 43.
6 Ibid., 44-45.
8 Ibid., 70.
9 Ibid., 72-73.
Bluyssen and Willemus Bekkers asked Dominican theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, to examine the schemata and prepare a letter for distribution to the Council Fathers.\(^\text{10}\)

In his letter, Schillebeeckx expressed concern that the schema did not start with a discussion of “public revelation and the Catholic faith” and seemed to focus on Revelation in words to the exclusion of Revelation “in reality itself.” He also pointed out that *De Deposito Fidei* equated “objectivity” with “abstraction and universality.” His letter, according to Fogarty, was the most widely distributed to the Fathers, who were “struck by the forcefulness of its arguments.”\(^\text{11}\) According to Riccardo Burigana, the Pope’s radio message of September 11 was a very important in fostering hope for a different kind of Council than that envisioned by the Holy Office.

The reasons of this change of perspective are found not only in the reception of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, since it would be realized above all in a second moment in the course of the debate on *De Fontibus*; they must rather be sought in the hopes aroused by Pope John on the very eve of the opening of Vatican II, with the radio message of 11 September 1962, when the Pope indicated the significance that he attributed to the celebration of an ecumenical council.\(^\text{12}\)

**Councillial Discussion of *De Fontibus Revelationis* (Form C)**

The ten-member Council of Presidents, the governing body of the Council appointed by the Pope, decided on October 15 that the schema on the liturgy would be discussed first and *De Fontibus Revelationis* (Form C) would be discussed next.\(^\text{13}\) The discussion of *De Fontibus* was held on November, 14-19, 1962. Giuseppe Ruggeri has described the

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 71-72.


\(^{13}\) Ibid., 71; Riccardi, “The Tumultuous Opening Days,” 56-57.
period—November 14 to December 8—as “a turning point that was decisive for the future of the Council and therefore for the future of the Catholic Church itself”:

The turn from the Church of Pius XII, which was still essentially hostile to modernity and in this respect the heir to the nineteenth-century restoration, to a Church that is a friend to all human beings, even children of modern society, its culture, and its history. This period proved decisive for the future of the Council, not because the Council fathers already knew all the decisions they would make later, but because in it the Council took possession of itself, its nature, and its purpose and attuned itself to the intentions of John XXIII, an attunement that had largely been impeded by the work of the preparatory commissions, especially the Theological Commission.\(^\text{14}\)

Karl Rahner raised four concerns in a critique of *De Fontibus Revelationis* that was “universally circulated” among the bishops.\(^\text{15}\) First, he considered the schema too long and aimed at settling disputed theological questions. Second, the schema lacked “any pastoral orientation”; in particular, its use of Scripture seemed like proof-texting and lacking an ecumenical spirit. Third, Rahner considered it more appropriate to leave open the question of the material sufficiency of the Scriptures. Fourth, inspiration, while a personal charism of the sacred writers, was connected to their membership in the Church and service to believers.\(^\text{16}\) Rahner, along with Schillebeeckx, urged the bishops to abandon or replace the schema. According to Ruggeri, “The critical arguments of Schillebeeckx and Rahner were confirmed by many of the theologians who during those days were setting the tone of many of the meetings which the bishops held for their own updating.”\(^\text{17}\)

\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., 237.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid., 237-39.
\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 240.
Ottaviani and Garofalo opened the Council’s discussion with a *relatio* on *De Fontibus* (Form C) on November 14. Controversy, which “had been building” due to the circulation of a private counter-draft by the presidents of the episcopal conferences of Belgium, Germany, France, Holland, and Austria, broke out. Cardinal Liénart declared “*Hoc schema mihi non placet*” (This schema is unacceptable to me.). Cardinals Josef Frings of Cologne, Paul Léger of Montreal, König of Vienna, Alfrink of Utrecht, Léon Suenens of Brussels, Joseph Ritter of St. Louis, and Bea shared Liénart’s view. Cardinals Fernando Quiroga y Palacios of Santiago de Compostela, Ernesto Ruffini of Palermo, and Siri defended the text. Bishop Emil De Smedt of Bruges, Belgium, of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, objected that the schema would hurt ecumenical efforts, calling it “a step backwards, a hindrance, it does damage . . . it would destroy all hope that the Council would lead to the drawing together again of the separated brethren.”

At meetings of the Secretariat for Christian Unity on November 16 and 19, Bea and Johannes Feiner laid out a strategy for what Ruggeri called an “open declaration of war” upon *De Fontibus*. Feiner was particularly concerned about defending the fifth point of a *votum* prepared by the Secretariat, “On Scripture and Tradition,” that asserted that all

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20 Ibid., 160.

revealed truths, except for the canon, are somehow contained in the Scripture. Feiner argued that: 1) public Revelation is completed at the end of the apostolic age, which the schema supported; 2) Revelation is the sole source of the truth known through Scripture and Tradition (which in the Secretariat’s view De Fontibus denied); 3) Scripture and Tradition are connected. In contrast, the schema “does not say Scripture is nothing else than the original tradition of the early Church in written form and it says nothing about the continuing influence which Scripture has had . . . down through the centuries, on tradition and the entire life of the Church”; 4) the unique role of the Scriptures in the life of the Church (not mentioned by Form C); 5) the people of God in its entirety is the active subject of Tradition (not mentioned by Form C); 6) Tradition is a living process of progressive understanding of revealed truth (discussed in De Deposito); 7) the sovereignty of Scripture and Tradition over the Magisterium (not discussed by Form C).

Support for the schema came from the Italian Episcopal Conference in a set of short Animadversiones in schema de fontibus revelationis. The Conference recommended expanding the section on Tradition “to explain all its aspects, to reject the modernist view of the value and nature of tradition; to explain the role of tradition in safeguarding and effectively defending revelation; and to define more clearly the relation between revelation and dogma, between tradition itself and the magisterium, both ordinary and extraordinary, by explaining more precisely the value of the documents of the tradition,” and adding a prologue—whose nature was unspecified. According to Ruggeri, the Conference’s

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[23] Ibid., 242-243.
[24] Ibid., 244.
arguments found little support and were not widely circulated among the Council fathers. At a meeting on November 13, various episcopal conferences including those of Germany, Japan, India and Ceylon, the Philippines, Africa, and Latin America, indicated their dissatisfaction with the schema De Fontibus. An alternative schema proposed by Rahner and Ratzinger was widely circulated.

When the commission’s schema was introduced at the Council, Cardinal Ottaviani claimed that

the foundation of pastoral practice is ‘concise and clear teaching and that the conciliar style had been stamped by the practice of centuries.’ Look elsewhere, not to a council, to find the pastoral expression of dogma.

Monsignor Garofalo’s report stated:

Our constitution is dogmatic, not disciplinary; and even though what is said occasionally reflects the circumstances of the time, it must nonetheless be valid for the ages, since doctrinal statements of councils, even if they may be made more complete, are irreformable . . . the constitution is to be described as pastoral in character, since the clear statement of doctrine and its safeguarding and defense are very closely associated with the pastoral task and provide any pastoral undertaking with the solid foundation it needs.

The majority of bishops were critical; Bishop Émile-Maurice Guerry of Chambéry thought that the schema differed from Pope John’s vision expressed in Gaudet Mater

Ecclesia:

Our first duty as pastors is to teach our people doctrine that is complete and unadulterated, but in such a way that they can hear the word of God, understand it, accept it in faith, and, finally, put it into practice in every area of their lives . . . it is not the teaching that must be adapted but the way in which the teaching is presented.

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25 Ibid., 245.
26 Ibid., 248.
27 This schema was published in Glaube im Prozess: Christsein nach dem II. Vatikanischen Konzils; Festschrift Karl Rahner, ed. Elmar Klinger and Klaus Wittstadt (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 51-64.
28 Ibid., 250.
29 Ibid., 252. Ruggeri described this statement as “astonishing.”
30 Ibid., 254.
On November 14, Cardinals Liénart, Frings, Léger, König, Alfrink, Suenens, Ritter, and Bea rejected the schema “in very forthright terms.” Bea proposed forming a mixed commission to prepare a new schema that would be “more pastoral, more intelligible, and more ecumenical.”

The *Schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae de Fontibus Revelationis* (Form C) that the Doctrinal Commission presented in the Council hall consisted of five chapters: 1) the twofold source of Revelation; 2) the inspiration, inerrancy, and literary composition of Sacred Scripture; 3) the Old Testament; 4) the New Testament; and finally, 5) Holy Scripture in the Church. Form C differed from Form B in its portrayal of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium as mediating Revelation (Chapter 1, §§ 1-6).

In the first Chapter, Hebrews 1:2 had been added to the list of citations (§ 1) “the Revelation of the Old and New Covenants,” by which God “spread the treasures of His wisdom and knowledge abroad to the whole human race.” The second paragraph on the proclamation of the Revelation of the New Covenant had two additions: first, to the statement that the spreading of the Gospel occurred “chiefly by preaching and [was] received by listening,” the following line was added: “just as the Apostle said: “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ (Rm 10:17).”

Second, after the citation from Mt. 28:18-20 (the Great Commission) and before the citation from St. Clement of Rome that concluded the paragraph, was the addition:

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31 Ibid., 256-257.
33 Ibid., 14. Hebrews 1:2: “But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world.” (RSV)
It is because the Apostles preach the doctrine of Christ and indeed do so in his name that in the Scriptures they are said simply to speak “the Word of God” or “the Word of the Lord” (see Acts 4:29; 8:25, 13:46; 15:36); indeed, their own preaching is called “the Word of God” (see Acts 6:2; 7:11; 12:24; 13:7, 48; etc.), inasmuch as it is truly God’s speech being addressed to men through them, as the Apostle said to the Thessalonians: “. . . we thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God which is at work in you who believe.” (I Th 2:13).

In addition, a phrase (in italics below) had been inserted into the opening sentence of the third paragraph about the transmission of Revelation:

Throughout the centuries, the ministry of the Word which Christ and the Apostles inaugurated has always been preserved in the Church. For as the Apostles handed on what they had received from Christ (see I Cor 15:3 along with 11:23) and entrusted it for safekeeping to their successors (see I Tm 6:20, II Tm 1:14), so Bishops, who succeed to the place of the Apostles in the Church, have always by their preaching handed on that doctrine and authoritatively interpreted it.

In the third paragraph of Form B, the final sentence about the recording of Revelation in inspired Scripture stated that the Apostles’ “living preaching” “was strengthened and recommended” (roboratum et commendatum); Form C amplified the statement as follows: “strengthened, preserved, more securely, and authoritatively explained .”

In the fourth paragraph on “the twofold source of revelation,” the opening sentence in Form B referred to the “complete revelation” contained in Scripture and in Tradition “as in a twofold source,” with a footnote referring to Chapter 2 of Dei Filius of the First Vatican

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35 Ibid., 14-15. Quia igitur Apostoli doctrinam Christi et quidem eius nomine praedicant, ideo dicuntur in Sacris Scripturis simpliciter loqui « Verbum Dei » vel « Verbum Domini » (cf. Act. 4, 29; 8, 25; 13, 46; 15, 36); immo eorum praedicatio ipsa vocatur « verbum Dei » (cf Act. 6, 2, 7; 11, 1; 12, 24; 13, 7, 48 etc.) quippe quae vere sit sermo Dei per eos ad homines missus secundum illud Apostoli ad Thessalonicenses; « . . . gratias agimus Deo sine intermissione, quoniam, cum accepissetis a nobis verbum auditus Dei, accepi est quod non ut verbum hominum, sed, sicut est vere, verbum Dei, qui operatur in vobis, qui credistis » (I Thess. 2, 13).
36 Ibid., 15. Ministerium autem verbi, quod Christus et Apostoli inceperunt, volventibus saeculis semper in Ecclesia servatum est. Nam sicut Apostoli tradiderunt quae a Christo acceperant (cf. 1 Cor 15, 3 coll. 11, 23) et sucessionibus suis custodienda commiserunt (cf. 1 Tim. 6, 20; 2 Tim. 1, 14) sic Episcopi, qui in Ecclesia locum Apostolorum per successionem obtinent, eorum doctrinam semper praedicatione tradiderunt et cum auctoritate interpretati sunt.
37 Ibid., 15. sed potius roboratum, securius conservatum et authentice explanatum est.
Council,\textsuperscript{38} Form C added II Thessalonians 2:15 to this note.\textsuperscript{39} In the fifth paragraph on “The Relationship of the Two Sources,” Form C added the following underlining in the second sentence: “For although Holy Scripture, since it is inspired, provides a divine instrument for expressing and illustrating the truths of faith, still its meaning can be \textit{clearly and fully} understood or even presented only by means of apostolic Tradition.”\textsuperscript{40} In the second sentence of the sixth paragraph, “The Relationship of Each Source to the Magisterium,” Form C added an additional phrase (italicized), to the second sentence: “It is the responsibility of the Church’s Magisterium, as the proximate and universal norm for believing, not only to pass judgment, \textit{having made use of the means which divine providence offers}, in matters directly or indirectly concerning faith or morals” and in the interpretation and illustration of things “obscurely and implicitly” contained in the sources.\textsuperscript{41}

Form C included a mix of new and old emphases. The depiction of Christ speaking the word of God to men reflected the personalist concern for God’s relationship to man (§1). But the multiplication of citations and emphasis upon the Apostles, the hierarchy, and speaking that Word, echoed the concern of Pius XII about the Magisterium’s role in mediating Revelation to believers. The new formulation (§3), “what they had received from Christ,” suggested a somewhat broadened concept of Revelation by considering the Word of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[39] AS I-III., trans Joseph A. Komonchak, 16. 2 Thessalonians 2:15: « Tenete traditiones, quas didicistis sive per sermonem sive per epistolem nostram »: “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by \textit{word of mouth or by letter}” (RSV).
\item[40] Ibid., 16. Licet enim Sacra Scriptura, cum sit inspirata, ad enuntiandas et illustrandas veritates fidei instrumentum praebeat divinum, eius nihilominus sensus nonnisi Traditione apostolica \textit{certe et plene} intelligi vel etiam expone potest.
\item[41] Ibid., 16. Magisterii Ecclesiae ergo est, utpote proximae et universalis credendi normae, non modo iudicare, \textit{adhibitis quae divina Providentia suppeditat auxiliis in iis}, quae, sive directe sive indirecte, ad fidem et mores spectant. Chapter 5 (§§ 24-29) on “Holy Scripture in the Church” remained unchanged.
\end{footnotes}
God spoken by Christ to be more than doctrine. In addition, some emendations (§§ 4, 5, 6) indicate a heightened concern for the role of Scripture and Tradition in the teaching of the Magisterium and for the fact that God speaks His Word in Christ: Revelation is a Divine Word even before it is doctrine. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the first chapter of *De Fontibus Revelationis* remained largely the same. It treated Scripture and Tradition as “sources” mediated so completely through the teaching of the Magisterium that any “obscureness” about either source could be seen as severely limiting its intelligibility. *De Fontibus* still did not address the concern of theologians such as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, and Bea, who wanted a text that incorporated recent scriptural theology and emphasized the intelligibility and accessibility, of Revelation.

On November 20, the Central Commission called for a vote on whether the Fathers generally accepted *De Fontibus* Form C; the vote was worded in an obtuse format in which *placet* (a “yes” vote) opposed the schema by favoring termination of the discussion. The Council’s procedural rules required a two-thirds vote to reject a schema. The vote was 1368 for termination, 822 against, and 19 votes were invalid; a two-thirds majority of 1473 was required to terminate discussion; in effect, the Council had reached an impasse—it was faced with continuing a discussion which the majority wished to terminate.\(^42\)

**Pope John XXIII’s Intervention and the Creation of the Mixed Commission**

On November 21, in one of the Council’s most dramatic moments, Pope John XXIII removed *De Fontibus* (Form C) from the agenda and created a Mixed Commission to revise it.\(^43\) The Pope’s decision caught most attendees by surprise; as he remarked to Léger:

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\(^{42}\) Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 161.

Whereas Trent and Vatican I had determined the object of faith, it was the task of Vatican II to present the Christian message to the modern world and the world of tomorrow. The purpose was not to compose a handbook but pave the way for a pastoral science of theology.\textsuperscript{44}

Cardinals Ottaviani and Bea were named co-chairmen of the Commission, and Fr. Sebastian Tromp (Secretary of the Theological Commission) and Msgr. Johannes Willebrands (Secretary of the Secretariat for Christian Unity) were named secretaries.\textsuperscript{45} According to Burigana:

All eyes were on Bea and Ottaviani, to whom was entrusted the direction of the work of the new commission. Before facing the issue of the content and tone of the schema, the commission had to resolve a preliminary question: should the old schema be revised, or should a new one be written? In other words, what were the limits of the work of the commission?\textsuperscript{46}

In fact, the Mixed Commission produced a new document. Between November 25 and December 7, 1962, the Mixed Commission reached general agreement upon its structure, and upon a new title: \textit{Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (De Divina Revelatione, Form D)}. The writing of the constitution, according to Ratzinger, was “constantly dominated” by the question of the material sufficiency of Scripture.\textsuperscript{47} Gabriel Moran and Yves Congar have stated that the bishops’ vote against the schema on November 20 and the intervention of John XIII “will be recognized by history as marking the definitive close of the counter-Reformation, because on that day the Council Fathers by a majority

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\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 264.
\textsuperscript{45} Johannes Willebrands (1909-2006), a native of Bovenkarspel, Netherlands, was ordained a priest in 1934. In 1960, Pope John XIII appointed him Secretary of the SCU. At the Council Willebrands produced the text that was the basis for the Decree on Ecumenism \textit{Unitatis Redintegratio} and assisted with the Declaration on Religious Liberty, \textit{Dignitatis Humanae}. In 1964, Pope Paul VI made him a bishop, and in 1969 named him a Cardinal and president of the SCU. See: B. Meeking, “Willebrands, Johannes Gerardus Maria,” in \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia} (Second Edition, 2003), 14: 727-728.
\textsuperscript{46} Burigana, \textit{La Bibbia Nel Concilio}, 169. “Gli occhi di tutti erano puntati su Bea e Ottaviani, ai quali era affidata la direzione dei lavori della nuova commissione. Prima di affrontare il nodo del contenuto e del tono dello schema, la commissione doveva sciogliere un quesito preliminare: si doveva rivedere il vecchio schema o redigere uno nuovo? In altri termini quali erano i limiti del lavoro della commissione?”
\textsuperscript{47} Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 161.
\end{flushright}
vote rejected a document that was too little ecumenical and too inspired by an anti-Protestant Catholicism.”

According to Alberigo, many Council fathers were uncertain at the opening of the Council whether they could even reject preparatory schemas without seeming to offend the Pope. Both the negative reaction to *De Fontibus* (Form C) and the decision of John XXIII to remand it to a new committee helped convince the bishops that they could take the Council in a direction of their choosing, which was not necessarily that of the Holy Office or the like-minded individuals on the Theological Commission that had prepared *De Fontibus*.

**Schema De Verbo Dei**

The second Supplementary Text to Form C was the *Schema decreti pastoralis De Verbo Dei*, prepared by a subcommission of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in 1961. The schema was drafted by H. Volk for the plenary session of April 1961, as “an attempt to begin the work of elaborating a theology of the word of God, not simply as a set of doctrines found in Scripture and Tradition, but as a living source of life for the Church through the reading of the Bible, in the liturgy, in preaching and catechesis.”

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51 Ibid.
this recommendation at its plenary session in March 1962 and Volk’s text was submitted to the Central Preparatory Commission where it was discussed on June 20, 1962.\textsuperscript{52}

The last of its 13 paragraphs has three sentences which discussed Isaiah 40:8, “manet in aeternum”—the Word of God “abides eternally.”\textsuperscript{53} Paragraph 13.1 described the Scriptures as the Word of God as food for spiritual sustenance:

It is the responsibility of pastors to nourish all the faithful as gently as possible in the frequent and spiritual reading of the Scriptures, so that they might become accustomed to contemplate the divine mysteries in scripture and so to draw spiritual strength against every impious attack.\textsuperscript{54}

The second sentence directed that preaching and liturgical worship should also be considered and conducted as a “continuous proclamation of the word of God.”\textsuperscript{55} The third sentence instructed the Church to seek renewal of life in the Word proclaimed as in the Eucharist\textsuperscript{56} and concluded with a citation from Isaiah 40:8: “Indeed, the Word of God abides eternally” (\textit{Etenim: Verbum Domini manet in aeternum}).

Just as \textit{Humani Generis} § 8 had described the Word of God as a fountain (\textit{haustus}), \textit{De Verbo Dei} § 13.1 called upon priests and the faithful to draw (\textit{haurire}) from the Word of God. The second sentence (§ 13.2) indicated that the Word of God proclaimed in liturgy does not simply disclose the mysteries of faith; the scriptural Revelation proclaimed in the liturgy is also a way in which God nourishes the souls of believers. The third sentence (§

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{52}Ibid.
\bibitem{53}Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 165. According to Ratzinger, paragraph 13 influenced the Constitution, \textit{Dei Verbum}, Chapters I and IV
\bibitem{54}\textit{ADA} II-III-II, 457. Pastorum officium est, fideles omnes quam primum suaviter in frequentem piamque Scripturarum lectionem manducere, quo consuescant mysteria Dei in eis contemplare atque inde robur spirituale contra omnes impietatis impetus haurire.
\bibitem{55}Ibid., 457. In id praedicatio dirigenda est ac totus liturgiae cultus digne et competenter instituendus, ut inter Sacramentorum Solemnia emineat quoque continua verbi Dei proclamatio.
\bibitem{56}Ibid., 457. Sicuti ex aduacto Euchariastiae cultu Ecclesiae vita incrementum acceperat, haud secus ex adequata Verbi aestionatione et cultu novum spiritualis vitae impulsum sperare licet.
\bibitem{57}Pius XII, \textit{Humani Generis} (1950), \textit{Acta Apostolica Sedis} 42 (1950): 561-578, at 563.
\end{thebibliography}
13.3) indicated that the eternal Word of God gives Himself as spiritual food in the Word proclaimed and invites us to become intimately united to Him in holiness by meditation on the mysteries of faith.

**Discussion of the schema *De Ecclesia***

The schema *De Ecclesia*, described by Giuseppe Ruggeri as “for almost all the bishops the Council’s reason for being,” was distributed to the bishops on November 23, 1962. A conflict soon emerged between those who wanted the document to present “a juridical conception of the Church as a society, reflected in the unyielding defense of the identification of the Catholic Church and the Mystical Body” and those who favored “a conception of the Church that was more sensitive to its mystery.”

During the fall of 1962, a group of theologians, following the initiative of Cardinals Suenens and Giovanni Montini of Milan, began drafting an alternate document, *De Episcopis*, based on a text of Suenens’ *peritus*, Gérard Philips. Meanwhile, the draft constitution *De Ecclesia* was debated by the Council Fathers from December 1 through December 7, 1962. Two of the schema’s eleven chapters treated topics relevant to the present investigation: Chapter 7 (§§ 28-35) discussed “The Magisterium of the Church,” and Chapter 8 (§§ 36-39) discussed “Authority and Obedience in the Church.”

The section (Chapter 7, § 28), “On the existence and nature of the authentic teachers,” began by framing the Magisterial office in a pastoral and Trinitarian light: “In

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59 Montini was elected Pope Paul VI in June 1963, after the Council’s second session.
60 Ibid., 282-283, 298. For instance, at a meeting on October 25 at the Angelicum, the group included Congar, Philips, Giovanni Colombo, Joseph Lécuyer, Rahner, Ratzinger, Otto Semmelroth, and McGrath. Philips (1899-1972), who was ordained a priest in 1922 and was a theologian at Louvain, helped draft chapters on the diaconate, the laity, and the Virgin Mary. See: Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*, 101, 103, 154.
61 Ibid., 330.
order that the Church might religiously exercise its duty of faithfully preaching the
message of the Gospel to all nations, her divine Founder made his beloved bride a most
trustworthy teacher of truth and through the Holy Spirit endowed her with the charism of
indefectible truth” (§ 28.1).62 This Magisterium is “the proximate principle and perpetual
organ of this indefectible truth, and to it he gave the task of preserving the integral deposit of
faith, of faithfully explaining it, and of keeping it immune from all error” (§ 28.4).63

For Christ the Lord, always living in heaven as the Head of his Mystical Body,
illuminates the whole Church in all his members: the pastors so that they may teach
the word of God; the faithful so that they may accept and rightly understand it; and
both, so that they may witness to their faith; on all these Christ sends for the
promised Spirit of truth to keep them from all error and to lead them to acknowledge
and profess the divine truth. (§ 28)64

Paragraph 29 concerning “The Object of the Authoritative Magisterium” taught that
both the primary and secondary objects of revelation may be taught infallibly. With “the
same authority” by which the Church teaches the revealed Word both written and handed-
down, “its scope also extends to all those things which, even if not revealed explicitly or
implicitly, are nevertheless so connected to what was revealed that they are necessary if the
deposit of faith is to be kept whole, properly explained, and effectively defended.”65 This
authority also includes the ability to teach the natural moral law with infallibility:

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gentibus fideliter praedicandi Ecclesia sancta fungeretur, divinus eius Conditor dilectam sponsam suae veritatis
magistram fidissimam effecit, eamque per Spiritum Sanctum charismate indefectibilis veritatis ditavit.
63 Ibid., 47. Huius indefectibilis veritatis proximum principium et organum perpetuum constituit Dominus
authenticum Ecclesiae magisterium, cui munus commissum est depositum fidei integrum servandi, fideliter
exponendi, et ab omni errore immune semper custodiendi.
64 Ibid., 48. Christus Dominus enim ipse, mystici sui corporis Caput in caelis semper existens, universam
Ecclesiam illuminat, in omnia membra sua, in pastores nempe ut doceant, in fideles ut verbum Dei accipiunt et
apte intelligant, in utroque ut de fide sua testimonium reddant, Spiritum veritatis quem promiserat immittens,
qui omnes ab errore avertat atque ad agnosceandam et profiterendam divinam veritatem perducat.
65 Ibid., 48. Eadem ex auctoritate, se extendit quae, licet non expressis verbis vel implicitis revelata, tamen
cum revelatis ita connectuntur ut ad depositum fidei integre custodiendum, rite explicandum et efficaciter
tuendum necessaria sint.
But since the same magisterium is a ministry of salvation by which men are taught how they are to live in order to gain eternal life, it has the task and right to interpret and infallibly to declare not only the revealed but also the natural law and to pass judgment on the objective conformity of all human actions with evangelical doctrine and the divine law.66

Paragraph 30, which discusses the subject of the authoritative Magisterium, presented the Pope as the primary subject: “It is exercised in the first place by the Roman Pontiff, since he bears the person of the Divine Teacher for the universal Church and since he was established by Christ not only as the teacher of the faithful but also as the one who would strengthen his brother bishops in the faith” according to Christ’s promise (Luke 22:32).67 Even when the pope teaches on his own authority, “he is proposing or defending a divine truth which, written or handed-down, is transmitted whole and entire through the legitimate succession of bishops and especially by the efforts of the Apostolic See and is faithfully preserved in the Church by the directing light of the Spirit of truth.”68 Paragraph 30 resonated with Humani Generis § 19 in stating that when the Pope passes judgment on a matter of faith and morals, the matter “can no longer be considered a question for public discussion among theologians.”69 The bishops in union with the Pope also exercise an authoritative magisterium: “although they do not possess the prerogative of infallibility,

66 Ibid., 48. Cum vero idem magisterium sit ministerium salutis, quo homines docentur quam viam sequi debeat ut ad aeternam vitam valeant pervenire, ideo monas et ius illi competunt non modo revelatam sed et naturalem legem interpretandi et infallibiliter declarandi, et de obiectiva conformitate omnium actionum humanarum cum evangelica doctrina et divina lege iudicandi.
67 Ibid., 49. Imprimis autem a Romano Pontifice exercetur, cum idem pro universa Ecclesia ipsius Divini Magistri personam gerat, et ab Eodem non doctor fidelium dumtaxat, sed etiam Fratrum suorum in Episcopatu fidei confirmatur constitutus sit.
68 Ibid., 49. Divinam exponit vel tuetur veritatem, quae, scripta vel tradita, per legitimam Episcoporum successionem et imprimis ipsius Apostolicae Sedis studio integra transmittitur, et praelucente Spiritu veritatis in Ecclesia fideliter servatur.
69 Ibid., 50. . . . quaestionem publicae inter theologos disceptationis iam haberi non posse.
(they) are nevertheless for their own faithful true doctors and authoritative teachers of Catholic doctrine.”

Paragraph 31 stated that “authoritative teachers in the Church” and “the Roman Pontiff” may “in part entrust [magisterial responsibility] to the Sacred Congregations and to other groups of experts established by him for particular purposes.” The decisions and declarations of such deputies “are not infallible or irreformable, [but are] owed not only a merely external submission but a religious and internal assent of the mind.” Paragraph 32 stated that theologians “enjoy their own doctrinal authority in the Church” which is “specifically different from that of the bishop.” A “unanimous and constant” consensus of theologians, by virtue of “an intimate association with the Sacred Magisterium” in the preparation of teaching,” may not be rejected, although contrary opinions “cannot be said to be heretical.” The document again recalled *Humani Generis* (§ 21) by instructing theologians to “listen to the ecclesial magisterium as the proximate norm of truth.”

Paragraph 33 described priests, laity, and parents as “helpers of the Magisterium” in “transmitting the word of salvation to people and implanting Christ and his teaching in the souls of the baptized.” Paragraph 34 ascribed to experts in various natural-level physical and social sciences the role of cooperating with the Magisterium in responding to

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70 Ibid., 50. . . . licet infallibilitatis praerogativa non polleant, sunt tamen pro suis fidelibus catholicae doctrinae veri doctores et magistri authentici.

71 Ibid., 51. Magistri Ecclesiae authentici, quo facilius munus sibi divinitus concreditum adimpleant, alios quos volunt sibi adsumunt in adiutorium auxiliares, quibus peculiaria munera conferunt atque determinat. Romanus enim Pontifex non per se solum magisterium suum exercet, verum id ex parte comitere potest etiam Sacris Congregationibus aliisque peritorum Consiliiis, quae ad hoc ab ipso instituuntur.

72 Ibid., 51. Non externum dumtaxat obsequium, sed religiosa debetur et de se interior mentis adhaesio.

73 Ibid., 51. Sua quoque in Ecclesia competit auctoritas doctrinalis theologis…..specificie ab auctoritate Episcopi differt.

74 Ibid., 52. Ad normam veritatis proximam semper attendant. *Humani Generis* (I.c) was cited in a footnote.

75 Ibid. De magisteri in pastorali munere auxiliaribus . . .

76 Ibid., 52. Transmittendi verbum salutis omnibus hominibus eum que Christum eiusque doctrinam in baptizatorum animis efformandi apprime noscentes.
contemporary needs by helping to ensure that “questions can be properly posed and
rightly answered in accord with Christian principles.”77 Chapter VII, paragraph 35
concluded by describing various errors to be avoided:

Christian prudence and sound modes of proceeding demand that, before they propose
anything new, they first study the doctrine of those who have earned the praise of the
Church in their investigation of the truth; and that it is the duty of all the faithful,
clergy as well as laity, faithfully to comply with the decisions of the authoritative
Magisterium.78

Chapter VIII continued the discussion of the role of the Magisterium in transmitting
Revelation in four paragraphs concerning “authority and obedience in the Church.”

