The origin of this book goes back as far as 1938 to the first publication in German of the Church’s doctrinal documents edited by J. Neuner and H. Roos under the title Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung. Later editions of that book were prepared by K. Rahner, the two editors being prevented by circumstances from pursuing their work. An English translation of the sixth edition of the work was brought out by Mercier Press, Cork, Ireland, in 1967, under the title The Teaching of the Catholic Church. In 1969 the Mercier Press licensed an Indian edition of the book. This was mostly a reprint of the English edition; except for a few modifications and additions, it innovated only by appending to each chapter a survey of the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council.

The profound changes in theological thinking characteristic of recent years have, however, made it desirable to produce a new edition of the Church’s doctrinal documents. Not only was an updating of the material required in order to include some characteristic texts of Vatican II and post-conciliar documents; it seemed also necessary to leave out some texts which have lost their relevance while re-introducing others. The introductions to the chapters had to be re-written in the light of the Council’s doctrine; those to the various documents had to be revised in the light of recent scholarship. Translations needed amending and have in many cases been done anew. Most of all, it seemed opportune to introduce new chapters so as to cover some important fields of modern theology.

This work has enlisted the collaboration of professors belonging to the two theological faculties of Vidyajyoti, Institute of Religious Studies, Delhi, and of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune. Individual chapters were prepared by the following authors: Symbols and Professions of Faith, Chapters VI, XI, XII, XIII, XV: J. Dupuis; Chapters I, III, VII, XVI: J. Neuner; Chapter II: R. Van de Walle; Chapters IV, V: P. De Letter; Chapters VIII, IX: J. Lerch; Chapter X: G. Gispert-Sauch; Chapters XIV, XVII, XX: G. Gilleman; Chapters XVIII, XXII: G. Lobo; Chapters XIX, XXIII: A. Bermejo;
Chapter XXI: F. Timmermans. The coordination and unification of the chapters is the work of the two editors. The responsibility for the book in its present form lies therefore with them only. The editors wish to express their gratitude to the authors for their co-operation.

Since the first edition of the forerunner of this book in 1938 other publications of Church documents have appeared in various languages. It is in the nature of these works that they are all inter-related and mutually dependent as regards the selection and arrangement of texts as well as the evaluation and interpretation of the documents provided in various introductions and notes. As other collections have derived some help from the predecessor of the present book, it has in turn drawn some inspiration from them. Mention may be made of G. Dumeige, La Foi Catholique, Paris 1969. Above all, however, it is on the new edition of the Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum first made by A. Schönmetzer in 1962 that every new collection of doctrinal documents necessarily depends as its main source. The editors gratefully acknowledge the help derived by them from these various sources.

J. Neuner—J. Dupuis
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CONCORDANCE OF DENZINGER-SCHÖNMETZER WITH NEUNER-DUPUIS 1088
Catholic theology must be taught "in the light of faith and under the guidance of the Church's teaching authority" (OT 16). It must be solidly anchored in the word of God, "which ought to be, as it were, the soul of all theology" (ibid.). But reflection on divine revelation is not the private pursuit of individuals; it is a task entrusted by Jesus Christ to the Church herself, which she must perform under the vigilance of the teaching office established by him as the custodian of his word. Keeping it faithfully and transmitting it through her living tradition, guided by it as by her ultimate norm, the Church has grown through the centuries in her awareness of the content of the deposit of faith committed to her. The responsibility of her teaching office consists in authentically declaring the divine deposit, in expanding and in interpreting it through the centuries in accordance with the changing conditions of the times and the specific needs of each generation. Thanks to this charism of interpretation, the same message endures through the centuries of Christianity, ever true to itself and capable of reaching out to the contemporary world of every age.

To ensure continuity in the task of proclaiming the revealed word to the modern world, this is the function of the doctrinal documents issued by the Church through the centuries; this shows their indispensable place in a study of theology that wishes to be at once creative and faithful to the past. The Church's living tradition today is the sum total of twenty centuries of Christian faith and life, and this no attempt at presenting the Christian message to modern people can afford to ignore. An accurate reading, however, of Church documents requires a keen theological discernment, capable of evaluating their content and of distinguishing in them elements of lasting value from others that time has rendered obsolete.

The deep significance of doctrinal documents lies in the authoritative guidance which they have provided in the past and still provide today for the correct understanding of divine revelation. In the course of history the Church has rejected errors which tended to disfigure the word of God and to evacuate the Christian message; she has done so with a sure instinct for the implications of the deposit entrusted to her. As her consciousness grew, she has unfolded what was latent in the message and, as
circumstances required, she has expressed it in more articulate formulations. Her solemn pronouncements of faith give authentic expression to the unchanging word of God; in their deep meaning and intention they remain valid for all times and can never be contradicted by new enunciations.

This is not to say that an absolute value necessarily attaches to the traditional concepts of ancient formulations. For the revealed truth lies beyond human concepts, all of which are essentially inadequate to express it fully. No matter how deeply traditional and founded on authoritative teaching they may be, these concepts are but pointers to a mystery which they can never encompass and whose content they can never exhaust. The definitions even of the early Councils intend no more than to indicate a direction along which the Christian mystery can appropriately be thought. They are not last but first words; not boundaries but signposts. St. Thomas Aquinas knew that "that act of faith is directed not to an enunciation but to the reality" that lies beyond it. ¹ Never exhausted by any formulation, this reality remains always open to new and deeper insights.

Human concepts, moreover, fall under the law of historical evolution, and this imposes on them a further unavoidable limitation. As their meaning evolves in the course of time, faithfulness to the intention of ancient formulations may at a later period recommend the use of new concepts. For, as every human discourse, the expression of the Church's faith is subject to the law of change inherent to human language.

Our own times have become more deeply aware of this twofold limitation that affects the discourse of the Church's faith. Under the impulse given it by Pope John XXIII,² the Second Vatican Council has reminded theologians that "the deposit of faith, that is the truths contained in it, are one thing, the manner of formulating these truths, while keeping the same sense and meaning, is another" (GS 62). To discern the intention of the faith through the concepts in which it is formulated, to recognise in its various expressions—all of which are conditioned by space and time—the faith of all times and of all places, is the task of the interpreter of doctrine.

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¹ Summa Theologica, II, II, 1, 2, ad 2.
² Discourse on the opening day of the Second Vatican Council, cf. AAS 54 (1962) 792.
Besides, and more important than, the limitations inherent in human language are those derived from the historical situation of the documents which affects their doctrine. This is in itself historically conditioned. The documents of the Church are occasional pronouncements, usually intended to meet the challenge of definite errors. The historical circumstances in which they were written called for emphasising those elements of the faith which were being threatened. The need for emphasis, however, is by nature little conducive to a harmonious and well-poised formulation of doctrine. The formulation is the more easily selective and one-sided as the documents bear more deeply the stamp of current controversies. In the process full justice is not always done to other facets of the revealed message nor are the truths expressed always properly focussed. Much less do the documents present a complete account of the Christian message. In fact, its most intimate core is rarely touched upon by them; this is taken for granted rather than explicitly stated. And, while the correct conceptual enunciation of the mysteries of the faith is stressed and officially formulated, little is said about knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (cf. Jn 17:3) as constituting the essence of the Christian life, and about the radical demand made on the Christian to follow Christ in the mystery of his death and resurrection.

In the history of the Church’s General Councils Vatican II is, perhaps, the first to be almost entirely free of controversial overtones; this is why, though less doctrinal than pastoral in purpose, it has succeeded better than its predecessors in establishing the balance between complementary aspects of the faith. It is significant to observe that the last Council points to a “hierarchy” of the truths contained in Catholic doctrine, which is based on “their different relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith” (UR II), and advocates a “fraternal rivalry” by which all Christians “will be spurred on to a deeper knowledge and a clearer expression of the unfathomable riches of Christ” (ibid.). In the same direction, Vatican II also recognises more clearly than did the ancient Councils of union the full legitimacy of differences between East and West in the theological enunciation of doctrine—which “diverse theological formulations are often to be considered as mutually complementary rather than conflicting” (UR 17). By these words the Council states the
principles of legitimate pluralism in the expression of the faith—a principle which in past centuries has often been overlooked.

What has been said above goes to show that the theological interpretation of Church documents is a delicate task. Their doctrinal value must be assessed; this is done in two ways. It may first be asked what claim the nature of a document makes to be an expression of the most fundamental data of the Christian faith. From this point of view the symbols and Professions of Faith of ancient origin hold a privileged position. Hence the prominence given to them in this book, where they are treated in the first place and where an effort is made to follow their historical development. Distinct from the question of the relationship of truths to the fundamental data of the Christian faith is the question of the degree of authority with which any document pronounces on matters connected with it. It is important to discern to what extent the teaching authority of the Church is involved in each text.

All statements in which the legitimate authority of the Church pronounces on matters pertaining to the divine revelation demand an inner assent on the part of the members of the Church. But not all have the same value. Only the universal authority, including General Councils and Popes, can make final pronouncements. The criterion by which to recognise them is the Church's own intention as expressed in each document. The concrete application of this principle, however, is a delicate matter, for the Church's precise intention is not always easily discerned. Modern historical criticism has brought to light the fact that not every proposition censured with Anathema implies a definition of the truth contradictorily opposed. Not all documents of General Councils, not even all their canons, are proposed as infallible definitions. The precise dogmatic value of documents remains in many cases open to question. In such cases the irrevocability of propositions is to be ascertained and cannot be presumed. Other texts, which by themselves make no claim to infallibility, have through the subsequent approbation of the Roman Pontiffs or through the general acceptance which they have received from the Church, acquired a high degree of authority. Where the need arises, this volume indicates the doctrinal value of documents in the measure in which it can at present be prudently assessed.
A note of caution must be added as regards the judicious use that must be made of any collection of doctrinal texts. The danger of using such a collection in too mechanical a manner has been pointed out in recent years. It easily leads to what has been stamped as "Denzinger theology"—a theology in which creativity and personal appropriation of the message are stifled by the repetition of trite formulas. The fact is then overlooked that, while no theology can afford to ignore the heritage of the past, neither can it forego its obligation to contribute to a deeper assimilation of the revealed truth. In this task its main point of reference remains the word of God. Such a theology, moreover, tends to isolate the documents from the ideological context in which they arose and from the life of the Church at the particular period during which they were written. The result is that formulations the precise meaning of which must be discovered against their historical background, tend to be treated as parts of a timeless system of doctrine. In addition, little attention is paid to the fact that a collection is made up of documents hailing from sources of vastly different doctrinal authority, ranging from General Councils to papal encyclicals and decrees of the Roman Congregations. In the process, the Church’s teaching office itself is wrongly treated as a uniform, monolithic thing, as a supra-temporal structure disengaged from her socio-historical reality. It is therefore supremely important to counteract the impression that the presentation in one collection of sources of vastly different origin and doctrinal value may easily create, by relating each document to its historical context and ascertaining its precise authority.

In an essay on "The Correct Use of Denzinger".1 Y. Congar, while recognising the merits of the Enchiridion on which every collection of Church documents in modern times has been based, also points to some serious deficiencies. Most important among these is the fact that the Enchiridion is sometimes unduly selective. Some texts have been truncated with the result that only one aspect of the truth expressed in particular documents has been preserved, complementary aspects also mentioned in the texts being lost sight of. Such a grievous omission occurs in the declaration of the Roman primacy made by the Council of

1. Y. CONGAR, Situation et tâches de la théologie (Paris 1967) 111-133.
Florence in its *Decree for the Greeks*, where Denzinger omits the complementary declaration made by the same document of the traditional privileges of the Oriental patriarchates. The same author observes with satisfaction that the recent edition of the *Enchiridion* provided by A. Schönmetzer makes good most of these losses. Yet, even in its present form the *Enchiridion* is not altogether without blemish. The extraordinary magisterium of the General Councils and of papal definitions finds in it its due place; prominence is also rightly given to those particular Councils which in the course of time have acquired much authority through papal confirmation or the broad acceptance mostly of the Western Church. The material representing the Church's ordinary magisterium is, however, too exclusively limited to its Roman expression, with special emphasis on papal encyclicals, while other organs of the same ordinary magisterium are not sufficiently heard. Y. Congar recognises that to supplement this deficiency much work would need to be done, which would require enlisting the collaboration of an international team of scholars. This remains a task for the future.

It was beyond the scope of the present work and beyond the means at the disposal of the editors to improve much on Denzinger-Schönmetzer in this direction. The main novel feature of the work lies elsewhere. In the last decades some areas of theological studies to which in the past little attention had been paid have received new emphasis, and other new fields have emerged. To cope with this broadened theological interest, the scope of the book has been widened beyond the frame-work of traditional treatises and new chapters have been added. These include: "The Church and the World Religions", "The Church and the Missions", "Christian Worship". Moreover, it was also found desirable to cover some areas of Christian morality never included before in collections of Church documents in modern languages. In the vast field of Christian living a strict selection had, however, to be made; some topics have been selected because of the growing importance they have received in recent years. They fall under three chapters: "Principles of Christian Life"; "The Social Doctrine of the Church"; "Sexual Order and Respect for Life". These limitations notwithstanding, the enlarged material and broadened scope of this new book justify its new title. *The Christian Faith* extends here not only to orthodoxy but to
ORTHOPRAXY as well; it is viewed in all its dimensions and related to the realities of the modern world.

Widening the scope of the book implied enlarging the volume which has grown to a size considerably greater than its predecessor, The Teaching of the Catholic Church. Severe limits were therefore imposed on the editors as regards the selection of the material related to the new topics. Only such texts could be included as have played an important role in the development of the doctrine and through which this development can be followed. Texts of a different nature, for instance liturgical texts or other witnesses of the Church's faith and practice, had to be left out of consideration. By and large, the principle of selection remains the same as in the other chapters. Apart from a few significant entries from the ordinary magisterium of local Churches, the stress remains on the Church's central teaching authority.

Other original features of the book have been mentioned in the Foreword. They are all parts of a general up-dating, in approach and content, which the important movement of return to the sources and of new theological reflection, characteristic of recent years, have made necessary. Ten years ago, this movement led to the Second Vatican Council, and the Council itself has given it a new point of departure. Prominence had therefore to be given to the Council's doctrine, in which the great theological themes are solidly based on the universal data of scripture and tradition and presented in relation to the life of the Church. To let the new orientation proper to Vatican II stand out against the background of previous documents, quoting extensive passages was not required in view of the fact that every theological student has access to the complete collection of the conciliar documents. In the case of the Council's ecclesiological doctrine, to make a judicious selection was found impracticable; for other topics important key-passages are explicitly quoted. But the Council's doctrine is in all cases presented by way of synthetic introductions following the order of the various chapters, with ample references to the Council documents.

It is hoped that this new book, with its original features, enlarged material and broadened scope, will provide students of theology with an instrument better fitted to help them perceive all the dimensions of the Christian faith. It is also hoped that it
will foster doctrinal clarity and a keen sense of the historical unfolding of Catholic doctrine through the centuries, both of which are of vital importance for our time.

Scripture quotations occurring in the documents are normally given according to the Revised Standard Version; this rule is, however, purposely departed from wherever the intention of the documents is clearly to argue from the Vulgate text. The translation of excerpts of some papal encyclicals is borrowed from, or based upon, the text provided by the Catholic Truth Society, London; that of the documents of the Second Vatican Council is mostly based on the text published by The Clergy Monthly. This dependence on previous translations is herewith gratefully acknowledged. To the introduction to each chapter an analytical table of its main points of doctrine is appended for easy reference to the relevant texts. A chronological table of documents, a biblical index and an analytical and onomastic index are given at the end of the volume. The volume closes with a concordance with the other editions of Church documents mentioned in this introduction.

15 April, 1973

J. Neuner—J. Dupuis
Each chapter has its number followed by the numbers of the successive texts. Thus the texts of the first chapter have the numbers 101, 102, etc., those of the second chapter the numbers 201, 202, etc. In this way the number of each text indicates the chapter to which it belongs. The Symbols and Professions of Faith, which are placed at the beginning and form a unit by themselves, have no key number, but only serial numbers: 1, 2, etc. The numbers of the volume are printed in heavy Roman type in the margin. For the sake of easy reference to the original Greek or Latin, the corresponding numbers in Denzinger-Schönmetzer are added for all texts found in that collection; these are printed in italics. For documents which are not found in Denzinger-Schönmetzer the sources are indicated in the introductions to the texts.

Numbers of the volume printed between brackets ( ) indicate either documents which are not quoted but to which an introduction is given or parts of documents which are not quoted but only summarised. For texts quoted elsewhere in the volume cross-references are given. Both in the introductions to the documents and in the texts, cross references indicate the numbers of this volume; / following a number refers to the introduction to that number. For documents not quoted in the volume, references are given to their numbers in Denzinger-Schönmetzer (DS). Numbers between square brackets [ ] indicate condemned propositions. A system of sub-numbers has been introduced; these are not always continuous, but indicate, for the sake of easy reference, the serial numbers of the propositions contained in the documents quoted.

ABBREVIATIONS FOR SOURCES

AAS Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Rome, 1909...
Acta refers to the Acta of a particular Pope.
Mansi J.D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, Florence, 1759....
DS H. Denzinger-A. Schönmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morum,
Freiburg im Breisgau, ed. 36, 1976.


**ABBREVIATIONS FOR THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td><em>Apostolicam Actuositatem</em>, Decree on the apostolate of the laity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td><em>Ad Gentes</em>, Decree on the missionary activity of the Church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td><em>Christus Dominus</em>, Decree on the pastoral office of bishops in the Church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td><em>Dignitatis Humanae</em>, Declaration on religious freedom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td><em>Dei Verbum</em>, Dogmatic Constitution on divine revelation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td><em>Gravissimum Educationis</em>, Declaration on Christian education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td><em>Gaudium et Spes</em>, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td><em>Inter Mirifica</em>, Decree on mass communications media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td><em>Lumen Gentium</em>, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td><em>Nostra Aetate</em>, Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OE</td>
<td><em>Orientalium Ecclesiarum</em>, Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td><em>Optatam Totius</em>, Decree on priestly formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td><em>Perfectae Caritatis</em>, Decree on the adaptation and renewal of the religious life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td><em>Presbyterorum Ordinis</em>, Decree on the ministry and life of priests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td><em>Unitatis Redintegratio</em>, Decree on Ecumenism.</td>
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**OTHER ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td><em>Catechism of the Catholic Church</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>“Dialogue and Mission”</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>“Dialogue and Proclamation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td><em>Evangelii Nuntiandi</em></td>
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<td>ES</td>
<td><em>Ecclesiam Suam</em></td>
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<td>RH</td>
<td><em>Redemptor Hominis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td><em>Redemptoris Missio</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td><em>Fides et Ratio</em></td>
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVENTH REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

Nearly thirty years have passed since *The Christian Faith* was first published in 1973. The Foreword and the Introduction to the first edition explained its special features, including chapters on topics of theological interest to which previous collections of doctrinal documents had devoted no special treatment, and the enlarging of the material to include key passages of the documents of the Second Vatican Council as well as of post-conciliar documents. Each edition that followed, at a rhythm of about five years, comprised a further updating till the time of publication. Following this tradition, the present seventh revised and enlarged edition updates the material up to the year 1999, included. The principle of selection of documents among the ever growing material, has remained the same as in previous editions: the stress remains, unavoidably, but not exclusively, on the Church’s central teaching authority, though significant documents from episcopal conferences and their federations have also been included.

It is a pleasant duty to thank all the colleagues who through the years have collaborated to the various editions. The names of the contributors to the first edition are mentioned in the Foreword. All belonged to the two Jesuit theological faculties of India. The same team of authors did the updating of the various chapters of the book down to the fifth edition (1991), included. A change intervened for the sixth edition, when circumstances made it imperative to seek the collaboration of professors of the Gregorian University in Rome, who generously took over from the Indian colleagues the responsibility for the further updating. The contributors for the sixth edition (1995) were: J. Wicks (chs. 1, 2), G. O’Collins (chs. 3, 6), L. Ladaria (chs. 4, 5, 19, 23), W. Henn (chs. 8, 9), Ch. Pottie (chs. 12, 13, 16, 18), Ph. Rosato (chs. 14, 15, 17), B. Johnstone (chs. 20, 22), P. McNellis (ch. 21), J. Dupuis, (professions of faith, chs. 7, 10, 11). For the present seventh edition, the team of scholars remains the same, with some exceptions due to circumstances. We have enrolled the collaboration of some new members, according to their respective specialties, for the updating of some chapters: M. Farrugia (chs. 4, 5, 16, 18, 19, 23), J. Joblin (ch. 21). To all, past and present, goes our gratitude for their willing and competent collaboration.
We also extend our thanks to sister Mary Peter Froelicher, shcj, for updating the indexes of this new edition.

This seventh edition brings the updating of the book down to the end of the second millennium. It is hoped that it may do to teachers and students of the beginning of the third millennium the same service as its predecessors have done for the last thirty years to those that went before them.

30 June 2000, Gregorian University, Rome

Jacques Dupuis, S.J.
SYMBOLS AND PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

The earliest profession of faith in the apostolic Church is Christological. It is expressed in three concise formulas: 'Jesus is the Christ' (cf. Acts 2:36; 10:36; Col 2:6); 'Jesus is the Lord' (1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9; cf. Acts 2:36; Phil 2:11); 'Jesus is the Son of God' (cf. Acts 9:20; 13:33; Rom 1:4; Heb 4:14). Soon it received a more ample development in which the Christ-event, the central event of salvation history, is progressively elaborated upon (1 Cor 15:3-4; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16). A further development in the life of the apostolic Church is the introduction of a Trinitarian profession of faith. This is a natural evolution, for the Trinitarian confession was latent in the Christological (cf. Acts 2:33) and implied in the early kerygma (cf. Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 13:16-41). The Trinitarian profession of faith in the New Testament is best witnessed to by Mt 28:19-20 and 2 Cor 13:13; it corresponds to the Trinitarian teaching of the apostles (cf. Eph 1:3-14).

The post-apostolic Church inherited this double expression of the Christian faith, the Trinitarian and the Christological in its elaborate form. The "Apostles' Creed"—called thus by Rufinus and St. Ambrose in the fourth century—seems to result from the amalgamation of the two; hence the more evolved form of its second article referring to Christ. The legendary tradition according to which the "Apostles' Creed", made up of twelve articles, would have been composed by the apostles themselves, has long been exploded. Yet, though not composed by the apostles, the "Apostles' Creed" can legitimately be considered to represent their faith. Its origin can be reconstituted by having recourse to early documents. Among these only a few are mentioned here; they have been selected because of their historical importance in the development of the symbol of the apostles. A papyrus found at Dér-Balîzêh has preserved a purely Trinitarian profession of faith. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus contains a baptismal profession of faith, Trinitarian in structure but with a more ample Christological development. The Trinitarian formula goes back to 2 Cor 13:13 and Mt 28:19; the Christological development to 1 Cor 15:3-6 and 1 Cor 12:3.
THE SYMBOL OF ST. AMBROSE (d. 397)

St. Ambrose seems to have been the first to refer to the Symbol of faith as "Symbol of the Apostles". He explains it in an opuscule called Explanation of the Symbol, the text of which he probably dictated to a scribe. The author refers to it also as the "Symbol of Rome". This is not intended to mean that the text coincides strictly with that in use in Rome (cf. n. 5), but that the content is substantially the same. The text of the Symbol can be reconstituted by joining together the articles interspersed by St. Ambrose's explanations.

3 I believe in God, the Father almighty,

13 And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, wherefrom he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body.

THE SYMBOL OF RUFINUS (c. 404)

Rufinus too makes reference to the "Symbol of the Apostles". While writing c. 404 to explain the text used in Aquilae, he gives an account of its few divergences from the text accepted in Rome (cf. n. 5). Unlike the Ambrosian text (cf. n. 3), that of Rufinus contains the reference to Christ's descent to the dead.

4 I believe in God, the Father almighty, invisible and impassible,

16 And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried. He went down to the dead (ad inferna). On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body.

THE SYMBOL OF THE ROMAN ORDER OF BAPTISM

This is the form of the "Symbol of the Apostles" accepted in Rome during the tenth century, but already previously recognised throughout the
Western Church. Ninth century codices witness to its being used in Gaul in the local language. Except for accidental variants, this text of the "Symbol of the Apostles" will thereafter remain traditional in the West. It has both the Trinitarian structure and the large Christological development. Numbers in the text indicate the division in twelve articles, on which is based the legendary tradition which attributes it to the twelve apostles. Proper to the West, this Symbol is unknown to the Eastern Churches. These will always refer to the Creed of Nicaea (cf. nn. 7-8) as the first authoritative Symbol of the Christian faith.

5 I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth (1).

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord (2), who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (3), suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he went down to the dead (ad inferna) (4). On the third day he rose again from the dead (5). He ascended to the heavens, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty (6), wherefrom he shall come again to judge the living and the dead (7).

I believe in the Holy Spirit (8), the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints (9), the forgiveness of sins (10), the resurrection of the body (11), and the life everlasting (12).

THE SYMBOL OF EUSEBIUS

In a letter addressed to his diocese (325), Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, refers to the profession of faith with which he had been baptised. This testifies to the use of this Symbol around the middle of the third century. Its historical importance consists mostly in the influence it has exercised on the composition of the Symbol of Nicaea (cf. n. 7). The Trinitarian structure is clear: one God, one Lord, one Spirit, refers to Eph 4:4-6 and 1 Cor 8:6. The Christological development contains dogmatic affirmations unknown to the Symbol of the Apostles; the third article merely mentions the Holy Spirit.

6 We believe in one God, the Father almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, the only-begotten Son, first born of all creation, begotten from the Father before all ages, through whom all things were made. For our salvation he became flesh and lived as a man, he suffered and rose again on the third
Epiphanius (d. 403) writes in the context of the already rising trends which deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He thus prepares in advance the doctrine of Constantinople. The short form is quoted here because its more precise formulations as regards the divinity of the Spirit will be adopted by the Council of Constantinople. For the long form, cf. DS 44-45.

10 We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, generated from the Father before all ages, that is, from the being (ousia) of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being (homoousios) with the Father, through whom all things were made, those in the heavens and those on earth. For us and for our salvation he came down from the heavens, and became flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake too he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended to the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; to his Kingdom there will be no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord (to Kurion) and Giver of life, who proceeds (ekporeuomenon) from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. [And] in one Holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

11 As for those who say: “There was a time when he was not”, and “Before being begotten he was not”, or who declare that he was made from nothing, or that the Son of God is from a different substance or being, or subject to change and alteration,—such persons the Catholic and apostolic Church condemns.

THE FIRST GENERAL COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

SYMBOL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (381)

The Council was convened by Emperor Theodosius I to "confirm the faith of Nicaea" and to reaffirm it against the Arian current which had not entirely died out; more particularly the intention was to determine the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—about which Nicaea had remained silent—against various
heretical tendencies, notably that of Eunomius and the Macedonians, also called “Pneumatomachs”, who denied his divinity. The Council was held from May till July 381. It was composed of “150 Fathers”, all from the East. Pope Damasus was not represented. No mention of the Symbol of Constantinople will later be made at Ephesus (431), but Chalcedon (451) will consider it as representing “the faith of the 150 Fathers gathered at Constantinople”; in the West, Constantinople will be regarded as an ecumenical Council only in the sixth century. The post-factum approbation that raises this Byzantine Synod to the rank of General Council extends to its Symbol, and notably to its doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The divinity of the Holy Spirit is proclaimed beyond doubt though in less decisive terms than had been used at Nicaea with regard to the divinity of the Son. The term homoousios is avoided, probably in an effort to win over the Pneumatomachs. To the Symbol are appended various canons, the first of which condemns various errors against the divinity of the Son and of the Spirit.

The Symbol of Constantinople, which will only much later (from the 17th century on) be known as the “Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol” has not been composed by the Council. It is a revised version of the Symbol of Epiphanius of Salamis, contained in his work Ancoratus (374); it differs from it in details only. It incorporates many elements of the Symbol of Nicaea and of the apostolic Symbol; some notations seem to be borrowed from the symbol of Cyril of Jerusalem. Though not a new composition made by the Council of Constantinople, the Symbol seems to have been promulgated by the Council. After gaining recognition, it soon acquired greater authority than the Nicene Creed, even in the West. Introduced first in the East in the liturgy of baptism and then in the Mass, it made its way later into the Western liturgy in a slightly different form (cf. DS 150). The original text is given here.


12 We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, generated from the Father before all ages, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being (homoousios) with the Father, through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from the heavens, and became flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake too he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, he ascended to the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He shall come again in
or else [we shall receive] the penalty of eternal punishment for sins. Read these words, keep them, subject your soul to this faith. From Christ the Lord you will receive both life and reward.

THE PSEUDO-ATHANASIAN SYMBOL QUICUMQUE

This Symbol of faith has, since the seventh century, been wrongly attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), who had attended the Council of Nicaea as a deacon and had later become the champion of the Nicene faith in the East. In reality, the content of the Symbol clearly shows that it belongs to another time and another environment. It is a didactic summary of doctrine, characterised by the Latin approach to the mystery of the Trinity. Its antithetic formulations are much in the manner of St. Augustine. It is an original Latin composition belonging to the end of the fifth century, the author of which remains unknown. It has enjoyed great authority in the Latin Church; its rhythmic character has contributed to its widespread diffusion among various Western Liturgies.


16 Whoever wishes to be saved must, first of all, hold the Catholic faith, for, unless he keeps it whole and inviolate, he will undoubtedly perish for ever.

Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty equally eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such also the Holy Spirit; uncreated is the Father, uncreated the Son, uncreated the Holy Spirit; infinite (immensus) is the Father, infinite the Son, infinite the Holy Spirit; eternal is the Father, eternal the Son, eternal the Holy Spirit; yet, they are not three uncreated beings but one eternal, just as they are not three eternal beings or three infinite beings but one uncreated and one infinite. In the same way, almighty is the Father, almighty the Son, almighty the Holy Spirit; yet, they are not three gods but one God. Thus, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; yet, they are not three lords but one Lord. For, as the Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each person distinctly as God and Lord, so too the Catholic religion forbids us to speak of three gods or lords.

The Father has neither been made by anyone, nor is he created or begotten; the Son is from the Father alone, not made
nor created but begotten; the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is no before or after, no greater or lesser, but all three persons are equally eternal with each other and fully equal. Thus, in all things, as has already been stated above, both unity in the Trinity and Trinity in the unity must be worshipped. Let him therefore who wishes to be saved think this of the Trinity.

17 For his eternal salvation it is necessary, however, that he should also faithfully believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here then is the right faith: We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both and equally God and man. He is God from the substance of the Father, begotten before the ages, and he is man from the substance of a mother, born in time; perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father as to his divinity, less than the Father as to his humanity. Although he is God and man, he is nevertheless one Christ, not two; however, not one because the divinity has been changed into a human body, but because the humanity has been assumed into God; entirely one, not by a confusion of substance but by the unity of personhood. For, as a rational soul and a body are a single human person, so God and man are one Christ. He suffered for our salvation, went down to the underworld (ad infernos), rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended to the heavens, is seated at the right hand of the Father, wherefrom he shall come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all human beings are to rise again with their bodies and to render an account of their own deeds; those who have done good will go to eternal life, but those who have done evil to eternal fire.

This is the Catholic faith. Unless one believes it faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

THE ELEVENTH COUNCIL OF TOLEDO

SYMBOL OF FAITH (675)

(18) Begun on Nov. 7, 675, the provincial Synod of Toledo gathered 17 bishops only. Its Symbol of faith, which formerly was wrongly attributed to Eusebius of Vercelli (d. c. 371), can be considered as the work of the Synod, though its redaction was prepared in advance by the Metropolitan
and a human body, one person in two natures, showed the way of life more clearly. Though immortal and impassible according to his divinity, he, the very same, became passible and mortal according to his humanity. He also suffered and died on the wood of the cross for the salvation of the human race; he went down to the underworld (ad infernos), rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven; but he went down in the soul, rose again in the body and ascended equally in both. He shall come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead and to render to each one according to his works, to the reprobate (reprobis) as well as to the elect. All of them will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear, to receive according to their works, whether these have been good or evil, the ones perpetual punishment with the devil and the others everlasting glory with Christ.

21 There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful outside which no one at all is saved,¹ and in which the priest himself, Jesus Christ, is also the sacrifice (idem ipse sacerdos est sacrificium Jesus Christus). His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body by the divine power and the wine into the blood, to the effect that we receive from what is his in what he has received from what is ours (ut [...] accipiamus ipsi de suo, quod acceptit ipse de nostro) in order that the mystery of unity may be accomplished. Indeed, no one can perform (conficere) this sacrament, except the priest duly ordained according to [the power of] the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ himself conceded to the apostles and their successors. The sacrament of baptism (which is celebrated in water at the invocation of God and of the undivided Trinity, viz. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) conduces to the salvation of children as well as of adults when duly conferred by anyone according to the Church’s form. After receiving baptism, anyone who shall have lapsed into sin can always be restored through true penance. Not only virgins and the continent (continentes), but also married persons, by pleasing God through right faith and good work, merit to attain to eternal happiness.

¹. CYPRIAN OF CARthage, Letter (73) to lubianus, 21.
THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL OF LYONS
“PROFESSION OF FAITH OF MICHAEL PALAEOLOGUS” (1274)

Convened by Pope Gregory X, the second General Council of Lyons was held in six sessions from May 7 to July 17, 1274. Besides reforming the Church, it aimed at bringing to an end the two century old schism between East and West and to bring about the reunion of the Churches. Invited to be personally present at the Council, emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus sent a delegation to Lyons. At the fourth session held on July 6, 1274, what is usually called the “profession of faith of Michael Palaeologus” was read before the Council Fathers. This document was not written at the Council, nor was it accepted by the Greeks as a basis for a doctrinal agreement with the Latins. It was neither promulgated, nor even discussed by the Council Fathers, but simply read from a letter sent by the Byzantine emperor. In this letter, the emperor merely transcribed, without discussion or modification, the text of a profession of faith proposed to him by Pope Clement IV as early as March 4, 1267. In Clement’s mind, this profession contained “the faith of the Holy Roman Church”, the acceptance of which by the Greeks was the pre-required condition for union. If the emperor personally subscribed to it, this was due to his desire to establish union with Rome.

The text is therefore pre-conciliar. It is composed of two parts. The first part takes up with a few alterations a Trinitarian and Christological profession of faith submitted by Pope Leo IX to Peter, patriarch of Antioch, two centuries earlier (1053), that is one year before the consummation of the Eastern Schism (1054). For the redaction of this profession (cf. DS nn. 680-686), Leo IX had leaned heavily on the Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua, a canonical and liturgical compilation made in Southern Gaul towards the end of the fifth century. The second part, written by the theologians of Clement IV, has directly in view the recent discussion with the Greeks; it contrasts abruptly to their “various errors” the current theology of the Latins, mostly as regards the eschatological doctrine, sacramental theology and the primacy of the Roman Church.

In the first part, the Christological doctrine of Chalcedon (cf. nn. 613 ff) is linked to the section of the Trinitarian profession devoted to the second person. The Trinitarian doctrine reflects strongly the Latin approach to the mystery: the unity of nature is the point of departure for the enunciation of the plurality of persons; the procession of the Holy Spirit is conceived after the Latin tradition. Such a one-sided formulation of the mystery was not conducive to establishing union with the Greeks. In the second part, the text of Clement lays stress on the immediate retribution and the nature of purgatory, the two questions raised by the Greeks in the current controversies. But these points are inserted into a complete doctrine of individual eschatology, which will be taken up later by the Council of Florence (cf. nn. 2308 ff), and will

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

become classical. A clause on the general judgment is added to mark the agreement which existed between Greeks and Latins on this point.


First Part

22 We believe in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one almighty God; and that in the Trinity the whole Godhead is the same essence (coessentialis), the same substance (consubstantialis), equally eternal and equally almighty, of one will, one power and majesty. [This Trinity is] the creator of all things created, from whom, in whom, by whom all things exist in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, the corporeal and the spiritual. We believe that each single person in the Trinity is the one true God, fully and perfectly.