Paragraph 36 stated that authority in the church both derives its nature from and has its
origin in Christ. The Church “represents his royal power, and it is ordered towards the
supernatural purpose which he entrusted to His church, namely to extend to all the benefits
of his universal redemption.”79 This institutional power, according to paragraph 37, is in
keeping with “human dignity and the rights of a free person or with the freedom of the
children of God.”80 Paragraph 38 developed the relationships between bishops and clergy
and laity and the rights of free criticism; paragraph 39 concluded the chapter with a short
discussion of public opinion in the Church.

De Ecclesia, Chapters 7 and 8, like De Fontibus Revelationis (Form C) and De
Verbo Dei, were a mix of the new and the old. The opening sentence of Chapter 7 (§ 28.1)
related an aspect of the magisterial teaching office to each member of the Trinity: the Father

77 Ibid., 53. . . . ut quaestiones recte ponantur riteque secundum principia christiana solvantur.
78 Ibid., 53-54. Christianam prudentiam et sanam procedendi methodum exigere ut, priusquam aliquid novi
proponant, in doctrinam incumbant eorum qui cum laude Ecclesiae investigaverunt veritatem; omnium autem
fidelium, clericorum pariter ac laicorum, officium esse ut fideliter obsequantur omnibus magisterii authentici
decisionibus.
79 Ibid., 60. Eisque regalem potestatem repraesentat, et ad hunc supernaturalem finem ordinatur, quem Ipse
suae Ecclesiae commisit, scilicet extendendi ad omnes homines universalis redemptionis munera.
80 Ibid., 61. Cum dignitate hominis et iuribus personae liberae, vel cum libertate filiorum Dei componi non
posse.
sends the Son, who establishes the Church His mystical Bride; the Spirit acts as the means through which the Son endows the Magisterial office with an indefectible teaching charism. The statement that the Magisterium is the proximate principle and perpetual organ of revealed truth (§ 28.4) was described by Ruggeri as “giving the impression of intending to specify and rigidify the teaching of Vatican I.”

Paragraph 28 combined an emphasis upon the Magisterium’s authoritative charism to proclaim the Gospel with the teaching that all can know revealed truth by the light of Christ. The role of the laity seems passive in regard to the Magisterium, but active in regard to professing faith: Christ illumines the minds of the laity. He empowers all to give witness to and help spread the faith. The Spirit’s activity of enlightening minds it not limited to pastors, although only they have the authoritative charism to preach. In spite of its discussion of the grace-aided ability of the faithful to know truth and give witness to it, the text stressed the hierarchical aspect of the mediation of Revelation.

Paragraph 29 indicated that the Magisterium’s pastoral authority includes the ability to specify which behaviors do or do not conform to the natural moral law and to divinely revealed law. This duty is pastoral in nature, part of God’s loving accommodation to earthly life, so that human beings may know with infallible authority that specific actions violate their nature and divine vocation, and endanger salvation. The natural moral law is necessarily connected to the Church’s ability to preserve, explain, and defend the deposit of faith. If the Church could not teach infallibly about the natural moral law, she would not be able to preserve the deposit, or faithfully explain or defend it. Paragraph 30 indicated that the papal office primarily embodies the magisterial office and strengthens its other subjects,

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the bishops. Ruggeri noted that the text of paragraph 32 would have been the first time that a Council was asked to address the doctrinal status of the Roman Curia. 82 Although paragraph 33 taught that all are servants of the same “message of the Gospel” (Chapter 7) the strong emphasis upon the role of the Magisterium could easily overshadow this point. 83

**Draft Constitution on Revelation De Divina Revelatione (Form D): 1963**

After the first session ended in December, 1962, the Council did not reconvene until October 1963. According to Jan Grootaers, the intersession “created a kind of void in Rome; the vigilant bishops had returned to their distant dioceses, and the inquisitive press had disappeared.” Those bishops and theologians, in what was becoming the conciliar minority in favor of a more scholastic presentation of doctrine, considered the intersession an opportunity to “regain lost ground both in the commissions, which were working behind closed doors, and with the guiding authorities of the Curia.” 84 John XXIII, on the Epiphany 1963, issued the letter, *Mirabilis ille*, which, according to Grootaers, was intended to “dynamize the entire second preparation and to involve the bishops, now back in their dioceses, as much as possible.” 85 The letter’s statement that “it was the bishops’ duty to propose, discuss, and prepare the decrees in the desired form” was, according to Grootaers, a contradiction of the more traditional party, who claimed papal authority as a means to limit discussion and to pass the schemata in their original form to the extent possible. 86

The mixed commission met nine times, five times before the end of 1962, and four

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82 Ibid.,” 292.
83 According to Ruggeri (“Beyond an Ecclesiology of Polemics,” 294), the addition of Chapter 8 on authority, a topic which had been a central point for Catholic apologetics since the Reformation, had the effect of “reducing every aspect of the Church to its relation to the central authority.” For the teaching of Vatican I on the principle of authority, see *Dei Filii*, introduction (Denzinger, § 3000).
85 Ibid., 368.
86 Ibid., 368.
times during the intersession. At the meetings in December and January, the commission
did not reach a two-thirds majority on the material sufficiency of Scripture. Cardinal Liénart
sent a report from the coordinating commission instructing the Mixed Commission

because the formula in chapter I on Scripture and Tradition had not won a two-thirds
majority, it was to be dropped and a new text capable of obtaining such a majority
was to be developed. If this were to prove impossible, it would be necessary to return
to the formulas of Trent and Vatican I. 87

According to Burigana, those aligned with Holy Office resisted discarding De
Fontibus; 88 however, they did not prevail. At its meeting on February 23, 1963, Bea
recommended that the commission not take a position on the material sufficiency of
Scripture. The commission voted 28-8 to leave the matter open. Ottaviani challenged the
vote on the basis of his absence when it was taken; this action was angrily rejected by other
commission members and no further action was taken at the meeting. 89

At the meeting on March 1, Bishop Léger proposed stating that Scripture and
Tradition “are not alien, rather both are in close communication,” to replace the previous
schema’s formula: “Sacred scripture and sacred tradition are related to each other in such a
way that neither is external to the other.” This change was approved 30-7; according to
Grootaers, “some chroniclers have claimed that this vote on March 1 was of historic
importance, especially for ecumenical dialogue.” During the same meeting Archbishop
Marcel-François Lefevbre spoke forcefully in defense of the fathers’ right to consider

87 Ibid., 386.
88 Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 171-172. In questa prospettiva la creazione della commissione mista non
poteva essere accettata passivamente da coloro che si erano battuti per lo schema della preparazione e
ritenevano inutile il coinvolgimento del segretario, poiché la definizione e la difesa della dogmatica spettava
alla commissione dottrinale, che aveva in concilio il compito che nella prassi ordinaria era del s. Uffizio; il
Vaticano II doveva riaffermare la tradizionale dottrina per condannare gli errori presenti nella chiesa.
89 Grootaers, “The Drama Continues,” 387.
conciliar schemata freely, without the curia imposing any of them. On March 27, the Coordinating Commission approved *De Divina Revelatione* (Form D), which was printed and distributed to the Fathers starting on April 22, 1963, along with ten other schemata.

Form D, which resembled the final *Dei Verbum*, consisted of a preface and five chapters:

I, *On the revealed Word of God;*  
II, *On the Divine inspiration and interpretation of Sacred Scripture;*  
III, *On the Old Testament;*  
V, *On the Use of Sacred Scripture in the Church.*

Chapter I discussed the mediation of Revelation in four paragraphs (§§ 7-10), which are very similar to the Chapter II of *Dei Verbum* (*DV*), but with a somewhat stronger emphasis on the role of the Magisterium. The initial sentence of Form D, § 7 was similar to the final form (§ 10): “The Lord Jesus Christ gave the apostles the mandate, that his Gospel, which is the entirety of what he did and taught in his life, as the source of all saving truth and of moral discipline, would be taught to all creation.” The remainder of the paragraph (§ 7) presented Revelation, the one Word of God, as a reality greater than the propositions that express doctrines, and abandoned the language of sources:

> The Apostles transmitted those matters which they had received either from the very mouth of Christ or from the guidance of the Holy Spirit both through writings inspired by the Holy Spirit and through oral tradition. However, this word of God, both written

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90 Ibid., 388.  
91 The schemata distributed for consideration in the second session, were the following: 1) seminaries; 2) Catholic education; 3) priests; 4, the lay apostolate; 5) bishops and dioceses; 6 the care of souls (pastoral practice); 7) the states of perfection (religious); 8) the Oriental Churches; 9) Revelation; 10) the Church; and 11) ecumenism; see: Grootaers, “The Drama Continues,” 493.  
93 Ibid., 78-79. [*Apostoli praedicatorum Evangelii.*] Christus Dominus mandatum dedit Apostolis, ut Evangelium suum, id est ea quae per totam suam vitam fecerat et docuerat, tamquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae omni creaturae preaedicaret. All English translations of material of *De Divina Revelatione* Form D that appeared in *Dei Verbum* are from the translation available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html. All other material is my translation.
and handed down, constituted one Deposit of Faith, from which the Magisterium of
the Church draws everything that it proposes to be believed with divine faith as divinely
revealed.\footnote{Ibid., 79. Quod quidem Apostoli fecerunt cum per scripta Spiritu Sancto inspirata, cum oretenus tradendo ea, quae ex ipso Christi ore vel a Spiritu Sancto dictante acceperant. Hoc autem verbum Dei, scriptum vel traditum, unum Depositum Fidei constituit, ex quo Ecclesiae Magisterium haurit ea omnia, quae fide divina tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponit.}

Form D § 8, while resembling the final paragraph (§ 8) of \textit{Dei Verbum}, in its
treatment of the writing of Scripture and the development of Tradition, had a stronger
emphasis on the role of the Magisterium. Form D began with the same teaching as \textit{Dei
Verbum} §8 that the “apostolic preaching” was “expressed in a special way” in Scripture and
would be “preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time.” The
apostles not only hand on the same teachings that they received by word of mouth or letter
(2 Thess. 2:15), they also “teach the faith” which was “once and for all delivered to the
saints (Jude 3).\footnote{Ibid., 79. Unde Apostoli, dum fideles instruunt, tradendo eis quod et ipsi acceperunt (cf. 1. Cor. 11, 23), eosdem simul traditae sanctis fidei supercertari deprecantur (cf. \textit{Iud.} 3), traditionsque quas, sive per sermonem sive per epistolam didcerunt, tenere iubent (Cf. 2 Thess. 2, 15)} \textit{Dei Verbum} §8 taught that “what was handed on by the Apostles”
includes all that the Church is and all that she believes.

Form D § 9, which discussed the same material as \textit{Dei Verbum} 10, began its much
briefer treatment with a strong emphasis on the role of the Magisterium in the mediation of
revelation: “But Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, as one sacred deposit of the word of
God, are entrusted not to individual men, but to the living and infallible Magisterium of the
Church.\footnote{Ibid., 80-81. At S. Scriptura ac S. Traditio, uti sacrum verbi Dei depositum, non singulis hominibus, sed vivo et infallibili Ecclesiae Magisterio concreditum est.} Form D, similar to \textit{Dei Verbum} § 10, taught that the Magisterium is not above
the Word of God but serves it in accord with a divine mandate, and with the help of the Holy
Spirit. Form D added a note from \textit{Humani Generis} § 21 that the Magisterium is

\footnote{Ibid., 80-81. At S. Scriptura ac S. Traditio, uti sacrum verbi Dei depositum, non singulis hominibus, sed vivo et infallibili Ecclesiae Magisterio concreditum est.}
to protect and authentically interpret, by illustrating and even by elaborating, what is contained only implicitly and obscurely in one or other part of the Deposit. Accordingly, the proximate rule of faith is indeed the Magisterium of the Church, while the remote rule is truly the Sacred Deposit.\footnote{Ibid., 81. Tuetur et authentice interpretatur, illustrando et etiam enucleando quae in una vel altera Depositi parte implicite et obscure continentur. Exinde regula fidei proxima quidem est Ecclesiae Magisterium, remotae vero Sacrum Depositum.}

Two sentences of *De Divina Revelatione* (Form D) §10 constituted the first draft of what was to become the concluding sentence of *Dei Verbum* §10. The first sentence was almost identical: “It is clear, therefore, that Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined, that it would not be possible for one to stand without the others.”\footnote{Ibid., 81. Patet igitur S. Scripturam, S. Traditionem ac Ecclesiae Magisterium, iuxta sapientissimum Dei consilium, ita inter se internecti et consociari, ut unum sine aliis consistere non possit. The italicized words indicate where the text is different.} The second sentence differed from the final text of *Dei Verbum* in its discussion of the *sensus fidelium*:

“The three [Tradition, Scripture, Magisterium] each in its own way efficaciously contribute to the salvation of souls, along with a concurrent yet subordinate sense of the faithful.”\footnote{Ibid., 81. Tria simul ad animarum salutem suo modo efficaciter conferunt; sensu quoque fidelium subordinate concurrente.}

The first chapter of *De Divina Revelatione* (Form D) included many revisions. The opening sentence of paragraph 7 emphasized that Christ’s life, both actions and words, are revelatory, yet presented Revelation in terms of Magisterial teaching. Paragraph § 9 did not mention the sources of Revelation, but pointed to one sacred Deposit, one Word of God—that was considered less accessible for the faithful, who need to rely on the Magisterium’s interpretive authority. The numerous small differences between the text of *De Divina Revelatione* (Form D) §§ 8 and 9 and the corresponding text in *Dei Verbum* §§ 8 and 9 indicate that the two documents took a different view of Tradition. Form D stated that “the living tradition” grows in the Church under the Spirit’s assistance; *Dei Verbum* spoke of...
“This tradition which comes from the Apostles.” The growth in understanding (perceptio in Form D, intelligentia in Dei Verbum) occurs through the contemplation of believers; Dei Verbum spoke of the “contemplation and study” of believers. Form D lacked language that would strengthen the relationship of Revelation to the Magisterium. Dei Verbum added to Form D: “and through the preaching of those who have received the sure gift of truth.” Dei Verbum § 9 spoke of “a close connection” between Scripture and Tradition.” Form D like Dei Verbum (§ 8) concluded by speaking of “a mutual coinherence” between Scripture and Tradition. Both Form D and Dei Verbum included Cardinal Léger’s formula that Scripture and Tradition “are not extraneous to each other.”\footnote{Ibid., 80. S. Scriptura ergo et S. Traditio ita mutuo se habent, ut altera alteri extranea non sit; the next line, “Imo arcte inter se connectuntur atque commmunicant” is in Dei Verbum § 9.} Dei Verbum, like Form D, maintained that Scripture and Tradition flow from “the same wellspring”—(Dei Verbum added “divine”)—and “in a certain way merge into a unity and toward the same end. Dei Verbum § 9, like Form D § 8, stated that Scripture and Tradition “are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.” Form D § 10 had a stronger emphasis upon Magisterial authority than Dei Verbum, Chapter 2; the paragraph concluded by stating that the Magisterium’s authority is limited by Scripture and Tradition. This text was discussed at the ninth and final meeting of the Mixed Commission on March 4. Cardinal Liénart noted that someone had removed the second clause in the version presented to the Coordinating Commission; he “made an effort” to restore the Mixed Commission’s version.\footnote{Grootaers, “The Drama Continues,” 389.}

In Ratzinger’s judgment, De Divina Revelatione Form D represented progress: “The Preface presented an outline of the idea of revelation, in which strong emphasis was put on salvation history; new forms were found for the question of Scripture and Tradition; the
problems of inspiration and interpretation were treated in a relatively open way; and a number of positive things were said about the use of Scripture in the Church.\footnote{Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 161.}

Nonetheless, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the new draft, which was deemed “inadequate and vague, recognizable at first sight as a product of resignation.”\footnote{Ibid., 161.}

The death of Pope John XXIII on June 3 prompted a world-wide outpouring of love and affection for the deceased pontiff. In Grootaers’ view, this response functioned as a kind of “plebiscite” upon the pope’s vision for the Council, yet apparently surprised bishops who supported a more traditional approach to conciliar teaching:

> The hour had come for an examination of conscience: How were they to explain that an attitude of “weakness,” such as that of John XXIII, could reap such successes? According to testimonies from that time, John XXIII spoke even more strongly and loudly by his death than he had ever spoken in his lifetime. It became very quickly clear to the entire world that this plebiscite was a major event and would have great influence at the conclave and then on the continuation of the Council.\footnote{Grootaers, “The Drama Continues,” 501.}

The conclave was faced with the scholastic-minded party’s desire to “turn the page” after John’s papacy and the progressive party’s desire to continue the Council, whose second session had been postponed from May to September after news of John’s final illness in December 1962.\footnote{Ibid., 496, 502.} The conclave elected Cardinal Giovanni Montini, a supporter of John’s vision for the Council, by a two-thirds ballot on the sixth vote.\footnote{Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978) was born at Concesio, Lombardy, Italy. Ordained a priest in 1920, he pursued graduate studies in literature and canon law; in 1922, he began training as a diplomat. In 1937, he was named undersecretary for Church affairs for the Vatican secretary of state, Eugenio Pacelli. When Pacelli was elected Pope Pius XII in 1939, Montini continued in the position. From 1944, Montini served as “pro-secretary of state” along with Msgr. Domenico Tardini. In 1954, Pius XII appointed Montini Archbishop of Milan, where he endeavored to win back working-class Catholics from Communism. Pope John XXIII named Montini a cardinal in 1958, and in 1959, appointed him to the Central Preparatory Commission for Vatican II.} Montini brought “positive
aspects” to the Papal office including “intellectual openness to [the] great movements of liturgical, ecumenical, and theological renewal;” “willingness to examine and repair the deficiencies in the operations of the Curia;” and a strategic reorganization of the Council by appointing four moderators who would coordinate the commissions. Indeed, Pope John seemed to have “nominated” Montini by offering him various “signs of esteem” such as a Vatican residence during the Council and presiding at the liturgy on November 4, 1962.

On June 27, 1963, a few days after his election, Paul VI decreed that the Council would resume on September 29, but he did not include Form D among the five documents to be considered in the 1963 session. According to Burigana, the Pope’s decision to meet with Bea shortly after his election helped strengthen Form D’s treatment of the role of Scripture and perhaps saved De Divina Revelatione. During 1963, there was widespread expectation that De Divina Revelatione (Form D) would be “either suppressed, incorporated into the schema on the Church, or reshaped, [which] made irrelevant both the criticisms and

Montini was elected Pope on June 21, 1963, and took the name, Paul VI. The next day he announced his intention to work for peace and justice at all levels and to promote Christian unity. After the conclusion of Vatican II in 1965, Paul VI oversaw the process of implementing the Council’s decrees, and undertook curial reform and liturgical revisions. Paul VI traveled extensively, met with other religious leaders, and published encyclicals including Ecclesiam Suam and Humanae Vitae, and the apostolic exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi. Paul VI, who was “withdrawn and troubled” by the negative reaction to Humanae Vitae, the departure of many priests and religious, and the decline in vocations, died on August 6, 1978. See: Patrick Granfield, “Paul VI, Pope,” New Catholic Encyclopedia (Second Edition), 11: 26-33.

110 Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 223-224: “Infatti Paolo VI, pochi giorni dopo la sua elezione, ricevette Bea al quale, tra le altre cose, disse che gli stava molto a cuore mettere fine agli attacchi contro il Biblico, come Bea si preoccupò di far sapere in forma riservata ai suoi ex-colleghi dell'Istituto Biblico. La circolazione di queste notizie contribuì a temperare le polemiche intorno all’istituto romano e determinò un cambiamento di prospettiva nei confronti del De revelatione, che fino ad allora era stato considerato il massimo che la maggioranza più attenta al rinnovamento esegetico poteva ottenere in concilio. Le mutate condizioni sembravano favorire un ripensamento per mettere in luce i compromessi raggiunti nello schema, che gli attiravano più critiche che consensi; cominciavano a uscire allo scoperto le profonde insoddisfazioni verso il De revelatione, che avrebbero portato al suo ritiro dall’agenda conciliare nell’agosto successivo.
the praises of the schema that had come in between July and September.”111 National episcopates, notably the French episcopate, wanted extensive changes in the text. A group of Italian and French bishops led by Florit proposed the idea of folding the themes of Form D into the Constitution on the Church; however, Paul VI rejected this suggestion and announced in his closing speech to the second session on December 4, that the schema on Revelation would be considered at the third session.112

**De Divina Revelatione (Form E): 1964**

When the Council reconvened in the fall of 1964, the fathers discussed a new version of *De Divina Revelatione* (Form E) that had been modified in light of suggestions submitted between June 1963 and April 1964.113 The Coordinating Commission decided on December 28, 1963, that *De Fontibus* (Form D) should be submitted to the Council Fathers after the Doctrinal Commission reviewed it in light of comments received.114 A proposal by Bishop Gabriel-Marie Garrone of France at the meeting of the Coordinating Commission on January 15, 1964, to include the schema on Revelation in the schema on the Church was rejected by the Mixed Commission, which thought the topic merited its own document.115 About 300 fathers sent comments and proposed 2,481 emendations; most of these asked for revisions rather than rejection (two groups) or no changes (61 individuals). According to Evangelista Vilanova, some thought the schema’s language was imprecise, others thought it

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112 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 162.
115 Ibid., 374.
too academic; some wanted a more extensive condemnation of errors, others thought the
schema was “anxious to find errors everywhere.”

On March 7, 1964, the Theological Commission set up a Sub-Commission whose
work “would lead to the composition of the constitution Dei Verbum.” Bishop André
Marie Charue of Namur was selected as chairman; in addition to Florit and van Dodewaard,
the others members were: Francisco Barbado y Viejo of Salamanca; Georges Pelletier of
Trois Rivières, Québec; Jozef-Maria Heuschen of Hasselt, and Abbot Christopher Butler. A
Roman Franciscan, Umberto Betti, was appointed secretary. The secretaries of the
Theological Commission, Tromp and Philips, also served on the Commission.

After the preliminary work of the periti, the sub-commission spent April 20-25
preparing the version of the text that was presented to the full Commission. The
Commission broke up into two groups to pursue its work. Florit presided over the group that
produced the Introduction and chapter I, “Revelation and Tradition.” The second group,
led by Charue and Van Dodewaard, prepared the chapters on Scripture. P. Smulders
studied the comments on the introduction, and prepared the text with the help of Lucien
Cerfau, Carlo Colombo, Auxiliary Bishop of Milan, C. Moeller, A. Prignon, and Heuschen.
Rahner and Congar composed two partial texts on Scripture and Tradition. Betti and
Heuschen prepared a text covering the entire chapter, with the help of Cerfau, Moeller, and

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116 Ibid., 372-373.
117 Ibid., 375.
118 Listing in Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 162.
119 Ibid., 162.
120 Vilanova, “The Intersession,” 375. This group included H. Schauf, Prignon, Moeller, K. Rahner, Smulders,
Yves Congar, Betti, Tromp, J. Ramirez, and at Ottaviani’s request, Van Den Eynde.
121 Ibid., 375. This group included Cerfau, Gagnebet, Garofalo, L. Turrado, Bede Rigaux, Otto Semmelroth,
See http://www.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios-g.htm.
According to Burigana, Charue set April 25 as the deadline for finishing the task—a date considered realistic by secretary Betti and A. Kerrigan.²²³

The subcommission met from April 20-25, to discuss the changes and “determined the text that would replace the one developed a year earlier by the mixed commission.”²²⁴

Two points were of particular interest:

The first was the relation between deeds (gesta) and words (verba) in revelation. Tromp tenaciously defended the view that gave unqualified priority to words, on the grounds that faith comes “by hearing” and that all the texts of the scriptures and tradition speak of the “word of God.” The second point was the notion of primitive revelation, based on awareness that all human beings can be saved; according to Congar, this revelation began after Adam, not Abraham. At Philips’s suggestion the introduction was transformed into a first chapter, with the title “On Revelation Itself.”²²⁵

Three relationes were presented on Chapter II which dealt with the transmission of Divine Revelation: a “normal” relatio prepared by Betti; a majority relatio prepared by Rahner, and a minority relatio by Schauf. The second chapter was approved on April 23, and the subcommission approved the text of Form E on April 25.²²⁶ Burigana noted that the Secretariat for Christian Unity was excluded from reviewing De Divina Revelatione (Form E) before the Doctrinal Commission considered it in June, and did not demand a reconvening of the Mixed Commission for this purpose.²²⁷

From June 1-5, the Doctrinal Commission examined this draft and reached agreement on the whole text, but, according to Ratzinger, got into “a heated discussion on the question of the extra material provided by tradition.”²²⁸ The minority tried

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¹²² Ibid., 375.
¹²³ Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 263.
¹²⁴ Vilanova, “The Intersession,” 376.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 376.
¹²⁶ Ibid., 376.
¹²⁷ Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 274.
¹²⁸ Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 162.
unsuccessfully to have the first two chapters removed, while Ottaviani tried to limit the interventions of the majority’s theologians. In the end the text of the Doctrinal Commission did not include the question of a greater objective content of tradition in comparison with Scripture.\textsuperscript{129} The Commission could not reach agreement on the text, and decided to present two relationes to the Plenary Assembly when the Council reconvened. According to Burigana, Florit, Pelletier and Tromp suggested that the sixth chapter’s treatment of the reading of Scripture be limited to encouragement for “the simple” whose faith could be harmed.\textsuperscript{130}

A new preface was written, and the chapter structure changed to what was almost the final form of \textit{Dei Verbum}. The chapters were as follows:

\begin{enumerate}
  \item I, \textit{Revelation Itself};
  \item II, \textit{The Transmission of Divine Revelation} \textup{(previously chapter I, with extensive additions)};
  \item III, \textit{The Divine Inspiration and Interpretation of Sacred Scripture};
  \item IV, \textit{The Old Testament};
  \item V, \textit{The New Testament};
  \item VI, \textit{Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church}.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{enumerate}

Bea sent the text to the Doctrinal Commission with his approval; the Commission considered Form E from June 4-5, and approved it by a two-thirds majority (17-7).\textsuperscript{132} Form E was distributed to the Fathers starting on July 3. According to Vilanova, it differed in significant ways from \textit{De Fontibus}:

The preface was shorter and completely new; the old preface had been transformed into the first chapter (on revelation itself), in which the nature and object of revelation were described. The historical process in which the plan of salvation had

\textsuperscript{129} Vilanova, “The Intersession,” 377.
\textsuperscript{130} Burigana, \textit{La Bibbia nel Concilio}, 270.
\textsuperscript{132} Vilanova, “The Intersession,” 376.
been revealed was revised; the words and actions of God made known in the working of this plan, which was brought to full fruition in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In the second chapter (on the transmission of divine revelation) the section on the relation between Scripture and tradition (no. 9) had been reworked to omit any explicit reference to the theory of the two sources of revelation, which had drawn the largest number of criticisms during the first period of the Council. This decision had aroused strong resistance in the doctrinal Commission, but in the end it prevailed over a statement of the constitutive value of tradition in the transmission of divine revelation. At the same time, the editors had avoided entering into the merits of the ongoing debate on the sufficiency of Scripture and on the relationship between magisterial tradition and apostolic traditions. Extensive use was made of citations from the Bible and of passages from conciliar statements and the papal magisterium in order to show the doctrinal continuity of the positions taken.\textsuperscript{133}

De Lubac expressed praise for the text. \textsuperscript{133}

It brings everything into unity. Unity of the revealer and the revealed, both being Jesus Christ, “author and finisher of our faith; unity in him of the two Testaments, which bear witness to him; unity of scripture and tradition, which are never separable; unity, set forth in the final chapter of the Word of God in the two forms in which he becomes present among us: scripture and the eucharist.\textsuperscript{134}

The way that Form E presented Revelation differed in several respects from that in Form D. As indicated above, the six-paragraph introduction was refashioned into a first chapter with the same number of paragraphs. Chapter 2 treated “The Transmission of Divine Revelation.”\textsuperscript{135} Almost identical to Dei Verbum § 7, Form E § 7 text spoke of God as providing that “what he had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations.”\textsuperscript{136} But the discussion of committing “the message of salvation” to writing included a phrase (in italics below) that was not

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[133]{Ibid., 429.}
\footnotetext[134]{Ibid., 430. Vilanova cited de Lubac, La Révélation divine, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., rev. and enl. (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 174.}
\footnotetext[135]{Chapter 2 still consisted of §§ 7-10, with the material from § 8 on the relationship of Scripture and Tradition shifted to § 9; § 7 in both texts treat the handing-on of Revelation; the treatment of the relationship of Scripture and Tradition to the Magisterium (§10) was substantially lengthened.}
\footnotetext[136]{AS III-II, 78-81, at 78-79. Quae Deus ad salutem cunctarum gentium revelaverat, eadem benignissime disposit ut in aevum integra permanerent omnibusque generationibus transmitterentur. All material of De Divina Revelatione that appears in the final Dei Verbum is from the English translation at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html. All other translations are mine.}
\end{footnotes}
included in *Dei Verbum* § 7: “The commission was fulfilled too by those same apostles and apostolic men who, *enriched by a singular charism*, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing.” ¹³⁷ The final sentence of Form E § 7 referred to Tradition and Scripture as a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God; in contrast, *Dei Verbum* spoke of “Sacred Scripture of both Old and New Testaments.”

Form E of *De Divina Revelatione* § 9, which opened with a statement about the “close connection” of Scripture and Tradition that would later be incorporated into *Dei Verbum*, expanded the discussion of Form D about the origin of Scripture and Tradition in “the same divine wellspring” and their merging “into a unity and toward the same end.” The discussion of the relationship of Scripture and Tradition had not yet received its final form, but as Sauer notes, it left open the question of the material sufficiency of Scripture. ¹³⁸ Form E explained, in different language from *Dei Verbum* § 9: “For Sacred Scripture is the word of God in as much as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while Sacred Tradition is the mind, doctrine, example, and mandate of Christ heralded by the Apostles and their successors, assisted by the Holy Spirit.” ¹³⁹ In Form E, according to Hanjo Sauer, “Tradition is comprehensively described, it consists in the entire being and activity of the Church, in its life, teaching, and worship, for all it is in all this that its saving

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mystery is contained and communicated to all ages.” According to Burigana, this paragraph had a two-fold purpose: to reassure those who saw in the removal of the “sources of Revelation” as an attempt to undermine Roman thought, and to emphasize the nature and value of Tradition without appearing to devalue Scripture.

Form E §10 was almost identical to Dei Verbum §10, with three small differences. The opening sentence explained that Scripture and Tradition form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, committed to the Church; Form E like Dei Verbum expressed the relationship in terms of a Deposit borne by the Church as a whole, with the Magisterium as a servant. But the next sentence taught: “Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their priests (sacerdotibus rather than pastoribus as in Dei Verbum) remain steadfast” in the apostolic teaching, common life, breaking of bread, and prayers. The third sentence began, as in Dei Verbum: “But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the teaching authority of the Church.” Form E concluded: “by which supreme authority in the one name of Jesus Christ and in his single Church has been established”; in contrast Dei Verbum ended this sentence: “whose authority is exercised in the name of Christ.” Third, the concluding sentence had the same language as Dei Verbum, except for the clause, “under the action of the one Holy Spirit.”

On May 11, the Council’s Secretary General Pericle Felici sent the Fathers the list of schemata to be discussed in the third session: De Divina Revelatione was listed first.

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140 Sauer, “The Doctrinal and the Pastoral,” 199. Sauer also noted that Form E, unlike Dei Verbum, did not describe the process of its handing-on.

141 Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 294-295.

142 Pericle Felici (1911-1982), a native of Segni, Italy, was ordained a priest in 1933. He taught canon law and theology and “was said to be one of the most gifted Latinists in modern times.” Pius XII named him an auditor
June 26 the Central Commission also approved sending the schema to the Fathers.\textsuperscript{143} In Burigana’s view the greatly changed introduction and first chapter, which stressed the nature of Revelation, its nature and object, and the centrality of Christ’s Incarnation, indicated the importance that producing a schema specifically on Revelation had for the Council.\textsuperscript{144}

The Council Fathers discussed the text of \textit{De Divina Revelatione} Form E from September 30 to October 6, 1964. According to Sauer, there was still scholastic opposition to the compromise about the extent to which Tradition functioned in the transmission of Revelation; “the resolution came through a close collaboration between Florit and Betti, on the one side, and the Belgians on the other.”\textsuperscript{145} Bishop Frane Franić of Split-Makarska, Yugoslavia, presented the minority \textit{votum} of the Doctrinal Commission on the schema; the \textit{votum} approved the title-change to indicate that “the self-revealing God is the sole source of the Gospel” but called for an express statement about the material insufficiency of Scripture and of the constitutive function of Tradition.\textsuperscript{146}

On September 30, Archbishop Florit presented the majority \textit{relatio}, which opened with his observation that the history of the constitution resembled the history of the Council itself. He described the history of the document’s composition, and presented the first two chapters.\textsuperscript{147} In Ratzinger’s opinion, Florit’s presentation was one of the most important events of the Council: “Its solid theological content, clear logic, and its

\textsuperscript{143} Vilanova, “The Intersession,” 376, 419.
\textsuperscript{144} Burigana, \textit{La Bibbia nel Concilio}, 294.
\textsuperscript{145} Sauer, “The Doctrinal and the Pastoral,” 203.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 205.
consideration of all the reservations that were felt did not fail to produce an appropriate
effect on the Fathers.”148 Discussion in the Council hall reflected differences of opinion
similar to those in the Doctrinal Commission.

The strength of the text lay in the fact that it rejected the attempt to reach a definitive
decision on the relationship of scripture and tradition. In addition, it went more
deply into the concept of tradition, which was now understood as a vital process
that embraced the entire life of the Church. But would this not obscure needed
distinctions? Doubts arose, on one side, among the representatives of a static
understanding of revelation, who were concerned about a supposed revival of
modernism, and, on the other, among those who argued that divine revelation clearly
transcended all the ecclesiastical forms by which it was communicated. The point on
which the two sides most readily agreed was on deferring a decision on the material
sufficiency of Scripture.149

Two points were found to need more development: Biblical inerrancy and the
historicity of the Gospels. After the discussion concluded on October 6, and after receiving
the modi of the fathers, the sub-commissions of the Theological Commission immediately
began revising the text on the presumption that the “substance” of the draft was no longer to
be changed.150 According to Burigana, the sub-commissions saw their work as a matter of
corrections, modifications, and adjustments, although the treatment of the Scripture-
Tradition relationship in § 9 was still somewhat in doubt and so and provisional.151 Also, a
decision was made by the Doctrinal Commission on October 10-11, to reject the formulation
of Biblical inerrancy as an “absolute” inerrancy. The Commission instead produced a text
which described the books of Scripture as expressing saving truth (veritatem salutarem),152
thereby moving closer to the final formula: “The books of Scripture must be acknowledged

148 Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 163. Florit, a former professor of New Testament at the Lateran University, had
been expected to be on the “traditionalist side.”
151 Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 340.
152 Sauer, “The Doctrinal and the Pastoral,” 231.
as teaching solidly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation”—which was used in the final text of *Dei Verbum* (§ 11).  

On November 20, the revised text (Form F) was sent to the Council Fathers; Form F was a revision of Form E on the basis of the discussion in Council, September 30-October 6. Chapter III was renamed *De Sacrae Scripturae divina Inspiratione et de eius Interpretatione*; this change moved the text closer to the Constitution’s final form. Yet it would be ten months before the Council took up the text for its final revision and a final vote. In Burigana’s view Form F was delayed until the last session at least partially because the Council minority believed it could still insert an explicit declaration for “constitutive tradition” and prevent what it feared was a teaching of a kind of *sola scriptura*.  

**De Divina Revelatione (Form F): 1965**

According to Burigana and Giovanni Turbanti, “As the intersession began, the only thing certain about the fourth period of the Council was that the Pope had decided it would be the last one; when and how it would be conducted were still unknown.”  

Eleven schemata remained to be treated and so all work had to be done during the fourth session in 1965. Those involved in drafting the documents had to work assiduously to finish them. More traditionally-minded parties, especially in the Curia, wanted to show that “it was

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153 Cum ergo omne id, quod auctores inspirati seu hagiographi asserunt, retineri debeat assertum a Spiritu Sancto, inde Scripturae libri veritatem, quam Deus nostrae salutis causa Litteris Sacris consignari voluit, firmiter, fideliter et sine errore docere profitendi sunt.


156 Ibid., 484.
impossible for these schemas to reach sufficient maturity in a short time, perhaps only six months;” some wanted new debates on texts already prepared for a vote.157

_De Divina Revelatione_ Form F had “bogged down in the hall during the last days of the third period, just when the vote on it and its promulgation seemed imminent.”158 Florit was concerned that its opponents would seek a new discussion on the schema in the fourth session, in order to include a formula on the constitutive role of Tradition. He asked Betti, chair of the subcommission on the schema, “to keep an eye on the maneuvers” of these opponents, because the insertion of _modi_ “would involve much less work than that done in the recent past.”159 Felici asked the Fathers to send in _modi_ no later than January 31, 1965; “numerous” emendations were received. The Doctrinal Commission, however, was concerned that considering _modi_ would upset the “difficult balance of positions that had been reached through laborious brokering, and which many, beginning with Florit, thought the best possible. The vote, they said, has simply been deferred.” The subcommission decided simply to submit the _modi_ in a report with the text; composing this new report became its main task during the intersession.160

A major concern of the subcommission was the intense pressure launched by both opponents and proponents of _De Divina Revelatione_ Form F. In January, the group _Coetus Internationalis Patrum_,161 through Bishop Luigi Carli of Segni, called for a text “that would

157 Ibid., 483.
158 Ibid., 483.
159 Ibid., 483-484.
160 Ibid., 514-515.
161 The _Coetus Internationalis Patrum_ (International Group of Fathers) was “a minority of around 300 bishops, not to be identified solely with members of the Roman Curia, who were concerned about the dangers of secularism, Marxism, evolutionism and modernism, restrictions on the power of the pope, syncretism and relativism in the ecumenical movement, the direction of modern biblical studies, and the growing secularization of society and state.” See: Joseph A. Komonchak, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Communion,” in _History of Vatican II_, 4: 1-93, at 4; hereafter cited: Komonchak, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Communion.”
more clearly show the continuity of Catholic teaching with the definitions of the councils of Trent and Vatican I regarding the relationship between Scripture and tradition”; Segni “again discussed the expression ‘saving truth’ that had been introduced into the text and asked for a clearer assertion of the historicity of the Gospels.”

`Modi` prepared by a group of professors of the Pontifical Biblical Institute were “immediately seen as a response to Carli’s observations”; the professors wanted

- a reappraisal of the importance of tradition, asking, for example, that the adjective “sacred” not be applied to tradition; they defended the expression “saving truth,” which in their view correctly expressed the distinct character of the truth contained in Scripture; they emphasized the specific part played by the sacred writer and the importance of literary genres in biblical interpretation; they remarked that the study of the Bible should serve not so much to clarify obscure passages of the texts as to grasp its overall, true meaning.

The subcommission responded negatively to the efforts of the `Coetus`; Betti, with the agreement of Florit and Charue, urged that the subcommission report should forcefully defend the text and censure the criticisms received. But the subcommission did not want to appear partial. In addition, there was a “perception that the arguments of the [Coetus group] had received an attentive hearing from the Pope” after they wrote him at the end of July.

When the Council resumed in September, “there seems to have been a unanimous conviction among those mainly responsible for the schema that it would not be good to take an explicit stand against the `Coetus’;” Betti, for example, did not want to give “too much attention to these discordant voices.”

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163 Ibid., 516.
164 Ibid., 517-518.
George Tavard, shortly after the Council, observed that the revisions moved in three directions. First, an explanation of the fact and the notion of Revelation, which was not included in the version of *De Fontibus Revelationis* presented at the opening of the Council (Form C), was added during the subsequent revisions. Second, the explanation of Scripture and its relationship to Tradition became less and less controversial: “Whereas the first text adopted one particular interpretation of Tradition (as a partial source of faith, complementary to and independent of Scripture), the subsequent texts did not take sides among theologians in the controverted question of the qualitative extension of Scripture and Tradition.” Third, the discussion of the nature of Biblical inspiration and the use of historical-critical exegesis took greater account of the contemporary appreciation for these methods and ultimately did not take sides among contending methods. “These revisions,” Tavard concluded, “made the text eminently pastoral, open to contemporary theology, permissive of theological plurality on controversial matters, and highly encouraging to the researches of exegetes on the inspiration of Scripture, and of theologians on the nature of tradition.”

*De Divina Revelatione* Form F differed from Form E in several respects. The reference to the “singular charism” by which the “same” Apostles and apostolic men recorded Scripture was eliminated; in contrast, *Dei Verbum* spoke of “those” Apostles and apostolic men. While the formulation in § 8.2 about the handing-over of Tradition by the apostles and the formulation in § 8.3 remained unchanged, § 8.4 regarding the development

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166 Ibid., 7.
167 Ibid., 7.
168 Ibid., 8.
of doctrinal understanding was closer to the text of *Dei Verbum*. The phrases “contemplation and study made by believers” and “through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities they experience” were inserted. But the final clause of § 8.4, “and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth,” had not yet been added. The remainder of § 8 was the same as that of *Dei Verbum*; notably, the Church’s appropriation of Tradition was aided by the Holy Spirit: “the living voice of the Gospel resounds (*per quem viva vox resonat*)” in the Church and world.

In § 9 on the relationship of Scripture and Tradition, the first two sentences were the same as the those of *Dei Verbum*, but there was no longer a definition of Tradition, but a final clause: “while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known.” Between this sentence and the concluding sentence about accepting and venerating Scripture and Tradition with the same sense of loyalty and reverence, a sentence would later be inserted that it is “not from Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed.”

The four sentences of § 10 were the same as in *Dei Verbum* except for two small differences. In the first sentence, “priests” would later be changed to “pastors.” In the third sentence, which described the duties of the Magisterium towards the word of God, “listening to it devoutly” (*pie audit*) was added.

In Chapter VI, “Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church,” the language of *Dei Verbum* was almost in place for the first two sentences, which complemented the teaching of Chapter 2 on Scripture and Tradition: “The Church has always venerated the divine
Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from both the table both of God’s word and of Christ’s body.”  

This statement about the presence of the Word of God in Scripture and the Eucharist emphasized their relationship to the rule of faith:

She [the Church] has always maintained them, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since they are inspired by God, in this manner they impart the word of God himself, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and apostles.  

The emphasis on Scripture and Tradition as the supreme rule of faith indicated the Council’s shift away from the emphasis of both *Humani Generis* and *De Fontibus Revelationis* upon the Magisterium as a proximate norm of faith. Instead, the Council emphasized that the Magisterium serves the Word of God (§ 8). For Sauer, Form F achieved a connection between life and doctrine, because it took as its guide the connection between word and action in God’s revelation. . . . with this theological conception the Council bids farewell to a theology that from the outset places the Church’s Magisterium over and against the people of God, instead of first defining the Church as a whole by its shared listening to the word of God.

In September 1965, the Council considered *De Divina Revelatione*, Form F. Twenty votes were taken on September 20, 21, and 22, all the votes gained large majorities; however, there were various *modi*, which were subsequently discussed in a small technical commission which included Tromp, Philips, Betti, Grillmeier, Kerrigan, Rigaux, and

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169 *AAS* IV-I, 371. *Divinas Scripturas velut ipsum corpus dominicum semper venerata est Ecclesia, cum non desinat ex mensa tam verbi Dei quam corporis Christi panem vitae sumere atque fidelibus porrigere. “Velut” was replaced by “sicut” in the final text G.

170 Ibid., 371. *Eas una cum Traditio semper sicut supremam fidei suae regulam habuit, cum non tantum a Deo inspiratae sint, ut verbum ipsius Dei impertiant, sed insuper immutabilitatis indolem prae se ferant, atque in verbis Prophetarum Apostolorumque vocem Spiritus Sancti personam faciant. In the final text G, “sicut” was changed to “ut”; “et habet” was added after “habuit”; and “cum non tantum a Deo inspiratae sint ita ut verbum ipsius Dei impertiant” was replaced with “cum a Deo inspiratae et semel pro semper litteris consignatae, verbum ipsius Dei immutabiliter impertiant.”

Semmelroth. Christophe Theobald indicates that at this point, the doctrinal conflict which had started in the fall of 1962 was still unresolved and continued to affect the discussion in the fall of 1965. The votes of September 20, 21, and 22 confirmed the subcommission’s strategy of holding a clear hard-won line between what the schema asserted and what items remained unresolved.\textsuperscript{172} The report of the subcommission, which had handled Chapters 1 and 2, summarized the principles regarding what the schema would say:

This teaching was rooted in a “christocentric and personalist conception of revelation” that was reflected in the manner of its transmission (the nature, content, and era of tradition was here, for the first time, an express subject of a document of the supreme magisterium). That conception also had its completion, and its real point of departure, in a pastoral theology of Scripture that would make explicit the status at once historical and theological of the scriptures, the whole of this project being unobtrusively accomplished by a repositioning of the roles of the magisterium, exegetes, and theologians in dealing with scripture; its completion would also consist of an interpretation of scripture that was at once doctrinal and theological.\textsuperscript{173}

The report did not mention the relation of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, which apparently was still an unsettled question in September 1965.\textsuperscript{174} The commission also refused to modify the text regarding the connection between words and events in revelation in a way that would have favored a more verbal and doctrinal emphasis. Some fathers had resisted an “economic” and “kerygmatic” approach to describing Revelation, and protested the placement of the natural knowledge of God at the end of the first Chapter. They wanted more discussion of the supernatural orientation of the human being, the apologetic role of


\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 280.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 283.
signs, and Christ as revealer of truths rather than Revelation.\textsuperscript{175} The report, according to Theobald, tried to combine both a personalist and a scholastic language: “Faith implies by its nature the acceptance of a teaching; on the other hand, this acceptance is essentially an act of surrender to God.”\textsuperscript{176}

The number of negative votes in September 1965 indicated that a minority did not accept the subcommission’s treatment of these questions; this minority considered a more scholastic presentation, like that of Vatican I, as an essential element of Catholic teaching. In Theobald’s view this vote helps explain an “escalation in the means used” during the intersession and in September 1965.\textsuperscript{177} The subcommission wanted to retain the balance attained in Chapter II, and sought to resolve the disagreement by developing the concept of Tradition in both verbal and living aspects in the Church’s life; however, the problem remained alive at the beginning of the fourth session.\textsuperscript{178}

After the voting in September, the small technical commission met to consider the 1,498 \textit{modi}; 208 remained for discussion by the whole commission, and 60 concerned Chapter II.\textsuperscript{179} On September 24, Tromp “exploded a small bomb” by introducing a note from the Pope requesting that the commission “speak more clearly and more explicitly of the constitutive nature of tradition as a source of revelation,” specifically oral Tradition in the sense of the Council of Trent.\textsuperscript{180} Tromp persuaded the technical commission to introduce the word “directly” to \textit{modus 40D}, which was supported by 111 fathers: “not everything can be found or proved from Scripture.” But this formula could be read two ways: first,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 283-284.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 284.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 285.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 285-286.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Ibid., 287.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 289.
\end{itemize}
Tradition is required for knowledge of Revelation or, second, Tradition is a “second source” of Revelation. The relationship of Scripture-Tradition-Magisterium was not clear at this point.\textsuperscript{181}

A full session of the Theological Commission on September 29 was the first of six plenary meetings to discuss the modi for De Revelatione. These meetings ratified the proposals of the small commission—what Theobald called “a first commentary on the future constitution”—but disagreements resurfaced.\textsuperscript{182} The first Chapter was approved without difficulty; a few amendments such as one to define Revelation as objective speech, and another to discuss the motives of credibility and the preambles of faith, were rejected.\textsuperscript{183} Chapter II, §§ 7 and 8 elicited little discussion; attention focused upon the relationship of Scripture and Tradition in § 9. A heated discussion about Tradition took place, in which the majority rejected a series of modi by the minority who asked the Commission to reconsider the text.\textsuperscript{184} An attempt by Phillips to mediate between the parties with a formula stating that Catholic teaching “cannot be entirely proved from Scripture alone” failed; the Scholastic party pushed for a “two-sources” formula and failed as well.\textsuperscript{185}

Maneuvering outside of the meetings continued. According to Burigana, McGrath and Franć wrote to Florit to object to modi which had argued that the text should define the relationship of Scripture and Tradition in terms of its value for individual doctrines; Franć thought such a position contradicted the teaching of the Church, and McGrath thought it

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 296.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 298.
\textsuperscript{184} Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 164.
\textsuperscript{185} Theobald, “The Church Under the Word of God,” 301-304.
would harm ecumenical dialogue. There was “diffused desire” to continue discussing the topic, although Form G was almost ready for the presses.\textsuperscript{186}

In October, fatigue began to set in; “the assembly obviously wanted things to end and could no longer work up any enthusiasm except on some exceptional questions.” Two recesses were then scheduled, one for late October and one for early November. There was also uncertainty regarding the Pope’s relationship with the minority.\textsuperscript{187} Thus, there was fear that the Pope might intervene on behalf of the minority. Paul VI and several fathers corresponded about the constitutive role of Tradition and about the phrase “saving truth” in the discussion of inspiration in Chapter III. On October 17, Paul VI sent a letter to the commission asking that the text be improved, and seven formulas were included.\textsuperscript{188} At the Doctrinal Commission meeting of October 19, the final formula—“It is necessary to assert that the books of scripture teach firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth which for the sake of our salvation God willed should be recorded in the sacred writings”—was accepted. Instead of the phrase “historical faith,” the phrase “the four Gospels, whose historicity (the Church) unhesitatingly accepts,” was chosen.\textsuperscript{189}

**Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (Form G)**

After the first recess, the Council reconvened on Monday, October 25; on Tuesday morning the fathers were given Form G, which was a revision of Form F in light of the *modi* submitted to the Theological Commission. In addition, the fathers received the responses to

\textsuperscript{186} Burigana, *La Bibbia Nel Concilio*, 414-415.
\textsuperscript{187} Theobald, “The Church under the Word of God,” 322.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 331.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 335-336.
the *modi* and reports by Florit and Van Dodewaard. The Council of Presidents announced that the vote on *De Revelatione* would occur on Friday, October 29.\(^{190}\)

Florit’s report stated that the text “had been notably improved and been given a better form;” his report summarized the Prologue and Chapter I, and commented on Chapter II. He noted that the text did not allow for objective progress in Tradition, since nothing substantially new can be added; what grows is “the understanding of both the things and the words transmitted.” Florit also discussed “the internal development of a living reality” to describe the history of dogmas.\(^{191}\) The report also provided an interpretation of § 9: “It is made clear, then, that tradition is not a quantitative completion of scripture nor is scripture the codification of revelation in its entirety; the addition thus does not change the substance of the text but improves its expression.”\(^{192}\) The report also cautioned:

> Keep before your eyes this document that is minimal in size but is at the same time of truly fundamental doctrinal importance. It states the connection, often direct, between all the questions treated by the Council. It places us at the very heart of the Church and at the center also of the ecumenical problem.\(^{193}\)

Controversy continued: a widely-distributed circular from the *Coetus* warned that a “weak” schema on Revelation risked harming the Church’s mission of proclaiming doctrine;\(^{194}\) however, the majority of the Council fathers was not swayed. The final text of *Dei Verbum*, which was put to a vote in the plenary session on November 18, was approved with 2344 *placet* and 6 *non placet*. Pope Paul VI solemnly proclaimed the Constitution on the same day.\(^{195}\)

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 339.  
\(^{191}\) Ibid., 339-340.  
\(^{192}\) Ibid.  
\(^{193}\) Ibid., 340.  
\(^{195}\) Ratzinger, “Revelation,” 164.
Conclusion

During the four sessions of Vatican II, the treatment of Revelation underwent profound change from the draft of *De Fontibus Revelationis* (Form C) that was presented to the Council in 1962. *De Fontibus* reflected the preconciliar Theological Commission’s emphasis upon Revelation as flowing from two distinct sources with distinct content and consisting primarily of doctrinal truths. The Magisterium was seen as a proximate norm of interpretation and believers were seen to have a passive role. In contrast, Vatican II’s constitution *Dei Verbum* reflected a reconceptualized view of Revelation as God’s Word expressed in both words and actions, within salvation history, and entrusted to the Church as a whole, with the Magisterium primarily as a servant in its teaching of doctrine and its authoritative interpretation of Scripture. *De Fontibus* was more concerned with clearly teaching the truths of Catholic faith, while *Dei Verbum* reflected the bishops’ concern about speaking to non-Catholic Christians as well. Perhaps nothing reflected the bishops’ concern to speak of Revelation as a Divine self-disclosure to the Church as whole, more than did the history of *Dei Verbum* itself: the world’s bishops presented Revelation, not as a means to defend the Church as an institution, but as a word to be proclaimed in pursuit of unity with other Christians and in service to humanity as a whole.
Chapter 7

The Second Vatican Council’s Teaching About Revelation


In 1967, Cardinal Augustin Bea published The Word of God and Mankind “as a commentary” on Dei Verbum. In his view, the primary concern of Dei Verbum Chapter II was “the problem of how and where the revelation of God, which has been given in definite periods of history, is put before men; in other words how this great treasure has been handed on from generation to generation, and in what way its authentic integrity has been preserved.” Dei Verbum addressed “the totality of the means fore-ordained by Christ so that revelation might be handed on among men from generation to generation in all the purity and integrity of its content.” Echoing Congar’s concern in Tradition and Traditions, Bea stated that Dei Verbum addressed “a post-modern social situation where an “over-emphasized individualism” was giving way to a “re-awakening of the social sense, with the re-born understanding of the value of 'tradition' and traditions” as well as historical inquiry into the origin and transmission of ideas.

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1 All English citations of Dei Verbum and Lumen Gentium are from the translations at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm.
3 Ibid., 123.
4 Ibid., 123.
Bernard-Dominique Dupuy believed that the priority of *Dei Verbum* was not to define Scripture and Tradition in relation to Revelation, but to describe Revelation primarily as action:

*Dei Verbum* refrains from giving a definition of Tradition; it does not deliver so much a precise and unique concept of Scriptural inspiration; it delivers no longer a definition of revelation. It is a question, in all these cases, rather of a descriptive and progressive approach to a reality which cannot be understood simply as an object, simply as content. Revelation, rather than a content, is primarily *act*.  

For Dupuy, God’s self-disclosure in words and acts is an economy, in which “even the acts sometimes perhaps have more revelatory significance than the words; they inaugurate a new existence.” This “more Biblical” notion of truth refers to Christ who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life, which leads to salvation.  

Accordingly, Dupuy claimed Christian Revelation does not consist primarily of noetic content:

[This] idea of truth does not identify itself with the classical Greco-Latin idea of truth (*aletheia, adaequatio rei et intellectus*). Christian truth is not an atemporal noetic message, it is rather a response to a call, a promise of life. It plunges into existence and it dwells in each instant dependent upon the Word of God.”

In contrast, Vatican I had described revealed truth as: “all those things are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in Scripture and Tradition.”

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6 Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, “Lignes de force de la Constitution « Dei Verbum » de Vatican II,” *Irénikon* 43-1 (1970): 7-37, at 30; hereafter cited Dupuy, “Lignes de force.” *Dei Verbum* s'est abstenue de donner une définition de la Tradition; elle n'a pas livré non plus un concept précis et unique de l'inspiration scripturaire; elle ne livre pas davantage une définition de la Révélation. Il s'agit, dans tous ces cas, plutôt d'une approche descriptive et progressive d'une réalité qui ne peut pas être saisie simplement comme un objet, comme un contenu. Car la Révélation, plutôt qu'un contenu, est d'abord *acte*.  

7 Ibid., 31. Et même des actes ont peut-être parfois davantage de portée révélatrice que le paroles; ils inaugurent une existence nouvelle.  

8 Ibid., 32-33. Il en résulte pour la réflexion du théologien une idée de la vérité, qui ne s'identifie pas à l'idée philosophique classique, gréco-latine, de la vérité (*alêtheia, adaequatio rei et intellectus*). La vérité chrétienne n'est pas un message noétique intemporel, elle est plutôt réponse à un appel, promesse de vie. Elle plonge dans l'existence et elle demeure à chaque instant dépendante de la Parole de Dieu.  

For George Tavard,\textsuperscript{10} Vatican II’s omission of a discussion of belief in Christian

Revelation de-emphasized this process.

Theology is now investigating Christian experience rather than the rational aspects of

Revelation. It restores to revelation its mystery and to asent its mystical dimension. The steps toward faith, which used to be carefully analysed through the evidences of

credibility, the rational asent, the moral certitude, the ecclesiastical faith, and the

divine faith, now appear to be quite secondary. What primarily matters is the

Revelation itself, that is, not so much the result of Revelation for intellectual

knowledge and its importance as a provider of ideas, but God speaking, revealing

himself to the heart of men.\textsuperscript{11}

For Gabriel Moran, however:

It is the nature of revelation itself that is now in question. The main issue can no longer be the means of revelation, the organs of transmission, the places where

revelation is to be sought. All these questions are legitimate but to be considered secondary. They can be answered only if we have a clear understanding of revelation itself.\textsuperscript{12}

Revelation, for Moran, was primarily an “intersubjectivity of communion” between God and

man through Christ.\textsuperscript{13} As John Donahue observed after the Council, \textit{Dei Verbum} “represents the first major conciliar statement on themes such as revelation, scripture, tradition, and the

Bible in the life of the Church.”\textsuperscript{14}

In 1998, Riccardo Burigana claimed that postconciliar studies of \textit{Dei Verbum} often

portrayed its drafting simply in terms of the conflict between the traditional Roman school

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and a North European school. Burigana observed that there was a strong sense at the
council that the Church’s destiny was connected to its presentation of the Scripture-
Tradition relationship and to overcoming the past history of controversy with Protestants
that had been unduly focused on the Magisterium’s role in combating errors. In addition,
the process of composing Dei Verbum resulted in a recovery of the teaching of the Council
of Trent and of Vatican I from an excessive focus on combating error.

Dei Verbum § 7

Dei Verbum, Chapter II began with the statement: “In His gracious goodness, God
has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide
perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations” (§ 7.1). The following
sentences (2-3) treated the way Revelation was transmitted during the life of Christ and the
Apostles. Christ the Lord “in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to
completion” commissioned the Apostles to proclaim the Gospel “which is the source of all
saving truth and moral teaching, and to impart to them Heavenly gifts” (§ 7.2). This Gospel
“had been promised in former times through the prophets, and Christ Himself had fulfilled it
and promulgated it with His lips.” According to René Latourelle,

Vatican II takes up the text of the Council of Trent, but with two important additions.
. . . In Christ all revelation is completed, Christ has fulfilled the gospel promised of

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15 Riccardo Burigana, La Bibbia Nel Concilio: La redazione della costituzione «Dei verbum» del Vaticano II
16 Ibid., 437.
17 Ibid., 441.
AAS. Quae Deus ad salutem cunctarum gentium revelaverat, eadem benignissime disposuit ut in aevum
integra permanerent omnibusque generationibus transmitterentur.
19 Ibid., 820. Ideo Christus Dominus, in quo summi Dei tota revelatio consummatur (cfr. 2 Cor. 1, 20 et 3, 16 -
4,6) mandatum dedit Apostolis ut Evangelium, quod promissum ante per Prophetas Ipse adimplevit et proprio
ero promulgavit, tamquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae omnibus praedicarent, eis
dona divina communicantes.
old, and that as a consequence his command to the apostles to preach the gospel extends to the **totality** of revelation, Old Testament as well as new.\(^{20}\)

Bea noted that the Council here expressed a link between the Testaments: “the method of oral teaching is a part of the divine teaching method practised from the days of the Old Testament and continued in the New.”\(^{21}\) According to Burigana, the Council chose to frame Revelation in terms of Christ’s personal self-disclosure to the Apostles for ecumenical reasons as well.\(^{22}\)

The third sentence (§ 7.3) taught that the Apostles fulfilled their commission to communicate the Gospel in two ways: first, by Tradition that included oral preaching, example, and observances (worship), by which the Apostles handed on “what they received” from Christ’s teaching, life, and actions, and second by the Holy Spirit’s promptings.\(^{23}\)

Bea noted that the living testimony of the Apostles continued the living testimony of Christ “not by words alone but by the very fact of his presence, and by his whole life.” The Council’s reference to public preaching and also to “special teaching given privately . . . and from his life itself”\(^{24}\) provided an incarnational, Christological emphasis. The Holy Spirit’s

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\(^{21}\) Bea, *Word of God and Mankind*, 129.

\(^{22}\) Burigana, *La Bibbia nel Concilio*, 449.

\(^{23}\) *AAS* 58 (1966): 820. Quod quidem fideliter factum est, tum ab Apostolis, qui in praedicatione orali, exemplis et institutionibus ea tradiderunt quae sive ex ore, conversatione et operibus Christi acceperant, sive a Spiritu Sancto sugerente didicerant, tum ab illis Apostolis virisque apostolicis, qui, sub inspiratione eiusdem Spiritus Sancti, nuntium salutis scriptis mandaverunt. A doctrinal note attached to *De Divina Revelatione* (Form F) that was distributed to the Fathers on 21 November 1964, indicated that the phrase *peculiari charismti ditati* was dropped in Form F of § 7.3, because it duplicated what *sub inspiratione eiusdem Spiritus Sancti* had said; also, the phrase was seen to imply an ongoing, habitual charism. *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, Volume IV-I (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1966), at 352; hereafter cited *AS*.

\(^{24}\) Bea, *Word of God and Mankind*, 130.
promptings, Bea added, moved the Apostles to a deeper grasp of Revelation (as taught in John 14:26) and in the administration and life of the Church.\textsuperscript{25}

The Apostles and “apostolic men” committed the “message of salvation” to writing; the Council did not determine whether the Scriptures were written before the death of the last Apostle. Scripture emerged from the Tradition which exists before it.\textsuperscript{26} In Bea’s view, the existence of the Old Testament “did not influence” the Apostles’ decision to write: “They were in fact concerned with God's word, which Christ said he had not come to abolish but to fulfill (Mt. 5:17-18).”\textsuperscript{27} As Christ fulfilled the Scriptures in His life, death, and Resurrection, “so too the apostles from the very first preaching on the day of Pentecost took care to confirm the mission, life, and work of Christ with references to the Old Testament (cf \textit{DV} 5).” In addition, the Apostles were influenced by the prophets, who had announced God’s word “chiefly by preaching, but that later the written word had been added to this, so they also took the same course.”\textsuperscript{28} In John Donahue’s view, \textit{Dei Verbum} § 7 presents Scripture as an expression of a prior reality.