23 We believe in the Son of God, Word of God, eternally born from the Father, of the same substance, equally almighty and in all things equal to the Father in divinity; born in time, from the Holy Spirit and from Mary ever Virgin, with a rational soul. He has two births, one an eternal birth from the Father, the other a temporal birth from a mother. He is true God and true man, real (proprium) and perfect in both natures; neither an adoptive son nor an apparent son, but the one and only son of God, in and from two natures, that is, the divine and the human, in the unity of one person. He is impassible and immortal in his divinity, but in his humanity he suffered for us and for our salvation a true bodily passion; he died, was buried, went down to the dead, and on the third day rose again from the dead by a true bodily resurrection. Forty days after his resurrection he ascended into heaven with his risen body and his soul; he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, wherefrom he shall come to judge the living and the dead and to render to each one according to his works, whether these have been good or evil.

24 We believe also in the Holy Spirit, fully, perfectly and truly God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, fully equal, of the same substance, equally almighty and equally eternal with the Father and the Son in all things. We believe that this Holy Trinity is not three gods but one only God, almighty, eternal, invisible and immutable.
25 We believe that the Holy Catholic and apostolic Church is the one true Church, in which are given one holy baptism and the true forgiveness of all sins. We believe also in the true resurrection of this body which we now bear, and in the life eternal. We believe also that God, the Lord almighty, is the one author of the New Testament and the Old, of the Law, the prophets and the apostles.

855 Such is the true Catholic faith, which in the above mentioned articles the most Holy Roman Church holds and preaches.

Second Part

26 But, because of various errors, introduced by some through ignorance and by others out of malice, she says and preaches: that those who after baptism lapse into sin must not be rebaptised, but obtain pardon for their sins through true penance;

856 that, if, being truly repentant, they die in charity before having satisfied by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are cleansed after death by purgatorial and purifying penalties, as Brother John has explained to us;¹ and that to alleviate such penalties the acts of intercession (suffragia) of the living faithful benefit them, namely the sacrifices of the Mass, prayers, alms and other works of piety which the faithful are wont to do for the other faithful according to the Church's institutions.

857 As for the souls of those who, after having received holy baptism, have incurred no stain of sin whatever, and those souls who, after having contracted the stain of sin, have been cleansed, either while remaining still in their bodies or after having been divested of them as stated above, they are received immediately (mox) into heaven.

858 As for the souls of those who die in mortal sin or with original sin only, they go down immediately (mox) to hell (in infernum), to be punished however with different punishments.

¹. This refers to John Parastron, a Franciscan of Greek origin, who acted as mediator between Rome and Byzantium, and was entrusted with the task of conveying to the imperial court and to the patriarchate of Constantinople the Pope's invitation to the Council.
27 The same most Holy Roman Church firmly believes and firmly asserts that nevertheless on the day of Judgment all human persons will appear with their bodies before the judgment-seat of Christ, to render an account of their own deeds [cf. Rom 14:10-12].

28 The same Holy Roman Church also holds and teaches that there are seven sacraments of the Church: one is baptism, which has been mentioned above; another is the sacrament of confirmation which bishops confer by the laying on of hands while they anoint the reborn; then penance, the Eucharist, the sacrament of order, matrimony and extreme unction which, according to the doctrine of the Blessed James, is administered to the sick. The same Roman Church performs (conficit) the sacrament of the Eucharist with unleavened bread; she holds and teaches that in this sacrament the bread is truly transubstantiated into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wine into his blood. As regards matrimony, she holds that neither is a man allowed to have several wives at the same time nor a woman several husbands. But, when a legitimate marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the spouses, she declares that a second and afterwards a third wedding are successively licit, if no other canonical impediment goes against it for any reason.

29 The Holy Roman Church possesses also the highest and full primacy and authority over the universal Catholic Church, which she recognises in truth and humility to have received with fulness of power from the Lord himself in the person of Blessed Peter, the chief or head of the apostles, of whom the Roman pontiff is the successor. And, as she is bound above all to defend the truth of faith, so too, if any questions should arise regarding the faith, they must be decided by her judgment. Anyone accused in matters pertaining to the forum of the Church may appeal to her; and in all causes within the purview of ecclesiastical enquiry, recourse may be had to her judgment. To her all the Churches are subject; their prelates give obedience and reverence to her. Her fulness of power, moreover, is so firm that she admits the other Churches to a share in her solicitude.

The same Roman Church has honoured many of those Churches, and chiefly the Patriarchal Churches, with various privileges, its own prerogative being, however, always observed and safeguarded both in general Councils and in some other matters.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH OF PIUS IV
BULL INIUNCTUM NOBIS (1564)

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), in its "Decree on General Reform" (1563), had legislated that all prelates in the Church would have to make a profession of faith and of obedience to the Roman See. Its formulation was promulgated by Pope Pius IV in the Bull Iniunctum Nobis (13 November 1564), largely under pressure from St. Peter Canisius (d. 1597). It is often called the "Tridentine Profession of Faith", even though the text was not fixed by the Council; it may more adequately be named the "Profession of Faith of Pius IV". Besides repeating the Symbol of Constantinople (cf. n. 12), it sums up the essential doctrinal elements declared by the Council of Trent against the background of the errors of the Reformation. After the First Vatican General Council (1869-1870), a decree of the "Congregation of the Council" (Jan. 20, 1877)1 introduced in the text of Pius IV the reference to that Council with regard to the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office (cf. n. 37). In 1910, Pius X added to it the anti-Modernist oath (cf. n. 143). In 1967, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith promulgated a new text for the profession of faith to be made by law by various categories of persons.2 In this new text, the anti-Modernist oath is suppressed, while to the Symbol of Constantinople a single paragraph is added, which replaces the previous summary of Tridentine doctrine. This paragraph merely mentions the Church's doctrine of faith in general; it goes on to refer especially to the mystery of the Church, of the sacraments, especially the Mass, and to the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.

30 I, N., with firm faith believe and profess each and every article contained in the Symbol of faith which the Holy Roman Church uses:

[There follows the text of the Symbol of Constantinople in its Latin form used in the Roman Liturgy: DS 150 (cf. n. 12)]

31 I most firmly accept and embrace the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same Church. I likewise accept Holy

1. AAS 1877, 71 ff.
2. AAS 59 (1967) 1058.
Scripture according to that sense which Holy Mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures; I shall never accept or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

32 I also profess that there are truly and properly speaking seven sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord and necessary for the salvation of the human race, though not all are necessary for each individual person: [they are] baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order and matrimony. And [I profess] that they confer grace, and that of these, baptism, confirmation and order cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also admit and accept the rites received and approved in the Catholic Church for the administration of all the sacraments mentioned above.

33 I embrace and accept each and all the articles defined and declared by the most Holy Synod of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

34 I also profess that in the Mass there is offered to God a true sacrifice, properly speaking, which is propitiatory for the living and the dead, and that in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist the body and blood together with the soul and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly, really and substantially present, and that there takes place a change (conversio) of the whole substance of bread into the body and of the whole substance of wine into the blood; and this change the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation. I also confess that under each species alone (sub altera tantum specie) the whole and entire Christ and the true sacrament is received.

35 I steadfastly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the acts of intercession (suffragiis) of the faithful; likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ should be venerated and invoked, that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics should be venerated. I firmly declare that the images of Christ and of the Mother of God ever Virgin and of the other saints as well are to be kept and preserved, and that due honour and
veneration should be given to them. I also affirm that the power of indulgences has been left by Christ to the Church, and that their use is very beneficial to the Christian people.

36 I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic and apostolic, Roman Church as the mother and the teacher of all the Churches, and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, successor of Blessed Peter, chief of the apostles, and Vicar of Christ.

37 I unhesitatingly accept and profess also all other things transmitted, defined and declared by the sacred canons and the ecumenical Councils, especially by the most Holy Council of Trent [and by the ecumenical Vatican Council, mostly as regards the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching authority]. At the same time, all contrary propositions and whatever heresies have been condemned, rejected and anathematised by the Church, I too condemn, reject and anathematise.

38 This true Catholic faith, outside of which no one can be saved, which of my own accord I now profess and truly hold, I, N., do promise, vow and swear that, with the help of God, I shall most faithfully keep and confess entire and inviolate, to my last breath, and that I shall take care, as far as it lies in my power, that it be held, taught and preached by those under me, or those over whom I have charge by virtue of my office. So help me God and these his Holy Gospels.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH OF PAUL VI (1968)

On the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul (June 30, 1968), which marked the end of the “year of faith” (1967-1968) called by him one year earlier, Pope Paul VI closed the liturgical celebration with a “solemn profession of faith”. Preoccupied by “the disquiet which at the present time agitates certain quarters with regard to the faith”, the Pope considered it his duty to “fulfil the mandate entrusted by Christ to Peter”, whose successor he is, “to confirm his brothers in the faith”. The Pope expressly declared that, “without being properly speaking a dogmatic definition”, his profession of faith “repeats in substance the Creed of Nicaea, with some developments called for by the spiritual condition of our times”. Besides the clear reference to the Nicene Symbol, it integrates texts from other solemn documents of the Church, in particular the ecclesiological doctrine of
the Second Vatican General Council. Some developments are calculated to restate clearly the Church's faith against the background of recent controversies. The doctrine on original sin and on the Eucharist are cases in point.¹

39/1 We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, creator of things visible such as this world in which our brief life runs its course—and of things invisible—such as the pure spirits which are also called angels [cf. n. 412]—and creator in all human beings of their spiritual and immortal soul [cf. n. 410].

39/2 We believe that this only God is as absolutely one in his infinitely Holy essence as in his other perfections: in his almighty power, his infinite knowledge, his providence, his will and his love. He is 'He who is' as he revealed to Moses [cf. Ex 3:14 Vulg.]; He is 'Love', as the apostle John has taught us [cf. 1 Jn 4:8]; so that these two names, Being and Love, express ineffably the same divine essence of him who has wished to make himself manifest to us, and who, "dwelling in unapproachable light" [1 Tim 6:16], is in himself above every name and every created thing and every created intellect. God alone can give us right and full knowledge of himself, by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whose eternal life we are by grace called to share, here on earth in the obscurity of faith and after death in eternal light. The mutual bonds which from all eternity constitute the three persons, each of whom is one and the same divine Being, constitute the blessed inmost life of the most Holy God, infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand [cf. n. 132]. We give thanks, however, to the divine goodness that very many believers can testify with us before people to the unity of God, even though they know not the mystery of the most Holy Trinity.

39/3 We believe then in God who eternally begets the Son; we believe in the Son, the Word of God, who is eternally begotten; we believe in the Holy Spirit, the uncreated person who proceeds from the Father and the Son as their eternal love. Thus, in the three divine persons who are "equally eternal and fully equal" [cf. n. 16] the life and beatitude of God, perfectly one, superabound and are consummated in the supreme

excellence and glory proper to the uncreated essence, and always "both unity in the Trinity and Trinity in the unity must be worshipped" [cf. n. 16].

39/4 We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the eternal Word, born of the Father before all ages and of one same substance with the Father, that is one in being with the Father (homoousios ὁ Πατρὸς) [cf. n. 7]; through him all things were made. He became flesh from the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit and was made man. Therefore, he is "equal to the Father as to his divinity, less than the Father as to his humanity" [cf. n. 17], entirely one "not by a confusion of substance" (which is impossible), but by the unity of personhood" [cf. n. 17].

39/5 He dwelled among us, full of grace and truth. He proclaimed and established the Kingdom of God, making the Father manifest to us. He gave us his new commandment to love one another as he himself loved us. He taught us the way of the beatitudes of the Gospel; poverty in spirit, meekness, suffering borne with patience, thirst after justice, mercy, purity of heart, peace-making, persecution suffered for justice sake. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, he, the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world; he died for us, nailed to the cross, saving us by his redeeming blood. He was buried and, of his own power, rose again on the third day, raising us by his resurrection to that sharing in the divine life which is the life of grace. He ascended into heaven, wherefrom he shall come again, this time in glory, to judge the living and the dead, each according to his merits: those who have responded to the love and goodness of God will go to eternal life, but those who have rejected them to the end will be sentenced to the fire that will never be extinguished. And to his Kingdom there will be no end.

39/6 We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets; he was sent to us by Christ after his resurrection and his ascension to the Father; he enlightens, vivifies, protects and guides the Church; he purifies her members if they do not refuse his grace. His action, which penetrates to the inmost of the soul, enables one to respond to the command of Jesus: "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" [Mt 5:48].
We believe that Mary, who remained ever a Virgin, is the Mother of the Incarnate Word, our God and Saviour Jesus Christ [cf. nn. 605-606/1], and that, by reason of her singular election, "she was, in consideration of the merits of her Son, redeemed in a more eminent manner" [LG 53], "preserved immune from all stain of original sin" [cf. n. 709], and "by an exceptional gift of grace stands far above all other creatures" [LG 53].

Joined by a close and indissoluble bound to the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption [cf. LG. 53, 58, 61], the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate, "when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up, body and soul, to the glory of heaven" [cf. n. 715] and, likened to her Son who rose again from the dead, she received in anticipation the future lot of all the just. We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, "Mother of the Church" [LG 53, 56, 61], "continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role" with regard to Christ's members, "helping to bring forth and to increase the divine life in the souls of all the redeemed" [LG 62].

We believe that in Adam all have sinned, which means that the original offence committed by him caused the human race, common to all, to fall to a state in which it bears the consequences of that offence. This is no longer the state in which the human nature was at the beginning in our first parents, constituted as they were in holiness and justice, and in which the human being was immune from evil and death. And so, it is human nature so fallen, deprived from the gift of grace with which it had first been adorned, injured in its own natural powers and subjected to the dominion of death, that is communicated to all human persons; it is in this sense that all are born in sin. We therefore hold, with the Council of Trent, that original sin is transmitted with human nature "by propagation, not by imitation" and that it "is in all human beings, proper to each" [cf. n. 510].

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ by the sacrifice of the Cross redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us, so that the word of the apostle is verified: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" [Rom 5:20].
39/11 We believe in and confess one baptism instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Baptism should be administered even to little children "who of themselves cannot have yet committed any sin", in order that, though born deprived of supernatural grace, they may be reborn “of water and the Holy Spirit” to the divine life in Christ Jesus [cf. n. 511].

39/12 We believe in one, Holy, Catholic and apostolic Church built by Jesus Christ on that rock which is Peter. She is the “Mystical Body of Christ”, at once a visible society “provided with hierarchical organs” and a “spiritual community; the Church on earth”, the pilgrim People of God here below, and “the Church filled with heavenly blessings”; “the germ and the first fruits of the Kingdom of God”, through which the work and the sufferings of redemption are continued throughout human history, and which looks with all its strength for the perfect accomplishment it will obtain beyond time in glory [LG 8, 5]. In the course of time, the Lord Jesus Christ forms his Church by means of the sacraments emanating from his fulness [LG 7, 11]. For, by these the Church makes her members share in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through the grace of the Holy Spirit who gives her life and movement [SC 5, 6; LG 7,12,50]. She is therefore holy, though having sinners in her midst, because she herself has no other life but the life of grace. If they live by her life, her members are sanctified; if they move away from her life, they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for those offences, of which she has the power to free her children through the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39/13 Heiress of the divine promise and daughter of Abraham according to the Spirit, through that Israel whose sacred Scriptures she lovingly guards, and whose patriarchs and prophets she venerates; founded upon the apostles and faithfully handing down through the centuries their ever-living word and their powers as pastors in the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him; perpetually assisted by the Holy Spirit, the Church has the charge of guarding, teaching, explaining and spreading the truth which God revealed dimly to human beings through the prophets, and then fully in the Lord Jesus. We believe all “that is contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and that the Church proposes for belief as divinely
revealed, whether by a solemn decree or by the ordinary and universal teaching office” [cf. n. 121]. We believe in the infallibility enjoyed by the successor of Peter when, as pastor and teacher of all the Christians, “he speaks ex cathedra” [cf. n 839] and which “also resides in the episcopal body when it exercises with him the supreme teaching office” (LG 25).

39/14 We believe that the Church founded by Jesus Christ and for which he prayed is indefectibly one in faith, worship and the bond of hierarchical communion [LG 8, 18-23; UR 2]. In the bosom of this Church, the rich variety of liturgical rites and the legitimate diversity of theological and spiritual heritages and of special disciplines, far from “injuring her unity, make it more manifest” [LG 23; OE 2-6].

39/15 Recognising also the existence, “outside the organism” of the Church of Christ of “numerous elements of sanctification and truth which, because they belong to her as her own, call for Catholic unity” [LG 8], and believing in the action of the Holy Spirit who stirs up in the heart of all the disciples of Christ a desire for this unity [LG 15], we entertain the hope that the Christians who do not yet enjoy full communion in one only Church will at last be united in one flock with only one Shepherd.

39/16 We believe that “the Church is necessary for salvation. For, Christ, who is the sole Mediator and the one way to salvation, makes himself present for us in his Body which is the Church” [LG 14]. But the divine design of salvation embraces all human beings; and those “who without fault on their part do not know the Gospel of Christ and his Church but seek God with a sincere heart, and under the influence of grace endeavour to do his will as recognised through the prompting of their conscience”, they too in a manner known only to God “can obtain eternal salvation” [LG 16].

39/17 We believe that the Mass, celebrated by the priest representing the person of Christ by virtue of the power received through the sacrament of Order, and offered by him in the name of Christ and of the members of his Mystical Body, is indeed the sacrifice of Calvary rendered sacramentally present on our altars. We believe that, as the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord at the Last Supper were changed into his body and
his blood which were soon to be offered for us on the Cross, likewise the bread and wine consecrated by the priest are changed into the body and blood of Christ enthroned gloriously in heaven; and we believe that the mysterious presence of the Lord, under the species which continue to appear to our senses as before, is a true, real and substantial presence [cf. n. 1526].

39/18 Thus, in this sacrament Christ cannot become present otherwise than by the change of the whole substance of bread into his body, and the change of the whole substance of wine into his blood, while only the properties of the bread and wine which our senses perceive remain unchanged. This mysterious change is fittingly and properly named by the Church transubstantiation. Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery must, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, maintain firmly that in the order of reality itself, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the consecration, so that it is the adorable body and blood of the Lord Jesus which from then on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine [cf. nn. 1519, 1527, 1577], as the Lord willed it, in order to give himself to us as food and to bind us together in the unity of his Mystical Body.

39/19 The unique and indivisible existence of the Lord glorious in heaven is not multiplied, but is rendered present by the sacrament in the many places on earth where the eucharistic sacrifice is celebrated. And this existence remains present, after the celebration of the sacrifice, in the Blessed Sacrament which is in the tabernacle as the living heart of our churches. Therefore, it is our sweet duty to honour and adore, in the Blessed Host which our eyes see, the Incarnate Word himself whom they cannot see and who, yet without leaving heaven, is made present before us.

39/20 We confess also that the Kingdom of God, begun here on earth in the Church of Christ, is not “of this world” [Jn 18:36] whose “form is passing away” [1 Cor 7:31], and that its proper growth cannot be identified with the progress of civilisation, of science or of human technology, but that it consists in an ever more profound knowledge of the unfathomable riches of Christ, an ever stronger hope of eternal blessings, an ever
more ardent response to the love of God, and finally in an ever more abundant diffusion of grace and holiness among human persons. But it is this same love which impels the Church to be also continuously concerned about the true temporal welfare of people. While she never ceases to remind all her children that "they have not" here on earth "a lasting city" [Heb 13:14], she also urges them to contribute, each according to their condition of life and means, to the welfare of their earthly city, to promote justice, peace and fraternal concord among people, to give their help generously to their brothers and sisters, especially to the poorest and most unfortunate. The deep solicitude of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, for the needs of human beings, for their joys and hopes, their griefs and efforts, is therefore nothing other than the desire which strongly urges her to be present to them in order to enlighten them with the light of Christ and to gather and unite them all in him, their only Saviour. This solicitude can never be understood to mean that the Church conforms herself to the things of this world or that the ardour is lessened with which she expects her Lord and the eternal Kingdom.

39/21 We believe in the life eternal. We believe that the souls of all those who die in the grace of Christ—whether they must still be purified in purgatory, or, from the moment they leave their bodies, Jesus takes them to paradise as he did for the good thief—constitute the People of God beyond death; death will be finally vanquished on the day of the resurrection when these souls will be re-united with their bodies.

39/22 We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in paradise forms the Church of heaven, where in enjoyment of eternal beatitude they see God as he is [1 Jn 3:2: cf. n. 2305], and where they also, in different ways and degrees, are associated with the holy angels in the divine rule exercised by the glorified Christ, by interceding for us and by providing with their brotherly and sisterly solicitude a powerful help to our infirmity [LG 49].

39/23 We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we also believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and his saints is ever turning listening ears to our
prayers, as Jesus told us: “Ask and you will receive” [Jn 16:24]. Confessing this faith and sustained by this hope, we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Blessed be God thrice Holy, Amen.

JOHN PAUL II

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

NEW FORMULA FOR THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

(9 January 1989)

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a revised formula for the profession of faith and a new oath of fidelity. The profession of faith is required of those called to exercise an office in the name of the Church, according to canon 833 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The obligation of a special oath of fidelity—previously prescribed only for bishops—has been extended to the categories of people named in canon 833, 5-8. The formula of the profession of faith repeats in its entirety the first part of the text in effect since 1967 which contains the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (cf. AAS 59 (1967) 1058). The second part has been modified and subdivided into three paragraphs so as to distinguish better the type of truth and the corresponding assent that is sought. The text is found in AAS 81 (1989) 104-106.

(Profession of Faith)

40 I, N., with firm faith believe and profess everything (omnia et singula) that is contained in the symbol of faith, namely

[There follows the text of the Symbol of Constantinople as used in the Roman liturgy: DS 150 (cf. n. 12)]

41 With firm faith I believe as well everything (ea omnia) contained in God’s word, written or handed down in tradition and proposed by the Church—whether in solemn judgment or in the ordinary and universal Magisterium—as divinely revealed and calling for faith (tamquam divinitus revelata credenda).

I also firmly accept and hold each and every thing (omnia et singula) that is proposed by that same Church definitively (definitive) with regard to teaching concerning faith and morals.

What is more, I adhere (adhaereo) with religious submission of will and intellect (religioso voluntatis et intellectus obsequio) to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate when they exercise the authentic magisterium even if they proclaim those teachings in an act that is not definitive.
CHAPTER I

REVELATION AND FAITH

On its first page, Scripture relates that God created human beings in his own image, according to his own likeness. Thus every person can in fact be addressed by God and become a dialogue partner with him. God draws near to us, for personal encounter, and calls all men and women to enter communion of life with himself. Our recurrent sense of dissatisfaction with material and secular values intimates that deeply inscribed in our hearts is an orientation to God and to his word of revelation.

Christian existence rests on the conviction that God has indeed spoken to his human creatures and offered them abundant light on the meaning of their lives. The mysterious source of our being and of all creation has revealed himself as a loving friend and insistent Lord, as Abraham was given to experience, as Israel learned from its prophets, and as Jesus brought home to his disciples. In its culminating expression, revelation is the good news that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and raise us up to life eternal (DV 4; n. 151).

The response to revelation is faith, by which one accepts God’s invitation to enter his own sphere of truth and to know oneself loved in a radical and unconditional way. Faith is a personal act and attitude, deeply engaging our freedom. But it is also a sharing with others who have answered the same invitation. Communion with the God who reveals himself is as well communion with other believers. A community of faith, the Church, supports our faith and imparts the language of its expression and of our celebration of the good news revealed.

The 19th century documents on revelation and faith show Church authority countering the European Enlightenment’s assertion of human autonomy (rationalism). Revelation, especially in the First Vatican Council, was shown not be an arbitrary imposition that degrades human reason and dignity, but instead a much needed instruction that heals and elevates human intelligence.

Other 19th century currents of thought, fideism and traditionalism, were influenced by the Kantian limitation of our minds to empirical
realm. They distrusted human abilities to know the great truths about God and human life that set the stage for faith. Against them, Church authority affirmed the fundamental power of human intelligence to reach God and to ascertain the credentials of those through whom God communicates his revelation of himself.

In a similar vein, late 20th century teaching, especially by Pope John Paul II, has witnessed a remarkable rapprochement between those who speak for the community of faith and men and women dedicated to research in the fields of basic science. But prior to this, the nature of revelation itself was expressed in a fresh way by the Second Vatican Council as a loving call and gift of communion. This culminated in the saving presence of Jesus as one of us, with his revelation of the meaning of our call and the dignity of our lives. Animated by his Spirit, his followers continue in every age to testify to God’s revelation as a present blessing and life-giving word that makes present the communion with God that it signifies.

* * *

The main doctrinal points treated in the documents of this chapter are the following:

There are two kinds of religious knowledge, natural by reason and supernatural by faith: 112/8f, 117, 126, 131, 137, 183b, 190a-c.

**Human natural knowledge of God**

One can come through reason to the knowledge of God: 101, 113, 115, 143/1, 144, (153); and of other religious truths: 102, 103. This knowledge, however, is not intuitive: 141f.

**Revelation**

God can and does reveal himself to humankind: 112/4f, 113, 116f, 131, 149.

Through revelation God confirms naturally known religious truths: 114f, 135, 145, (153); but primarily calls humanity to participate in his own divine life: 114, 117, 149; and offers to all the fullness of our human destiny: 106, 149, 190a.

God reveals himself from the beginning of the human race: 150; in the history of salvation: 150; and finally in Jesus Christ: 151, (154).
The fact of divine revelation can be shown to be credible mainly through miracles: 104, 110f, 112/7, 119, 127f, 143/2, 146. Revelation is not a human achievement: 108, 112/4, 190a. The content of revelation, being God’s own life, remains beyond our comprehension: 112/9, 114, 131f, 137; it cannot be reduced to a philosophical system: 106, 108, 136; it is entrusted to the Church: 123, 134, 139f, 143/3.9.11, 180 a-d, 188, 836, 859; which can formulate its content in dogmatic definitions: 121, 160f, 179-180a, 181, 185, 883; and issue definitive teachings on truths necessarily connected with revelation: 180e, 185, 189. Though revelation unfolds in history, it remains essentially the same; 112/5, 136, 139, 143/4.7f.11, 161.

Faith

The human response to God’s revelation is faith: 110f, 118, 143/5, 152, 181. It is essentially distinct from a natural assent: 110, 112/8, 118, 126. It is a free assent involving the whole person: 120, 129, 152; under the influence of grace: 118, 120, 124, 129, 152, 1930. It includes the submission of the intellect: 118, 120, 126f, 143/5, 1930. It is our duty to respond in faith to God’s word: 109, 111, 118, 121, 125, 130. Faith is mediated by the ecclesial community: 186-187. Faith is necessary for salvation: 118, 120, 122, 1935. Though the content of faith consists in the divine mystery, it can and must be expressed in systematic language: 105, 147f. Faith is not a leap in the dark but has its certitude and unshakable foundation: 163a. Faith, while aided by formulae, transcends them: 188.

Atheism

It is understandable in the context of a secular culture: (154), 157-159; yet, it must be rejected because it destroys the foundations of human life and society: (154), 155f.

Faith and Reason

No real contradiction can exist between faith and reason: 107, 112/6, 133f, 135, 164.
Faith cannot be contradicted by sound philosophy: 107, 133f, 139, 147; nor by history: 143/6-12.
Reason is meant to lead to faith and to help penetrating it: 107, 109-111, 132, 135, 183a-b, 190c.
Perpetual questioning can keep a scientific mind on the threshold of faith: 171.

Faith and Science

There is no conflict between faith and science: 164-165, 173, 176a-c, 184c.
The limits of scientific knowledge: 166, 172.
The right use of science: 167-169, 175, 176a-c.
Science needs faith: 170.

Dogma and Theology

Interpretation of dogma: 160-161, 174, 190d.
Dogmatic relativism is excluded: 162.
Theology and Magisterium: 163, 177-182.
CONDEMNATION OF FIDEISM, TRADITIONALISM, RATIONALISM

Two apparently contradictory trends dominate the theology of revelation in the 19th century: fideism with its total reliance on revelation and its distrust of human reason, and rationalism in its various forms which considers natural reason as the only resource of human knowledge, and therefore rejects revelation as hostile to human autonomy and to true human progress. The struggle against these opposite tendencies comes to its climax in the First Vatican Council. Before this Council, however, the Church had already declared her attitude in a series of documents, four of which are mentioned here.

1. The articles subscribed to by L.E. Bautain (1796-1867), professor in Strasbourg, reckoned as the principal representative of fideism. Profoundly impressed by Kant's philosophy and by his own experience in returning to the faith, moved also by pastoral reason, Bautain sought the source of religious and moral knowledge exclusively in divine revelation. He denied the possibility of arriving at a certain knowledge of the existence of God and of the credibility of revelation by purely natural powers. To prove his orthodoxy, he was made to subscribe to six theses by the Bishop of Strasbourg in 1835 and again, with slight modifications, in 1840 (cf. DS 2751-2756). The most precise disavowal of his doctrines is contained in five theses proposed to him by the Roman Congregation for bishops and regulars in 1844, when he intended to found a religious congregation. The first four theses, quoted here, concern the demonstrability of the presuppositions of Christian faith.

2. Closely related to fideism were the representatives of traditionalism: L. de Bonald (d. 1840), F. de Lamennais (d. 1854) and A. Bonnetty (d. 1876). Having the same distrust for human reason, they sought the source of all religious and moral knowledge in human tradition which ultimately goes back to primitive revelation. Bonnetty had to subscribe to four articles proposed to him by the Roman Congregation of the Index (cf. DS 2811-2814). Articles 1 to 3 repeat the articles signed by Bautain and the doctrine of Qui Pluribus (cf. nn. 106 ff). Only article 4 is quoted here; it defends the scholastic method which was attacked by traditionalism on account of its confident espousal of rational principles and procedures.

3. Most important among Pius IX's earlier encyclicals is Qui Pluribus, which is concerned with the controversy over fideism on the one hand, and rationalism in the form of Hermesianism, on the other. The two fundamental errors of Hermes (1775-1831), professor of dogmatic theology in Bonn, were: 1) at the beginning of all theological knowledge there is absolute doubt; 2) the grounds for assent to faith are not different from the grounds for assent to natural knowledge; in both cases it is the inner necessity of the human capacity for knowledge which compels assent; this is held necessary in order to preserve human dignity. Thereby, however, the difference between natural and supernatural knowledge is suppressed. The encyclical rejects rationalism, and positively asserts that there can be no contradiction between faith and reason;
it then eloquently sets forth the motives of credibility by which reason can reach the threshold of Christian faith.

4. In view of the critical situation of the Church, not only with regard to the theological disciplines, but in ethical, social, political and other matters as well, Pius IX composed in 1864 a Syllabus of 80 propositions containing views already censured in papal discourses and letters (cf. Introduction to DS 2901-2980). We give below only the propositions exalting reason to the detriment of revelation and faith.

PROMISE SIGNED BY L.E. BAUTAIN (1844)

We promise today and for the future never to teach:

1. That one cannot give a true proof for the existence of God by the light of rightly ordained reason only, apart from divine revelation.
2. That by reason alone one cannot demonstrate the spirituality and immortality of the soul or any other purely natural, rational or moral truth.
3. That by reason alone one cannot have the knowledge of principles or metaphysics as well as of the truths that depend on them, a knowledge totally distinct from supernatural theology which is based on divine revelation.
4. That reason cannot acquire a true and full knowledge of the motives of credibility, i.e., of those motives which make divine revelation evidently credible, such as especially the miracles and prophecies, and in particular the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THE 4TH PROPOSITION SIGNED BY A. BONNETTY (1855)

4. The method used by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure and after them by other Scholastic theologians does not lead to rationalism, and has not been the cause why modern schools of philosophy move towards naturalism and pantheism. Hence one should not blame these doctors and teachers for using this method, especially as they did so with the approval or at least the tacit consent of the Church.

PIUS IX

ENCYCICAL LETTER QUI PLURIBUS (1846)

(Condemnation of rationalism)
[The enemies of Christianity do not hesitate to teach] that the sacred mysteries of our faith are fictions and human inventions, that the doctrine of the Catholic Church is hostile to the good and welfare of human society. They do not refrain from renouncing even Christ himself and God. To mislead people more easily and to deceive mainly the imprudent and the unlearned and to lead them into their own erroneous ways, they claim to be the only ones who know the road to prosperity; they do not hesitate to usurp the name of philosophers as though philosophy, which is totally engaged in the investigation of natural truth, would have to reject what the supreme and meriful God, the author of all nature, has deigned to reveal to us in his singular generosity and mercy so that we should attain true happiness and salvation.

Hence they never cease with absurd and fallacious ways of argumentation to appeal to the power and excellence of human reason and to extol it against our holy faith in Christ; they boldly assert that this faith is contrary to reason. Surely nothing more foolish, more impious, more opposed to reason itself can be imagined. For, though faith is above reason, there can never be found a real contradiction or disagreement between them, since both of them originate from the same source of immutable and eternal truth, from the good and great God, and both so help each other that right reason demonstrates, safeguards and defends the truth of faith, whereas faith frees reason from all errors and through the knowledge of divine things enlightens, strengthens, and perfects it.

With similar fallacy these enemies of divine revelation, while paying supreme homage to human progress, attempt with arbitrary and sacrilegious means to introduce this progress into the Catholic religion as though this religion were a human work, not coming from God, or a philosophical invention that could be perfected by human means. To those who so deplorably stray away, one may apply the verdict with which Tertullian rightly condemned the philosophers of his age "Who begot a stoic, Platonic, and dialectic [Aristotelian] Christianity." Indeed, as our holy religion was not invented by human reason but mercifully revealed by God to human beings,

1. TERTULLIAN, De praescriptione haereticorum, 7, 11.
everyone can easily see that this religion receives all its strength from the authority of God who speaks to us, and can never be deduced or perfected by human reason.

(Reason leads to faith)

109 It is the duty of human reason with diligence to inquire into the fact of revelation—lest it be deceived and fall into error in such an important matter—in order that it may be assured that God has spoken and that it may offer him "reasonable submission," as the apostle wisely teaches [cf. Rom 12:1 Vulg.]. For who does not know, or could not know, that complete faith must be given to God when he speaks, and that nothing corresponds more to reason than to accept and firmly to adhere to whatever is known to be revealed by God who can neither err nor deceive?

110 But how many, how wonderful, how lucid are the arguments at hand by which reason ought to be thoroughly convinced that Christ's religion is divine and that "our doctrines in their entirety have their origin from above, from the Lord of Heaven," that therefore there is nothing more certain than our faith, nothing safer, nothing more holy, nothing that rests on firmer principles. It is this faith that is the teacher of life, the guide to salvation, the exorcist of all vices, the mother and nurse of virtues. This faith is confirmed through the birth, the life, the death, the resurrection, the wisdom, the miracles and prophecies of him who founded and perfected it, Christ Jesus. Everywhere it shines with the light of its heavenly doctrine; it is enriched through the treasures of celestial riches; through so many predictions of the prophets, through the splendour of so many miracles, through the constancy of so many martyrs and the glory of so many saints it shines forth, clear and sublime. Proclaiming the saving laws of Christ, acquiring ever greater strength from the most cruel persecutions themselves, it has spread over the whole earth, on land and sea, from sunrise to sunset, with only the cross as its standard. It has overthrown the fallacy of idols and dissipated the darkness of errors; it has triumphed over enemies of every kind; it has illumined all peoples, races and nations, however barbarous and crude, and

1. JOHN CHRYSTOS, Interpretatio in Is., 1, 1.
no matter how different in their natural gifts, customs, laws and social structures, with the light of divine knowledge; it has subjected them to the easy yoke of Christ himself [cf. Mt. 11:30], announcing peace and good tidings to all. All this is totally resplendent with such brightness of divine wisdom and power that every thoughtful mind easily understands that the Christian faith is God's work.

Thus, human reason clearly and manifestly recognises from these altogether lucid and firm arguments that God is the author of this faith. It can proceed no further, but it has fully to reject and to rid itself of any difficulty and doubt and offer total surrender to this faith, because it is assured that whatever this faith proposes to us to believe and to do, is given by God.

SYLLABUS OF CONDEMNED ERRORS (1864)

(Errors of rationalism condemned)

[112/2] Any action of God on human beings and the world must be denied.

[112/3] Human reason is, without any reference to God, the sole judge of truth and falsehood, of good and evil; it is autonomous, and by its natural powers is sufficient to assure the welfare of peoples and nations.