In a sense, then, tradition and the existence of the Church, that community founded on the apostles, are historically prior to the existence of Scripture. Scripture is an objectification or expression of revelation behind which stands an earlier expression in the apostolic preaching and the message of Jesus. At the same time, the Council implies that after the close of the apostolic age, scripture has priority over tradition.\textsuperscript{29}

Tradition then pre-dates Scripture, which, however, by virtue of its fixed nature assumes priority once it comes into existence.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 131. John 14:26: “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” (RSV).
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 133; Bea noted that the terms “Holy Scripture” and “inspired by God” were equated here, although the development of inspiration as a topic was not treated until Chapter III.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{29} Donahue, “Scripture,” 235.
Ratzinger maintained that the Council’s statement that Christ fulfilled

(*adimplevit*) the Gospel in addition to simply promulgating it, represents a shift in meaning from prior magisterial teaching on Tradition:

That this was its intention is made clear by the second addition: the preaching of the Apostles is explained by the ideas of *donum* and *communicare*; again, instead of a legal concept, we have the idea of grace and the principle of dialogue: proclamation as communication in the giving activity of God. This provides an essentially new starting-point for the question of tradition, for if the origin of tradition—that which stands at the beginning and must be passed on—is not a promulgated law, but communication in the gift of God's plenitude, then the idea of “passing on” must mean something different than before.  

According to Ratzinger, Revelation is understood in a new way. Instead of a “narrowly doctrinal” view, a “comprehensive view of the real character of revelation, which—precisely because it is concerned with the whole man—is founded not only in the word that Christ preached, but in the whole of the living experience of his person. The description of inspiration as *suggerente* rather than *dictante* indicates that Revelation “reaches down to a process that cannot be measured by the terms ‘*praedicatio oralis*’ used by Trent.”

Francis Martin has maintained that the Council’s personalistic description of revelation makes an individual’s act of reception a constitutive aspect of the process:

Revelation exists only when both dimensions of the divine activity are present: the words and deeds culminating in Christ and the personal appropriation of these realities. As an unknown preacher of the fourth or fifth century put it: “As far as we are concerned, Christ’s immolation on our behalf takes place when we become aware of this grace and we understand the life conferred on us by this sacrifice. . . . The

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31 Ibid., 182. In contrast, Vatican I opened its discussion of Revelation in *Dei Filius* by stating: “It was, however, pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal laws of his will to the human race by another, and that a supernatural, way.” Denzinger § 3004, Tanner 806. Attamen placuisse eius sapientiae et bonitati, alia, eaque supernaturali via, se ipsum ac aeterna voluntatis suae decreta humano generi revelare.
initial divine act, the process of its transmission, and its interiorization on an individual level are all part of the one activity we call revelation."\[^{32}\]

The final two sentences of *Dei Verbum* § 7 discussed the transition from the Apostolic to the post-apostolic period: “In order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, ‘handing over’ to them ‘the authority to teach in their own place’” (§ 7.4).\[^{33}\] Revelation was then transmitted to later generations who did not know Jesus personally. Latourelle described Christ’s self-disclosure to the Apostles as vertical transmission and the continuing transmission in the Church as horizontal transmission.\[^{34}\] Pierre Duprey noted that the Council has been criticized for citing Irenaeus in support of the “handing over” of Revelation, because the citation allegedly does not reflect the historical complexities of the origin of the episcopal ministry:

On the contrary, it seems to me that we have a very interesting case where the Christian tradition, like the oral Torah, reveals its capacity of perceiving what is essential and summarizing it in a synthetic manner independently of the experimentations, hesitations, and varieties in the selection process for, and the names given to, those who, after the apostles, continued their ministry of *episkope* (oversight). Both Irenaeus and *Dei verbum* in citing him affirm their profound understanding of the episcopal structure and its meaning.\[^{35}\]

In this regard, Bea cited two sections of *Lumen Gentium*: first, the Gospel must be handed down continuously until Christ comes again: “That divine mission, entrusted by Christ to the Apostles, will last until the end of the world (Matt. 28;20), since the gospel

\[^{33}\] *AAS* 58 (1966): 820. Ut autem Evangelium integrum et vivum iugiter in Ecclesia servaretur, Apostoli successores reliquerunt Episcopos, ipsis « suum ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes ». The citation is from Irenaeus, *Against Heretics*, III, 3-1.
\[^{34}\] Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 474.
which was to be handed down by them is for all time the source of all life for the Church. (LG 20).”36 Christ’s Word must be borne by living men appointed by Him, through the appointment by the Apostles, until He returns. The “principal successors” of the apostles are those described by Lumen Gentium (§ 20):

Among these various ministries which, as tradition witnesses, were exercised in the Church from the earliest times, the chief place belongs to the office of those who, appointed to the episcopate in sequence running back to the beginning, are the ones who pass on the apostolic seed. Thus, as St. Irenaeus testifies, through those who were appointed bishops by the apostles, and through their successors down to our own time, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved.

Dei Verbum (§ 7.5) described Tradition and Scripture as “a mirror in which the pilgrim Church looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2).”37 Although people see now darkly as through a glass, Latourelle observed that the Church by means of this mirror “progressively enters into the economy of vision.”38 Ratzinger noted that the Pauline comparison of Tradition to a mirror was a “criticism”: “All knowledge in the time of the Church remains seen in a mirror—and hence fragmentary . . . one must expect distortions and shifts in emphasis.”39 According to Ratzinger, Dei Verbum developed Trent’s understanding by connecting Tradition to succession by citing Irenaeus: “the succession is the visible manifestation of tradition, tradition is the manifestation of succession.”

Ratzinger also noted that Dei Verbum, unlike Trent, discussed Tradition in the singular instead of the plural: “Vatican II starts from an abstract concept, whereas Trent was

36 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 134.
37 AAS 58 (1966): 820. Haec igitur Sacra Traditio et Sacra utriusque Testamenti Scriptura veluti speculum sunt in quo Ecclesia in terris peregrinas contemplatur Deum, a quo omnia accipit, usquedum ad Eum videndum facie ad faciem sicuti est perducatur (cf. 1 Io. 3, 2).
38 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 475. A doctrinal note added that the reference of Dei Verbum § 7.5 to both Testaments replaced De Divina Revelatione (Form E)’s “Sacred Scripture” because it made more clear that this quality was not restricted to the New Testament (AS IV-I, 353).
concerned with the concrete phenomenon, the actually existing traditions, by which it meant the form of the Church's life as it was actually practiced in the Mass, sacraments, and sacramentals.”

According to Bea, the final sentence reflects St. Paul's view of the Church as a pilgrim, who has no lasting city here but seeks one to come (Heb. 13:14): “while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight” (2. Cor. 5:5-7); while we walk by faith, we do not see things directly but “in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12). Scripture and Tradition together form this mirror in which we look at God from whom we have received everything, until we see Him face to face (1 John 3:2).

Dei Verbum § 8

The seven sentences of Dei Verbum § 8 discussed the transmission of Revelation and its reception in the life of the Church. The first sentence stated: “And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time.” For Bea, this sentence affirms the essential connection of these books with the apostolic preaching. They are not a completely new thing, different from or extraneous to the apostolic preaching; they contain nothing but that preaching, although in a special form, that is as the inspired word of God.

As George Tavard summarized briefly: “Tradition is identified with the permanence of apostolic proclamation in the Church. Expressed in a special manner in the Scriptures, the Apostles’ preaching goes on in the Church and is destined to continue to the end of time.”

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40 Ibid., 183.
41 Bea, The Word of God and Mankind, 135.
42 Ibid., 136.
44 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 137.
45 Tavard, “Commentary on De Revelatione,” 16.
In addition, Tavard noted, “the notion that Tradition is essentially the transmission of truth cast in the form of propositions is thereby ruled out by implication.”

According to Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, the Council indicated that Tradition in the singular is primarily the transmission of the Truth, the entirety of the Christian faith:

In what consists the originality of the text of Vatican II? From our perspective it is a sense especially for having spoken of the Tradition of the Church no more as a means of the transmission of truths, but as the transmission of the Truth itself; when Vatican II speaks of the Tradition, it speaks of a reality, of the reality itself of Christianity. What is transmitted in the Church, is not primarily documents, customs, rites, even truths. It is God who comes to us, who is the transcendent and ineffable mystery who makes himself present.

The Council presented Tradition in the singular, as a reality greater than individual monuments. Tradition is “what they [the Apostles] had received” through the handing-on process (§ 7.4, cf. § 8.2).

The following sentence (§ 8.2) pointed out that the Apostles, “handing on what they themselves had received,” instructed the faithful, first, to “hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15),” and second, to “fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3).”

The third sentence (§ 8.3) pointed out that the Apostles handed on: “everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the people of God.”

Accordingly, the Church “in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all

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46 Ibid., 16.
47 Dupuy, “Lignes de force,” 21. En quoi consiste l'originalité du texte de Vatican II? C'est à notre sens surtout d'avoir parlé de la Tradition de l'Église non plus tant comme moyen de transmission de vérités, mais comme la transmission de la Verité elle-même; quand Vatican II parle de la Tradition, il parle d'une réalité, de la réalité même du christianisme. Ce qui est transmis dans l'Église, ce ne sont pas d'abord des documents, des coutumes, des rites, voire même des vérités. C'est Dieu qui vient à nous, c'est le mystère transcendant et ineffable qui se rend présent.
48 AAS 58 (1966): 820-821. Unde Apostoli, tradentes quod et ipsi acceperunt, fideles monent ut teneant traditiones quas sive per sermonem sive per epistulam didicerint (cfr. 2 Thess. 2, 15), utque pro semel sibi tradita fide decerent (cfr. Iud. 3). In § 8.2, the Council shifted to the plural, speaking of traditions as distinct from Tradition.
generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.” 49 These traditions, which manifest Tradition, contribute to the faith and holiness of Christians, both individually and as a people. By actively transmitting Tradition, the Church hands on both what she believes and what she is—a people of God. 50 Latourelle commented:

Tradition is not only verbal, but real. Consequently, it is passed down not only by way of instruction, but also by means of institution, cult, rites, etc. Tradition perpetuates not only the faith of the Church, but also her life. 51

Ratzinger was concerned that this statement includes a “danger that lurks”—“not every (small-t) tradition that arises in the Church is a true celebration and keeping present of the mystery of Christ. There is a distorting, as well as a legitimate tradition.” He cited as examples “a kind of piety opposed to the spirit of liturgy and a casuistic and untheological moralism” and insisted that Scripture is the criterion by which Tradition is to be measured. 52

For Bea, this sentence at first glance resembles a moral exhortation rather than a dogmatic statement, because it teaches that the entire Church, not just the hierarchy, has responsibility for safeguarding Revelation. 53 Bea advanced three reasons for his view: first, ‘preserving’ the apostolic preaching means that the successors hand on what they received; the New Testament notion of ‘handing down’ includes both senses (II Thess. 2:15, I Cr. 11:2, 23; 5:1-3, II Thess 3:6, Rom 6:17, Gal 1:9, Phil 4:9, Col 2:6 and 8). Second, the Council’s emphasis on the role of the laity reflected a broader view of the traditional distinction between ecclesia docens (episcopate) and the ecclesia discens (laity); both laity

49 Ibid., 821. Quod vero ab Apostolis traditum est, ea omnia complectitur quae ad Populi Dei vitam sancte ducendam fidedigne augendam conferunt, sicque Ecclesia, in sua doctrina, vita et cultu, perpetuat cunctisquis generationibus transmittit omne quod ipsa est, omne quod credit.
50 A doctrinal note attached to De Divina Revelatione (Form F) indicated that omne quod habet was inserted to express more clearly that all in the Church’s Tradition originates in Apostolic Tradition (AS IV-I, 353).
51 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 477.
53 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 138.
and episcopate have a share in handing down Revelation. The Council, Bea noted, taught that the family “is, so to speak, the domestic Church” and that parents are “the first preachers of the faith to their children. (Lumen Gentium 11)” The people of God assist by virtue of the “sense of the faith” by which they “cling without fail to the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).” Third, Tradition is “an integral part of the life of the Church” because it contains all that contributes to holiness of life and increase of faith (§ 8).

Finally, according to Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, Dei Verbum distinguished between Tradition as the process of handing on and the actions by which Tradition is handed-on:

The place of this transmission is not this or that act first accomplished in the Church, but all that constitutes the history of salvation and that we sometimes indicate at present under the name of “sacrament of the Church”, all liturgy together, all that is object of blessing and consecration. In a word, the Tradition on which we live before the transmitted things.

The fourth sentence (§ 8.4) explained how this Tradition has developed in the Church: “with the help of the Holy Spirit.” Latourelle detected a contrast (in sentences 3 and 4) between a “passive sense (that which has been transmitted) and “dynamic sense . . . a living reality in the Church . . . continually developing.” Tavard summarized the results of the process: “It is the Church's insight into the meaning of the realities and words handed on

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54 Ibid., 139.
55 Ibid., 141.
56 Ibid., 142.
57 Dupuy, “Lignes de force,” 21. "Le lieu de cette transmission n'est pas d'abord tel ou tel acte accompli dans l'Église, mais tout ce qui constitue l'histoire du salut et que nous désignons parfois de nos jours sous le nom de <<sacrement de l'Église>>, tout l'ensemble de la liturgie, tout ce qui est objet de bénédiction et consécration. En un mot, la Tradition dont nous vivons avant les choses transmises."
58 AAS 58 (1966): 821. Haec quae est ab Apostolis Traditio sub assistentia Spiritus Sancti in Ecclesia proficit: crescet enim tam rerum quam verborum traditorum percepitio, tum ex contemplatione et studio creditum, qui ea conferunt in corde suo (cfr. Lc. 2, 19 et 51), tum ex intima spiritualium rerum quam experiuntur intelligentia, tum ex praeconio eorum qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum acceperunt.
59 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 477.
by the Tradition which becomes sharper, thereby enlarging her vision.”

The fourth sentence also pointed out that the Church collectively experiences “growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down.” The Church grows by means of “the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth.”

The fifth sentence of this section (§ 8.5) stated: “For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.” Ratzinger commented that the Council's choice of words (§ 8.4 and § 8.5) was a development of the formulation of Vincent of Lérins: “what had always been believed” that had been incorporated into the teaching of Trent and Vatican I.

It is not that Vatican II is taking back what is intended in those quotations: the rejection of a modernistic evolutionism, an affirmation of the definitive character of the revelation of Christ and the apostolic tradition . . . but it has another conception of the nature of historical identity and continuity. Vincent de Lérin’s static semper no longer seems the right way of expressing this problem. This kind of new orientation simply expresses our deeper knowledge of the problem of historical understanding, which is no longer adequately expressed by the simple ideas of a given fact and its

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60 Tavard, “Commentary on De Revelatione,” 24. A doctrinal note attached to Form F indicated that the Form E formulation Viva haec Traditio was changed to Haec quae est ab Apostolis Traditio, because the latter better expressed divine origin of Tradition and made clear that the passage did not simply refer to ecclesiastical traditions (AS IV-I, 353).

61 A doctrinal note explained that perceptio replaced Form E’s intelligentia to describe the Church’s growth in understanding in order to make it clear that such growth was not limited to the intellectual realm (AS IV-I, 353). Another note explained that et studio was added to indicate the work of theologians and focus on the intellectual as well as experiential aspect of appropriating Tradition. (AS IV-I, 353).

62 AAS 58 (1966): 821. Ecclesia scilicet, volventibus saeculis, ad plenitudinem divinae veritatis iugiter tendit, donec in ipsa consummentur verba Dei. A doctrinal note indicated that the reference to the woman of the Gospel in Form E was dropped because the new formulation better expressed the idea of an animating principle that moved the Church towards its eschatological fulfillment (AS, IV-I, 353).
explanation, because the explanation, as the process of understanding, cannot be neatly separated from what is being understood. 63

Ratzinger also noted that the Council rejected the views of Protestant theologians Oscar Cullmann and J. K. S. Reid, observers at the Council, who considered the establishment of the canon of Scripture as the “decisive and climactic” event in the history of salvation. According to Ratzinger, the position of Cullman and Reid was an inadequate understanding of the historical development of the Church’s understanding of Revelation. 64

Bea distilled this part of the Council’s teaching (§ 8.4 and §8.5) into four principles: first, the development of tradition “consists of an ever growing understanding of its object, in its entirety,” with the realities “in first place” through the words which express them; second, factors promoting development include the witness of saints and of religious orders; third, development as slow, like the tree springing from the Biblical mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32); fourth, the Holy Spirit as the decisive factor in bringing “the words of God to fulfillment” in the Church. 65

The two concluding sentences (§ 8.6 and § 8.7) applied these principles to the reading of Scripture: “The words of the holy fathers witness to the presence of this living tradition, whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church.” 66 As Latourelle noted, a truth handed down by Tradition is not fully known through one document or testimony, but “only by the sum total of all the testimony and forms of expression in which it lives.” 67 The Church primarily draws her certitude about

63 Ratzinger, “Transmission of Revelation,” 188.
64 Ibid., 188.
65 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 142-44.
67 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 477.
Revelation from the authority of God revealing through Christ and the testimony of the Apostles. But the writings of the fathers are also a testimonial to the presence of a living Tradition, whose wealth “is poured” into the Church’s life and practice.

The following sentence (§ 8.7) described three applications of this outpouring of Tradition: first, “through the same tradition the Church’s full canon of the sacred books is known, and the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her.” By means of Tradition, the Church determined which of the apostolic writings are canonical. But the Bible is not only a book from which the Church draws doctrinal information and salvation-historical data, Christians read Scripture to understand the Word of God in light of Tradition. Second, “God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son.” Through Revelation—recorded in both the Old and New Testaments—God initiated a conversation which continues in the history of the Church. As Bea observed, “the document does not say that the sacred writings are understood only in the light of tradition, but that they are more profoundly understood in that light.” Biblical scholars, in his view, cooperate with the Tradition by further illuminating Scripture through studying its composition. Finally, “the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, leads unto

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68 AAS 58 (1966), 821. Per eandem Traditionem integer Sacrorum Librorum canon Ecclesiae innotescit, ipsaesque Sacrae Litterae in ea penitus intelliguntur et indesinenter actuosa readduntur; sicque Deus, qui olim locutus est, sine intermissione cum dilecti Filii sui Sponsa colloquitur, et Spiritus Sanctus, per quem viva vox Evangelii in Ecclesia, et per ipsam in mundo resonat, credentes in omnem veritatem inducit, verbumque Christi in eis abundanter inhabitare facit (cfr. Col. 3, 16).

69 A doctrinal note indicated that the reference to the Canon was added to De Divina Revelatione (Form F), because Tradition makes not only the books, but their canon, known in the Church (AS IV-1, 353).

70 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 147.
all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col. 3:16).  

According to Ratzinger, the final two sentences of this section (§ 8) indicated the importance of the Patristic writers for the faith; these authors are less “bearers of apostolic traditions in the form of statements” and more witnesses of “the living presence of Tradition . . . as an expression of the act of understanding, which assimilates what has been passed down and holds it for the present.” By grace and study, the Patristic writers produced formulations of enduring value for expressing doctrine. Ratzinger also maintained that this paragraph (§ 8) “sees the function of tradition as wholly related to Scripture . . . in that accepting the canon necessarily involves accepting tradition” and that by Tradition books become canonical.

Bea maintained that Tradition’s causal effect in actualizing the Word of God is best understood in light of Gaudium et Spes (§ 44). Because Revelation discloses (DV § 6) realities which “totally transcend the understanding of the human mind”:

From the beginning of her history the Church has learned to express the message of Christ with the help of the ideas and terminology of various peoples, and has also tried to clarify it with the wisdom of philosophers. Her purpose has been to adapt the gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned, in so far as such was appropriate.

This text, in Bea’s opinion, reflected Pope John’s inaugural address which called the Council to adapt the proclamation of the Word to the times. By such practice, the bishops do not “simply mechanically transmit a body of doctrine” but make disciples of all the nations

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71 A doctrinal note indicated that resonat replaced the Form E’s first use of facit, for stylistic reasons. Potential difficulty in interpreting John 16:13 led the Doctrinal Commission to omit the E version’s reference to it after inducit (AS IV-I, 353).
73 Ibid.,189.
(Mt. 28:19-20). Thus the bishops are to “explain it to men in an authoritative and authentic way, in accordance with their culture and mentality, and differences of place and time.”

According to Bea, the Holy Spirit makes the living voice of the Gospel resound in the Church and world and so the apostles and their successors do their work by the light and power of the Spirit:

They must apply to their successors also, for it is these who have to be witnesses of Jesus ‘to the ends of the earth,’ preserving the divine revelation in its purity, explaining and handing it on from generation to generation. The Constitution on the Church echoes the New Testament on this. After having stated: ‘For the discharging of such great duties, the apostles were enriched by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them’ (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:4; John 20:22-23;), it immediately adds that the same apostles ‘passed on this spiritual gift to their helpers by the imposition of hands’ (cf 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7), and it has been transmitted to us in episcopal consecration (LG no. 1).

Dei Verbum § 9

The third paragraph of Chapter II turned from the proclamation and preservation of the Gospel in the Church to the relationship of Scripture and Tradition in this process: “there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture” (§ 9.1) Scripture and Tradition are not only closely connected, but communicate in a dynamic way; neither Scripture nor Tradition is without the other. Latourelle noted that the Council framed their relationship as one of “mutual cooperation . . . an organic whole whose elements are interdependent.” Ratzinger noted that opponents of the two-source theory prevailed: “in a typically modern spirit of positivism, [that theory] identified revelation with its historical presentation and thus falsified the original idea of ‘sources’ in the theological

74 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 150-51.
75 Ibid., 154.
76 AAS 58 (1966): 821. Sacra Traditio ergo et Sacra Scriptura arcte inter se connectuntur atque communicant.
77 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 479. The Council omitted the question of the material sufficiency of Scripture.
sense in favor of an historical idea of ‘Sources.’” Trent used the term “source” in the singular to refer only to the Gospel. In addition, “partim-partim . . . distributes revelation in a mechanical way between two vessels of revelation that are independent of each other and thus fails to recognize its true nature . . . as a living unity which can only be present as a whole.”

The Council then stated that Scripture and Tradition “flowing from the same divine wellspring (scaturigo), in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end” (§ 9.2). According to Ratzinger, this more personalistic and less “legalistic” formulation allows a Catholic reinterpretation of the Protestant sola Scriptura principle: the main function of Tradition is to ground the origin and canonicity of Scripture in the Church. Ratzinger agreed with Cullmann and Reid that the Council’s silence about the possibility of a “distorting tradition” is a weakness in the document, but he insisted that Scripture is the Word of God within the Church: “It would involve the absurdity of making faith the function of historical (Biblical-critical) research and expose it to scientific criteria, the certainty of which cannot go beyond a very moderate form of probability and is on quite another level from that of faith.” Kerygma exists only as Church kerygma. 

_Dei Verbum_ next considered the inspiration of Scripture:

For Sacred Scripture is the word of God in as much as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it.

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79 _AAS_ 58 (1966): 821. Nam ambe, ex eadem divina scaturigine promanantes, in unum quodammodo coalescunt et in eundem finem tendunt. The word _scaturigo_ does not rule out the possibility of viewing Scripture and Tradition as two _fontes_ of revelation.
81 Ibid., 192-93.
more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed (§ 9.3). This sentence, one of the few in Chapter II that was only settled with the final Form G, described a threefold process: first, Scripture expresses the Word of God because the Holy Spirit has inspired its human authors to write what He directed; second, Tradition functions as an active principle in handing down the Word of God, which Christ and the Spirit entrusted to the Apostles, to their successors in uncorrupted integrity; third the Spirit assists the Magisterium in preserving, explaining, and making know the Word; accordingly, the certitude of the Church’s teaching is not exclusively derived from Scripture.

Tradition, according to Dei Verbum § 8, is the Church’s collective expression of the Word in teaching, Christian living, and worship. In Dei Verbum§ 9, Tradition is a channel by which the Church transmits Revelation through history. According to Burigana, an important aspect of the Council’s failure to approve a “two-source” theory, was J. R. Geiselmann’s interpretation of the Council of Trent’s rejection of a partim-partim formulation. According to Ratzinger, Geiselmann taught that Trent turned away from the two-source theory by using et: Revelation is communicated by Scripture et Tradition. Bea considered the teaching of Dei Verbum § 9 to be self-explanatory: Scripture “is the word of

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82 AAS 58 (1966): 821. Etenim Sacra Scriptura est locutio Dei quatenus divino afflante Spiritu scripto consignatur; Sacra autem Traditio verbum Dei, a Christo Domino et a Spiritu Sancto Apostolis concreditum, successoribus eorum integre transmittit, ut illud, praelucente Spiritu veritatis, praeconio suo fideliter servent, exponant atque diffundant; quo fit ut Ecclesia certitudinem suam de omnibus revelatis non per solam Sacram Scripturam hauriat.

83 A doctrinal note attached to Form F indicated that the phrase “while Sacred Tradition is the mind, doctrine, example and mandate of Christ heralded by the Apostles and their successors, assisted by the Holy Spirit, faithfully transmitted,” was changed to the above formulation in order to make clear that Tradition transmits the Word of God faithfully (AS IV-I, 354).

84 Burigana, La Bibbia nel Concilio, 442.

God formally precisely because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.”

But the same Holy Spirit also animates Tradition as living principle.

Ratzinger noted that the formulation quo fit . . . hauriat resulted from an intervention by 111 Council Fathers, who wanted a phrase to the effect that quo fit ut non omnis doctrina catholica ex (sola) Scriptura (directe) probari queat. (“It is not from Scripture (alone) that the Church (directly) draws certitude about Catholic doctrine.”) After the Doctrinal Commission meeting of 6 October 1965, the Council wanted to avoid this kind of addition. However, on 18 October, Ottaviani, the president of the Doctrinal Commission, presented a letter written by Cardinal Cicogiani at the Pope’s request, that the phrase be added.

According to Ratzinger, the final text did not create ecumenical problems: “The function of the tradition is seen here as a making certain of the truth, i.e. it belongs in the formal and gnoseological sphere—and, in fact, this is the sphere in which the significance of tradition is to be sought.” Bea maintained that this formulation showed that “the Council wished to emphasize the fundamental importance of tradition, without however deciding the question which Catholics still debate on the so-called ‘sufficiency of Holy Scripture,’ by speaking of certitude about doctrine rather than knowledge.”

Given the relationship of both Scripture and Tradition to Revelation, the Council taught that “both Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same piety, affection, and reverence” (§ 9.4). Ratzinger claimed that this passage

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87 Bea conceded that “it is true that this, in so far as it is the vehicle of thought, is truly a human word, but the thought is none other than the word of God, i.e. that which God spoke by means of the prophets and then in Christ, intending it for the whole human race” (ibid.).
89 Ibid., 195.
91 *AAS* 58 (1966): 821. Quapropter utraque pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipienda et veneranda est.
presented difficulties for ecumenism in that it represents a victory by the Council minority who felt it was “a symbol of the fidelity of Trent, to the totality of the Church’s faith”; he would have preferred “a progressive revision of what had been said at Trent” about one Gospel handed down in written books and unwritten traditions.\textsuperscript{92} For Ratzinger, in the context of the entire Constitution the sentence “is not a total description of the relationship between Scripture and tradition, but simply a profession of faith in the unassailability of dogma, the outward form of the Church’s faith.”\textsuperscript{93}

In contrast, according to Bea, this sentence . . . does not mean that Scripture is being denied that unique character which makes it formally the word of God, for that would be to deny all that has gone before, but are intended simply to affirm that tradition deserves all our respect and reverence, since it too is in its own way the word of God because of its content; it too transmits the divine teaching in its entirety and speaks in the name of God and Christ, it is the Holy Spirit who guides and enlightens it.\textsuperscript{94}

In Bea’s view, Tradition is also formally the word of God, but in a different way than Scripture. Timothy George, a Protestant theologian, has claimed that this sentence (§ 9.4) suggests an endorsement of the “two source” theory:

> From an Evangelical perspective, this language seems to imply at once a retreat from the “new theology” of Scripture and Tradition advanced prior to the Council, and a reassertion of the two-source theory in all its vigor. . . . Evangelicals can affirm the coinherence of sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, but not their coequality.\textsuperscript{95}

Christophe Theobald noted that the passage did not completely rule out the “two source theory”:\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92} Ratzinger, “Transmission of Revelation,” 195.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 195-196.
\textsuperscript{94} Bea, \textit{Word of God and Mankind}, 159.
Betti, along with Philips and Congar, shifted the problem from the content of revelation to the certain and complete knowledge of it, a knowledge that is provided by tradition. This leaves intact the question of the status of the content of revelation in relation to the event.\(^7\)

Theobald also notes that this section (§ 9) represented an accomplishment in that the authors distinguished between the “apostolic tradition and the scriptures, sustained by the promptings of the Holy Spirit and inspiration, and “the Tradition that comes from the apostles [and] makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit.”\(^8\) The paragraph did not, however, distinguish as clearly as Theobald would have liked between the transcendent word of God, and the ongoing dialogue between the God and His Son’s spouse the Church.\(^9\)

\textit{Dei Verbum} § 10

As Latourelle noted, this paragraph (§ 10) treated the relationship of Revelation to the Church as a whole (laity and hierarchy) in sentences 1-2 and the relationship of Revelation to the Church hierarchy in sentences 3-4.\(^10\) This arrangement resonates with the Council's decision to frame \textit{Lumen Gentium} in terms of the mystery of the Church (Chapter I) and of the People of God (Chapter II) before treating the Church’s hierarchical nature. As Ratzinger has noted, "the preservation and active realization of the word is the business of the whole people of God, not just the hierarchy."\(^11\) This section of \textit{Dei Verbum} opened:

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people of God united with their pastors remain always steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers (cf. Act. 2, 42 Greek

\(^7\) Theobald, “Church under the Word of God,” 348.
\(^8\) Ibid., 346; italics in the original.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Latourelle, 481.
text), so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort (§ 10.1).102

The first part of this sentence emphasizes that Scripture and Tradition constitute together one deposit. Scripture is inspired by, and Tradition animated by, the Holy Spirit; Scripture and Tradition together serve God's purpose of disclosing Himself to human beings. The People of God and their pastors hold fast to the deposit of faith, expressed in Scripture and Tradition, by believing the Apostolic doctrine, and living a common life in the Eucharist, and in prayer.

As Bea noted, “although this statement is only the conclusion of the last paragraph, it nonetheless deserves to be heavily underlined, for too often in the past many people have made the mistake of thinking, notwithstanding the teaching of the New Testament, that ‘the word of God’ is exclusively that which is written.”103 In Christophe Theobald’s view, the teaching of Dei Verbum on the Magisterium’s role in this process represents a fulfillment of Pope John XXIII’s hope, expressed in his opening speech Gaudet Mater Ecclesia, of teaching about “a pastoral magisterium that keeps in mind the intrinsic unity of doctrine and practice.”104 Ratzinger claimed that the statement of Humani Generis (§ 21) that Christ “entrusted his word neither to the individual believers, nor to the theologians as such for its authentic explanation, but solely to the teaching office” juxtaposed the role of faithful and bishops “in a strictly antithetical way,” in contrast to Dei Verbum (§10).105


103 Bea, 159-60.

104 Theobald, “Church under the Word of God,” 357.

105 Ratzinger, “Transmission of Revelation,” 196. Humani Generis, however, did not address the broader questions of the transmission of the Deposit of Faith, or its actualization in the life of believers.
George Tavard pointed out that one result of the First Vatican Council was a tendency to identify Tradition with the Magisterium:

Starting with Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876) and reaching its high point with Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816-1886), the Roman theology of Tradition, which was part of a wider Roman theology of the Church, was characterized by the growing importance it gave to the magisterium, especially of the Roman Pontiff, in the traditioning process. The other factors of tradition receded; they became ancillary to the discerning and deciding function of the Pope and, under him, the Bishops. . . . In this view, the definition of Papal infallibility entailed the identity of Tradition with the decisions of the Supreme Magisterium.106

As a result of the Modernist crisis, there was a “narrowing down of the formerly very wide concept of Tradition to what was only one of its factors, the regula fidei or rule of faith, originally destined to act as the standard by which a tradition would be authentic.” Tradition was seen as primarily the voice of the present, not the past.107 Dei Verbum dispelled this view by emphasizing that Tradition preserves Apostolic preaching in the Church (§ 9) and that the Magisterium is the servant of Tradition and Scripture (§ 10). For Tavard, “the dual unity of Scripture and Tradition becomes a trilogy, in which the Church’s magisterium constitutes the third term.” Tavard also contrasted the role of the Magisterium with that of academics:

The Magisterium’s task cannot be equated with that of exegetes or that of historians of doctrine. It resides in a higher synthesis than those of biblical or of historical theology, at the level of the Symbols of faith, the Creeds and other authentic expressions of the deposit of revelation.108

The Magisterium may “in no way lord it over Scripture and Tradition,” rather, it must wait upon and listen to God’s word, and keep and explain it.109

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107 Ibid., 18-19.
108 Ibid., 19.
109 Ibid., 19.
According to John Donahue, “Tradition is not an independent source of revelation but primarily a criterion by which the Church tests the authenticity of an interpretation of revelation” (cf. *DV* § 10); “the Church draws from Tradition part of her certitude about what has been revealed . . . [yet] Tradition is never called ‘the word of God’ but is rather described functionalistically” as handing on God's word in its purity. In contrast, Timothy George claimed that this clause (§ 10.1b) . . . seems to relativize both the historicity of the incarnation and the normativity of the apostolic witness to it. That church is apostolic which still listens to the voice of the apostles through which alone it hears the voice of its shepherd, and not that of a stranger, calling, correcting, reforming, renewing, and judging (John 10:3-5).

In this regard, Bea’s comments are helpful: “From these words it is obvious that the whole people of God must be loyal in faith and practice to this sacred deposit so that it may always be for all generations like the primitive community in Jerusalem, of which it was said ‘that they were of one heart and soul, devoted to apostolic teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread.’” In Latourelle’s view, this sentence, “although not a doctrinal innovation . . . does however represent progress over the earlier documents, principally those of Vatican I and the encyclical *Humani Generis*, which were content to consider the relationship of Scripture and Tradition only to the Magisterium.”

Georg Günter Blum contrasted this teaching of *Dei Verbum* (§ 10.1) with the teaching of *Humani Generis*:

If one compares this understanding with the corresponding explanations of the encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950, a clear modification of the relationship between Church and the Magisterium is to be observed. If Pius XII could still describe the Magisterium in the terminology of the Roman school as *norma proxima*, so as to set

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110 Donahue, “Scripture,” 236.
113 Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 482.
up a stark antithesis that Christ “has entrusted” his Word “neither to individual believers nor to theologians as such, but only to the teaching office of the Church, for authentic [authoritative] interpretation,” now the Word of God is preeminently understood as a reality of the entire People of God. Indeed, in the following paragraph [Dei Verbum § 10], soli Magisterio is still used, but it now stands in contrast to Humani Generis in a completely ecclesiological relationship.  

Ratzinger in turn has suggested that Dei Verbum (§ 10.1) offered an “important achievement of a renewed theology of the laity, seen here in connection with the theology of the word and making clear not merely the secular function, but the truly ecclesial and spiritual function of the layman.” He also noted also that the Council fathers declined to address the question of “consensus of faith,” because the concept was not sufficiently developed to allow inclusion in a conciliar document. “The function of the total Church lies rather, as history teaches, in the idea of perseverat, to which the text gives a central place: in the power of persistence, which recognizes as such the false innovation that is contrary to faith and condemns it, while holding firmly, on the other hand, to the original truth.” Tavard has recalled a helpful aspect of the development of doctrine, which this sentence expressed:

> The older Church had known that doctrine develops or, in other words, that Tradition is not simply a transmission of final truths and of set statements, but a self-enlarging stream of spiritual experience. . . . Doctrine grows in the fashion of a living organism, which has in itself the principles of its growth, yet whose growth is nurtured by its assimilation of outside elements.

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116 Tavard, “Commentary on De Revelatione,” 19, 21.
Timothy George has offered an Evangelical view of apostolic succession in light of Dei Verbum (§ 10.1): “Evangelicals understand this concept not in terms of an unbroken chain of ecclesiastical officeholders going back through the centuries to Saint Peter, and last of all to Christ as the founder of the Church, but rather as the faithful preaching of the inscripturated apostolic witness.”

George also objected to the use of the word “exclusively” to describe the Church teaching office.

The difficulty here is with the word “exclusively,” especially if it implies the infallibility and irreformability of any particular interpreter. Jesus Christ himself remains the Lord as well as the center of Holy Scripture. But it does not follow from this axiom that there is no authoritative teaching office in the Church. . . . Evangelicals and Catholics differ on the scope and locus of the magisterium but not on whether it exists as a necessary component in the ongoing life of the Church.

Dei Verbum then succinctly ascribed the interpretation of Revelation to the Magisterium (§ 10.2):

But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.

As Bea has noted, “it is not a question of any sort of interpretation . . . but of an authentic interpretation, which is binding upon the people of God and accepted by it with faith as the true meaning of God’s revelation.”

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118 Ibid., 206.
120 Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 161-62. A doctrinal note attached to the text of Form F sent to the Fathers in the summer of 1964 indicated that the word infallibilis before Ecclesiae Magisterio was omitted because not all actions of the Magisterium partake of infallibility (AS IV-I, 354). Another note indicated that suprema was changed to cuius, to clarify that the text did not refer specifically to an exercise of infallibility, but to exercises of magisterial authority in general (ibid.).
While insisting that it is the Magisterium’s prerogative to interpret Revelation authoritatively, *Dei Verbum* also emphasized the Magisterium’s subordination to Revelation (§ 10.3):

>This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.\(^{121}\)

Latourelle observed that this was the first time a Council presented the Magisterium as the servant of the Deposit of Faith.\(^{122}\) Latourelle also noted that the expression “scrupulously guards the word of God . . . is traditional and comes up in many documents of the Magisterium in an identical or equivalent form.”\(^{123}\)

Bea observed, in response to the objection that “a human teaching office sets itself up as judge of the word of God,” that the text of *Lumen Gentium* repeatedly affirmed the role of episcopal servanthood (*LG* §§18, 24, 32); the hierarchy “are servants of their brethren, so that all who are of the people of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, can work towards a common goal freely and in an orderly way, and arrive at salvation”; accordingly, “the bishops, even before and more than other members of the Church, are bound to offer to God who reveals himself the humble obedience of faith” and “the full submission of intellect and will.”\(^{124}\)

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\(^{121}\) *AAS* 58 (1966): 822. Quod quidem Magisterium non supra verbum Dei est, sed eidem ministrat, docens nonnisi quod traditum est, quatenus illud, ex divino mandato et Spiritu Sancto assistente, pie audit, sancte custodit et fideliter exponit, ac ea omnia ex hoc uno fidei deposito haurit quae tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponit. A doctrinal note to the text of *De Divina Revelatione* (Form F) that was sent to the Fathers in summer 1964 indicated that the phrase *pie audit* was added to indicate more clearly the dependence of the Magisterium upon the deposit of Revelation which transcends it (*AS* IV-I, 354).

\(^{122}\) Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 482.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., 483.

\(^{124}\) Bea, *Word of God and Mankind*, 163-64.
John Donahue has seen in *Dei Verbum* (§ 10.3) “a dialectical juxtaposition of different perspectives: the magisterium is simultaneously the servant of the word and its authentic interpreter; the whole Church determines the development of tradition, but is subordinate to the teaching authority.”125 In Burigana’s view, however, the teaching of *Dei Verbum* about the relationship of the Word of God to the Magisterium bore the influence of the schema *De Verbo Dei*: the Word of God is not subject to the Magisterium, although the Magisterium is the final interpretive authority of the Word of God in the Church.126

*Dei Verbum* then described the essential inter-connection of Tradition, Scripture and Magisterium in the mediation of Revelation (§ 10.4):

> It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.127

Ratzinger has described the final two sentences of *Dei Verbum* (§ 10) as “a summing up, in that (they give) expression to the reciprocal and inseparable functional relationship of Scripture, tradition, and the Church’s teaching office, none of which could be conceived independently of the other”:128

> the whole is placed within the pneumatological context, which avoids the danger of being seen in terms of a merely ecclesiastical functionalism. The last clause brings in the idea of the “saving power of the word” and thus again contributes an important element to a theology of the word, which, in the dialogical conception of the Constitution of necessity no longer appears merely as a preliminary condition for the actual sacramental reality of salvation, but itself as the dialogue of salvation.129

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125 Donahue, “Scripture,” 237.
127 *AAS* 58 (1966): 822. *Patet igitur Sacram Traditionem, Sacram Scripturam et Ecclesiae Magisterium, iuxta sapientissimum Dei consilium, ita inter se connecti et consociari, ut unum sine aliis non consistat, omniaque simul, singula suo modo sub actione unius Spiritus Sancti, ad animarum salutem efficaciter conferant.*
129 Ibid., 198.
Dei Verbum (§10.4) also provided a good example of the personalist overtone that, in Latourelle’s estimation, the Fathers wanted to give to the Council texts.

God enters into a person-to-person relationship with man: the divine I calls to the human Thou, speaks to him, carries on a dialogue with him, reveals the mystery of his own intimate life in view of a communion of thought and love with the divine Persons. By faith, man responds to this initiative of love and surrenders his whole self. Described thus, revelation is at once personalized and personalizing.\(^\text{130}\)

In Ratzinger’s words, we enter into a reality: Christ, who is God, comes to live in us, and we live in Him.\(^\text{131}\)

Latourelle contrasted the teaching of the First Vatican Council in Dei Filius with its successor in Dei Verbum to suggest that Vatican II took a Christocentric focus rather than the theocentric focus taken by the First Vatican Council, which stated:

It was, however, the good pleasure of [God in] his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal decrees of his will to the human race in another and supernatural way. (DF Chapter 2)\(^\text{132}\)

In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and to make known the hidden purpose of his will by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature. (DV 2)\(^\text{133}\)

Bea felt that because Dei Verbum (§ 10.4) is such an “effective and precise conclusion, that it has no need of comment, so clearly is it derived from the whole of the chapter which we have been expounding.”\(^\text{134}\) Bea then commented that the Church needs to “preserve the equilibrium between the Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium in three ways.” First, equilibrium is needed between preserving the Deposit of faith, and the proclamation and the

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\(^\text{130}\) Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 486.
\(^\text{131}\) Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 40.
\(^\text{132}\) Denzinger § 3004, Tanner, 806. Attamen placuisse eius sapientiae et bonitati, alia, eaque supernaturali via, se ipsum ac aeterna voluntatis suae decreta humano generi revelare.
\(^\text{133}\) AAS 58 (1966): 818. Placuit Deo in sua bonitate et sapientia Seipsum revelare et notum facere sacramentum voluntatis suae (cfr. Eph. 1, 9), quo homines per Christum, Verbum carnem factum, in Spiritu Sancto accessum habent ad Patrem et divinae naturae consortes efficiuntur (cfr. Eph. 2, 18; 2 Petr. 1, 4).
\(^\text{134}\) Bea, Word of God and Mankind, 166.
contemplation of that deposit. Second, equilibrium is needed between the roles of the faithful and the bishops. All must cling to the Word of God and keep, profess, and practice the faith handed on via Tradition and authoritatively explained by the Magisterium. Third, the bishops must keep the human element of the process in mind. Bea concluded: “This divine-human transmission is the fitting and effective means by which God continues to speak with the Bride of his only-begotten Son, and by which the Holy Spirit leads believers into all truth and brings them gradually in the Church to the fulfillment of the words of God.”

Georg Günter Blum observed that the ecclesial element developed in DV 10 makes possible the effective functioning of the Scripture and Tradition in the salvation of souls described in 10.4.

It may correctly be said that none of these three elements [Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium] stands without the others and that “each in its own way” through the action of the Holy Spirit serves the salvation of souls. The universal ecclesial aspect should however absolutely have been considered here. If their sense of faith enables the Christian people to retain in its integrity the good news of the apostolic Paradosis entrusted to it and to contribute to the progressive understanding of the Tradition, this can only happen with the closest cooperation with the teaching organs of the Church and the work of theology.

According to Burigana, the definition of Revelation is the premise underlying this teaching.

Had the Council not emphasized the mystery of Christ in human salvation, it would not have presented the actual basis of the relationship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium.

Nor would the Council have offered sufficient basis for other emphases in Dei Verbum, such

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135 Ibid., 168.
as the enduring value of the Old Testament, and the identification of Scripture as the foundation of theology and the life of the Church.\(^\text{137}\)

**Lumen Gentium § 25**

The other key conciliar text that discussed the mediation of Revelation was in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter III, “On the Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate.” The Council discussed the eleven-chapter schema *De Ecclesia* from December 1 to December 7, 1962.\(^\text{138}\) According to Gérard Philips, there was general agreement that the Constitution on the Church would be “the centre and climax of the Council,” but many Fathers were dissatisfied with the initial draft. Cardinal Léon Suenens of Brussels suggested the title *Lumen Gentium*, because Christ is the light of the Gentiles, “although this light is reflected in the visage of the Church.”\(^\text{139}\)

Many Fathers faulted the spirit and general approach of the text for overemphasizing apologetics and rules of conduct rather than presenting doctrine “positively and constructively”; the draft did not seem to reflect John XXIII’s desire to present doctrine in a way easily intelligible to the contemporary world.\(^\text{140}\) For example, Cardinal Liénart felt that the text identified the mystical body of Christ too closely with the Roman Catholic Church; Cardinals Döpfner and Frings objected to absence of discussion about the mystery of the

\(^{137}\) Burigana, *La Bibbia nel Concilio*, 443-444.


\(^{139}\) Philips, “Constitution on the Church,” Ibid., 107.

\(^{140}\) Ibid., 108.
Church. Others wanted more emphasis upon the Church as a community rather than a society; Cardinal Ritter wanted more discussion of the common priesthood of believers.\footnote{Ibid., 109.}

Between the first and second sessions, the Doctrinal Commission prepared a new schema which more closely resembled the final \textit{Lumen Gentium}. The new draft consisted of four chapters: the mystery of the Church; the hierarchical constitution of the Church and the episcopate; the people of God and the laity; and the call to holiness. Two volumes of emendations were proposed before the second session, but the discussion from September 30 to October 31, 1963, followed the four-chapter format.\footnote{Ibid., 110.} Chapter II on the episcopate was according to Philips “by far the most hotly debated chapter.” While the first version discussed the episcopate in a scattered manner, among various topics, in the new schema, the episcopate was treated in one chapter, which considered the institution of the twelve, the bishops as the Apostles’ successors, the sacramental nature of the episcopacy, priests and deacons, the college of bishops in relation to its head, and the office of the bishops, particularly their duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing.\footnote{Ibid., 112-113.}

The new draft indicated that individual bishops enter the Apostolic college by the sacrament of Episcopal consecration. Thus, in Philips’ view, “the individual diocesan bishop was thus seen in a broader perspective . . . [all bishops] are in fact called to share in the guidance of the Church.”\footnote{Ibid., 114.} Many fathers were concerned that the notion of episcopal collegiality could endanger papal primacy.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} In Philips’ view, \textit{Lumen Gentium} was intended to help non-Catholics, especially the Orthodox, see that “the source of infallibility of the

\footnote{Ibid., 117. In an address to fourteen new bishops on 20 October, Paul VI indicated that the notion of collegiality could endanger papal primacy.}
Pope, as that of the college of bishops and of the whole Church (for there is only one infallibility), is not to be sought in the arbitrary opinion of a man but in the assistance of the Holy Spirit.”

During the 1963-1964 intersession, the Theological Commission revised the text, first to six chapters and then to eight. This final version, which the Council discussed during October 1964, included: The mystery of the Church, The People of God, The Hierarchical Constitution and Visible Episcopate of the Church, The Laity, The Call to Holiness, Religious, The Pilgrim Church, and Our Lady. The revised text included a stronger presentation of the apostolicity and sacramental nature of the episcopate; the discussion of collegiality was expanded to discuss papal primacy, which to Phillips made the text “prolix and hindered the flow of style.” Thousands of amendments were proposed, and took several weeks to examine. At the final vote on November 24, 1965, Lumen Gentium was approved with only five negative votes. Paul VI promulgated the constitution that day.

Lumen Gentium Chapter III (§ 25) discussed the bishop’s teaching office. The first sentence (§ 25.1) emphasized: “Among the principal duties of bishops, the preaching of the Gospel occupies an eminent place.” The next three sentences (2-4) discussed the teaching office in general; the next three sentences (5-7) treated infallibility in relation to the college of bishops in general, while the following three sentences (8-10) discussed the infallibility of the Pope in particular; the next three sentences (11-13) consider infallibility in relation to the Pope and Bishops. Revelation was considered in the second and fourteenth sentences.

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146 Ibid., 119.
147 Ibid., 126-133.
148 Ibid., 128-129.
149 Ibid., 137.
The second sentence (§ 25.2) taught that bishops are “preachers of the faith, who lead new disciples to Christ, and are authentic teachers . . . endowed with Christ's authority, who preach to the people committed to them the faith they must believe and put into practice, and by the light of the Holy Spirit illustrate that faith.”¹⁵¹ In their ministry of preaching, the bishops “bring forth from the treasury of revelation new things and old, making it bear fruit, and vigilantly warding off any errors that threaten their flock.”¹⁵²

Bernard Sesboüé has noted that the Council’s use of *authentico* (§ 25.2) to describe the magisterium of the Pope and bishops, is the first time the word appears in a magisterial document.¹⁵³ According to Sesboüé, this usage represents a move away from the terminology “ordinary and universal magisterium,” which Vatican I had used the phrase in its description of the “object of faith”:

> Wherefore, by divine and catholic faith all those teachings are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in scripture and tradition, and which are proposed by the church as matters to be believed as divinely revealed, whether by her solemn judgment or in her ordinary and universal magisterium.¹⁵⁴

According to Sesboüé, “ordinary and universal predication” at Vatican I evoked the classical formula “the sense which has been held and which Holy Mother Church intends”:

> But the original idea [of the earlier formulation] remains: it is about what belongs to the universal teaching of the Church. In the debate several Fathers saw in this distinction that of the ordinary magisterium of the Church gathered together in Council and that of the ordinary magisterium of the Church dispersed. . . . The primary intention of the Council was to emphasize what not only that which has been

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¹⁵¹ Ibid., 29. Episcopi enim sunt fidei praecones, qui novos discipulos ad Christum adducunt, et doctores authentici seu auctoritate Christi praediti, qui populo sibi commisso fidem credendam et moribus applicandam praedicant, et sub lumine Sancti spiritus illustrant.

¹⁵² Ibid., 29. Ex thesauro Revelationis nova et vetera proferentes (cfr. Matth. 13, 52), eam fructificare faciunt erroresque gregi suo inprendentes vigilanter arcent (cfr. 2 Tim. 4, 1-4).


¹⁵⁴ Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Chapter 3 (Denzinger § 3011; Tanner, 807). Porro fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur, et ab ecclesia sive sollemni iudico sive ordinario et universali magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur.
solemnly defined belongs to divine faith, but also that which is the object of a
teaching of the universal faith. That is how the Council arrived at the formulation
“ordinary and universal magisterium.”

In Sesboüé’s opinion, this teaching of Vatican I included a “glaring dissymmetry”
by suggesting that the Pope and bishops together may exercise the ordinary and universal
teaching office infallibly in non-solemn, non-extraordinary occasions, but the Pope on His
own may not. Vatican II, in his view, wanted to correct this apparent dissymmetry with the
phrase “authentic magisterium” which described both the Pope's non-infallible teaching
office (§ 25.6) and that of the bishops in general (§ 25.1). Lumen Gentium emphasized
that “Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as
witnesses to divine and Catholic truth” (25.3). In addition, “In matters of faith and
morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching
and adhere to it with a religious assent.”

The following sentence considered the appropriate response to magisterial teachings
of Peter’s successor.

This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the
authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex
cathedra; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is
acknowledged with reverence the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to,
according to his manifest mind and will.

\[\text{155} \quad \text{Sesboüé, “Magistère ‘ordinaire’” 269. Mais l’idée originaire demeure: il s’agit de ce qui appartient à l’enseignement universel de l’Église. Dans le débat plusieurs Pères voyaient dans cette distinction celle du magistère extraordinaire de l’Église rassemblée en concile et celle du magistère ordinaire de l’Église dispersée, évoquée par le Bref Tuas libenter de Pie IX (« totius Ecclesiae per orbem dispersae ») . . . . L’intention première du concile était de souligner qu’appartenait à la foi divine non seulement ce qui avait été solennellement défini, mais aussi ce qui faisait l’objet d’un enseignement de foi universel. C’est ainsi que le concile s’arrêta à cette formule du « magistère ordinaire et universel ».
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\[\text{156} \quad \text{Ibid., 272.}
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\[\text{157} \quad \text{AAS 57 (1965): 29. Episcopi in communione cum Romano Pontifice docentes ab omnibus tamquam divinae et catholicae veritatis testes venerandi sunt.}
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\[\text{158} \quad \text{Ibid., 29-30. Fideles autem in sui Episcopi sententiam de fide et moribus nomine Christi prolatum concurrere, eique religioso animi obsequio adhaerere debent.}
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\[\text{159} \quad \text{Ibid., 30. Hoc vero religiosum voluntatis et intellectus obsequium singulari ratione praestandum est Romani Pontificis authentico magisterio etiam cum non ex cathedra loquitur; ita nempe ut magisterium eius supremum}
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The faithful may know the Pope’s “mind and will” in three ways: the character of the
documents, frequent repetition of the same doctrine, and his manner of speaking.\textsuperscript{160}

According to Sesboüé, Vatican II filled the “teaching vacuum” that Vatican I had left with
its phrase “ordinary and universal magisterium”:

Related to the current and non-infallible teaching of the Pope, the council therefore
avoided using the expression “ordinary magisterium,” allowing in this paragraph its
anterior acceptance of universal magisterium of the Pope and bishops to assume this
title of infallibility. The adherence which is demanded by the personal interventions
of the Pope is “the religious submission of will and intellect,” but not the formal act
of faith.\textsuperscript{161}

\textit{Lumen Gentium} then considered the exercise of infallibility by the pope and college
of bishops:

Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they
nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed
throughout the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among
themselves and with the successor of Peter, and authentically teaching on matters of
faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as definitively to be held.\textsuperscript{162}

This infallibility is “even more clearly verified when, gathered in an ecumenical council,
they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, whose definitions
must be adhered to with the submission of faith (\textit{fidei obsequio est adhaerendum})” (§ 25.6).

\begin{flushright}
reverenter agnoscatur, et sententiis ab eo prolatis sincere adhaeretur, iuxta mentem et voluntatem
manifestatam ipsius.
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\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 30. Quae se prodit praecipue sive indole documentorum, sive ex frequenti propositione eiusdem
doctrinae, sive ex dicendi ratione.
\textsuperscript{161} Sesboüé, “Magistére ‘ordinaire’”, 274. “A propos de l’enseignement courant et non infallible du pape, le
concile évite donc l’expression tentante de « magistère ordinaire », laissée dans ce paragraphe à son acception
antérieure de magistère \textit{universel} du pape et des évêques et revêtu à ce titre de l’infaillibilité. L’adhésion qui
est demandée devant les interventions personnelles du pape est « la soumission religieuse de la volonté et de
l’intelligence », mais non l’acte formel de foi.”
\textsuperscript{162} AAS 57 (1965): 30. Licet singuli praesules infallibilitatis praerogativa non polleant, quando tamen, etiam per
orbem dispersi, sed communionis nuntium inter se et cum Successore Petri servantes, authentice res fidei et
morum docentes in unam sententiam tamquam definitive tenendum conveniunt, doctrinam Christi infallibiliter
enuntiant.
Lumen Gentium (§ 25.7) concluded the conciliar teaching on infallibility by indicating its extent: “this infallibility, which the Divine Redeemer willed his Church to have in defining doctrine of faith and morals, extends as far as the deposit of revelation extends; this deposit must be religiously guarded and faithfully expounded.\footnote{Ibid., 30. Haec autem infallibilitas, qua Divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit, tantum patet quantum divinae Revelationis patet depositum, sancte custodiendum et fideliter exponendum.} In regard to the papal exercise of infallibility, Lumen Gentium (§ 25.8) stated: “Indeed the Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility, when, as the supreme pastor and teacher of all Christ's faithful, confirms his brethren in their faith (cf. Lk 22:32) and by a definitive act proclaims a doctrine of faith and morals.”\footnote{AAS 57 (1965): 30. Qua quidem infallibilitate Romanus Pontifex, Collegii Episcoporum Caput vi muneris sui gaudet, quando, ut supremus omnium christifidelium pastor et doctor, qui fratres suos in fide confirmat (cfr. Luc. 22, 32), doctrinam de fide vel moribus definitivo actu proclamat.} In terminology derived from Vatican I, Lumen Gentium (§25. 9) described the definitions that result from an exercise of infallibility: “Accordingly, such definitions are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, justly called irreformable, since they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit that was promised to blessed Peter and so they do not need any other approval, nor do they allow appeal to any other judgment.”\footnote{Ibid., 30. Quare definitiones eius ex sese, et non ex consensu Ecclesiae, irreformabiles merito dicuntur, quippe quae sub assistentia Spiritus Sancti, ipsi in beato Petro promissa, prolatae sint, ideoque nulla indigent aliorum approbatione, nec ullam ad aliud iudicium appellationem patiantur.}

Lumen Gentium (§ 25.10) also emphasized the ecclesial context of such papal pronouncements: “For then the Roman Pontiff is not pronouncing judgment as a private person, but as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the charism of infallibility of the Church itself is individually present, he is expounding or defending a
doctrine of Catholic faith."\(^{166}\) *Lumen Gentium* (§ 25.11) then considered a collegial exercise of infallibility: “The infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of bishops, when that body exercises the supreme magisterium with the successor of Peter.”\(^{167}\) Just as the Magisterium is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so too is the response of members of the Church: “To these definitions the assent of the Church cannot be lacking, because of the action of that same Holy Spirit, by which the whole flock of Christ is preserved and progresses in unity of faith” (§ 25.12).\(^{168}\) The basic criterion for such magisterial teaching is Revelation:

> But when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of bishops together with him defines a judgment, they pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with; Revelation, as written or orally handed down, is transmitted in its entirety through the legitimate succession of bishops and especially in the care of the Roman Pontiff himself and so, under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth, is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church (§25.13).\(^{169}\)

This section of *Lumen Gentium* concluded by emphasizing that magisterial teaching is a matter of giving new expression to Revelation, not a matter of new Revelation:

> The Roman Pontiff and the bishops, in virtue of their office and the importance of the issue, and by using appropriate means, diligently strive to inquire properly about and give appropriate expression to that revelation, but they do not accept a new public revelation as pertaining to the divine deposit of faith (§25.14).\(^{170}\)

\(^{166}\) Ibid., 30. Tunc enim Romanus Pontifex non ut persona privata sententiam profert, sed ut universalis Ecclesiae magister supremus, in quo charisma infallibilitatis ipsius Ecclesiae singulariter inest, doctrinam fidei catholicae exponit vel tuetur.

\(^{167}\) Ibid., 30. Infallibilitas Ecclesiae promissa in corpore Episcoporum quoque inest, quando supremum magisterium cum Petri Successore exercet.

\(^{168}\) Ibid., 30-31. Istis autem definitionibus assensus Ecclesiae numquam deesse potest propter actionem eiusdem Spiritus Sancti, qua universus Christi gregis in unitate fidei servatur et proficit.

\(^{169}\) Ibid., 31. Cum autem sive Romanus Pontifex sive Corpus Episcoporum cum eo sententiam definiunt, eam proferunt secundum ipsum Revelationem, cui omnes stare et conformari tenetur et quae scripta vel tradita per legitimam Episcoporum successionem et imprimis ipsius Romani Pontificis cura integre transmittitur, atque praelucente Spiritu veritatis in Ecclesia sancte servatur et fideliter exponitur.

\(^{170}\) Ibid., 31. Ad quam rite indagandam et apte enuntiandam, Romanus Pontifex et Episcopi, pro officio suo et rei gravitate, per media apta, sedulo operam navant; novam vero revelationem publicam tamquam ad divinum fidei depositum pertinentem non accipiunt.
Conclusion

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Revelation incorporated several new emphases derived from new movements in theology and philosophy and expressed in view of new pastoral concerns. The Council benefitted from the preconciliar theological *ressourcement* about Tradition, a new emphasis on the study and theology of Scripture, and a renewed ecclesiological emphasis upon the Church as a witness of Revelation. The Council drew from personalist philosophies in highlighting Christ’s self-disclosure to the individual; it expressed John XXIII’s pastoral recognition of the need to present the Gospel to an increasingly secularized and politically democratic world; it took account of humankind’s greatly increased control over the destiny of the world yet the simultaneous insufficiency of technological progress to satisfy the spiritual need for God. At the same time, the Council retained the emphasis of Vatican I and *Humani Generis* upon a cosmologically realist view of reality in general.

Neither *Dei Verbum* nor *Lumen Gentium* rejected the concerns discussed by Vatican I and *Humani Generis*, but Vatican II presented a new theological portrait of Revelation, Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium in a way that was pastorally relevant. A variety of preconciliar developments in theology and philosophy aided the process of producing this portrait and gave it a particular richness that a scholastic emphasis was not as well suited to deliver in the 20th century. Finally, the concluding sentence of *Dei Verbum* Chapter 2 represented a development in the Church’s understanding of doctrine by presenting the mediation of Revelation through the interdependence of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. After the Council, the Church has taught on various occasions about the
mediation of Revelation; the following chapter discusses the way that Pope John Paul II’s 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998) presented Revelation in the context of the dialectic and dialogue between faith and reason.
Part III

Chapter 8


The Second Vatican Council’s teaching on Revelation (1965) was subsequently complemented by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, On the Relationship of Faith and Reason (Fides et Ratio) in 1998.¹ On the one hand, Dei Verbum was a succinct presentation of Revelation from a biblical and doctrinal perspective, which gave limited attention to the pastoral challenge of proclaiming Revelation to the modern, secularized world.² On the other hand, Fides et Ratio discussed various dimensions of Revelation in detail. Like Pope Pius XII in Humani Generis and Gerardus Van Noort in his Dogmatic Theology, John Paul II recognized a pastoral need to discuss philosophical issues in detail. Fides et Ratio, however, differed from the philosophical orientation of both Humani Generis and Dogmatic Theology insofar as John Paul II maintained the personalist focus of the Second Vatican Council.