[112/4] All religious truths originate from the natural power of human reason. Hence reason is the principal norm by which we can and must reach knowledge of whatever kind of truths.

[112/5] Divine revelation is imperfect and hence subject to continual and indefinite progress, which ought to correspond to the progress of human reason.

[112/6] Faith in Christ is detrimental to human reason; and divine revelation not only is of no use but is even harmful to human perfection.

[112/7] The prophecies and miracles set forth in the accounts given in Sacred Scripture are poetical fictions; the mysteries of the Christian faith are the outcome of philosophical reflections; in the books of both Testaments
mythical tales are contained; Jesus Christ himself is a mythical fiction.

*(Errors of semi-rationalism condemned)*

[112/8] Since human reason is on a par with religion itself, theological disciplines have to be handled in the same manner as the philosophical ones.

[112/9] All dogmas of the Christian religion are, without distinction, the object of natural science or of philosophy; human reason solely as developed in history can, by means of its natural powers and principles, come to a true understanding of all, even the more profound dogmas, provided only that such dogmas be proposed to reason as its object.

[112/10] As there is a distinction between the philosopher and one's philosophy, one has the right and the duty to submit to the authority acknowledged as legitimate; but philosophy neither can nor must submit to any authority.

[112/11] The Church must not only abstain from any censure of philosophy; she must also tolerate the errors of philosophy, and leave it to philosophy to correct itself.

THE FIRST VATICAN GENERAL COUNCIL
THIRD SESSION

DOGmatic CONSTITUTION DEI FILiUS ON THE CATHOLIC FAITH (1870)

To meet the numerous problems of the time, Pope Pius IX summoned the 20th General Council. It met in the Vatican from December 1869 to September 1870. From among the many drafts proposed to the Council only two Constitutions were finalised, the first on the Catholic faith, the second on the primacy and infallibility of the Pope (cf. nn. 818 ff).

In the four chapters of the Constitution on the Catholic faith and in the corresponding canons, the Church set forth its doctrine against the current errors of the 19th century: materialism, rationalism, pantheism, and also against the inner-Catholic approaches of fideism and traditionalism. The first chapter deals with God and creation (cf. nn. 412-413); the second with revelation, its relation to human reason, and the channels of Scripture and Tradition through which revelation is communicated; the third chapter treats of faith, its rational and supernatural foundations and its place in the Christian life; the fourth enters into the complex problems of the relation between faith and reason.

The doctrine of the Council is expressed in terms of 19th century theology.
Revelation is presented primarily as the communication of supernatural truth inaccessible to natural reason, and faith as the submissive acceptance of this revealed truth. The Second Vatican Council will later complement this doctrine with a more personalistic approach, according to which God speaks to human beings as to his friends, whom he invites to communion of life with himself, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Faith then freely accepts this invitation in a commitment of one’s whole self.

Chapter II: Revelation

(Natural knowledge of God and supernatural revelation)

113 The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the things that were created, through the natural light of human reason, for “ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made” [Rom 1:20]; but that it pleased his wisdom and bounty to reveal himself and his eternal decrees in another, supernatural way, as the apostle says: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” [Heb 1:1-2].

(The necessity of divine revelation)

114 It is to be ascribed to this divine revelation that such truths about things divine which of themselves are not beyond human reason can, even in the present condition of humankind, be known by everyone with facility, with firm certitude and with no admixture of error. It is, however, not for this reason that revelation is to be judged absolutely necessary, but because God in His infinite goodness has ordained us to a supernatural end, viz., to share in the good things of God which utterly exceed the intelligence of the human mind, for “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God prepared for those who love him” [1 Cor 2:9].

(The rest of the chapter is found in nn. 216f).

Canons on Chapter II

115 1. If anyone says that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty with the natural light of human reason through the things that are created, anathema sit.
2. If anyone says that it is impossible or useless for human beings to be taught through divine revelation about God and the worship to be rendered to him, anathema sit.

3. If anyone says that human beings cannot be called by God to a knowledge and perfection that surpasses the natural order, but that they can and must by themselves, through constant progress, finally arrive at the possession of all that is true and good, anathema sit.

Chapter III: Faith

(Definition of faith)

Since we are totally dependent upon God, as upon our Creator and Lord, and since created reason is absolutely subject to uncreated truth, we are bound to yield by faith the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals himself. The Catholic Church professes that this faith, which is the "beginning of human salvation" [cf. n. 1935], is a supernatural virtue whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that what he has revealed is true, not because the intrinsic truth of things is recognised by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither err nor deceive. For faith, as the apostle testifies, is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" [Heb 11:1].

(The rational basis of faith)

However, in order that our submission of faith be nevertheless in harmony with reason [cf. Rom 12:1], God willed that exterior proofs of his revelation, viz. divine facts, especially miracles and prophecies, should be joined to the interior helps of the Holy Spirit; as they manifestly display the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, they are the most certain signs of divine revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all people. Therefore Moses and the prophets, and especially Christ our Lord himself, performed many manifest miracles and uttered prophecies; and of the apostles we read: "They went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it"
[Mk 16:20]; and again it is written: “We have the prophetic word made more sure; you will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place” [2 Pet 1:19].

(Faith as God’s gift)

120 Though the assent of faith is by no means a blind impulse of the mind, still no one can “assent to the Gospel message”, as is necessary to obtain salvation, “without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all joy in assenting to the truth and believing it” [cf. n. 1919]. Wherefore faith itself, even when it is not working through love [cf. Gal 5:6], is in itself a gift of God, and the act of faith is a work appertaining to salvation, by which one yields voluntary obedience to God himself by assenting to and cooperating with his grace, which one could resist.

(The object of faith)

121 Further, all those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which by the Church, either in solemn judgement or through her ordinary and universal teaching office, are proposed for belief as divinely revealed.

(The necessity of faith for salvation)

122 Since “without faith it is impossible to please God” [Heb 11:6] and to attain to the fellowship of his children, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life unless he has persevered in it to the end [cf. Mt 10:22; 24:13]. However, to enable us to fulfil the obligation to embrace the true faith and persistently to persevere in it, God has instituted the Church through his only-begotten Son and has endowed her with manifest marks of his institution so that she may be recognised by all as the guardian and teacher of the revealed word.

(The Church as guarantor of revelation)

123 To the Catholic Church alone belong all the manifold and wonderful endowments which by divine disposition are meant to set forth the credibility of the Christian faith. Nay more, the Church by herself, with her marvellous
propagation, eminent holiness and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything that is good, with her Catholic unity and invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable testimony of her divine mission.

Thus, like a standard lifted up among the nations [cf. Is 11:12], she invites to herself those who do not yet believe, and at the same time gives greater assurance to her children that the faith which they profess rests on a solid foundation.

(Interior grace as guarantee of faith)

To this testimony an efficacious help coming from the power above is added. For the merciful Lord arouses and aids with his grace those who are wandering astray, so that they be able to “come to the knowledge of the truth” [1 Tim 2:4], and those whom “he has called out of darkness into his admirable light” [1 Pet 2:9] he confirms with his grace so that they may persevere in this light, for he deserts no one who does not desert him [cf. n. 1938]. Therefore, the condition of those who by the heavenly gift of faith have embraced the Catholic truth, and of those who led by human opinions follow a false religion, is by no means the same. For those who have received the faith under the teaching authority of the Church can never have a just reason to change this same faith or to reject it. For this reason, “giving thanks to God the Father who has qualified as to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” [Col 1:12], let us not neglect so great a salvation, but “looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith” [Heb 12:2], “let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering” [Heb 10:23].

Canons on Chapter III

1. If anyone says that human reason is so independent that faith cannot be enjoined upon it by God, anathema sit.

2. If anyone says that divine faith is not distinct from the natural knowledge of God and of moral truths; that, therefore, for divine faith it is not necessary that the revealed truth be believed on the authority of God who reveals it, anathema sit.
3. If anyone says that divine revelation cannot be made credible by outward signs, and that, therefore, people ought to be moved to faith solely by each one's inner experience or by personal inspiration, anathema sit.

4. If anyone says that no miracles are possible, and that therefore all accounts of them, even those contained in Holy Scripture, are to be dismissed as fables and myths; or that miracles can never be recognised with certainty, and that the divine origin of the Christian religion cannot be legitimately proved by them, anathema sit.

5. If anyone says that the assent to the Christian faith is not free but is produced with necessity by arguments of human reason; or that the grace of God is necessary only for that living faith which works by love, anathema sit.

6. If anyone says that the condition of the faithful and of those who have not yet attained to the only true faith is the same, so that Catholics could have a just reason for suspending their judgement and calling into question the faith which they have already received under the teaching authority of the Church, until they have completed a scientific demonstration of the credibility and truth of their faith, anathema sit.

Chapter IV: Faith and Reason
(The twofold order of religious knowledge)

The perpetual common belief of the Catholic Church has held and holds also this: there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only in its source but also in its object; in its source, because in the one we know by natural reason, in the other by divine faith; in its object, because apart from what natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God. Hence the apostle who, on the one hand, testifies that God is known to the gentiles by means of the things that have been made [cf. Rom 1:20], on the other hand, when speaking about the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ [cf. Jn 1:17], proclaims: "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which
God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew.[...] But to us God has revealed this by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God” [1 Cor 2:7-10 Vulg.]. The only-begotten himself praises the Father because he has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and has revealed them to little ones [cf. Mt. 11:25].

(Task and limits of reason)

Nevertheless, if reason illumined by faith inquires in an earnest, pious and sober manner, it attains by God’s grace a certain understanding of the mysteries, which is most fruitful, both from the analogy with the objects of its natural knowledge and from the connection of these mysteries with one another and with our ultimate end. But it never becomes capable of understanding them in the way it does the truths which constitute its proper object. For divine mysteries by their very nature so excel the created intellect that, even when they have been communicated in revelation and received by faith, they remain covered by the veil of faith itself and shrouded as it were in darkness as long as in this mortal life “We are away from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight” [2 Cor 5:6-7].

(Faith and reason cannot contradict each other)

However, though faith is above reason, there can never be a real conflict between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, and God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth. The deceptive appearance of such a contradiction is mainly due to the fact that either the dogmas of faith have not been understood and expounded according to the mind of the Church, or that uncertain theories are taken for verdicts of reason. Thus “we define that every assertion that is opposed to enlightened faith is utterly false” [Lateran V: DS 1441].

Further, the Church which, along with the apostolic office of teaching, received the charge of guarding the deposit of faith has also from God the right and the duty to proscribe what is falsely called knowledge [cf. 1 Tim 6:20], lest anyone be deceived by philosophy and vain fallacy [cf. Col 2:8].
Hence all believing Christians are not only forbidden to defend as legitimate conclusions of science such opinions which they realise to be contrary to the doctrine of faith, particularly if they have been condemned by the Church, but they are seriously bound to account them as errors which put on the fallacious appearance of truth.

(Mutual support of faith and reason)

135 Not only can there be no conflict between faith and reason; but they also support each other since right reason demonstrates the foundations of faith and, illumined by its light, pursues the understanding of divine things, while faith frees and protects reason from errors and provides it with manifold insights. It is therefore far removed from the truth to say that the Church opposes the study of human arts and sciences; on the contrary, she supports and promotes them in many ways. She does not ignore or despise the benefits that human life derives from them. Indeed, she confesses: as they have their origin from God who is the Lord of knowledge [cf. 1 Sam 2:3], so too, if rightly pursued, they lead to God with the help of his grace. Nor does the Church in any way forbid that these sciences, each in its sphere, should make use of their own principles and of the method proper to them. While, however, acknowledging this just freedom, she seriously warns lest they fall into error by going contrary to divine doctrine, or, stepping beyond their own limits, they enter into the sphere of faith and create confusion.

(The development of dogma)

136 For the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed like a philosophical system to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been committed to the spouse of Christ as a divine trust to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared. Hence also that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother Church has once declared, and there must never be a deviation from that meaning on the specious ground and title of a more profound understanding. "Therefore, let there be growth and abundant progress in understanding, knowledge and wisdom, in each and all, in individuals and in the whole Church, at all times and in the succession of the ages, but only in its proper
kind, i.e., in the same dogma, the same meaning, the same understanding.”

Canons on Chapter IV

137 1. If anyone says that in divine revelation no true and properly so called mysteries are contained but that all dogmas of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles by reason, if it is properly trained, anathema sit.

138 2. If anyone says that human sciences are to be pursued with such liberty that their assertions, even if opposed to revealed doctrine, may be held as true and cannot be proscribed by the Church, anathema sit.

139 3. If anyone says that, as science progresses, at times a sense is to be given to dogmas proposed by the Church, different from the one which the Church has understood and understands, anathema sit.

Epilogue

140 Therefore, in fulfilment of our supreme pastoral office, we beseech in the love of Jesus Christ, and we command in the authority of the same God our Saviour, all Christian faithful, and especially those who hold authority or are engaged in teaching, to apply their zeal and effort to removing and eliminating these errors from the holy Church and to spreading the light of pure faith.

3045 It is, however, not enough to avoid the malice of heresy unless those errors more or less near to it are also carefully avoided. We therefore remind all of their duty to observe also the constitutions and decrees by which such perverse opinions, which are not explicitly enumerated here, are proscribed by this Holy See.

LEO XIII

ERRORS OF A. ROSMINI-SERBATI CONDEMNED BY THE HOLY OFFICE (1887)

Though the orthodoxy of Romini (1797-1855) had been questioned during

1. VINCENT OF LERINS, Commonitorium primum, 23.
his lifetime, his books were declared free from errors by the Congregation of the Index in 1854. Yet, after his death renewed doubts were raised, and in 1887 the Holy Office condemned 40 propositions taken mainly from his posthumous works. The following two propositions are taken from his *Teosofía* (1859), but are too much isolated from their context. These are reproduced here not so much for their historical interest—whether or not they could be understood in an orthodox sense—but because of their significance for our time. Our natural knowledge of God is not intuitive; it is through the limited experience of created things that we have access to God's transcendent mystery.

1. In the order of created things there is immediately manifested to the human intellect something divine in itself, such that it belongs to the divine nature.

5. The being (esse) that we intuit must necessarily be something of the necessary and eternal Being (entis), of the cause that creates, determines, and perfects all contingent beings; and that is God.

PIUS X

OATH AGAINST THE ERRORS OF MODERNISM (1910)

Modernism has become the generic name for the most varied attempts to reconcile the Christian religion with the findings of agnostic philosophy, rationalistic science of history, and in general with all those cultural movements which in their development have progressively become estranged from religion or have set themselves in hostile opposition to it. In this general sense modernism practically covers all the abortive attempts of the nineteenth century to find a satisfactory solution to the problem of revelation and its rational foundations in the face of modern science and philosophy.

In the technical sense, in which the term is used here, modernism comprises those systems which yielded to the attacks made against the foundations of the Christian faith and, therefore, sought a new basis for religion. This basis would no longer consist in absolute philosophical certitudes about God, creation, etc., and in the historical certitudes concerning the event of Jesus Christ and his work, but solely in human interiority, in religious experience, and in the power with which this experience asserts itself in the Church and throughout the world in all cultures and ages. Through this interiorisation of religion modernism stands against a religious rationalism, but also against Christianity with its insistence on positive revelation.

After repeated individual initiatives, Pius X finally opposed modernism in an official manner in the decree *Lamentabili* (1907) which rejects its most important errors (DS 3401-3466), and in the encyclical *Pascendi* (1907) which contains a wide-ranging exposition of its various doctrines and attempts to systematize them (DS 3475-3500).
In 1910 the entire body of the clergy involved in pastoral work or in the teaching profession was obliged to take an oath rejecting the essential errors of modernism concerning revelation and tradition. On account of the concise form in which it summarises antimodernist positions this oath, apart from its disciplinary importance, has also considerable doctrinal value as a document of the Church's teaching authority. The formula was first replaced in 1967 and then in 1989 by the new formula of profession of faith (cf. nn. 40-41).

143 I firmly embrace and accept each and every teaching that is defined, proposed and declared by the infallible magisterium of the Church, and in particular those principal truths which are directly opposed to the errors of this time.

143/1 First of all, I profess that God, the beginning and the end of all things, can be known with certainty, and that his existence can also be proved through the natural light of reason from the things that were made [cf. Rom 1:20], viz., from the visible works of creation, as the cause is known from its effects.

143/2 Secondly, I recognise the exterior proofs of revelation, that is to say, divine works, mainly miracles and prophecies, as sure signs of the divine origin of the Christian religion, and I hold that they are well adapted to the understanding of all ages and of all people, also those of the present time.

143/3 Thirdly, I hold with equally firm faith that the Church, the guardian and teacher of the revealed word, was personally (proxime) and directly instituted by the true historical Christ himself during the life among us, and that it is built upon Peter, the head of the apostolic hierarchy and upon his successors through the ages.

143/4 Fourthly, I sincerely accept the doctrine of the faith which was handed down to us in the same meaning and always with the same purport from the apostles through the orthodox Fathers. I therefore entirely reject the heretical theory of the evolution of the dogmas, viz., that they change from one meaning to another, different from the one which the Church previously held. I also condemn any error which substitutes for the divine trust left to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully guarded by her, a philosophical system or a creation of human
reflection which gradually developed through human effort and is to be perfected in the future through indefinite progress.

Fifthly, I hold with certainty and I sincerely confess that faith is not a blind impulse of religion welling up from the depth of the subconscious under the impulse of the heart and the inclination of a morally conditioned will, but the genuine assent of the intellect to a truth which is received from outside "by hearing". In this assent, given on the authority of the all-truthful God, we hold to be true what has been said, attested to, and revealed by the personal God, our Creator and Lord.

I also submit myself with due respect and I adhere whole-heartedly to all the condemnations, declarations, and norms contained in the encyclical Pascendi and the decree Lamentabili, particularly those referring to the so-called history of dogma.

I also reject the error of those who maintain that the faith proposed by the Church can be contrary to history, and that Catholic dogmas in the sense in which they are now understood are irreconcilable with the origins of the Christian religion as they really were.

I condemn and reject also the conception of those who say that an educated Christian puts on a double personality, the one of a believer, the other of a historian, as though it were allowed for the historian to hold something contrary to the faith of the believer or to advance premises from which it would follow that the dogmas are false or doubtful, provided only that these are not directly denied.