Dei Filius (1870)

Among the resources for its treatment of Revelation, Fides et Ratio utilized The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith (Dei Filius) of the First Vatican Council. As Kenneth Schmitz has observed: “strewn throughout the encyclical are references to the earlier constitution, each one reaffirming the teaching of Dei Filius.” Schmitz also pointed

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² Dei Verbum treated Revelation and Tradition in its first two chapters; its next three chapters treated Scripture; chapter 6 briefly discussed “Holy Scripture in the Life of the Church.” Vatican II discussed in detail the Church’s role in the modern world in Gaudium et Spes.
out the need to “gauge the continuity and difference between the two documents” and to explain the intellectual development during “the interval in the history of the Church,” i.e., the publication of *Dei Filius* (1870) and *Fides et Ratio* (1998).³

*Dei Filius* began with a discussion of the philosophical and religious challenges to the Catholic faith during the centuries since its predecessor, the Council of Trent.⁴ The First Vatican Council was particularly concerned about rationalism, which considered autonomous human reason to be the final arbiter in human knowledge.⁵ According to Vatican I, rationalistic teachings “strive to destroy rational nature itself, to deny any criterion of what is right and just, and to overthrow the very foundations of human society.”⁶ Avery Dulles identified two general adversaries addressed by *Dei Filius*.⁷ First were agnostics influenced by the teaching of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that human knowledge was restricted to the phenomenal order and that knowledge of the transcendent order via Revelation is impossible. Second are those who believed that Revelation was not a free and

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⁵ Ibid., introduction. This section does not appear in Denzinger; Tanner, 804.
⁶ Ibid., introduction. This section does not appear in Denzinger; Tanner, 805: Ut iam ipsam rationalem naturam, omnemque justi rectique normam negantes, ima humane societatis fundamenta dirurere connitantur. According to Schmitz (“Faith and Reason,” 599) the assessment of Europe’s spiritual situation by *Dei Filius* has “the tone . . . of a sorrowing mother in the face of her wayward children.”
supernatural action of God in history, rather “a necessary phase in the immanent progress of the human spirit toward the fully rational truth of absolute philosophy.”

The first chapter of *Dei Filius* discussed God the Creator as incomprehensible, perfect, and simple. God—although an unchangeable spiritual substance, complete in Himself—“wished to manifest his perfection” to creatures “by the good things which he bestows on what he creates.” Accordingly, God freely created the universe in a twofold order: spiritual and bodily. Human beings participate in both realms because they are both spiritual and corporeal. God protects and governs this universe by His all-encompassing providence.

The second chapter of *Dei Filius* discussed the way that God the Creator self-reveals. On the one hand, people can naturally know God’s existence by human reason: “God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of human reason: ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.” On the other hand, God has supernaturally self-revealed: “It was pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal laws of his will to the human race by another,

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9 *Dei Filius*, Denzinger § 3002, Tanner, 805: Sed ad manifestandam perfectionem suam per bona, quae creaturis impertitur.
10 Ibid., Denzinger § 3003, Tanner 806.
11 Denzinger § 3004, Tanner 806: Deum, rerum omnium principio et finem, naturali humanae rationis lumine e rebus creatis certo cognisci posse; “invisibilia enim ipsius, a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta, conspicuuntur” [Rom. 1, 20]. In order to respect Newman’s distinction between *certainty* and *certitude*, it might have been better to translate *certo* as “certainly” rather than “with certainty.” For Newman, *certainty* is attainable only by formal (logical) inference and so cannot be achieved in religious matters; in contrast, *certitude* is attainable by informal (real) inference and can be achieved in religious matters. See John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Chapter 8, available at: http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/chapter8-1.html.
and that a supernatural, way.” God has destined us to a supernatural end “sharing in the good things of God that utterly surpass the understanding of the human mind.”

According to René Latourelle, “the Council vindicates the value of natural theology against two errors”: first, atheism and positivism; second, “advanced traditionalism” which accorded human reason only a passive power of knowing God, thereby limiting human knowledge of God to what is revealed.

Vatican I described Revelation as being “contained” in the written books of Scripture and unwritten traditions:

Now this supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal church, as declared by the sacred council of Trent, is contained in written books and unwritten traditions, which were received by the apostles from the lips of Christ Himself, or came to the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and were passed on as it were from hand to hand until they reached us.

Commenting on this chapter, Latourelle described “the content of the Divine word” as “a religious doctrine, a complex of propositions which state and designate the mystery of our salvation.” According to Latourelle, the Council’s phrase *haec porro supernaturalis revelatio* designated the content of the Divine word with greater precision than Trent in its discussion of Scripture and Tradition: “This word spoken by God, the subject of Scripture and Tradition, is the object of our faith.”

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12 Ibid., Denzinger § 3004, Tanner 806: Attamen placuisse eius sapientiae et bonitati, alia, eaque supernaturali via, se ipsum ac aeterna voluntatis suae decreta humano generi revelare.
13 Ibid., Denzinger § 3005, Tanner 806: Ad participanda scilicet bona divina, quae humanae mentis intelligentiam omnino superant.
15 *Dei Filius*, Denzinger § 3006, Tanner 806: Haec porro supernaturalis revelatio, secundum universalis ecclesiae fidem a sancta Tridentina synodo declaratam, continetur in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptae, aut ipsis apostolis Spiritu sancto dictante quasi per manus traditae, ad nos usque pervenerunt. The Latin *dictante*—which is translated in Tanner as “dictation”—does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit “dictated” each word of the Scriptural text.
17 Ibid., 262.
The Council then succinctly explained its understanding of Scripture:

These books the Church holds to be sacred and canonical not because she subsequently approved them by her authority after they had been composed by unaided human skill, nor simply because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the holy Spirit, they have God for their author, and were as such committed to the Church.\(^{18}\)

Recognizing that Scripture is not self-interpretive and that there is need for authoritative interpretation, the Council insisted that

in matters of faith and morals, belonging as they do to the establishing of Christian doctrine, that meaning of holy scripture must be held to be the true one, which holy mother church held and holds, since it is her right to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of holy scripture.\(^{19}\)

According to Congar, in speaking of “holy mother church,” the Council “above all” meant the Magisterium, especially that of the Roman Pontiff.\(^{20}\) Vatican I then emphasized the intellectual or doctrinal aspect of Revelation but did not discuss the historical or existential questions involved with its mediation; as Dulles pointed out, the conciliar teaching represented a doctrinal model of Revelation.\(^{21}\) In addition, as Schmitz noted

the propositional style of *Dei Filius* makes no explicit adversion to the historical and cultural matrix in which the faith is to be preached. Its propositions fall from Revelation in a timeless way.\(^{22}\)

The third chapter of *Dei Filius* described Faith as a supernatural virtue which, with the aid of grace, enables people to believe what is revealed, not through the light of human

\(^{18}\) *Dei Filius*, Denzinger § 3006; Tanner, 806: Eos vero ecclesia pro sacris et canonicis habet, non ideo quod sola humana industria circumcinnati, sua inde auctoritate sint approbati; nec ideo dumtaxat, quod revelationem sine errore contineant; sed propter a quod Spiritu sancto inspirante conscripti Deum habent auctorem, atque ut tales ipsi ecclesiae traditi sunt.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., Denzinger § 3007; Tanner, 806: . . . Nos idem decretum renovantes, hanc illius mentem esse declaramus, ut in rebus fidei et morum, ad aedificationem doctrinae christianae pertinentium, is pro vero sensu sacrae scripturae habendus sit, quem tenuit ac tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cuius est iudicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Scripturarum sanctarum; . .


\(^{22}\) Schmitz, “Faith and Reason,” 602.
reason, but through the authority of God revealing. “Since human beings are totally dependent upon God as their creator and lord, and created reason is completely subject to uncreated truth, we are obliged to yield to God the revealer full submission of intellect and will by faith.”23 A person believes Revelation primarily on the basis of God’s authority, because God can neither deceive nor be deceived.24 Latourelle noted that this passage distinguished faith from natural sciences and was directed against both a rationalist approach that reduced faith to philosophy and a semi-rationalist approach that attributed faith to a process of human reasoning.25 Dulles described this chapter as representing the culmination of the Council’s response to the Enlightenment:

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Christian Churches were equipped with a systematically complete doctrine of revelation as a deposit of truth built up in biblical times and reliably transmitted through the Bible and church teaching. Among Christians who still adhere to this doctrine, faith is seen as foundational to the religious life of the individual, to the mission of the Church, and to the method of theology.26

According to Vatican I, in order for people to come to faith, God provides external motives of credibility as well as the internal aid of grace:

Nevertheless, in order that the submission of our faith should be in accordance with reason, it was God’s will that there should be linked to the internal assistance of the holy Spirit outward indications of his revelation, that is, to say divine acts, and first and foremost miracles and prophecies, which clearly demonstrating as they do the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, are the most certain signs of revelation and are suited to the understanding of all.27

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23 Dei Filius, Denzinger § 3008, Tanner 807. Cum homo a Deo tanquam creatore et domino suo totus dependeat et ratio creatae increatae veritati penitus subiecta sit, plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium fide praestare tenemur.
24 Ibid., Denzinger § 3008, Tanner 807.
25 Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 263.
26 Dulles, Models of Revelation, 4.
27 Dei Filius, Denzinger § 3008, Tanner 807: Ut nihilominus fidei nostrae obsequium rationi consentaneum esset, voluit Deus cum internis Spiritus sancti auxiliis externa iungi revelationis suae argumenta, facta scilicet divina, atque imprimis miracula et prophetias, quae cum Dei omnipotentiam et infinitam scientiam luculenter commonestrent, divinae revelationis signa sunt certissima et omnium intelligentiae accomodata.
Along with these external signs of revelation, Vatican I insisted on the internal assistance of the Spirit:

Now, although the assent of faith is by no means a blind movement of the mind, yet no one can accept the gospel preaching in a way that is necessary for achieving salvation without the inspiration and illumination of the holy Spirit, who gives to all facility in accepting and believing the truth.\(^\text{28}\)

The Council then described the content of Revelation—the object of faith:

Wherefore, by divine and catholic faith all those things are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in scripture and tradition, and which are proposed by the church as matters to be believed as divinely revealed, whether by her solemn judgment or in her universal and ordinary Magisterium.\(^\text{29}\)

Vatican I next taught: “Since, then, without faith it is impossible to please God and reach the fellowship of his sons and daughters, it follows that no one can ever achieve justification without it, neither can anyone attain eternal life unless he or she perseveres in it to the end.”\(^\text{30}\) The Church functions as a means that assists believers in “embracing the true faith and of persevering unwaveringly in it.”\(^\text{31}\) Christ endowed the Church with “notes” that would identify her as the “guardian and teacher of the revealed word.”\(^\text{32}\) Insofar as the

\(^{28}\) Ibid., Denzinger § 3010, Tanner 807: Licet autem fidei assensus nequaquam sit motus animi caecus: nemo tamen evangelicae praedicationi consentire potest, sicut oportet ad salutem consequendam, absque illuinatione et inspiratione Spiritus sancti, qui dat omnibus suavitatem in consentiendo et credendo veritati.

\(^{29}\) Dei Filius, Denzinger § 3011, Tanner 807: Porro fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur, et ab ecclesia sive solenni iudicio sive ordinario et universalis magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., Denzinger § 3011; Tanner, 807: Quoniam vero sine fide impossibile est placere Deo, et ad filiorum eius consortium pervenire; ideo nemini unquam sine illa contigit iustificatio, nec ullus, nisi in ea perseveraverit usque in finem, vitam aeternam assequetur.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., Denzinger § 3012; Tanner, 807: Ut autem officio veram fidei amplectendi, in eaque constanter perseverandi satisfacere possemus . . . .

\(^{32}\) Ibid., Denzinger § 3012; Tanner, 807.
Church is endowed with holiness, unity, and stability, the Church is a perpetual motive for the credibility of the Creator and His revelation, which it is her mission to propagate.\textsuperscript{33}

The fourth chapter of \textit{Dei Filius} considered the relationship between faith and reason: "The perpetual agreement of the catholic church has maintained and maintains this too: that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only as regards its source, but also as regards its object."\textsuperscript{34} The Council then defended the permanent validity of the deposit of faith: “For the doctrine of the faith which God has revealed is put forward not as some philosophical discovery capable of being perfected by human intelligence, but as a divine deposit committed to the spouse of Christ to be fully protected and infallibly promulgated.”\textsuperscript{35}

Accordingly, the Church’s teachings about Revelation remain permanently valid:

“Hence, too, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is ever to be maintained which has once been declared by holy mother church, and there must never be any abandonment of this sense under a pretext or in the name of a more profound understanding.”\textsuperscript{36}

Vatican I discussed Revelation from a theological viewpoint that primarily relied on the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. On the one hand, people using the natural light of human reason can come to a knowledge of God as Creator; nonetheless, in order to obtain such knowledge, Revelation is helpful. On the other hand, Revelation is

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\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., Denzinger § 3014; Tanner, 807. Dulles, noted that this chapter endorsed some points of Neoscholastic thought “while avoiding the technical phraseology of that particular system” (\textit{Models of Revelation}, 249).
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Dei Filius}, Denzinger § 3015; Tanner 808: Hoc quoque perpetuus ecclesiae catholicae consensus tenuit et tenet, duplicem esse ordinem cognitionis, non solum principio, sed obiecto etiam distinctum.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., Denzinger § 3020, Tanner 809: Neque enim fidei doctrina, quam Deus revelavit, velut philosophicum inventum proposita est humanis ingenii perficienda, sed tanquam divinum depositum Christi sponsae tradita, fideliter custodienda et infallibiliter declaranda.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., Denzinger 3020, Tanner 809: Hinc sacrorum quoque dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit sancta mater ecclesia, nec unquam ab eo sensu, altioris intelligentiae specie et nomine, recedendum.
\end{flushright}
absolutely necessary if people are to come to a supernatural knowledge of God as Redeemer. *Dei Filius* was then primarily concerned with philosophical questions about the nature of religious belief rather than questions about the factual situation of believers. In Latourelle’s view, “the Council envisages revelation either in the active or objective sense, as word addressed or word spoken. But it is revelation in the objective sense which claims fullest attention.”

In regard to human destiny or the purpose of life—a central concern in *Fides et Ratio*—Vatican I emphasized that human happiness is the attainment of a “supernatural end, that is a sharing in the good things of God which utterly surpass the understanding of the human mind” and a “closer union of the members with the visible head,” Christ.

According to Latourelle, Vatican I understood Revelation as “personal, from subject to subject, and not from object to object; historical, progressive, culminating with the revelation of the Son.” Nonetheless, the Council emphasized the intellectual aspects of the process of Revelation and stressed the role of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium—rather than the Person of Christ—in the transmission of Revelation.

*Fides et Ratio*

The encyclical *Fides et Ratio* was published by Pope John Paul II on 14 September 1998. After comparing “Faith and Reason” to “two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth” (Introduction) *Fides et Ratio* situated Revelation in the context of God’s general disclosure of His wisdom to humankind (Chapter 1). The encyclical then

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37 Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 266.
38 *Dei Filius* 2, Denzinger § 3005, Tanner 806: Ad participanda scilicet bona divina, quae humanae mentis intelligentiam omnino superant.
39 Ibid., Introduction, not found in Denzinger; Tanner, 804: Hinc praeterea arctior membrorum cum visibili capite communio.
40 Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 266.
discussed human reason’s approach to the mysteries of faith (Chapter 2) and faith’s search for the “truth of the person” in Christ (Chapter 3). After considering the relationship of faith and reason (Chapter 4), Fides et Ratio addressed the Magisterium’s interventions in philosophical matters (Chapter 5) and the interaction of philosophy and theology (Chapter 6). The encyclical concluded with a consideration of current requirements and tasks for philosophy (Chapter 7).

John Paul II emphasized that both reason and faith are sources of human knowledge about God. Recognizing the postmodern context in which people today explore questions about reason and faith, he sought not only to articulate a rational basis for faith, but also to defend reason. As the editors of Philosophy and Theology noted, Fides et Ratio seems to be addressed to “the state of marginalization in which both disciplines seem to stand with respect to the wider range of human culture at the start of the third millennium.”

In regard to Revelation, John Paul II wanted to explain how Scripture and Tradition can speak to people at a time when people not only doubt faith’s ability to attain truth but also reason’s. In addition, he wanted to make a case that the Magisterium can authoritatively articulate and teach the Revelation expressed in Scripture and Tradition. In accord with Vatican I, which taught that Revelation is necessary for people to come to a knowledge of mysteries, he considered Revelation necessary for people to achieve both self-knowledge and a lasting relationship with God.

Thomas Guarino has suggested various motives undergirding the pope’s decision to write Fides et Ratio:

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41 Fides et Ratio, § 32: Quod potius petitur est ipsa personae veritas: nempe id quod ipsa est et quidquid intimae suae conditionis ostendit.
Surely the ascendancy of postmodernity and allied tendencies in contemporary thought is one reason. Another is fear of the deleterious effects of fashioning a theology apart from a consciously held philosophy. Still another reason is the continuing decline of metaphysics, a central theme of the encyclical, as a legitimate philosophical/theological option . . . . For a significant part of contemporary theory, human subjects, as well as human reason, are deeply, if not entirely, shaped by the cultural and linguistic circumstances in which they are embedded.  

John Paul II also faced the task of describing the kind of metaphysics that would be suitable for discussing the revealed mysteries of faith in terms intelligible to post-modern culture.

**Introduction**

In its introduction, the encyclical pointed out centuries-long philosophical concerns:

a cursory glance at ancient history shows clearly how in different parts of the world . . . there arise at the same time the fundamental questions which pervade human life: *Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?*  

For John Paul II, the answers to such questions are part of the journey of life:

It is a journey which has unfolded—as it must—within the horizon of personal self-consciousness: the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, with the question of the meaning of things and of their very existence becoming ever more pressing (§ 1).  

The approach of John Paul II was in the conversational manner of a friend and fellow seeker, rather than in an instructional manner intended for a student or an erring child.  

According to Schmitz, “There can be no doubt that this call to conversation with the world is rooted in the present pope’s personalist philosophy and theology which is deeply embedded in his own personality.”

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44 *Fides et Ratio,* § 1; hereafter references to paragraphs will be given within the text.

45 Hoc quidem iter sic explicatum est—neque aliter accidere potuit—intra prospectum quendam singularis hominum conscientiae: quo namque plenius res orbehque cognovit homo, eo magis ipsemet cognoscit se unica in sua natura, eodemque tempore instans fit interrogatio de significatione rerum suaequae ipsius existentiae.

On the one hand, the answer to these questions is Jesus Christ; on the other hand, in a way reminiscent of *Lumen Gentium* (§ 8), the encyclical described the Church as our partner in the quest:

The Church is no stranger to this journey of discovery, nor could she ever be. From the moment when, through the Paschal Mystery, she received the gift of the ultimate truth about human life, the Church has made her pilgrim way along the paths of the world to proclaim that Jesus Christ is 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn 14:6). It is her duty to serve humanity in different ways, but one way in particular imposes a specific responsibility: *the diakonia of the truth* (§ 2).

Simultaneously, *Fides et Ratio* echoed the teaching of *Dei Verbum* (§ 7) that the Magisterium “serves the word of God.”

The encyclical then presented philosophy as arising from a wondrous desire to ask why things are as they are. Philosophy can help provide systematic bodies of knowledge about human beings and the world. According to John Galvin, “Both the anthropocentric focus and the concern with truth are characteristic of the entire document.” Philosophical insight provides numerous aids: the principles of non-contradiction, finality, and causality; philosophy also envisions a human being as a free and intelligent person who can attain knowledge about God, truth, and goodness (§ 4). This portrait of the human being is

47 The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, § 8 stated: “The church “proceeds on its pilgrim way amidst the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,” announcing the cross and death of the Lord until He comes (see 1 Cor. 11:26);” the official Vatican translation is available at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

48 *Aliena sane non est Ecclesia, neque esse potest, hoc ab inquirendi opere. Ab eo enim tempore, cum intra Paschale Mysterium postremam accepit de hominis vita veritatem uti donum, facta est illa vicissim peregrina per semitas orbis ut Christum lesem esse praedicet “viam veritatem et vitam” (cfr Io 14,6).* Diversa inter officia, quae hominibus ea offerat oportet, unum illud nimimum esse intellegit sibi plane proprium: *Veritatis diaconiam.*

49 The *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*, 10: “This teaching office is not above the word of God but serves it;” the official Vatican translation is available at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

consistent with that offered by Vatican I, which discussed a person’s ability to know God, without treating the question of an individual’s search for knowledge and meaning.

The first chapter of *Fides et Ratio* pointed out that in the late 20th Century philosophy neglected the metaphysical search for transcendent truth. W. Norris Clarke has claimed that truth is the encyclical’s unifying theme: “although the term is not mentioned in the title, the underlying theme that gives unity to the whole document is truth, the human search for truth, taken as the very definition of what it means to be a human being.”

In Clarke’s view, the search for truth has a broadly “foundational character” which “situates it as more fundamental than the division between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, and supporting both.” For John Paul II, philosophy today tends to focus upon the person or the world as the final horizon of knowledge. Because these realities are insufficient either to process the questions of the human search or to form thought and culture, philosophy thus limits its search and despairs of achieving its true goal, ultimate truth. Philosophy must now strive resolutely to recover its vocation to truth (§ 6).

In Schmitz’s view, *Fides et Ratio* builds upon the teaching of *Dei Filius*:

More than a century later, faced with a reason that has in many quarters lost its courage, *Fides et Ratio* rather shores up the immanence of truth in things, by virtue of course of God’s presence to, in, and with them, but also as the basis for truth that is accessible to human reason.

*Fides et Ratio*, however, aimed at a wider audience, according to Peter Henrici, than did earlier Magisterial documents about philosophy, insofar as it looks beyond “the limited

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52 Ibid., 560.
horizon of ecclesiastical circles . . . and targets the world of culture and philosophy in general."\textsuperscript{54} The editors of \textit{Philosophy and Theology} noted that \textit{Fides et Ratio} taught that

There is a fundamental dimension of spirit to our human reality, and it is on the basis of a common recognition of the spiritual dimension of our humanity that philosophers and theologians can engage in fruitful dialogue with one another—and more important, with the minds and hearts of our fellow human beings.\textsuperscript{55}

In Schmitz’s words, \textit{Fides et Ratio} “is meant to probe more deeply and broadly into the very nature of truth itself, seen from the disclosure of faith which unites the search for truth which the search for eternal life.”\textsuperscript{56} The Church has a vocation to help in that search (§ 4-6). Revelation is God’s loving self-disclosure to man and of man to himself; Revelation discloses the full horizon of human knowledge and meaning. The Church mediates Revelation to human beings and partners with them in searching for ultimate meaning.

\textbf{Chapter 1: “The Revelation of God's Wisdom”}

In Galvin’s view, the first chapter of \textit{Fides et Ratio} is a second introduction that approaches the same basic questions from the perspective of faith.\textsuperscript{57} Chapter 1 considers key data that Revelation contributes to the human quest and aligns with the structure of \textit{Dei Verbum}, Chapter 1: Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, reveals God to humankind. Through Christ, people can be saved from sin and share in the nature of the Triune God through the Spirit (§ 7). \textit{Fides et Ratio} noted that \textit{Dei Filius} stressed the supernatural character of Revelation and the accessibility of supernatural knowledge about God only through faith. God the Revealer can be trusted because He cannot and does not deceive (§ 8). The


\textsuperscript{55} Editors of \textit{Philosophy and Theology}, “\textit{Fides et Ratio},” 100.

\textsuperscript{56} Schmitz, “Faith and Reason,” 596.

\textsuperscript{57} Galvin, “\textit{Fides et Ratio},” 4.
encyclical recalled the teaching of *Dei Filius* about the necessary role of reason and analogy in the human appropriation of the data of faith, as well as the twofold order of knowledge (§ 9).\(^{58}\)

Then the encyclical added an epistemological note about the teaching of *Dei Filius*:

“Based upon God’s testimony and enjoying the supernatural assistance of grace, faith is of an order other than philosophical knowledge which depends upon sense perception and experience and which advances by the light of the intellect alone” (§ 9).\(^{59}\) *Fides et Ratio* next pointed out that *Dei Verbum* § 2 stressed the salvific character of God’s Revelation.

Out of love, God speaks to men and women as friends (§ 10). God realizes His plan of Revelation by deeds and words having an inner unity in Christ, the mediator and fullness of revelation (§ 10). God's revelation in Christ occurs in history, which is the path followed by the People of God on their journey to history’s end (§ 11): “Through this revelation, men and women are offered the ultimate truth about their own life and the goal of history (§ 12).\(^{60}\)

Thus the encyclical developed the teaching of *Dei Verbum* (§ 8) that the Church constantly progresses toward the fullness of divine truth, until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her:

History therefore becomes the arena where we see what God does for humanity. God comes to us in the things we know best and can verify most easily, the things of our everyday life, apart from which we cannot understand ourselves (§ 12).\(^{61}\)

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\(^{58}\) The encyclical noted that the Second Vatican Council repeated this teaching in *Gaudium et Spes*, § 59.

\(^{59}\) Quae Dei testimonio innititur fides atque supernaturali gratiae utitur adiumento, re vera ad alium pertinet ordinem ac philosophicae cognitionis. Sensuum enim haec perceptioni adnitor nec non experientiae ac se sub intellectus solius lumine movet.

\(^{60}\) Hanc per Revelationem ultima exhibetur homini de propria vita veritas deque historiae sorte.

\(^{61}\) Locus ita evadit historia ubi comprobare possimus Dei acta pro hominibus. Nos enim attingit ille in iis quae nobis maxime sunt familiaria et ad demonstrandum facilita, quia cotidiana nostra constituunt adiuncta, quibus submotis haud possemus nosmet ipsos intellegere.
Schmitz has related this passage to an early theory of Wojtyla’s about time having a dramatic character:

The wording of the text itself recalls an early theory of dramatic time, which the young Wojtyla expressed in the prologue to the play Job, written when he was only twenty. Precisely because the revealed Word is eternal, it embraces all times: Job in the biblical past, the collective Job of a Poland suffering under the Nazi Tyranny, and the Job that looks forward in the hope of the Promise to the future in the time of judgment.62

Jesus Christ, as Fides et Ratio taught, reveals man to himself (§ 12): "Seen in any other terms, the mystery of personal existence remains an insoluble riddle."63 For John Paul II, Revelation is charged with mystery; man must receive it obediently in faith in order to receive God. Through faith, human beings assent to God and the testimony that God offers, in a fundamental decision of will that engages the whole person (§ 13). Indeed, through believing, human persons accomplish the most significant act of their lives, which enables them to achieve the certitude of truth and live by it (§ 13).64 Revelation is also sacramental in character, granted through realities such as the Eucharist; it allows human beings to grasp the depths of the mystery (§ 13).

The Revelation of Christ introduces into history a universal reference point of truth. Christ continually stirs us to unceasing effort to pursue knowledge by all possible means (§14). By embracing Jesus of Nazareth, men and women come to accept the mystery of their own life and existence. Christian faith is the true lodestar of men and women, as they strive towards truth in a world that has an “immanentist habit of mind” and “technocratic logic” (§ 15).

63 Extra hunc rerum conspectum mysterium vitae singulorum hominum manet aenigma insolubile.
64 Credendo namque persona humana actum suae vitae significantissimum complevit; hic enim veritatis certitudinem adsequitur veritas in eaque vivere decernit.
These considerations prompt a first conclusion: the truth made known in revelation is thus neither a product of, nor the consummation of, an argument produced by human reason. It appears instead as something gratuitous, which itself stirs thought and seeks acceptance as an expression of love. This revealed truth is set within our history as an anticipation of that ultimate and definitive vision of God which is reserved for those who believe in him and seek him with a sincere heart. The ultimate purpose of personal existence, then, is the theme of philosophy and theology alike (§ 15).65

The revelation of Christ, which allows human beings to understand themselves, “is neither the product nor the consummation of an argument devised by human reason,” rather it is a gratuitous gift, “which itself stirs thought and seeks acceptance as an expression of love” (§ 15).66 Thus Revelation is possible insofar as it is given freely, out of love. Revelation occurs in the particularity of history with both existential import and intellectual validity. Human beings can realize their teleological end only through Revelation, which is fitted to their earthly existence and the human way of knowing, while simultaneously being directed toward a transcendent end.

Chapter 2: “Credo ut Intellegam: Believing that one may understand”

The second chapter of Fides et Ratio considered the results of embracing Divine Revelation: access to, and direction by, Divine Wisdom. The encyclical recalled that all civilizations produce wisdom literature and observed that the Wisdom Literature of the Old

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65 His praeluentibus deliberationibus prima iam imponitur conclusio: quam nobis Revelatio cognoscere permittit veritas non fructus est maturus neque summus alcuiss cognititionis apx ratione humana enucleatae. Illa contra cum proprietatibus se exhibet gratuitti mineris, gignit notiones poscitque ut amoris tamquam declaratio susciptiur. Haec veritas revelata locus iam anticipatus in hominum historia est illius postremae ac decretorid Dei visionis, quae iis destinatur quotquot cedument eumque animo conquiritu sincer. Ultimus propterea singulorum hominum vitae finis tum philosophiae studium exstat tum etiam theologiae.

66 His praeluentibus deliberationibus prima iam imponitur conclusio: quam nobis Revelatio cognoscere permittit veritas non fructus est maturus neque summus alcuiss cognititionis apx ratione humana enucleatae. Illa contra cum proprietatibus se exhibet gratuitti mineris, gignit notiones poscitque ut amoris tamquam declaratio susciptiur.
Testament described the wise person as one who loves and seeks the truth (§ 16). Biblical wisdom literature is distinguished by its belief in the “profound and indissoluble unity between the knowledge of reason and the knowledge of faith” (§ 16). Revelation illuminates history. “Faith intervenes (in history) not to abolish reason's autonomy nor to reduce its scope for action, but solely to bring the human being to understand that in these events it is the God of Israel who acts” (§ 16).

On the one hand, “reason must realize that human knowledge is a journey which allows no rest”; on the other hand, “such a path is not for the proud who think that everything is the fruit of personal conquest; a third rule is grounded in the ‘fear of God’ whose transcendent sovereignty and provident love in the governance of the world reason must recognize (§ 18). God first self-reveals in the "book of nature;” Revelation shows that reason’s findings are only fully known within the horizon of faith (§ 20). God's self-Revelation in nature is linked to the ability of the human mind to receive it. The encyclical cited Romans 1:20 (the “eyes of the mind” come to know God through all that is created) and explained the interaction of faith and reason.

This is to concede to human reason a capacity which seems almost to surpass its natural limitations. Not only is it not restricted to sensory knowledge, from the moment that it can reflect critically upon the data of the senses, but by discoursing on the data provided by the senses, reason can reach the cause which lies at the origin of all perceptible reality. In philosophical terms, we could say that this

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67 In addition to citing Wisdom 9:11 at the introduction of the chapter, reference was made to Sirach 14:20-27 and Proverbs 20:5.
68 Quales denique? Proprietas ea, qua textus biblicus signatur, in eo consistit quod persuadetur altam et continuum existere coniunctionem inter rationis cognitionem atque fidei.
69 Ipsa [fides] non ideo intercedit ut autonomiam rationis deiciat aut eius actionis regionem deminuat, sed tantummodo ut homini explicet his in eventibus visibilem feiri agereque Deum Israelis.
70 Prima in eo consistit regula ut ratio habeatur huius veritatis: in itinere constitutum esse hominem quod interrupmi non possit; secunda, ex conscientia nascitur neminem hanc in viam introire superbo animo eius qui omnia propriarum virium effecta esse arbitretur; consistit tertia in « timore Dei », cuius supremam agnosce debet ratio transcendentiam simulque providum in gubernandis rebus amorem.
important Pauline text [Romans 1:20] affirms the human capacity for metaphysical inquiry (§ 22).\footnote{Hominis rationi ergo illa adsignatur facultas quae excedere videtur ipsos eius naturae limites: non tantum intra sensuum cognitionem non circumscribitur, quoniam de iis critico iudicio meditari valet, sed de sensuum notitiis ratiocinando causam etiam tangere potest quae omnium rerum sensibilium subiectae origini. Philosophicis vocibus dici licet in pergravi loco illo Paulino potestatem hominis metaphysicam adfirmari.}

Human difficulties in accepting this truth are the effects of original sin, which results in an epistemological blinding due to pride and radical autonomy (§ 22).