Equally I reject any way of judging and interpreting Holy Scripture which takes no account of the Church's Tradition, of the analogy of faith and the norms laid down by the apostolic See: which adheres to the theories of the rationalists, and presumptuously and rashly accepts textual criticism as the only supreme rule.

Equally I reject the opinion of those who maintain that a lecturer or writer on matters of historical theology must first discard all preconceived opinions about the supernatural origin of Catholic Tradition or about the promise
of divine help to preserve for ever all revealed truth; that the writings of the individual Fathers should be interpreted on purely scientific principles to the exclusion of all sacred authority, with the same freedom of judgment with which any profane document is studied.

143/11 Finally, I profess in general that I am completely adverse to the error of the Modernists who say that there is nothing divine in the sacred Tradition or—what is still worse—who admit it in a pantheistic sense, which would leave us with a bare and simple fact, on a par with the common facts of history, the fact, namely, that a band of individuals continued in subsequent ages through their efforts, their solicitude and ingenuity, the school that was started by Christ and his apostles.

143/12 Thus I firmly hold, and shall continue to hold to my last breath, the faith of the Fathers, on the basis of the sure charism of truth that is, has been, and always will be in the succession of the bishops from the apostles, for the purpose that not what seems better and more suited according to the culture of each age should be held, but that the absolute and immutable truth, which from the beginning was preached by the apostles, "should never be believed, never be understood, in a different way".

143/13 I promise that I shall keep all this faithfully, wholly, and sincerely, that I shall keep it inviolate, never deviating from it in teaching or in any way in word or in writing. Thus I promise, thus I swear; so help me God and these holy gospels of God.

PIUS XII

ENCYCLICAL LETTER HUMANI GENERIS (1950)

This encyclical issued on 12 August 1950 by Pius XII constituted almost a new Syllabus of errors to be rejected; it was concerned with "certain false opinions which threaten to sap the foundation of Catholic teaching", as the encyclical itself described its theme. It opposed certain theological and philosophical tendencies which had appeared in various places, notably in France (Nouvelle Théologie), without, however, constituting a new system. The encyclical was correspondingly many-sided.

1. TERTULLIAN, De praescriptione haereticorum, 28.
Two passages are reproduced here. The first refers to the rational foundations of faith. Pius XII maintains the doctrine of Vatican I about the possibility of giving a rational proof for the philosophical and historical foundations of faith, but he admits the possibility of great subjective obstacles which may prevent their acceptance.

The second text deals with the expression of faith through changing philosophical systems. It admits the limitations of human concepts, but it asserts that the terms in which divine revelation has been expressed do contain the word of God in a lasting and binding manner. It deplores the rashness with which the formulations of the faith are abandoned by some theologians.

(The rational basis of faith)

144 Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God who watches over and governs the world by his providence, and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that refer to God and concern the relations between God and our human race wholly transcend the visible order of things, and, if they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation. The human mind, in its turn, is hampered in the attaining of such truths, not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that people in such matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful.

145 Hence we have to admit that divine revelation is morally necessary in order that such religious and moral truths "which of themselves are not beyond human reason can, even in the present condition of humankind, be known by everyone with facility, with firm certitude and with no admixture of error" [cf. n. 114].

146 Difficulties may occur to the human mind also in forming a firm judgment concerning the credibility of the Catholic faith, though we are provided by God with such a wealth of wonderful exterior signs by which the divine origin of the Christian religion can be proved with certainty even by the natural light of reason alone. But a person
may be guided by prejudices, may be influenced by passions and ill intentions, and so can turn away from and resist not only the evidence of the exterior signs which is plain to the eyes, but also the heavenly inspirations which God conveys to our minds.

(Faith and theological terminology)

147 [Desirous to come as close as possible to the way of thinking and speaking of modern systems, some theologians] hope that the way is made clear for restating dogma in terms of modern philosophy, of immanentism, idealism, existentialism, or some other system, according to the needs of the day. As for the bolder spirits, they assert that this is possible and necessary, because the mysteries of faith can never be formulated in notions which adequately express the truth, but only in approximate notions, which, as they say, are always subject to change, by which the truth is indicated up to a point, but at the same time is necessarily deformed. Therefore, in their opinion, it is not absurd, rather it is absolutely necessary, that theology should constantly exchange old concepts for new ones, in accordance with various philosophies which it uses as its instruments in the course of time. So theology would express in a human way the same divine truths in different, and even to some extent opposite ways, which, however, they maintain, mean the same thing. They go on to say that the history of dogma consists in giving an account of the various successive forms in which revealed truth has been clothed, in accordance with the various doctrines and theories which developed in the course of centuries.

148 It will be clear, from all we have been saying, that the efforts made by these thinkers not merely lead to what is called dogmatic ‘relativism’ but already contain it. Such relativism is strongly fostered by the disrespect they show for the doctrine commonly handed down, and for the terminology by which it is expressed. Surely, all are agreed that the terms expressing certain ideas, as they are used in the schools and even by the teaching authority of the Church itself, are susceptible of further perfecting and refining: it is also known that the Church in the use of these terms has not always been consistent. It is also clear that the Church cannot tie itself to any philosophical system which flourishes for a short time; but what has been built
up in a common consensus by Catholic teachers in the course of
centuries, in their effort to reach a certain understanding of
dogma, does certainly not rest on such flimsy grounds. It rests
on principles and notions deduced from a true understanding of
created things; in the deduction of these insights the divinely
revealed truth, like a star, has illumined the human mind through
the Church. No wonder, then, that some of these conceptions
have not only been used, but even have been sanctioned by
ecumenical Councils, so that it is wrong to deviate from them.

THE SECOND VATICAN GENERAL COUNCIL

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION DEI VERBUM (1965)

The Constitution Dei Verbum is foundational for Vatican II’s broad
renewal of Catholic doctrine. Early in the deliberations, numerous bishops
voiced dissatisfaction over the preparatory schemata on the deposit of faith
and the “sources” of revelation. These texts had been cast in the thought-
forms of the textbook tradition that established itself after Vatican I and was
further strengthened by the anti-modernist measures. But in 1962, many
bishops argued that revelation should no longer be explained mainly in terms
of its relation to reason, that is, as including transcendent mysteries but at
the same time being rationally prepared by arguments for credibility that bring
the mind to the threshold of faith.

The bishops called for an articulation of revelation out of the centre of
God’s gift of light and life in his Son. Christ is, to be sure, our teacher of
supernatural mysteries of salvation, but he is more, for in him revelation itself
takes personal form, in the Word who expresses in an incomparable way God’s
will to save. On revelation, Scripture must furnish the language of exposition,
especially the great passages of Paul and John on God’s disclosure of his mystery
long concealed but unfolding openly in Christ and the Spirit with their
abundant gifts of grace and truth.

And so, through four major revisions during the Council, Dei Verbum
grew out of the interventions, both oral and written, of the bishops. Parts of
the finished product express fundamental tenets of Christianity in a manner able
to create an ecumenical consensus. Moreover, the Constitution relates God’s
saving word to the larger human family, as stated in its Prologue: “this Synod
[...] wants the whole world to hear the summons to salvation, so that through
hearing it may believe, through belief it may hope, and through hope it may come
to love” (DV 1, adapting St. Augustine, De catechizandis rudibus, 4, 8).

The Constitution deals in 6 Chapters: 1) with revelation itself; 2) with
its transmission in Tradition; 3) with the inspiration and interpretation of
Holy Scripture; 4) with revelation as attested by the Old Testament; 5) with
revelation in Jesus Christ as the New Testament proclaims and applies this; 6)
with Holy Scripture in the life of the Church.
Chapter 1, 2-5, is quoted here. These paragraphs contain the new perspectives on revelation developed by the Council: the nature of revelation (2), its preparatory stages leading to the coming of Jesus Christ (3), the fulness of revelation in Jesus Christ (4), and the human response to revelation in faith (5).

Chapter I: Revelation Itself

(The nature and object of revelation)

149 2. In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will [cf. Eph 1:9], by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, we have access in the Holy Spirit to the Father, and are made partakers of the divine nature [cf. Eph 2:18; 2 Pet 1:4]. Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God [cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17], out of the abundance of his love, speaks to us as friends [cf. Ex 33:11; Jn 15:14-15] and dwells among us [cf. Bar 3:38], so that he may invite and receive us into communion with himself. This plan of revelation is realised by deeds and words intrinsically connected: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and the realities signified by the words, while the words themselves declare and explain the deeds and the mystery contained in them. The deepest truth thus revealed both about God and about our salvation shines out for us in Christ, who is the mediator and at the same time the fulness of all revelation.

(The preparation of the Gospel)

150 3. God who creates and sustains all things through the Word [cf. Jn 1:3] gives men and women permanent testimony to himself in created things [cf. Rom 1:19-20]. Moreover, wishing to open the way of supernatural salvation, he revealed himself to our first parents from the very beginning. After their fall he kindled in them the hope of salvation by his promise of redemption [cf. Gen 3:15]. He continued to watch over humankind unceasingly so as to grant eternal life to all who seek salvation through the faithful pursuit of good works [cf. Rom 2:6-7]. In his own time he called Abraham in order to make of him a great nation [cf. Gen 12:2]. After the time of the patriarchs, he taught his people, through Moses and the prophets, to acknowledge him as the one true living God, provident Father and just Judge,
and to wait for the promised Saviour. In this way, down through the centuries, God was preparing the way for the Gospel.

(\textit{Jesus Christ is in his person the fulness of revelation})

151 4. After God had spoken in many and various ways through the prophets, “in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” \([\text{Heb 1:1-2}]\). For he sent his Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all human beings, so that he might dwell among them and declare to them the secrets of God \([\text{cf. Jn 1:1-18}]\). Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, sent as “a man to men”, \(\text{I "utters the words of God" [Jn 3:34]}\) and accomplishes the work of salvation committed to him by the Father \([\text{cf. Jn 5:36; 17:4}]\). To see Jesus is to see also the Father \([\text{cf. Jn 14:9}]\). Jesus, therefore, brings revelation to its final perfection by his whole presence and self-manifestation, by his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, particularly by his death and glorious resurrection, and finally by the sending of the Spirit of truth; he confirms with divine testimony the fact of revelation that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death and to raise us up to life eternal.

The Christian dispensation, therefore, being the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away, and we now await no new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ \([\text{cf. 1 Tim 6:14; Tit 2:13}]\).

(\textit{Revelation is to be received by faith})

152 5. To God who reveals himself must be given “the obedience of faith” \([\text{Rom 16:26; cf. Rom 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6}]\), by which one freely commits one’s whole self to God, offering “the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals himself” \([\text{cf. n. 118}]\) and freely assenting to the revelation granted by him. This faith cannot exist without the prevenient and assisting grace of God and the interior succour of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and turns it to God, opens the eyes of the mind, and gives “to all joy in assenting to the truth and in believing it” \([\text{cf. n. 120}]\). The same Holy Spirit continually perfects faith by his gifts so as to bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation.

1. \textit{Epistola ad Diognetum}, 8, 4.
(The object of revelation)

6. (The doctrine of Vatican I is reasserted, concerning reason's natural power to know God, the revelation of divine mysteries, and also the truths which by themselves can be the object of natural knowledge) (cf. n. 114).

PASTORAL CONSTITUTION GAUDIUM ET SPES (1965)

It is characteristic of Vatican II that it moves doctrinal questions into the context of actual life. God's revelation and our believing response to it must be realised in our modern age of science, secularism and social transformation. Gaudium et Spes analyses the convictions and attitudes toward God and the sphere of human and social values that are characteristic of the modern era.

The entire document conceives humanity as a community on its "journey to the kingdom of the Father" (1); it answers questions "in the light of Christ, the image of the unseen God" (10). The Constitution vindicates the relevance of revelation and faith for people in their personal lives, in society, and in the various spheres of their activities.

Of special significance is the section about modern atheism, i.e., the refusal to accept God and his revelation. Atheism is considered under the following aspects.

1) The phenomenon of modern atheism: its widespread presence in the modern world with the result that it "must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age"; its various forms, and the reasons for its growing influence (19).

2) Systematic atheism: it claims to liberate the human mind so as to make human beings "the sole artisans and creators of their own history"; to lead to "economic and social emancipation"; to guide everyone in the building up of the earthly city (20).

3) The Church's attitude: the significance of faith in God for personal life and for human society (21).

Finally Gaudium et Spes notably expands the horizon of the teaching on revelation expressed in Dei Verbum. What God has uttered to humankind in Christ brilliantly illumines our human history and the mystery of our human existence. In the light of the Word incarnate and of his paschal mystery, human life is shown to be abundantly significant, even at the most painful and desperate moments of our pilgrimage (cf. nn. 669a-b, 678-680).

PAUL VI

ENCYCLICAL LETTER ECCLESIAM SUAM (1964)

While the Council through its documents inaugurated a new understanding both of the word of God and of the modern world in which it has to be proclaimed, and so prepared a new approach of the Church to human
society, Pope Paul VI wrote his first encyclical Ecclesiam Suam which outlines the renewed attitude of the Church to the world of today.

Two passages of this encyclical referring to atheism are quoted here. In fact, they are previous to the corresponding Council texts of Gaudium et Spes. The Pope speaks of the “concentric circles” with which the Church must enter into dialogue. The widest of these circles embraces the whole of humankind. It is in this context that the Pope speaks about atheism. The text is found in AAS 56 (1964) 650-653.

(The destructive power of modern atheism)

155 We realise, however, that in this limitless circle there are many, very many unfortunately, who profess no religion; not a few also, we know, declare that they deny God in various ways. We are aware that some of them proclaim their godlessness openly and uphold it as a programme of human education and political conduct in the futile and fatal conviction that they are setting people free from obsolete and false opinions about life and the world, and put in their place, as they pretend, conceptions that are scientific and in conformity with the needs of modern progress.

156 This, indeed, is the most serious problem of our time. We are firmly convinced that the principles on which the denial of God is based are by their nature utterly erroneous; they are not in keeping with the ultimate and necessary requirements of thought; they deprive the rational order of the world of its true and effective foundations; they do not provide human life with sound judgment to solve problems but with an empty dogma which degrades and saddens it, and destroys at the root any social order which would base itself on it. Thus it does not bring freedom but is the source of the saddest fall, attempting to quench the light of the living God. We shall therefore resist with all our strength the evil assault of this denial; we do so in the supreme cause of truth, in virtue of our sacred duty faithfully to profess Christ and his Gospel, moved by a burning and unshakable love which inspires in us a concern for the fortunes of the human race. We do it in the invincible hope that people of the modern age may feel again impelled, through those religious ideals which the Catholic faith sets before them, to pursue a civilization that never declines but tends to the natural and supernatural perfection of the human mind, enabled by divine grace to possess temporal goods in peace and
honour, and confidently hoping for the attainment of perennial goods.

(The roots of modern atheism)

157 But though we must speak firmly and clearly to preserve and defend religion and the human values it proclaims and fosters, we are moved by our pastoral office to seek in the hearts of modern atheists the reasons for these disturbances and their denial of God. One can easily see that these reasons are many and complex, so that we must examine them carefully and refute them effectively. Some of them arise from the demand that divine things be presented in a worthier and purer way than is the case in certain imperfect forms of language and worship; we ought to do all in our power to improve them and to make them more transparent so that they may express more adequately the sacred reality of which they are the signs. We see people with an earnest and often noble yearning, with hearts moved by zeal, and burning with ideals of the unattainable, who dream of justice and progress and seek in striving for a social order the attainment of values that to them appear the highest and almost divine. Such ideals for them are a substitute for him who is the Absolute and Necessary; they testify to the fact that they are in the grip of the longing for that supreme Source and End that cannot be eradicated from the human heart; it is for us, in the patient and wise exercise of the teaching ministry, to show that all this transcends human nature as well as is immanent in it.

158 Again we see individuals accurately using the tools of human reasoning, at times not without some simplification, for the purpose of building up a notion of the whole universe founded on science. The search is all the less reprehensible as it often follows ways of logical procedure not unlike those received in the classical schools and based on a strict discipline of the mind. But, against the will of those who think that in this way they have found a sure support in defending atheism, this discipline impels them through its innate dynamism to proceed to the renewed and definite acknowledgment of the highest God, to a metaphysical and logical system. The atheistic politico-scientist deliberately stops this cogent process of reasoning at a certain point and so extinguishes the sovereign light through which the universe could become intelligible. Who of us would
not effectively assist them to come, ultimately, to the realisation of the objective truth of the universe in which the mind is struck by the divine presence and the lips begin to utter humble words of consoling prayers?

159 At times we also find [atheists] of noble sentiments who are impatient with the mediocrity and the self-seeking of large sections of our present human society; they ingeniously borrow from our gospels ways of speaking and phrases, using them to express solidarity, mutual help and compassion. Shall we not be able to trace these words, which express moral values, back to their true source which is Christian?

DECLARATION MYSTERIUM ECCLESIAE OF THE S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH
(11 May 1973)

This document on the mystery of the Church is primarily concerned with the charism of infallibility pertaining to the Church's teaching authority (cf. n. 883). While strongly upholding the traditional doctrine of infallibility, it nevertheless recognizes that dogmatic formulas are historically conditioned, with the result that they always remain incomplete and perfectible. This important section of the Declaration begins by acknowledging the "difficulties of various kinds" to which the transmission of divine Revelation is subject: these arise from the very nature of the mysteries of the faith (cf. n. 132); they "also arise from the historical conditioning that affects the expression of Revelation". With regard to this historical conditioning, the declaration offers considerations—somewhat novel in an official document—by which the unavoidable inadequacy and perfectibility of dogmatic formulas is brought out, all of which "have to be taken into account in order that these pronouncements may be properly interpreted". It goes on to delineate the important consequences deriving from these considerations as regards the interpretation of dogmatic formulas pronounced by the Church's teaching authority. It notes, however, that, incomplete and perfectible as they may be, these formulas remain true in their meaning; this excludes "dogmatic relativism". The text is found in AAS 65 (1973) 402-404.