The coming of Christ in history nullifies all purely rational attempts to understand truth solely by unaided reason, because reason cannot on its own grasp how death could be the source of life and love (§ 23). Reason cannot eliminate the mystery of kenosis as love which the Cross represents; in addition, the Cross answers the question of ultimate truth and meaning in human existence and related questions (§ 23). In this regard, Galvin has noted that the encyclical “seems to presuppose that the contrasting elements” of reason and Revelation “can be reconciled on a deeper level, but does not seek to develop a coherent synthesis.” Galvin noted that Fides et Ratio did not explore the argument, found in the Mémorial of the French philosopher, Blaise Pascal (1623-1661), that Divine Revelation’s portrait of God and that of philosophical reason may be opposed rather than compatible.\footnote{Galvin, “Fides et Ratio,” 6. Galvin cited Emile Gailliet and John C. Blankenagel, eds., Great Shorter Works of Pascal (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1948), 177; for the French original, see Oeuvres complètes (ed. Jacques Chevalier; Paris, Gallimard, 1954), 554.}

\section*{Chapter 3: “Intellego ut Credam: Knowing that one may believe”}

Chapter 3 began by citing Paul’s visit to Athens (Acts 17) and his comments about the altar dedicated “To an unknown God.” The existence of such an altar indicates that “in the far reaches of the human heart there is a seed of desire and nostalgia for God” (§ 24).\footnote{In latebris cordis hominis flagrans Dei desiderium est seminatum.} Accordingly, there is “a path which the human being my choose to take, a path which begins with reason’s capacity to rise beyond what is contingent and set out toward the infinite” (§}
24). Citing the Aristotelian adage that “All human beings desire to know” and the Augustinian teaching that while many want to deceive, not want to be deceived, John Paul II insisted that “persons have reached adulthood when they can distinguish independently between truth and falsehood, making up their own minds about the objective reality of things” (§25). Indeed, the pursuit of good and moral values is the way that human beings come to self-realization and the acquisition of truth (§ 25).

Peter Henrici has commented that this section (§ 25) of Fides et Ratio “grounds philosophy in anthropology, in every human being’s search for truth” and reflects a key question of the twentieth-century French philosopher, Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), in his L’Action (1893): “Yes or no, does human life make sense, and does man have a destiny?” Henrici observed that John Paul, like Vatican I, approached the question of faith and reason “from the outside, that is to say objectively”—considering the question of being to be primary even within his anthropological manner of proceeding.

Metaphysics should not be seen as an alternative to anthropology, since it is metaphysics which makes it possible to ground the concept of the person’s dignity in virtue of the person’s spiritual nature. In a special way, the person constitutes a privileged locus for the encounter with being, and hence with metaphysical inquiry (§ 83).

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74 Quod vehementer recolit liturgia Feriae VI in Parasceve, cum, in precibus pro non credentibus, nos invitat ad orandum: « Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui cunctos homines condidisti, ut te semper desiderando quaererent et inveniendo quiescerent . . . ».
75 Persona merito dicitur adultam aetatem attigisse tantum cum, pro viribus, vera a falsis diiudicare potest, constituens ita proprium iudicium de authentica rerum veritate.
77 Ibid., 615.
78 Ita quidem metaphysica disciplina non respicienda est tamquam anthropologiae opposita, quandoquidem metaphysica ipsa sinit solide stabiliri dignitatis personae conceptum ex eius spirituali natura. Persona, nominatim, locum constituit praecipuum ut quis congrediatur cum actu essendi ac, propterea, cum meditatione metaphysica.
However, even granting that metaphysics grounds anthropology—the experience of suffering and the inevitability of death raise the question of universal truth and the eschatological destiny of humanity:

Each of us has both the desire and the duty to know the truth of our own destiny. We want to know if death will be the definitive end of our life, or if there is something beyond—if it is possible to hope for an afterlife or not” (§ 26). 79

Personal existence must then be anchored to a final truth that affords real certitude (§ 27). W. Norris Clarke has rejected the criticism of some commentators that this argument requires a Cartesian type of certitude detached from experience.

The author has here been accused by some of calling us back to the old Cartesian type of absolute certitude, which no sophisticated modern intellectual, orthodox Catholic or not, would any longer feel comfortable with . . . . The important truths of philosophy, including metaphysics, are based rather on the dynamic principle of intelligibility—i.e., the principle of sufficient reason, which resists all attempts to somehow deduce it from, or reduce it to, the principle of non-contradiction. 80

Human beings seek truth and find life meaningless without it: “All men and women . . . are in some sense philosophers and have their own philosophical conceptions with which they direct their lives” (§ 30). 81 A key philosophical datum is that human beings are not made to live alone (§ 31); moreover, they appropriate many truths upon the authority of others; thus, a person who seeks truth entrusts himself to others and lives by belief (§ 31).

What is sought is the truth of the person—what the person is and what the person reveals from deep within. Human perfection, then consists not simply in acquiring an abstract knowledge of the truth, but in a dynamic relationship of faithful self-giving with others. It is in this faithful self-giving that a person finds a fullness of certainty and security. At the same, time, however, knowledge through belief, grounded as it is on trust between persons, is linked to truth; in the act of believing,

79 Unusquisque optat — immo tenetur — cognoscere veritatem de proprio fine. Scire vult utrum mors sit definitiva conclusio eius existentiae an sit aliquid quod mortem praetergrediatur; utrum liceat illi in vita ulteriore spem reponere necne.
80 Clarke, “Faith and Philosophy,” 568. Clarke did not indicate which commentators accused John Paul II of calling philosophers to the Cartesian type certitude.
81 Omnis homo, ut dictum est, quodam sub modo philosophus est et suas possidet philosophicas notiones, quibus vitam gubernat suam.
men and women entrust themselves to the truth which the other declares to them (§ 32).  

This portrait of the human person indicates certain conditions for the mediation of Revelation: one must decide to trust a revealing God and to trust in the means by which revelation is mediated. This trust, according to Schmitz, is not an uncritical fideism but “the recognition that the source and medium of this richer truth comes to us through trusting relationships with other persons.” Schmitz pointed out John Paul’s prominent emphasis upon the person’s use of freedom to trust as a condition for the successful mediation of Revelation:

In *The Acting Person*, Wojtyla argued that there is a deeper freedom than that of the will, summing up his argument thus: we are not free because we have a will, rather we have a will because we are free. The will is in service of the person—that is, the last word to be said about freedom, its deeper meaning, is not expressed simply by identifying it with the faculty of the will; for that lodges freedom within the differentia that goes to make up the species whose genus is animal. Such a definition is not incorrect, but neither is it adequate to the real character of freedom. Rather, freedom is to be identified within the distinctive root of the person and personal existence. It is this emphasis which manifests John Paul’s *personalist* philosophy [italics in the original].

The Revealer thus initiates a relationship of self-giving, in which the receiving persons grow in trust and intimacy with the revealing Lord (§ 32). For John Paul II, martyrs are the most authentic witnesses to the truth about existence, which they have found in the encounter with Christ, and for which they would die. Their example shows a love that

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82 Expedit ut in luce ponatur veritates in hac interpersonali relatione adeptas ad rerum gestarum vel philosophiae ordinem non attinere. Quod potius petitur est ipsa personae veritas: nempe id quod ipsa est et quidquid intimae suae conditionis ostendit. Hominis enim perfectio non ponitur tantum in sola comparanda cognitione abstracta veritatis, verum stat etiam in vivificanti consuetudine deditonis et fidelitatis erga alterum. Hac in fidelitate, cuius vi homo se dedere novit, plenam invenit certitutinem et animi firmitatem. Eodem tamen tempore, cognitio per fiduciam, quae exstimatione interpersonali nitiur, non datur quin ad veritatem referatur: homo, credendo, veritati quam alter ostendit committitur.  
84 Ibid., 606. Schmitz cited Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, translated by Anna-Maria Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979), 122 ff (Schmitz did not list the end page).
inspires and convinces without arguments (§ 32)—similar to the miracles of Christ cited by Vatican I as motives of credibility. The human search ends only when a person reaches both the truth about life and a person who may be trusted on a transcendent level (§ 33). Faith and reason lead to truth in its fullness: Revelation renders the unity of truth certain. Revelation indicates that the God known darkly through reason is God the Father, revealed in Jesus Christ (§ 34).

Schmitz considered the Pope’s position a philosophical development of Dei Filius, Chapter 3, which delineated various dimensions of the act of faith: “The assent to faith is ‘by no means a blind action of the mind,’ but requires both philosophical judgment and Christian discernment, so that faith and reason harmonize with each other in the pursuit of truth.” In the argument of § 32-33, Galvin found an echo of Karl Rahner’s “searching Christology” of Foundations of Christian Faith.

John Paul II concluded this chapter by maintaining that the relationship between faith and philosophy can best be presented by discussing their interaction in history (§ 35). Christ definitively joins the particularity of history to transcendent mystery and so provides the key to mediating Revelation through text, a tradition, and a human office.

**Chapter 4: “The Relationship Between Faith and Reason”**

The fourth chapter began by recalling the common concern of ancient philosophy and Christianity to purify human notions of God of mythological elements and to link reason and...
and religion (§ 36). Like Vatican I, the encyclical cited biblical texts in support of both “the voice of conscience” and the ability of human reason to know of God (§ 36). The chapter attributed the democratization of truth to Christian Revelation:

In dismantling barriers of race, social status, and gender, Christianity proclaimed from the first the equality of all men and women before God. One prime implication of this touched the theme of truth. The elitism which had characterized the ancients’ search for truth was clearly abandoned. Since access to truth enables access to God, it must be denied to none (§ 38).

The encyclical credited Augustine with the first great synthesis of philosophy and theology (§ 40). In explaining why some patristic writers seemed hostile to philosophy, the encyclical pointed out that Tertullian's question—“What does Athens have in common with Jerusalem?”—indicated that the Fathers were not transposing faith into philosophical categories: “As I have shown, theirs was the task of showing how reason, freed from external constraints, could find its way out of the blind alley of myth and open itself to the transcendent in a more appropriate way” (§ 41).

Scholastic theology framed the question in terms of faith seeking understanding. The human intellect pursues the truth that it loves, through a desire that spurs reason ever further (§ 42). John Paul II maintained that the Church has consistently proposed St. Thomas as a master of thought because he perfected the method of inquiry (§ 43). His achievement gave Christian civilization confidence that rational inquiry glorified the Triune God, rather than encroaching upon divine prerogatives (§ 43). Aquinas brought the encounter of faith and

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89 *Deiectis repagulis stirpis, ordinis socialis et sexus, Christianismus inde ab exordiis nuntiavit aequalitatem omnium hominum coram Deo. Primum huius conceptus consectarium respexit argumentum de veritate. Ita aperte superata est notio altioris societatis, cui apud antiquos perquisitio veritatis erat reservata. Quandoquidem accessus ad veritatem bonum est quod ducit ad Deum, omnibus patere debuit haec via percurrenda.

90 *Hi enim, uti diximus, munus habuerunt docendi methodum qua mens, externis vinculis liberata, exire poterat ab angustiis fabularum et ad modum excedentem accommodatius sese aperiens.*
reason to a new synthesis, a reconciliation, between the secularity of the world and the radicality of the gospel (§ 44). Apparently the mediation of Revelation is fitted to the connatural or organic relationship between faith and reason, where liturgical texts and sacramental rites can express revelation without prejudice to God’s sovereignty or majesty. Faith accepts revealed truth as it is, wisdom from the Holy Spirit enables a person to judge according to that truth (§ 44).

John Paul II described the post-scholastic period as beginning a “drama” of the separation of faith and reason (§ 45). In the succeeding centuries, “the legitimate distinction between the two forms of learning [theology and philosophy] becomes more and more a fateful separation”—rationalism (§ 45). Rationalism culminates in nihilism, which limits inquiry to a matter of sensations and experience and holds that knowledge is no longer viable because everything is fleeting and provisional (§ 46). As regards rationalism, Galvin has observed that “while no names are mentioned, the allusions to Hegel [1770-1831] on the one hand and to Feuerbach [1804-1872] and Karl Marx [1818-1883] on the other hand are unmistakable.”

As a result, reason becomes an instrument for utilitarian ends such as pleasure or power.

In the wake of these cultural shifts, some philosophers abandoned the search for truth itself and made their sole aim the attainment of a subjective certainty or a pragmatic sense of utility. This in turn has obscured the true dignity of reason, which is no longer equipped to know the truth and seek the absolute (§ 47).

91 Legitima distinctio inter has duas cognitionis areas paulatim in nefastum discidium mutata est.
93 His culturae immutationibus praepositus, nonnulli philosophi, veritatem ipsius causa inquirere desistentes, sibi hoc unum statuerunt ut obiectivam certitudinem practicanve utilitatem obtinerent. Proximum fuit ut vera rationis dignitas offunderetur, quae nempe facultatem amisit verum cognoscendi et absolutum vestigandi.
Man lives increasingly in fear, alienated from other human beings and from God.

Similarly, faith, tied to weak reasoning, is no longer penetrating.

It is an illusion to think that faith, tied to weak reasoning, might be more penetrating; on the contrary, then faith runs the grave risk of withering into myth or superstition. By the same token, reason which is unrelated to an adult faith is not prompted to turn its gaze to the newness of radicality and being (§ 48).\footnote{Fides, ratione carens, animi sensum et experientiam extulit, atque sic in periculo versatur ne amplius sit universalis oblatio. Fallax est cogitare fidem, coram infirma ratione, plus posse; ipsa, contra, in grave periculum incidit ne in fabulam ac superstitionem evadat. Eodem modo ratio, quae fidei firmatae non obversatur, ad novitatem et radicalitatem ipsius «esse» contuendas non laessitur.}

According to Clarke, these rationalistic positions effectively undermine Christianity.

There may be not a few Christian thinkers who seem unaware of this inconsistency in their thought when they also defend, as philosophers, one or the other of the above negative positions. In a word, to be a sincere Christian one must believe in the possibility of a universal spreading of the same Good News to all human cultures through diverse human languages.\footnote{Clarke, “Faith and Philosophy,” 562.}

The fourth chapter of Fides et Ratio, like Dei Verbum, took a very different approach to the intellectual history of post-Tridentine centuries than Vatican I, even though both the encyclical and the council shared the concern of Vatican I about the rejection of philosophical truth and revealed truth. In Guarino’s view, the encyclical’s philosophical stance reflected not simply an “updated endorsement” of Leo XIII’s recommendation of Thomism in Aeterni Patris, but “a new conceptual framework” that “is needed that acknowledges and incorporates advances in thought since the Middle Ages”; the encyclical “opens out into the wider conceptual pluralism important to theological development.”\footnote{Guarino, “Fides et Ratio,” 681.}

Schmitz has pointed out that “the tone of authority is transformed, so that the judgments [of
Fides et Ratio], while concordant with Catholic tradition, are couched in the tone of disclosure, correction, and encouragement."

Chapter 5: “The Magisterium's Interventions in Philosophical Matters”

The fifth chapter distinguished between schools of philosophy and Magisterial teaching:

The Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one particular philosophy in reference to others. The underlying reason for this reluctance is that, even when it engages theology, philosophy must remain faithful to its principles and methods (§ 49).

Although it is “neither the task nor the competence of the Magisterium” to correct the faults of “deficient” philosophical systems, it is the Magisterium’s duty “to respond clearly and strongly when controversial philosophical opinions threaten right understanding of what has been revealed” (§ 49). Such intervention may involve determining whether the tenets of a school of philosophy are incompatible with right reason or Revelation (§ 50).

The interventions of the Magisterium are intended primarily to encourage philosophical enquiry by insisting upon a unity of truth that remains open to the data of faith (§ 50). The encyclical pointed out that since the middle of the 19th Century the Magisterium has spoken frequently regarding philosophical questions and that it has addressed errors regarding both reason and faith:

The censures were delivered even-handedly: on the one hand, fideism and radical traditionalism, for their distrust of reason’s natural capacities, and on the other,

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98 Suam ipsius philosophiam non exhibet Ecclesia, neque quamlibet praelegit peculiarem philosophiam aliarum damno. Recondita huius temperantiae causa in eo reperitur quod philosophia, etiam cum necessitudinem instituit cum theologia, secundum suam rationem suasque regulas agere debet.
99 Munus non est Magisterni neque officium opem ferre ad lacunas philosophicae cogitationis mancæ implendas. Eius est, contra, palam et strenue obistere, cum philosophicae sententiae dubiae periculum iniciunt ne revelatio recte intellegatur nec non cum falsae factiosaeque effunduntur opiniones, quae graves errores disseminant, exturbantes Dei populi simplicitatem et fidei sinceritatem.
rationalism and ontologism because they attributed to natural reason a knowledge which only the light of faith could confer (§ 52).\(^{100}\)

The encyclical recalled the insistence of Vatican I on the rational demonstrability of God’s existence and noted that the Church has had to condemn errors in various areas of science (§ 53). In a passage reminiscent of *Humani Generis* (§ 13), *Fides et Ratio* pointed that Catholic theology today often considers rationalistic presuppositions “normative for theological research.” This happens when “theologians, through lack of philosophical competence, allow themselves to be swayed uncritically by assertions which have become part of current parlance and culture but which are poorly grounded in reason” (§ 55).\(^{101}\)

The encyclical attributed the difficulties that theologians have in treating Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium to fideism, rather than rationalism: “There are also signs of a resurgence of fideism which fails to recognize the importance of rational knowledge and philosophical discourse for the understanding of faith, indeed for the very possibility of belief in God” (§ 55).\(^{102}\) As a “widespread symptom of this fideistic tendency,” the encyclical pointed to a “Biblicism” which tends to make the reading and exegesis of Sacred

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\(^{101}\) *In nonnullis huius aetatis theologicis scholis, exempli gratia, quidam rationalismus progreditur, praesertim cum placita, quae philosophice habentur valida, praeceptiva ad theologiam inquisitionem agendam iudicantur. Id potissimum accidit cum theologus, scientiae philosophicae expers, sine iudicio sententiis iam in communem loquelam cultumque receptis, at satis rationali fundamento carentibus, temperatur.*

\(^{102}\) *Neque desunt qui in fideismum periculose regrediantur, quippe qui rationalis cognitionis philosophicae scientiae pondus ad fidem intellegendam, immo ad ipsam facultatem possidendum in Deum credendi, non agnoscat.*
Scripture the sole criterion of truth. Consequently, some identify the word of God with Scripture alone, thus eliminating the doctrine of the Church.\textsuperscript{103}

\textit{Fides et Ratio} then turned to consider the teaching of \textit{Dei Verbum} (§§ 9-10), as a remedy for this particular error. According to \textit{Dei Verbum} (§ 9), the word of God is present in both Scripture and Tradition, which together comprise a single sacred deposit of the Word of God entrusted to the Church (§ 10). The Pope then applied the teaching of \textit{Dei Verbum} § 10.

Scripture, therefore, is not the Church's sole point of reference. The “supreme rule of her faith” derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others (§ 55).\textsuperscript{104}

The encyclical also encouraged scholars not to restrict their scriptural analysis to “one method alone,” which could result in “ignoring the need for a more comprehensive exegesis which enables the exegete to arrive at the full sense of the texts”; the encyclical also cautioned against “other modes of latent fideism” that give “scant consideration” to “speculative theology” and express “disdain” for “classical philosophy” (§ 55).\textsuperscript{105} This

\textsuperscript{103} Hodie pervagata opinio huius fideisticae propensionis est « biblicismus », qui Sacrarum Litterarum lectionem earumque explicacionem unicum arbitratur veridicae congruentiae caput. Sic evenit ut Dei verbum cum sola Sacra Scriptura aequetur, hoc modo Ecclesiae doctrinam perimendo, quam Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II palam confirmavit.

\textsuperscript{104} . . . cui inhaerens tota plebs sancta cum Pastoribus suis adunata in doctrina Apostolorum et communione, fratione panis et orationibus iugiter perseverat (cfr Act 2,42) ». Non ad Sacram Scripturam dumtaxat igitur sese refert Ecclesia. Etenim « suprema fidei eius regula » ex unitate oritur quam inter Sacram Traditionem Sacram Scripturam et Ecclesiae Magisterium posuit Spiritus, quae sic mutuo implicantur, ut haec tria seunctim nullo modo esse possint. The phrase \textit{suprema fidei eius regula} appeared in \textit{Dei Verbum} § 21: [The Church] has always maintained [the Scriptures], and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the Prophets and the Apostles (Eas una cum Sacra Traditione semper ut supremam fidei suae regulam habuit et habet, cum a Deo inspiratae et semel pro semper litteris consignatae, verbum ipsius Dei immutabiliter impertiant, atque in verbis Prophetae Apostolorumque vocem Spiritus Sancti personare faciant.

\textsuperscript{105} Non est porro subaestimandum periculum quod inest in proposito quodam Sacrae Scripturae veritatem eruendi ex una tantum adhibita methodologia, necessitate neglecta latioris exegesis, quae una cum tota Ecclesia ad textus plene intellegendos accedere sinat. Quotquot in Sacrae Scripturae studium incumbunt prae se usque
section concluded with a reference to *Humani Generis*, which had also attributed rejection of doctrinal realism to both rationalistic (§ 15) and fideistic (§ 8) principles.\(^{106}\)

*Fides et Ratio* next discussed the relationship of universal statements to reason and to Revelation: “In brief, there are signs of a widespread distrust of universal and absolute statements, especially among those who think that truth is born of consensus and not of a consonance between intellect and objective reality” (§ 56).\(^{107}\) The subdivision of academic fields can make it difficult to acknowledge the meaning of life, which philosophy has traditionally sought (§ 56):

Nonetheless, in the light of faith which finds in Jesus Christ this ultimate meaning, I cannot but urge philosophers to trust in the power of human reason and not to set themselves goals that are too modest in their philosophizing (§ 56).\(^{108}\)

The lesson of the second millennium was that “It is necessary not to abandon the passion for ultimate truth, the eagerness to search for it or the audacity to forge new paths in the search” (§ 56).\(^{109}\)

The encyclical pointed out that the Church’s interest in philosophy extends to encouraging renewal, not just indicating the limits of philosophy (§ 57). The pope praised

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\(^{107}\) Aliquo modo, postremo, effatis omnia complacentibus et absolutis diffidunt, ii potissimum qui arbitrantur ex consensu, non ex intellectu obiectivae realitati obnoxio depromi veritatem.

\(^{108}\) Verumtamen sub lumine fidei quae in Christo lesu hunc ultimum sensum agnoscit, facere non possumus quin philosophos, christianos vel non christianos, incitemus ut rationis humanae faculti confidant neque metas in philosophandi arte nimiris mediocres prae se ferant. Illis in paginis de humanae personae valore agitur, quae ad imaginem Dei creatae est, eius dignitatis et praestantiae prae ceteris creaturar ratio affertur atque eius rationis transcendens facultas ostenditur.

\(^{109}\) . . . incitemus ut rationis humanae faculti confidant neque metas in philosophandi arte nimiris mediocres prae se ferant. Huius iam ad finem vergentis millenni historica lectio testatur hanc esse calcandam viam: oportet veritatis ultimae cupido vestigationisque desiderium non amittantur, quae cum audacia novos cursus detegendiconiunguntur.
not only the Thomistic renewal fostered by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, (1879), but also “a number of Catholic philosophers who, adopting more recent currents of thought and according to a specific method produced philosophical works of great influence and lasting value” (§ 59). In particular, the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et Spes* (§14-15) offered “a virtual compendium of the biblical anthropology from which philosophy too can draw inspiration” (§ 60).111

Pope John Paul II then emphasized the philosophical significance of Revelation for knowing our human identity—a point which he had previously discussed in his “first Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* and which serves as one of the constant reference-points of my teaching”:

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, 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 (§ 60).112

By highlighting the engagement of Catholic philosophers with contemporary philosophical trends, John Paul II indicated that Catholic philosophy should not be exclusively identified with Scholasticism. Galvin has characterized the praise of *Fides et Ratio* (§ 56-60) for non-Thomistic authors in the periods before and after Leo XIII’s *Aeterni Patris* as “remarkable”:

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110 . . . non pauci catholici philosophi exstiterant, qui recentioribus philosophantium cogitationibus innitentes, propria utentes methodologia, magnae auctoritatis duraturique momenti opera philosophica ediderant.

111 Oblivisci non possumus, his potissimum consideratis Litteris Encyclicis, Constitutionis *Gaudium et spes* integrum quoddam caput anthropologiae biblicae esse quasi compendium, idemque extare pro philosophia quoque consilii fontem.

Again, no names are mentioned, but the thought of the nineteenth-century Tübingen school (Johann Sebastian von Drey, Johann Adam Möhler, Johannes Evangelist Kuhn) and of Maurice Blondel—all of whom were quite sharply criticized by their Neo-Scholastic opponents—can easily be recognized in the formulations of the text (no. 59).  

The conclusion of Chapter 4 called upon the faculties of Catholic seminaries and universities to restore the study of philosophy, particularly metaphysics, to the central position they enjoyed before Vatican II (§ 60). The conclusion also was a prelude to the pope’s broader treatment of the interaction of philosophy and theology in the next chapter: “It is my task to state principles and criteria which in my judgment are necessary in order to restore a harmonious and creative relationship between theology and philosophy” (§ 63). Guarino has briefly summarized this “revelationally appropriate” philosophical horizon:  

Inasmuch as Christianity is concerned with mediating states of affairs, human and divine, some form of philosophical realism, profoundly stamped by the subjective and constructive dimensions intrinsic to knowing and productive of it, and equally stamped by the apophatic nature of theological language, must be adduced.

Chapter 6: “The Interaction Between Philosophy and Theology”  

According to the encyclical, theological inquiry proceeds by a twofold methodology. First is the auditus fidei, the appropriation of Revelation as it is expressed in Scripture and Tradition, and proposed by the Magisterium (§ 64). Philosophy helps prepare theologians for a correct auditus fidei, specifically by “its study of the structure of knowledge and personal communication, especially the various forms and functions of language” (§ 65).  

No less important is philosophy’s contribution to a more coherent understanding of Church Tradition, the pronouncements of the Magisterium, and the teachings of the great masters of theology, who often adopt concepts and thought forms from a particular philosophical tradition. In this case, the theologian is summoned not only to explain the concepts and terms used by the Church in her thinking and the

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development of her teaching, but also to know in depth the philosophical systems which may have influenced those concepts and systems, in order to formulate correct and consistent interpretations of them (§ 65)\textsuperscript{115}

The second principle, the *intellectus fidei*, inquires into Revelation in order to articulate its mysteries for teaching and evangelism (§ 65). Dogmatic theology must articulate the mystery of the One and Triune God, and the economy of salvation both in its historical narrative and in persuasive arguments. This task requires theologians to engage the philosophy of being, which has objective truth at its foundation (§ 66). According to Clarke, the philosophical task envisioned by *Fides et Ratio* § 65 is necessitated by the fact that “revelation usually comes to us in powerful and pregnant, but brief, aphorisms: it contains ‘philosophical density’ as the pope puts it, but without explanatory arguments or explication of its own full implications.”\textsuperscript{116} Fundamental theology must articulate the relationship between faith and philosophical thought. It must explain how certain truths perceived by reason prepare one for faith, so that the human mind may properly and intelligently believe in God and accept divine Revelation (§ 67). In the case of moral theology, both the power of natural reason and the data of faith need to be fully engaged in the process of conscience formation (§ 68-69).

The encyclical insisted that Christ strengthens all cultures and destroys their divisions, and unifies them. Openness to mystery and the human desire for knowledge have advanced the Church’s appreciation of her Lord (§71). The Church keeps the fruits of her original inculturation in the Greco-Latin world—an inculturation is part of God’s

\textsuperscript{115} Aequum pariter est pondus quod confert philosophia ut ecclesialis Traditio, Magisterii effata nec non eximiorum theologiae magistrorum sententiae aptius intellegantur: hi enim mentem suam patetaciat saepe per cogitata formasque cogitationis, quae a certa quadam philosophica traditione mutuo suscipiuntur. Hac in re theologus rogatur ut non modo significet notiones vocabulaque, quibus Ecclesia cogitam suamque doctinam definit, verum etiam ut penitus philosophicas opiniones intellegat quae forte tam notiones quam nomina afferent, ut ad rectas congruasque significationes perveniatur.

\textsuperscript{116} Clarke, “Faith and Philosophy,” 563.
providential plan. The encyclical depicted the relationship between theology and philosophy as a circle, beginning from the Word of God revealed in history and proceeding through the believer’s power of reason in reflection, in continually deeper appropriation of the Scriptures (§ 72).

John Paul II pointed to three positions which philosophy can take in regard to Christian revelation. First, reason can inquire independently—an option that was followed by all philosophy before Christ and one that can still be useful, but which should be open to faith (§ 75). Second, Christian philosophy can be pursued in “dynamic union with faith” (cum fide coniungitur, § 76); faith purifies reason and liberates it from presumption while reason sets the rationality of Scriptural truths into sharper relief (§ 76). Third, theology can utilize philosophy in order to articulate its own truths more clearly: “Moreover, theology needs philosophy as a partner in dialogue in order to confirm the intelligibility and universal truth of its claims.”¹¹⁷ This option brings philosophy more directly under magisterial authority, due to “the implications it has for the correct understanding of revelation” (§ 77).

According to Clarke, philosophy so described can help theology with several needs: “to explicate carefully the connection between concepts and truth, concepts and language, especially the diversity of human languages, the relation of truth to culture, and in general the role and limits of Hermeneutics.”¹¹⁸

The chapter concluded by recalling the perennial value of St. Thomas’ thought for theology and reiterated the teaching of Aeterni Patris that the Magisterium has “made him

¹¹⁷ Theologia porro philosophia indiget quacum paene dialogum instituat, ut comprobet intellegibilitatem universalemque principiorum suorum veritatem.
¹¹⁸ Clarke, 564; italics Clarke’s.
the guide and model for theological studies.” The encyclical observed that “By virtue of the splendor emanating from subsisting Being itself, revealed truth offers the fullness of light and will therefore illuminate the path of philosophical inquiry” (§79). Finally, *Fides et Ratio* recalled the Patristic dictum that to believe is nothing other than to think with assent, and that if there is no assent there is no faith (§ 79). Guarino pointed out that *Fides et Ratio* was not intended simply to restate *Aeterni Patris*:

*Fides et ratio* suggests that while central elements of Aquinas’s corpus remain essential, a new conceptual framework is needed that acknowledges and incorporates advances in thought since the Middle Ages. The encyclical calls for a contemporary synthesis that, while taking account of early Christian thinkers, the Scholastics, and modern thought as well, is able to fashion a new relationship between faith and reason (§ 85).