(The historical conditioning of dogmatic formulas)

160 With regard to this historical conditioning, it must first be observed that the meaning of the pronouncements of faith depends partly upon the expressive power of the language used at a certain point in time and in particular circumstances. Moreover, it sometimes happens that a given dogmatic truth is
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

first expressed incompletely (but not falsely), and at a later date, when considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, it receives a fuller and more perfect expression. In addition, when the Church makes new pronouncements, she intends to confirm or clarify what is in some way contained in Sacred Scripture or in previous expressions of Tradition; but at the same time she usually has the intention of solving certain questions or removing certain errors. All these things have to be taken into account in order that these pronouncements may be properly interpreted. Finally, even though the truths which the Church intends to teach through her dogmatic formulas are distinct from the changeable conceptions of the given epoch and can be expressed without them, nevertheless it can sometimes happen that these truths may be enunciated by the Sacred Magisterium in terms that bear traces of such conceptions.

(The interpretation of dogmatic formulas)

161 In view of the above it must be stated that the dogmatic formulas of the Church's Magisterium were from the beginning suitable for communicating revealed truth, and that as they are they remain perennially suitable for communicating this truth to those who interpret them correctly. It does not however follow that everyone of these formulas has always been or will always be so to the same extent. For this reason theologians seek to define exactly the intention of teaching proper to the various formulas, and in carrying out this work they are of considerable assistance to the living Magisterium of the Church, to which they remain subordinated. For this reason also it often happens that ancient dogmatic formulas and others closely connected with them remain living and fruitful in the habitual usage of the Church, but with suitable expository and explanatory additions that maintain and clarify their original meaning. In addition, it has sometimes happened that in this habitual usage of the Church certain of these formulas gave way to new expressions which, proposed and approved by the Sacred Magisterium, present more clearly or more completely the same meaning.

(Dogmatic relativism is excluded)

162 As for the meaning of dogmatic formulas, this remains ever true and constant in the Church, even when it is expressed
with greater clarity or more developed. The faithful, therefore, must shun the opinion, first, that dogmatic formulas (or some category of them) cannot signify truth in a determinate way, but can only offer changeable approximations to it, which to a certain extent distort or alter it; secondly, that these formulas signify the truth only in an indeterminate way, the truth being like a goal that is constantly being sought by means of such approximations. Those who hold such an opinion do not avoid dogmatic relativism and they corrupt the concept of the Church’s infallibility relative to the truth to be taught or held in a determinate way.

JOHN PAUL II

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION SAPIENTIA CHRISTIANA
(1979)

The Church’s dialogue with modern society, promoted by the Council, necessarily led to an opening of theology towards many spheres of culture and sciences. Theology rightly claims the freedom to investigate new realms in which the message of the Gospel has to be articulated.

Thus the relation of academic freedom in theological research and teaching to the hierarchical magisterium has had to be faced anew. In the Apostolic Constitution which promulgates the new legislation covering ecclesiastical academic studies in Universities and Faculties (29 April 1979), the relationship of academic freedom to ecclesiastical authority is carefully formulated: While “just freedom” is recognised both for teaching and research “within the limits of God’s Word”, teaching must be carried out in accordance with the Church’s magisterium. The reason is that theology is taught in the name of the Church, while research may open out towards new avenues, provided it does so in “deference to the Church’s Magisterium” and its function of authoritatively interpreting the Word of God.

(Theology and Magisterium)

39. 1. Following the norm of the Second Vatican Council, according to the nature of each faculty:

1) just freedom [GS 59] should be acknowledged in research and teaching so that true progress can be obtained in learning and understanding divine truth;

2) at the same time it is clear that:

a) true freedom in teaching is necessarily contained within the limits of God’s Word as this is constantly taught by the Church’s Magisterium;
b) likewise, true freedom in research is necessarily based upon firm adherence to God’s Word and deference to the Church’s Magisterium, whose duty it is to interpret authentically the Word of God.

2. Therefore, in such a weighty matter one must proceed with prudence, with trust and without suspicion, at the same time with judgement and without rashness, especially in teaching, while working to harmonise studiously the necessities of science with the pastoral needs of the People of God.

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION CATECHESI TRADENDAE
(16 October 1979)

In this major document Pope John Paul II takes up the theme of Catechesis in Our Day in response to and on the basis of the 1977 Synod of Bishops which discussed the same topic. The Apostolic Exhortation balances encouragement of the new methods and approaches with repeated insistence that these should not endanger the integrity of content or substitute personal views for teachings revealed through Scripture and developed Christian Tradition. In the eighth chapter entitled “The Joy of Faith in a Troubled World” a section on “Research and Certainty of Faith” emphasizes that faith is not a leap into the dark but has an unshakable foundation. The text is found in AAS 71 (1979) 1277-1340.

(Scientific research and certitude of faith)

163a A more subtle challenge occasionally comes from the very way of conceiving faith. Certain contemporary philosophical schools [...] like to emphasize that the fundamental human attitude is that of seeking the infinite, a seeking that never attains its object. In theology, this view of things will state very categorically that faith is not certainty but questioning, not clarity but a leap in the dark.

These currents of thought certainly have the advantage of reminding us that faith concerns things not yet in our possession, since they are hoped for; that as yet we see only “in a mirror dimly” [1 Cor 13:12]; and that God dwells always in inaccessible light [cf. 1 Tim 6:16]. They help us to make the Christian faith not the attitude of one who has already arrived, but a journey forward as with Abraham. For all the more reason one must avoid presenting as certain things which are not.

However, we must not fall into the opposite extreme, as too often happens. [...] Although we are not in full possession, we do have an assurance and a conviction [...] Let us not give [...]
too negative an idea of faith—as if it were absolute non-knowing, a kind of blindness, a world of darkness—but let us show [...] that the humble yet courageous seeking of the believer, far from having its starting point in nothingness, in plain self-deception, in fallible opinions or in uncertainty, is based on the word of God who cannot deceive or be deceived, and is unceasingly built on the unmoving rock of this word.

ADDRESS TO SCIENTISTS
(15 November 1980)

On November 15th, 1980, Pope John Paul II addressed a gathering of scientists and university students in the Cathedral of Cologne. It was on the feast of St. Albert the Great, on the 700th anniversary of his death. In fact the invitation of the Pope to Germany was occasioned by this anniversary and Cologne had been the second home of the Saint. The historic importance of Albert the Great lies in the fact that in the first crucial encounter of secular sciences (Aristotelian philosophy) and traditional faith he took up a position which remains programmatic even today. The Pope used the occasion to propose in a systematic way the relation of science to faith in our time; this has radically changed from suspicion and hostility to complementarity and the recognised need, on both sides, of collaboration in a time of crisis of the scientific-technical culture. The text is found in Osservatore Romano (English Edition), 24 November, 1980, pp. 6-7.

(The recognition of science according to Albert the Great)

164 2. The claim to truth of a science based on rationality is recognised; in fact it is accepted in its contents, completed, corrected and developed in its independent rationality. And precisely in this way it becomes the property of the Christian world. In this way the latter sees its own understanding of the world enormously enriched without having to give up any essential element of its tradition, far less the foundation of its faith. For there can be no fundamental conflict between a reason which, in conformity with its own nature which comes from God, is geared to truth and is qualified to know truth, and a faith which refers to the same divine source of all truth.

(The conflicts of the past are deplored)

165 3. Many people [...] still feel the weight of those notorious conflicts which arose from the interference of religious authorities in the process of the development of scientific knowledge. The Church remembers this with regret, for today we
realise the errors and shortcomings of these ways of proceeding. We can say today that they have been overcome, thanks to the power of persuasion of science, and thanks above all to the work of a scientific theology, which has deepened the understanding of faith and freed it from the conditionings of time.

(The crisis of merely functional science)

166 3. Our culture, in all its areas, is imbued with a science which proceeds in a way that is largely functionalistic. This applies also to the area of values and norms, of spiritual orientation in general. Precisely here science comes up against its own limits. There is talk of a crisis of legitimation of science, nay more, of a crisis or orientation of our whole scientific culture. What is its essence? [...]

Science alone is not capable of answering the question of meaning; in fact it cannot even set it in the framework of its starting point. And yet this question of meaning cannot tolerate an indefinite postponement of its answer. If widespread confidence in science is disappointed, then the state of mind easily changes into hostility to science. In this space that has remained empty, ideologies suddenly break in. They sometimes behave as if they were "scientific", but they owe their power of persuasion to the urgent need for an answer to the question of meanings and to the interest in social and political change. Science that is purely functional, without values and alienated from truth, can enter the service of these ideologies; a reason that is only instrumental runs the risk of losing its freedom.[...]

(The criterion for the right use of science)

167 4. There is no reason to consider technico-scientific culture as opposed to the world of God's creation. It is clear beyond all doubt that technical knowledge can be used for good as well as for evil.[...] Technical science, aimed at the transformation of the world, is justified on the basis of the service it renders to individuals and all humanity [...] Our human personal dignity represents the criterion by which all cultural application of technico-scientific knowledge must be judged.

(Science must safeguard human freedom)

168 4. [Sciences extend also to] the scientific analysis of human existence and of the world in which we live, at the social
REVELATION AND FAITH

and cultural level. An absolutely incalculable mass of knowledge has thereby come to light, which has repercussions on both public and private life. The social system of modern states, the health and educational system, economic processes and cultural activities are all marked in many ways by the influence of these sciences. But it is important that science should not keep the human race under its thumb. Also in the culture of technology, human beings, in conformity with their dignity, must remain free; in fact it must be the meaning of this culture to give them greater freedom.

(Science is bound to truth)

169 5. To be able to influence praxis, [science] must first be determined by truth, and therefore be free for truth. A free science, bound only to truth, does not let itself be reduced to the model of functionalism or any other which limits understanding of scientific rationality [...].

I do not hesitate at all to see also the science of faith on the horizon of rationality understood in this way. The Church wants independent theological research, which is not identified with the ecclesiastical magisterium, but which knows it is committed with regard to it in common service of the truth of faith and the People of God. It cannot be ignored that tensions and even conflicts may arise. But this cannot be ignored either as regards the relationship between Church and science. The reason is to be sought in the finiteness of our reason, limited in its extension and therefore exposed to error. Nevertheless we can always hope for a solution of reconciliation, if we take our stand on the ability of this same reason to attain truth.

(Science needs faith)

170 5. In the past precursors of modern science fought against the Church with the slogans: reason, freedom and progress. Today, in view of the crisis with regard to the meaning of science, the multiple threats to its freedom and the doubt about progress, the battle-fronts have been inverted. Today it is the Church that takes up the defence:

—for reason and science, which she recognises as having the ability to attain truth, which legitimizes it as a human realisation;
--for the freedom of science, through which the latter possesses its dignity as a human and personal good;
--for progress in the service of a humanity which needs it to safeguard its life and its dignity.
With this task, the Church and all Christians are at the centre of the debate of these times of ours. An adequate solution of the pressing questions about the meaning of human existence, norms of action, and the prospects of a more far-reaching hope, is possible only in the renewed connection between scientific thought and the power of faith in human beings in search of truth. The pursuit of a new humanism on which the future of the third millennium can be based, will be successful only on condition that scientific knowledge again enters upon a living relationship with the truth revealed to us as God's gift. Human reason is a grand instrument for knowledge and structuring of the world. It needs, however, in order to realise the whole wealth of human possibilities, to open to the word of eternal Truth, which became man in Christ.

ADDRESS TO THE SECRETARIAT FOR NON-BELIEVERS
(2 April 1981)

Speaking to the plenary session of the Secretariat for Non-believers John Paul II accepts the legitimate questioning of scientists but points out the risk of a scientific mentality which closes itself to a broader vision of realities beyond pure rationality and so remains on the threshold of faith. The text is found in AAS 73 (1981) 292-296.

(Science and unbelief)

171 By reason of the increased rationality which it yields, the development of the sciences [...] appeals to a total vision which it cannot itself provide: it calls for the meaning of meanings.

Science is not the only legitimate form of knowledge. In such radically reductionist perspective faith is nothing but a naive representation of reality [...] bound up with a myth-making mentality.

[...] Proper consideration of the whole reality is a delicate and difficult task. [...] We see a twofold temptation for believers: rationalism and fideism. What is needed is a dialogue between human beings, in which the dynamics of rational thinking are by no means opposed to the specific transcendence of faith but
in a sense calls for it. The experience of life reveals the need of moving beyond the interior emptiness created by the collapse of meaning that occurs when all human activities are forced to exist in a closed universe and are no longer seen in a broader and deeper perspective [...], when they are no longer integrated into a supra-rational dimension that far from being non-rational or sub-rational is the foundation and goal of all rationality.

[...] To the extent that the scientific method permeates all thinking and the whole of one's outlook on reality, it can lead in the area of faith to the loss of the certitude proper to this domain in which knowledge is also love.

Thus the spirit of perpetual questioning can lead to doubts about essential points of faith and, while falling short of outright denial, to a suspension of judgment and assent as long as one has not explained for oneself all the reasons for believing and all the aspects of the Christian mystery, as though one were awaiting further discoveries even with regard to the Creed. [...]

[...] Minds imbued with the method of scientific research may find it an embarrassment or an obstacle because they do not understand the specific nature and transcendental character of faith and are in danger of always remaining on the threshold of faith.

ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF PAX ROMANA
(13 September 1982)

The convention dealt with the theme “Ethical Responsibility and Christian Faith in a Changing World”. In his welcoming address, the Pope urged the participants to distinguish the two orders of knowledge, science and faith, and reminded them of their responsibility to uphold the dignity and the freedom of the human person. The text is found in The Pope Speaks 27 (1982), p. 362.

(Science and faith)

172 You show by your life that faith does not limit the space and freedom of science but rather that the responses of the various scientific disciplines are only partial responses for the person who deeply hungers for the truth. For science neither intends to nor can perceive more than a single sector of reality especially since this perception is again limited by its curtailing methodology, deliberate and necessary.
Faith, on the other hand, can transcend partial visions of reality for such faith sees it as created by God. In this perspective, created things reveal their meaning. Human beings in particular find their dignity in the fact that their origin and ultimate destiny are in God. Scientific progress which injures the inalienable worth of the human person must be denounced and opposed. The philosophico-religious currents which destroy human freedom and promise paradise on earth are mere ideologies.

DISCOURSE TO SCIENTISTS ON THE 350th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF GALILEO'S DIALOGHI
(9 May 1983)

That the Pope should address scientists gathered for a symposium to commemorate the anniversary of the publication of Galileo's Dialoghi, is in itself a sign of the spirit of dialogue which has replaced the former antagonism between the Church and science. After a dispassionate exposition of the Galileo 'case', the Pope speaks of the responsibility of scientists. He encourages them to open their hearts and minds to the imperatives of today's world in the service of 'the whole truth' but also expresses the gratitude of the Church for the help they give in clarifying some aspects of Christian doctrine. The text is found in AAS 75 (1983) 689-694.

(Relationship between the Church and science)

173 Divine revelation, of which the Church is the guarantor and witness, does not in itself involve a particular scientific theory and the assistance of the Holy Spirit in no way lends itself to guaranteeing explanations that we would wish to profess concerning the physical constitution of reality.

[...] The Church is always interested in research concerning the knowledge of the universe, whether physical, biological or psychological.

It is only through humble and assiduous study that it learns to dissociate the essentials of faith from scientific systems of a given age, especially when a culturally influenced reading of the Bible seems to be linked to an obligatory cosmology.

The age-old relationships between the Church and science have brought Catholics to a more current understanding of the sphere of their faith, to a sort of intellectual purification and to a conviction that scientific study deserves a commitment to unbiased research which is, in the final analysis, a service to truth and to humanity itself.
We would add that the Church recognises with gratitude all that it owes to research and to science.

[...] Open your mind and heart fully to the imperatives of today's world, which aspires to justice and to dignity founded on truth. You yourselves be ready to seek all that is true, convinced that the realities of the spirit form part of what is real and part of the whole truth.

ADDRESS ON THE CEREMONY OF CONFERRING THE PAUL VI PRIZE ON HANS URS VON BALTHASAR
(23 June 1984)

In honouring the great Swiss scholar, John Paul II acknowledges the service rendered by theological scholars to the better understanding of Christian doctrine, and emphasises the limitations of our human knowledge in its grasp of the divine mysteries. The text is found in The Pope Speaks 26 (1984), pp. 339-340.

174 The service which theology must render to revealed truth is the continuous exploration of it. The aim is to discover and to express, as far as possible in all its aspects, the harmony, the unity and the beauty of it. Exploring will never end, because the truth of God is infinite and because human intelligence cannot approach it except in successive degrees.[...]

Service to revealed truth, then, always postulates a great sense of mystery so that it may accompany authentic theological research. It prevents revealed truth from being reduced, in rationalistic or unnatural terms, to the level of an ideology.

ADDRESS TO THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
(8 October 1986)

On the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences the Pope received its members in solemn audience. Stressing the Church's esteem for science and her respect of its legitimate autonomy in methodology and research, he exalted the role of scientists in our present age and enumerated the virtues and human values displayed in their professional vocation. The text is found in The Pope Speaks 32 (1987), pp. 51-53.

(Role of scientific research)

175 Christians have been encouraged to read the Bible afresh without seeking in it a scientific cosmological system. Scientists themselves have been invited to remain open to the
absoluteness of God and to the awareness of creation. In itself, no field is closed to scientific investigation, provided that this respects the human being; it is rather the methodologies employed that bring the scientists to certain abstractions and definitions. [...] 

One must recognise the particular method of each of the sciences. "This is why methodological research, in all the fields of knowledge, will never be truly opposed to faith, if it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and follows the norm of morality: worldly realities and the realities of faith find their origin in the same God" [cf. GS 36,2]. However, it would be false to understand this autonomy of earthly realities to mean that they did not depend on God and that men and women can dispose of them without reference to the Creator. [...] 

Today, far from shutting herself up in an apologetic or defensive perspective, the Church rather makes herself the advocate of science, of reason and of the freedom of research for legitimate authentic science. The Church appreciates not only the scientists' use of intelligence but their professional and moral merit, their intellectual honesty, their objectivity, their search for what is true, their self-discipline, their cooperation in teams, their commitment to serve others, their respect in the presence of the mysteries of the universe. These are human values that display the spiritual vocation of human beings.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY  
(1 June 1988)  

In September 1987 a study week was held at Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's summer residence, on the relationships between theology, philosophy, and the natural sciences. In 1988, on the occasion of the publication of the resulting papers, Pope John Paul II wrote to Fr. George V. Coyne, S.J., Director of the Vatican Observatory, on the dialogue that should be promoted between theology and science, for the enrichment of both by the exchange of discoveries and insights. The text is found in Origins 18 (1988-89), pp. 375-378, and in Physics, Philosophy, and Theology: a Common Quest for Understanding, ed. R.J. Russell et al. (Vatican City 1988).