**Chapter 7: “Current Requirements and Tasks”**

The final chapter of *Fides et Ratio* began with a pastoral discussion of Scripture’s vision of man and the world; Scripture anchors a full portrait of what and who we are:

we learn that what we experience is not absolute: it is neither uncreated nor self-generating. God alone is the absolute. From the Bible there emerges also a vision of man as *imago Dei* (§ 80).

Moral evil is a wound inflicted by the misuse of freedom in pursuit of “the illusion of autonomy which would deny the essential dependence on God of every creature” (§ 80).

The world and humanity derive meaning from, and await eschatological fulfillment in, Jesus Christ: “The mystery of the Incarnation will always remain the central point of reference for

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119 His praepositis cogitationibus, probe intellegitur cur subinde laudaverit Magisterium sancti Thomae philosophiae merita eundemque putaverit ductorem atque theologicae disciplinae exemplar.  
120 Veritas revelata, clare id quod est collurazierdo sumens initium ex splendore quem efficit id quod per se Est, philosophicae cogitationis iter illuminabit.  
121 John Paul II cited Saint Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 2, 5: PL 44, 963, and *De Fide, Spe et Caritate*, 7: CCL 64, 61.  
123 Inde quidem elucet id quod experimur non esse absolutum, non esse increatum neque ex se ipso generatum. Deus est Absolutus unus. De Bibliorum paginis praeterea manifesto apparret species hominis veluti Dei imagines.
an understanding of the enigma of human existence, the created world, and God himself”
(§ 80). Revelation is then necessary for human beings to have true, fully rational self-understanding and a correct understanding of God and the world (§ 80). In order to be consonant with the Word of God, philosophy needs to recover its sapiential dimension as a search for the full meaning of life (§ 81).

Scripture always assumes that a person can know and grasp the clear and simple truth. The Bible, and the New Testament in particular, contains statements which have a genuinely ontological content (§ 82). Philosophy must include metaphysics, which can move past empirical data and phenomena, in order to reach a foundation and wisdom (§ 83). The study of hermeneutics and language must not only consider our understanding and expressions of reality, but also consider how reason may uncover its essence (§ 83).

Language can express divine and transcendent reality in a universal way (§ 83). Since the Scriptural requirements for philosophy can seem daunting, John Paul II acknowledged that “this is why, taking up what has been taught repeatedly by the Popes for several generations and reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, I wish to reaffirm strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge” (§ 85). In light of Vatican II’s detailed development of the functioning of Tradition and its interaction with Scripture and the Magisterium, it is surprising that this chapter, like chapter 5, mentioned only briefly the role of Tradition (§ 85).

124 Incarnationis mysterium manebit semper veluti medium punctum ad quod quis referatur ut comprehendere possit arcanum vitae humanae, orbis conditi et Dei ipsius.
125 Etenim, pro concesso semper Sacra Sacriptura habet hominem, licet falsitatis sit reus fallaciaeque, cognoscere tamen posse et comprehendere per lucidam semplicemque veritatem. Libris Sacris ac præsertim Novo Testamento, insunt loci et adfirmationes indolis omnino ontologicæ.
126 Hanc omnino ob causam, ea omnia Nostra facientes quae iam complures annos Summi Pontifices docere non desistunt quaque rursus inculcavit Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II, vehementer confitemur Nobis esse persuasum hominem visionem unicum et ordinatum scientiae assequi posse.
The encyclical also identified fallacies that can undermine philosophy and affect the mediation of Revelation. For example, eclecticism draws ideas from different philosophies without concern for historical context or internal coherence (§ 86); historicism reduces truth to its historical circumstances and so denies the enduring validity of truth (§ 87); “modernism” accepts “only the most recent opinions and philosophical language, ignoring the critical evaluation which ought to be made of them in light of the tradition” (§ 87); nihilism denies the identity of the person in denying truth and eliminates the basis of human dignity (§ 90).

Guarino has noted that *Fides et Ratio* (§ 90) did not require that theology be bound to a standard “external to theology as the final standard for truth and certainty”; rather, it rejected any philosophy that denies basic first principles (which were identified in § 4). This survey of philosophical schools concluded that “our age has been termed by some thinkers as the age of ‘postmodernity’, its currents of thought merit appropriate attention.” However, those currents should be rejected which assert that “the time of certainties is irrevocably past, and the human being must learn to live in a horizon of total absence of meaning, where everything is provisional and ephemeral” (§ 91).

In John Paul II’s view, theology now faces a dual task. First, theology must renew its methods in order to serve better evangelization; second, theology must study the ultimate truth of Revelation (§ 92). Theology’s purpose is to articulate Revelation and its heart is the contemplation of the mysteries of the Triune God, the Incarnation, and the Paschal Mystery (§ 93): “In this light, a careful analysis of texts emerges as a basic and urgent need: first, the

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128 Secundum enim quasdam earum opinationes certitudinum tempus dicitur iam sine remedio transiisse et homini ipsi iam discendum esse in rerum quodam prospectu vivere ubi nullus reperiatur sensus, sub nomine nempe rerum fugientium ac temporariarum.
texts of Scripture, and then those which express the Church’s living Tradition”129 (§ 93).

“Human language thus embodies the language of God, who communicates his own truth with that wonderful ‘condescension’ which mirrors the logic of the Incarnation”130 (§ 94).

The truth of Scripture’s events lies in the meaning they have in and for salvation history. Dogmatic statements formulate unchanging and ultimate truth; certain basic concepts retain universal epistemological value over the centuries (§ 95). The task of understanding theological truth, the *intellectus fidei*, “demands the contribution of a philosophy of being which first of all would enable dogmatic theology to perform its functions appropriately” (§ 97).131

In this regard, the editors of *Philosophy and Theology* noted: “In a commodified world, poets, philosophers, and theologians are likely to be among the few who practice crafts that are most essential for keeping us aware that words are more than instruments of power . . . . it is the utterance of words that enables us to give voice to spirit.”132 Guarino was afraid that John Paul II’s emphasis upon “the identity and perpetuity of doctrine” is not balanced by earlier teaching that discussed the distinction between the content of doctrine and the form in which it is expressed.133 He referred to the opening speech of John XXIII at Vatican II (11 October 1962), *Gaudet mater ecclesia, Gaudium et spes* and the *Decree on Ecumenism* (1964).

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129 Hac autem in re primaria quaedam necessitas iniungitur urgensque simul locorum ipsorum intenta pervestigatio: in primis Sacrarum Litterarum, deinde eorum quibus viva Ecclesiae Traditio profertur.
130 Quocirca hominum in sermone incorporatur Dei sermo, qui suam veritatem communicat, ea admirabili « indulgentia » quae logicam Incarnationis rationem refert. The reference is to: *Dei Verbum* § 13.
131 Sicut iam superius innuimus, *intellectus fidei* postulat ut philosophia essendi partes quae in primis sinant ut *theologia dogmatica* consentaneo modo expleat sua munia.
133 Guarino, “*Fides et Ratio,*” 696.
In fact, *Fides et Ratio* did take these documents into account. The encyclical’s openness to various forms of realism seems in keeping with the statement of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (§ 17) that “It is hardly surprising that, then, if from time to time one [Christian] tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage.”\(^{134}\) In addition, *Fides et Ratio* cited *Gaudium et spes* a dozen times, including the statement that the human intellect “can, with genuine certainty, reach realities known only to the mind” despite the effects of sin (*Gaudium et Spes* § 15, *Fides et Ratio* § 82).\(^{135}\) *Fides et Ratio* also referred to *Gaudium et Spes* (§ 53-59) in discussing the fact that different cultures take “different paths to the truth, which assuredly serve men and women well in revealing values which make their life ever more human”(*Fides et Ratio* § 70).\(^{136}\)

### Conclusion of the Encyclical

John Paul II concluded his encyclical by asking theologians, seminary personnel, philosophers, scientists, and all persons to adopt the principles of the encyclical (§ 105-106). He urged all to turn to Mary as Seat of Wisdom for help in realizing the human quest for self-knowledge, understanding of creation and of God, and beatific union with God through Christ (§108). Norris Clarke has commented that the encyclical did not call so much for a particular metaphysical system, as for a realistic stance that is “rather a rational explication and defense of the mind’s ability to grasp the great ‘transcendent truths’ about the meaning of human existence and human destiny, its anchoring an Ultimate Reality transcending our

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\(^{134}\) Latin and English at Tanner, 917. Unde mirum non est quosdam aspectus mysterii revelati quandoque magis congrue percipi et in meliorem lucem poni ab uno quam ab altero, ita ut tunc variae illae theologicae formulae non raro potius inter se completeri dicendae sint quam opponi.

\(^{135}\) Translation is that in *Fides et Ratio*; Latin in Tanner, 1077. Sed realitatem intelligibilem cum vera certitudine adipsici valet.

\(^{136}\) Ipsae ideo exhibent diversas ad veritatem accessiones, quae perutes sunt homini, cui valores praebent qui magis magisque humanam reddere valent eius existentiam.
human experience.” A rejection of metaphysics “undercuts the whole intelligibility of revelation itself, with its reference to truths about the transcendent order of being . . . . Theology without metaphysics could not move far beyond the analysis of religious experience.”

In *Fides et Ratio*, Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium are presented as the means through which God continues to communicate Revelation in the post-apostolic age. Each of these three channels is necessary in order for Revelation to be communicated in a manner appropriate to the human way of knowing the divine through reason and faith. Christ is the answer to the enigma of existence and shows humankind its true purpose and destiny by means of personal self-disclosure in Spirit-inspired Scripture and Spirit-guided Tradition communicated by living witnesses authorized by Christ. An unbroken line of living witnesses, whose office is guaranteed by Christ, is evidently necessary for the transmission of Revelation.

Forms of metaphysics and epistemology that deny Scripture, Tradition or the Magisterium their place in the mediation of Revelation, are basically incompatible with Revelation. The Magisterium has the rightful authority, indeed the responsibility, to reject them. Epistemologies that claim that reason is an autonomous faculty that imposes categorical coherence upon phenomena, are false because they effectively deny the metaphysical validity and epistemological accessibility of the mysteries, communicated by Christian Revelation. Ultimately, such thinking effectively denies that reason has a role in the human being’s most important personal relationship. For John Paul II, such a stance denies the roles of sense perception and analogy in a person's appropriation of Revelation.

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137 Clarke, “Faith and Philosophy,” 565.
According to Clarke, the encyclical also evidenced John Paul’s belief that phenomenological method is suited to the articulation of doctrine and that it is harmonious with metaphysics, which “lifts phenomenology out of its limited vision and gives it full meaning by setting it in a wider horizon of the ultimate meaning and destiny of the whole human being, which phenomenology of itself is incapable of doing.” Galvin has observed that the encyclical did not take adequate account of the role of history in the development of human knowledge:

The chief deficiency of the encyclical is, in my opinion, its failure to address explicitly the relationship of faith to historical reason. As it stands, the relationship of faith and reason is all too quickly subsumed under the rubric of the relationship of theology and philosophy. The problems raised and the insights gained by the development of modern historical-critical methods of enquiry into texts from the past (especially, but not exclusively, in the field of biblical exegesis) warrant serious consideration in this context beyond that provided in this encyclical.

Guarino was concerned that the teaching of *Fides et Ratio* (§ 82) about philosophy’s sapiential dimension requires that it affirm the intellect’s ability to know objective truth in the sense of the Scholastic *adequatio rei et intellectus* (the conforming of the intellect to the reality known) “appears to limit the very pluralism *Fides et ratio* supports” and asked: “Is it not precisely the Aristotelian-Thomistic notion of the *adequatio* itself, that, in at least certain aspects, needs rethinking?” Shortly after the sentence Guarino discussed, John Paul II cited *Gaudium et spes* (§ 15): “Intelligence is not confined to the observable data alone. It

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138 Ibid., 570.
140 Guarino, “*Fides et Ratio,*” 692.
can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable, though in consequence of sin that certitude is partially obscured and weakened.\textsuperscript{141}

\textit{Fides et Ratio} recalled some key concerns of both Pope Pius XII and Van Noort. The encyclical taught that philosophical positions supporting Christian doctrine are as vital and relevant as ever to both Christian belief and life. The encyclical suggested that Vatican II’s decision to emphasize the mystical and personal should not be seen as de-emphasizing these concerns. \textit{Fides et Ratio} articulated Revelation in terms of noetic realism in the context of the personal quest for fulfillment in the Divine, a quest that engages the horizon of mystery. Guarino was concerned that this teaching could caricature thinkers who are seeking what he called a “via media” between traditional metaphysics and epistemologically-idealist nihilism:

With the encyclical, many contemporary philosophers and theologians are seeking to overcome both relativism and anarchic rationalism. But they wish to do so without metaphysics, without even a renewed metaphysics, which they deem philosophically untenable. These thinkers seek to develop an understanding of human rationality adequately adjusted to the newly presenced horizons of historicity and linguisticality.\textsuperscript{142}

In contrast, John Paul II maintained that philosophy must recover its sapiential dimension insofar as the search for the meaning of life must be based on the human intellect’s ability to reach objective truth: “the need for a philosophy of genuinely metaphysical range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate, and foundational in its search for truth” (§ 83)\textsuperscript{143} Thinkers

\textsuperscript{141} The translation of \textit{Gaudium et spes} (§ 15) is from \textit{Fides et Ratio}, which cited the Council: \textit{Intelligentia enim non ad sola phaenomena coarctatur, sed realitatem intelligibilem cum vera certitudine adipisci valet, etiamsi, ex sequela peccati, ex parte obscuratur et debilitatur.}

\textsuperscript{142} Guarino, “\textit{Fides et Ratio},” 694.

\textsuperscript{143} \ldots\textit{ opus est philosophia naturae vere metaphysicae, quae excedere nempe valeat empirica indicia ut, veritatem conquirens, ad aliquid absolutum ultimum, fundamentale pertingat.}
such as Guarino have argued that philosophy should take account of the roles of history and linguistics in human knowledge. For John Paul II, Revelation is both theologically and philosophically appropriate to the human intellect. The philosophy of being is well-suited to the process of articulating Revelation and inquiring into its expressions in Scripture and Tradition and the teachings of the Magisterium.

One omission in the encyclical’s treatment of Revelation is that it did not consider the role of Tradition in relation to Scripture. *Dei Verbum* (§ 7) taught that Revelation is channeled through both Tradition and Scripture: Revelation was originally communicated (“handed down”) through Tradition and eventually was recorded in Scripture. Further analysis of the role of Tradition in the mediation of Revelation could address Guarino’s concern that *Fides et Ratio* portrayed Revelation too much as “an abiding word crystallized in certain doctrinal statements requiring universality and continuity as essential benchmarks and more as eruptive manifestations of truthfulness unveiled before humanity, distinctly differing from age to age and from culture to culture.”¹⁴⁴ In any case, the interdependence of Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium was expressed less explicitly by *Humani Generis* and by theologians like Van Noort prior to Vatican II. This interdependence was expressed in an organic, synthetic way by Vatican II in *Dei Verbum*, Chapter 2. The encyclical *Fides et Ratio* united the concern for the role of the human mind in the appropriation of Revelation in light of the presentation of Vatican II on the importance of mystery and personal encounter with God, while simultaneously teaching that Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium function together.

¹⁴⁴ Guarino, “*Fides et Ratio,*” 699.
Conclusion

The final sentence of the second chapter of the Second Vatican Council’s *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum*, §10) made a statement about the mediation of Revelation through Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, which neither the preconciliar thinkers examined in this dissertation, nor the draft documents of the Council made:

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls (§ 10).\(^1\)

Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium are then interdependent and jointly contribute to the mediation of Revelation through the action of the Holy Spirit. Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium originated in God’s decision to reveal Himself and His will (§ 2) in ancient Israel (§ 3) and in Jesus Christ (§ 4). To preserve and transmit that Revelation, Christ commissioned the Apostles to preach the Word; the Apostles in turn handed on both the message of Revelation and the authority to transmit and teach that message to their successors, the bishops (§ 7). Since Scripture and Tradition flow from the same divine wellspring (*scaturigo*), they are to be regarded with equal reverence (§ 9) and together communicate Revelation, which is to be interpreted authoritatively by the Magisterium (§ 10).

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The encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, *On the Relationship of Faith and Reason* (*Fides et Ratio*, 1998) reiterated this emphasis of *Dei Verbum* on the interdependence of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium (§ 55). *Fides et Ratio* also linked its view to an intellectual view of Revelation, such as that proposed by both Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950)\(^2\) and Gerardus Van Noort in his *Dogmatic Theology*.\(^3\) In *Humani Generis*, Pius XII taught that Revelation is contained in Scripture and Tradition, which express the one Word of God, and that the Magisterium has the exclusive authority to interpret Scripture and Tradition. Pius XII did not emphasize the interdependence of Scripture and Tradition, but stated that “Scripture is the foundation of religious teaching” (§ 8) and so seemingly has the primary role in mediating Revelation.\(^4\) *Humani Generis* did not develop a theology of Tradition, but taught that Tradition, like Scripture, is one of “the sources of divine revelation” (§ 21).\(^5\) However, the emphasis of Pius XII on the role of the Magisterium—as the “proximate and universal criterion of truth” (§ 18)\(^6\)—in interpreting Scripture and Tradition could lead to the view that the Magisterium is superior to Scripture and Tradition.

In his widely-used seminary manual, Van Noort maintained that God self-reveals via Tradition, of which Scripture is an expression.\(^7\) He described oral Tradition and Scripture as

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\(^5\) Ibid., 568: Divinae revelationis fontes.

\(^6\) Ibid., 567: Theolgo proxime et universalis veritatis norma esse debet.

streams that “mix” in the Magisterium. The Church which conveys Tradition “gives life to the dead letter of Scripture” which is the “inspired word of God.”

Stressing the Church’s mediating role more strongly than Pius XII, Van Noort described Tradition as “that collection of speculative and practical truths communicated viva voce to the Church by Christ and the Apostles as organs of revelation.”

Relying on the Council of Trent’s description of traditions as “received by the apostles from Christ’s “lips” or through the Spirit’s “dictation,” Van Noort maintained that the Magisterium determines what constitutes Scripture and Tradition and authoritatively interprets them. For Van Noort, even if a truth is found primarily in Tradition, Scripture is needed in the early stages of demonstrating a particular doctrine.

Concern about the nature and role of Tradition was also evident in Yves Congar’s Tradition and Traditions (1966), a project of ressourcement which studied Tradition in liturgical and theological sources: Scripture, the Fathers of the early Church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Council of Trent, and post-Tridentine theology (until 1950). Congar maintained that Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium are linked by the action of the Holy Spirit in transmitting Revelation. The Magisterium’s power to make judgments

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8 Ibid., 6.
9 Ibid., 6.
10 Ibid., 135.
12 Ibid., 6-7.
13 Ibid., 142.
15 Ibid., 422-423.
about Revelation matters less in the Church’s life than does its role as the herald of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{16} Tradition originated in Christ’s teaching of the apostles through word and deed; after His death the apostles expressed this teaching in Scripture and “monuments” of Tradition.\textsuperscript{17} Accordingly, Tradition communicates the Gospel,\textsuperscript{18} while the Magisterium authoritatively expresses the Church’s sense of Scripture, read in the milieu of Tradition.\textsuperscript{19} For Congar, bishops are spiritual readers of Scripture, who offer authoritative interpretations.\textsuperscript{20} In addition, “in the establishment of the canon three elements unite: Scripture, Tradition, and the Church.”\textsuperscript{21} Congar stressed Tradition’s dynamic, fertile character as the Church’s appropriation and living of Revelation.\textsuperscript{22}

Expressing a similar concern about the nature of Revelation, Karl Rahner, in his essay “Observations on the Concept of Revelation” (1965), sketched a transcendental portrait of Revelation as God’s self-communication to human beings.\textsuperscript{23} Revelation engages a person’s created self-transcendence, a supernatural quality of the mind. Revelation provides a “supernaturally elevated transcendence,”\textsuperscript{24} which fosters a “divinized” view of reality.\textsuperscript{25} In Christ, “the unique and final culmination of this history of revelation has already occurred.”\textsuperscript{26} God’s self-disclosure was made directly to the prophets and in Christ; subsequent believers rely upon the “social, ecclesial” mediation of Revelation through the

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] Ibid., 334.
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] Ibid., 301, 300.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Ibid., 287-288.
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] Ibid., 337.
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] Ibid., 384-387.
\item[\textsuperscript{21}] Ibid., 419.
\item[\textsuperscript{22}] Ibid., 368-370.
\item[\textsuperscript{24}] Ibid., 13.
\item[\textsuperscript{25}] Ibid., 16.
\item[\textsuperscript{26}] Ibid., 14.
\end{itemize}
Church. When God self-discloses to a human being, Revelation occurs: “Only in Christ do even the holy scriptures of the Old Testament possess an inner and external canon as a guiding principle of their own interpretation,” yet Christians must recognize them as “a genuine history of the revelation of the Father of our Lord.”

Joseph Ratzinger, in his essays “Revelation and Tradition” and “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition” (1965) offered a personalistic view of Revelation as God’s self-disclosure in speech and action. Ratzinger’s first essay proposed five theses to explain the relation of Revelation and Tradition: first, “Revelation means God’s whole speech and action with man . . . it is more than Scripture to the extent that reality exceeds information about it;” second, the New Testament writings “understand by ‘scripture’ only the Old Testament” whose meaning has “come to light in the Christ-event;” third, “The actual reality which occurs in Christian revelation is nothing and no other than Christ himself;” fourth, “the explication of the Christ-reality” occurs in the Church’s proclamation of the Gospel, interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, and interpreting the New Testament by the Spirit now dwelling in the Church; fifth, “Tradition by its very nature is always interpretation, does not exist independently, but only as exposition, interpretation according to the scriptures.”

In his essay “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” Ratzinger concluded that the decree brought together “three different theological conceptions” which

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27 Ibid., 20.
29 “Revelation and Tradition,” 35.
30 Ibid., 37.
31 Ibid., 40.
32 Ibid., 41–42.
33 Ibid., 47.
were “linked by the fundamental tendency which they have in common:”³⁴ first, a pneumatological conception that stressed “they dynamic character of the Christ-reality present in the Church;” second, a ceremonial conception which included ecclesial customs; and third a dogmatic conception that “emphasized the fact that the phenomenon of traditio extends to the domain of fides also.”³⁵

In retrospect, once can recognize on the eve of the Second Vatican Council that the theology of Revelation included contrasting perspectives, ranging from the more doctrinal and noetic views of Pope Pius XII and Gerardus Van Noort to the more historical and personalist views of Congar, Rahner and Ratzinger.

The Teaching of Vatican II about Revelation

In his speech announcing the forthcoming council, Pope John XXIII indicated his desire to present Christianity anew to a world that was both confused and spiritually hungry.³⁶ He emphasized that “the grace of Christ continues to multiply fruits and portents of spiritual elevation, of salvation and holiness,” but lamented “the abuse and compromise of the freedom of man” who “rejected faith in Christ, the Son of God, redeemer of the world” and “devotes himself entirely to the search for the so-called goods of the earth.”³⁷ John XXIII convened a Council in order to “recall ancient forms for stating doctrine and for making wise provision for Church discipline” as well as for the “enlightenment, edification, and joy of the entire Christian people” and to foster unity with other Christians and

³⁴ “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 62.
³⁵ Ibid., 62-63.
³⁷ Ibid., 4.
friendship with non-Christians. John XXIII stated in his opening speech to the Council, Gaudet mater ecclesia, his hope that

the whole of Christian doctrine, with no part of it lost, be received in our times by all with a new fervor . . . . For the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our venerable doctrine is one thing; the fashion in which they are expressed, with the same meaning and the same judgment, is another thing.  

The pope also preferred a policy of explaining rather than condemning: “But at the present time, the spouse of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity.”

The Council’s preparatory documents (1960-1962), however, did not utilize the ressourcement, transcendentalist, or personalist approaches of theologians like Congar, Rahner and Ratzinger. The “Brief Outline” of a “Constitution on the Sources of Divine Revelation” asserted the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, Tradition as explaining Scripture, and the Magisterium’s authority to interpret both. Scripture was seen as containing some truths, Tradition others. The “Brief Outline” of a “Constitution on Defending the Deposit of Faith” (1960) asserted that the Magisterium's primary duty was defending Revelation. In the “New Formula for the Profession of Faith” (1960), Scripture and Tradition were presented as the sources of revealed truths what were to be explained by the Magisterium.

Revelation was considered in three of the Preparatory Theological Commission’s schemata that were available at the opening of the Council in 1962: On the Sources of

38 Ibid., 5-6.  
39 John XXIII, “Gaudet Mater Ecclesia,” AAS 54/3-4: 786-796, at 791-792.  
40 Ibid., 792.  
41 “Brief Outline” of a Constitution on the Sources of Revelation, The four “Brief Outlines” are not available in a published volume; the translations of these outlines and of other Vatican II drafts were provided by Joseph A. Komonchak.  
42 “Brief Outline” of a Constitution on Defending the Deposit of Faith, §§ 5-6.  
Revelation (De Fontibus Revelationis), On Defending the Purity of the Deposit of Faith (De Deposito Fidei), and On the Church (De Ecclesia). De Fontibus portrayed Revelation as disclosed by Christ, expressed in Tradition, recorded in Scripture, and taught by the Magisterium. The Holy Spirit inspires Scripture, illumines bishops, and bestows a sense of the faith. De Fontibus offered neither a systematic portrait of Revelation nor a discussion of an organic interlinking of Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium. De Deposito Fidei considered the intellectual aspects of Revelation, while stating that God “in his great love revealed himself to us in the Lord Jesus;”\(^{44}\) Christ perfects Revelation in His words and actions (§ 18); the Church teaches the mysteries of God’s Triune Being and His plan of salvation. However, De Deposito did not articulate the role of the Holy Spirit in the transmission of Revelation.

In regard to Revelation, De Ecclesia tended to rely on the teaching of Humani Generis: the Father sends the Son, who establishes the Church, and endows the Magisterium with “the charism of indefectible truth” (§ 28). The Pope is the primary teacher and strengthens bishops in the Faith; he teaches truths that have been “written or handed-down” in the Church by the “directing light” of the Spirit (§ 30). De Ecclesia characterized the laity as “helpers of the Magisterium” in transmitting Revelation. De Verbo Dei, the schema for a pastoral decree on the Word of God, taught that the Word of God was food, as important as the Eucharist; this view would be reflected in Vatican II’s statement (Dei Verbum §21) that the Church “receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God’s word and of Christ’s body.”\(^{45}\)

\(^{44}\) “De Deposito Fidei Pure Custodiendo,” ADA II-III-II: 54-86, at 56.

\(^{45}\) “Dei Verbum”: ex mensa tam verbi Dei quam Corporis Christi panem vitae sumere atque fidelibus porrigere, AAS 58: 817-836, at 827.
Dei Verbum taught that Revelation, given through historical events, is transmitted without corruption: “In His gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations” (§ 7). Chapter I described Revelation as God’s disclosure of Himself and His plan for our salvation, through deeds and words possessing an inner unity. Christ commissioned the Apostles to teach the Gospel—a commission that they fulfilled through preaching, example, and liturgy.

Chapter II then discussed the transmission of Revelation: “The apostolic preaching, expressed in a special way” in Scripture “was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers” (§ 8). The faithful, together with the bishops, hold fast to Revelation in Scripture and Tradition, intelligently explaining it, and handing it on in the Church’s teaching, life, and worship. Scripture and Tradition, which are “closely connected and communicate closely,” “flow from the same divine wellspring” and “merge into a unity and tend toward the same end” of manifesting God’s Word (§9). Scripture and Tradition “form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church” (§10). Dei Verbum called upon all the faithful to “hold fast to this deposit” and “remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and prayers” in “a single common effort.” Finally, Christ has entrusted exclusively to the Magisterium the task of authoritatively interpreting the Word of God. Chapter 2 of Dei Verbum concluded by teaching (§ 10): “It is clear, therefore, that the sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s wise design, are so linked and joined that one cannot stand without the others.”
The other major conciliar discussion of the mediation of Revelation was in *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*, § 25), which pointed out that the preaching of the Gospel is an “eminent” duty of bishops, who are to draw “new things” out of the deposit of faith, and illustrate that faith by the light of the Spirit. Similar to the teaching of Vatican I that the pope may (under specific conditions) exercise the Church’s infallibility, Vatican II taught that the college of bishops in communion with the pope may also exercise the Church’s infallibility. The Church’s infallibility extends as far as the Deposit, which the Church is to guard religiously and expound faithfully. When the Pope or the college of bishops “define a judgment, they pronounce it in accordance with revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with.” This Revelation, which is “written or orally handed down is transmitted in its entirety” through the Pope and bishops and “under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded.”

At Vatican II, the treatment of Revelation was amplified from the intellectual, noetic emphasis of the preparatory documents to a more historical and personalistic perspective. While framing Revelation in terms of a personal and historical relationship, the Council retained the teaching of Vatican I and *Humani Generis* that human beings can know God through created things. The new theological developments about the theology of Revelation that were discussed by Congar, Ratzinger, and Rahner were reflected in the conciliar perspective that differed notably from previous Scholastic treatments. Accordingly, the Council provided a new perspective about the relationship and interdependence of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium.
In his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998), Pope John Paul II adopted a Christological approach towards Revelation, by emphasizing the human search for meaning and salvation (§ 1). The pope emphasized both the validity of faith and reason and reason’s ability to attain truth. The answer to human questions is Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, who discloses the Triune God. Without Christ, the mystery of personal existence remains an insoluble riddle (§ 12). Relying on the principle, *Credo ut Intellegam* (I believe in order to understand), the pope pointed out that embracing Revelation provides access to and direction by Divine Wisdom. The complementary principle, *Intellego ut Credam* (I understand in order to believe) shows that the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood indicates maturity. Indeed, the history of faith and reason shows that a common pursuit of good can overcome the “historical drama” of the separation of faith and reason (§ 45).

*Fides et Ratio* also discussed the role of the Magisterium in matters of faith and reason: “the supreme rule of faith derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others” (§ 55). The section on “The Interaction Between Philosophy and Theology” started with the *auditus fidei*, the appropriation of Scripture and Tradition, articulated in Magisterial documents, while the *intellectus fidei* means that a person inquires into the revealed mysteries of faith in order to articulate them. Accordingly, theology must renew its methods, contemplate the mystery of the Triune God, and better serve evangelization. Although Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium were described as interdependent, *Fides et Ratio* did not discuss the role of
Tradition in the mediation of Revelation. The fact that Tradition can communicate Revelation not only in verbal but also in sacramental ways might help address such contemporary concerns as the adequacy of language and intellectual realism in the mediation of Revelation.

Retrospect and Prospect

What is evident in the period from Pius XII’s *Humani Generis* and Van Noort’s *Dogmatic Theology* to Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* is that there has been a significant change in the understanding of Revelation and its transmission. The change from the intellectual and Scholastic viewpoint of *Humani Generis* to the historical and personalist viewpoint of *Dei Verbum* was prompted by the theological perspectives of theologians like Congar, Rahner and Ratzinger. In a sense, *Fides et Ratio* both summarized the *status quaestionis* about some aspects of the theology of Revelation and provided a point of departure for further discussion of the meaning of Revelation and its mediation. The fact that John Paul II wrote *Fides et Ratio*, a third of a century after the promulgation of *Dei Verbum*, suggests that the Church’s reception of the Vatican II’s teaching on Revelation and its mediation is still in process and that further progress is possible.
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