(Science supports faith's perception of unity in the universe)  

176a The scientific disciplines [...] are endowing us with an understanding and appreciation of our universe as a
whole and of the incredibly rich variety of intricately related processes and structures which constitute its animate and inanimate components. This knowledge has given us a more thorough understanding of ourselves and of our humble yet unique role within creation. [...] 

The unity we perceive in creation on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of the universe, and the correlative unity for which we strive in our human communities, seems to be reflected and even reinforced in what contemporary science is revealing to us. As we behold the incredible development of scientific research, we detect an underlying movement toward the discovery of levels of law and process which unify created reality and which at the same time have given rise to the vast diversity of structures and organisms which constitute the physical and biological, and even the psychological and sociological worlds.[...]

(Science and religion should dialogue in mutual respect) 

176b By encouraging openness between the church and the scientific communities, we are not envisioning a disciplinary unity between theology and science like that which exists within a given scientific field or within theology proper. As dialogue and common searching continue, there will be growth toward mutual understanding and a gradual uncovering of common concerns which will provide the basis for further research and discussion.[...]

The unity that we seek [...] is not identity. The church does not propose that science should become religion or religion science. On the contrary, unity always presupposes the diversity and the integrity of its elements. Each of these members should become not less itself but more itself in a dynamic interchange, for a unity in which one of the elements is reduced to the other is destructive, false in its promises of harmony, and ruinous of the integrity of its components. We are asked to become one. We are not asked to become each other.

To be more specific, both religion and science must preserve their autonomy and their distinctiveness. Religion is not founded on science nor is science an extension of religion. Each should possess its own principles, its pattern of procedures, its diversities of interpretation and its own conclusions. Christianity possesses the source of its justification within itself and does not expect
science to constitute its primary apologetic. Science must bear witness to its own worth. While each can and should support the other as distinct dimensions of a common human culture, neither ought to assume that it forms the necessary premise for the other. The unprecedented opportunity we have today is for a common interactive relationship in which each discipline retains its integrity and yet is radically open to the discoveries and insights of the other.[...]

(Theology should carefully incorporate scientific findings)

176c Theology [...] must be in vital interchange today with science just as it always has been with philosophy and other forms of learning. Theology will have to call on the findings of science to one degree or another as it pursues its primary concern for the human person, the reaches of freedom, the possibilities of Christian community, the nature of belief and the intelligibility of nature and history. The vitality and significance of theology for humanity will in a profound way be reflected in its ability to incorporate these findings.

Now this is a point of delicate importance, and it has to be carefully qualified. Theology is not to incorporate indifferently each new philosophical or scientific theory. As these findings become part of the intellectual culture of the time, however, theologians must understand them and test their value in bringing out from Christian belief some of the possibilities that have not yet been realized.[...]

If the cosmologies of the ancient Near Eastern world could be purified and assimilated into the first chapters of Genesis, might contemporary cosmology have something to offer to our reflections on creation? Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear upon theological anthropology, the meaning of the human person as imago Dei, the problem of Christology—and even upon the development of doctrine itself? What, if any, are the eschatological implications of contemporary cosmology, especially in light of the vast future of the universe? Can theological method fruitfully appropriate insights from scientific methodology and the philosophy of science?

Questions of this kind can be suggested in abundance. Pursuing them further would require the sort of intense dialogue with contemporary science that has, on the whole, been lacking among those engaged in theological research and teaching. It
would entail that some theologians, at least, should be sufficiently well versed in the sciences to make authentic and creative use of the resources that the best-established theories may offer them.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH
INSTRUCTION ON THE ECCLESIAL VOCATION OF THE THEOLOGIAN (DONUM VERITATIS)
(24 May 1990)

The service rendered by theologians at the Second Vatican Council signalled the opening of a new partnership between the papal-episcopal magisterium and theology. The earlier paradigm of subordination and delegation (cf. nn. 858-859) was giving way to a new pattern of collaboration between these two forms of mediation of God’s word. In 1976 the International Theological Commission issued 15 theses on the common elements that connect the magisterial and theological forms of teaching and on the relation of complementarity that should obtain between them.

A more authoritative statement is the Instruction of 1990 excerpted here, in which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith sets forth the respective roles of the magisterium and theologians and deals with the thorny issue of public dissent from magisterial teaching. Before its treatment of dissent (Instruction, nn. 32-41), the congregation describes theology as a needed work of reason in the sphere of revelation and offers a careful analysis of the levels of authoritative teaching and the corresponding responses due to the magisterium’s enunciation of the content of faith and related truths.

The English text of the Instruction is found in Origins 20 (1990-91), pp. 118-126.

(The sources of the vocation of the theologian)

6. Among the vocations awakened [...] by the Spirit in the church is that of theologians. Their role is to pursue in a particular way an ever deeper understanding of the word of God found in the inspired Scriptures and handed on by the living tradition of the church. They do this in communion with the magisterium, which has been charged with the responsibility of preserving the deposit of faith.

Revealed truth beckons reason—God’s gift fashioned for the assimilation of truth—to enter into its light and thereby to come to understand in a certain measure what it has believed. Theological science responds to the invitation of truth as it seeks to understand the faith. [...]  

7. The theologian’s work thus responds to a dynamism found in faith itself. Truth, by its nature, seeks to be
communicated since human beings were created for the perception of truth and from the depths of their being desire knowledge of it so that they can discover themselves in the truth and there find their salvation [cf. 1 Tim 2:4]. [...] 

Theology therefore offers its contribution so that the faith might be communicated. Appealing to the understanding of those who do not yet know Christ, it helps them to seek and find faith. Obedient to the impulse of truth which seeks to be communicated, theology also arises from love and love's dynamism. In the act of faith, one knows God's goodness and begins to love him. Love, however, is ever desirous of a better knowledge of the beloved. From this double origin of theology, inscribed upon the interior life of the people of God and its missionary vocation, derives the method with which it ought to be pursued in order to satisfy the requirements of its nature.

(The resources of theological research)

Since the object of theology is the truth which is the living God and his plan for salvation in Jesus Christ, theologians are called on to deepen their own life of faith and continuously unite their scholarly research with prayer. In this way they will become more open to the "supernatural sense of faith" on which they depend, and it will appear to them as a sure rule for guiding their reflections and helping them assess the correctness of their conclusions.

10. [...] Theology's proper task is to understand the meaning of revelation and this therefore requires the utilization of philosophical concepts which provide "a solid and correct understanding of humanity, the world, and God" [OT 15] and can be employed in a reflection upon revealed doctrine. The historical disciplines are likewise necessary for the theologian's investigations. This is due chiefly to the historical character of revelation itself, which has been communicated to us in salvation history. Finally, a consultation of the human sciences is also necessary, to understand better revealed truth about human beings and the moral norms for their conduct, setting these in relation to the sound findings of such sciences.

It is the task of theologians in this perspective to draw from the surrounding culture those elements which will allow them to better illumine one or the other aspect of the mysteries of the faith. This is certainly an arduous task that has its risks, but it is legitimate in itself and should be encouraged.

Here it is important to emphasize that when theology employs the elements and conceptual tools of philosophy or other disciplines, discernment is needed. The ultimate normative principle for such discernment is revealed doctrine, which itself must furnish the criteria for the evaluation of these elements and conceptual tools and not vice versa.

(The magisterium's service of Christian truth; cf. LG 25, DV 10)

14. [...] It is the mission of the magisterium to affirm the definitive character of the covenant established by God through Christ with his people in a way which is consistent with the eschatological nature of the event of Jesus Christ. It must protect God's people from the danger of deviations and confusion, guaranteeing them the objective possibility of professing the authentic faith free from error, at all times and in diverse situations. It follows that the sense and weight of the magisterium's authority are only intelligible in relation to the truth of Christian doctrine and the preaching of the true word.

The function of the magisterium is not, then, something extrinsic to Christian truth nor is it set above the faith. It arises directly from the economy of the faith itself, in as much as the magisterium in its service to the word of God is an institution positively willed by Christ as a constitutive element of his Church. The service to Christian truth which the magisterium renders is thus for the benefit of the whole people of God called to enter the liberty of the truth revealed by God in Christ.

(The highest level of magisterial activity: dogmatic definitions)

15. Jesus Christ promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit to the Church's pastors so that they could fulfil their assigned task of teaching the Gospel and authentically interpreting revelation. In particular he bestowed on them the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. This charism is manifested when the pastors propose a doctrine as contained in revelation and can be exercised in various ways. Thus it is exercised particularly when the bishops in union with
their visible head proclaim a doctrine by a collegial act as is the case in an ecumenical council, or when the Roman pontiff, fulfilling his mission as supreme pastor and teacher of all Christians, proclaims a doctrine *ex cathedra*.

(The level of definitive teaching by the magisterium)

180b 16. By its nature, the task of religiously guarding and loyally expounding the deposit of divine revelation (in all its integrity and purity), implies that the magisterium can make a pronouncement "in a definitive way" [cf. n. 41] on propositions which, even if not contained among the truths of faith, are nonetheless intimately connected with them in such a way that the definitive character of such affirmations derives in the final analysis from revelation itself [cf. LG 25; Mysterium ecclesiae, 3-5; also n. 41, above].

(The magisterium's competency to teach moral norms)

180c What concerns morality can also be the object of the authentic magisterium because the Gospel, being the word of life, inspires and guides the whole sphere of human behaviour. The magisterium, therefore, has the task of discerning by means of judgments normative for the consciences of believers those acts which in themselves conform to the demands of faith and foster their expression in life, and those which, because intrinsically evil, are incompatible with such demands. By reason of the connection between the orders of creation and redemption, and by reason of the necessity, in view of salvation, of knowing and observing the whole moral law, the competence of the magisterium also extends to that which concerns the natural law.1

Revelation also contains moral teachings which *per se* could be known by natural reason. Access to them, however, is made difficult by our sinful condition. It is a doctrine of the faith that these moral norms can be infallibly taught by the magisterium [cf. n. 114].

(Non-definitive teaching by the magisterium)

180d 17. Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles teaching in communion with the successor

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of Peter, and in a particular way to the Roman pontiff as pastor of the whole church, when exercising their ordinary magisterium, even should this not issue in an infallible definition or in a “definitive” pronouncement, but in the proposal of some teaching which leads to a better understanding of revelation in matters of faith and morals and to moral directives derived from such teaching.

(The different responses due to the different levels of teaching)

181 23. When the magisterium of the Church makes an infallible pronouncement and solemnly declares that a teaching is found in revelation, the assent called for is that of theological faith. This kind of adherence is to be given even to the teaching of the ordinary and universal magisterium when it proposes for belief a teaching of faith as divinely revealed.

When the magisterium proposes “in a definitive way” truths concerning faith and morals, which even if not divinely revealed are nevertheless strictly and intimately connected with revelation, these must be firmly accepted and held [cf. n. 41].

When the magisterium, not intending to act “definitively” teaches a doctrine to aid a better understanding of revelation and make explicit its contents, or to recall how some teaching is in conformity with the truths of faith or finally to guard against ideas that are incompatible with these truths, the response called for is that of the religious submission of will and intellect [LG 25]. This kind of response cannot be simply exterior or disciplinary, but must be understood within the logic of faith and under the impulse of obedience to the faith.

(Magisterial interventions of a prudential and reformable kind)

182 24. Finally, in order to serve the people of God as well as possible, in particular by warning them of dangerous opinions that could lead to error, the magisterium can intervene in questions under discussion which involve, in addition to solid principles, certain contingent and conjectural elements. It often only becomes possible with the passage of time to distinguish between what is necessary and what is contingent.

The willingness to submit loyally to the teaching of the magisterium in matters per se not irreformable must be the rule. It can happen, however, that a theologian may, according to the case, raise questions regarding the timeliness, the form, or even
the contents of magisterial interventions. Here the theologian will need, first of all, to assess accurately the authoritativeness of the interventions, which becomes clear from the nature of the documents, the insistence with which a teaching is repeated, and the very way in which it is expressed [LG 25, 1].

In the area of interventions in the prudential order, it has happened that some magisterial documents were not free from deficiencies. Bishops and their advisers have not always taken into immediate consideration every aspect or the entire complexity of a question. But it would be contrary to the truth if, proceeding from some particular cases, one were to conclude that the church’s magisterium can be habitually mistaken in its prudential judgments or that it does not enjoy divine assistance in the integral exercise of its mission. In fact, theologians, who cannot pursue their discipline without a certain competence in history, are aware of the filtering that occurs with the passage of time. This is not to be understood in the sense of a relativization of the tenets of the faith. Theologians know that some judgments of the magisterium could be justified at the time in which they were made, because while the pronouncements contained true assertions and others which were not sure, both types were inextricably connected. Only time has permitted discernment and, after deeper study, the attainment of true doctrinal progress.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION PASTORES DABO VOBIS
(7 April 1991)

In October 1990 the Synod of Bishops treated the topic “The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day”. Pope John Paul II’s post-synodal document weaves together the propositiones submitted by the Synod into a comprehensive sketch of the priestly vocation, its spirituality, and formation for priestly ministry in the contemporary world. The exhortation interprets and updates Vatican II’s decree Optatam totius for a world in rapid transition. Priestly formation entails the cultivation of fundamental human qualities, prayerful familiarity with Scripture, preparation for celibate living, a broad intellectual education, and training for pastoral service.

On the role of philosophy in seminary education, the document brings

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out themes not present in Optatam totius (cf. n. 15), especially on the relation of the human mind and truth.


(The present urgency of intellectual formation)

183a  51. Intellectual formation has its own characteristics, but it is also deeply connected with, and indeed can be seen as a necessary expression of both human and spiritual formation. It is a fundamental demand of human intelligence by which one "participates in the light of God's mind" and seeks to acquire a wisdom which in turn opens to and is directed toward knowing and adhering to God [GS 15].[...]

The present situation is heavily marked by religious indifference, by a widespread mistrust regarding the real capacity of reason to reach objective truth, and by fresh problems brought on by scientific and technological discoveries.[...] Moreover, there is the present phenomenon of pluralism, which is very marked in the field not only of human society but also in the community of the church itself. It demands special attention to critical discernment and is a further reason for an extremely rigorous intellectual formation.[...]

(The contribution of philosophy)

183b  52. A crucial stage of intellectual formation is the study of philosophy, which leads to a deeper understanding of the person and of the person's freedom and relationships with the world and with God. A proper philosophical training is vital, not only because of the links between the great philosophical questions and the mysteries of salvation studied in theology under the guidance of the higher light of faith,¹ but also vis-à-vis an extremely widespread cultural situation which emphasizes subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth. Only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ.

Nor must one underestimate the importance of philosophy as a guarantee of that "certainty of truth" which is the only firm

basis for a total giving of oneself to Jesus and to the church. It is not difficult to see that some very specific questions, such as that concerning the priest's identity and his apostolic and missionary commitment, are closely linked to the question about the nature of truth, which is anything but an abstract question. For if we are not certain about the truth, how can we put our whole life on the line, and how can we have the strength to challenge others' way of living?

Philosophy greatly helps the candidate to enrich his intellectual formation in the "cult of truth," namely, in a kind of loving veneration of the truth, which leads one to recognize that the truth is not created or measured by human beings but is given to us as a gift by the supreme truth, God; that, albeit in a limited way and often with difficulty, human reason can reach objective and universal truth, even that relating to God and the radical meaning of existence; and that faith itself cannot do without reason and the effort of thinking through its contents.

ADDRESS TO THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
(31 October 1992)

The year 1992 marked the conclusion of work by the papal commission appointed in 1981 to study the ecclesiastical censure of Galileo Galilei in 1633. At a gathering of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on October 31, 1992, attended as well by the principal members of the Roman Curia and the heads of diplomatic missions to the Holy See, Pope John Paul II received the findings of the commission and commented on them in an address excerpted below.

The findings were summarized by Cardinal Paul Poupard, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, in a presentation that underscored the tentative grounds that Galileo had advanced for Copernican heliocentrism, the equivalent revocation of the condemnation in 1741, when Galileo's works received the imprimatur of the Holy Office, and the failure of the theologians who judged Galileo to grasp the nature of biblical statements about the cosmos. Galileo's judges erred in judgment by transposing a question calling for an answer based on observation and reasoning to the realm of revelation and faith.

Pope John Paul took up this theme and developed it in his response, the text of which is found, along with the presentation by Cardinal Poupard, in Origins 22 (1992-93), pp. 369-375.

(The need to acknowledge complexity)

184a 9. If contemporary culture is marked by a tendency to scientism, the cultural horizon of Galileo's age was
uniform and carried the imprint of a particular philosophical formation. This unitary nature of culture, which in itself is positive and desirable even in our own day, was one of the reasons for Galileo’s condemnation. The majority of theologians did not recognize the formal distinction between Sacred Scripture and its interpretation, and this led them unduly to transpose into the realm of the doctrine of the faith, a question that in fact pertained to scientific investigations.[...]

(Our transformed understanding of the universe)

184b 11. From the Galileo affair we can learn a lesson that remains valid in relation to similar situations that occur today and that may occur in the future.

In Galileo’s time, to depict the world as lacking an absolute physical reference point was, so to speak, inconceivable. And since the cosmos as then known was contained in the solar system alone, this reference point could only be situated in the earth or the sun. Today, after Einstein and within the perspective of contemporary cosmology, neither of these two reference points has the importance they once had. This observation [...] is not directed against the validity of Galileo’s position in the debate; it is only meant to show that often beyond two partial and contrasting perceptions there exists a wider perception that includes them and goes beyond both of them.

(Biblical revelation distinct from scientific findings)

184c 12. Another lesson that we can learn is that the different branches of knowledge call for different methods. Thanks to his intuition as a brilliant physicist and by relying on different arguments, Galileo [...] understood why only the sun could function as the centre of the world as it was then known, that is to say, as a planetary system. The error of the theologians of the time when they maintained the centrality of the earth was to think that our understanding of the physical world’s structure is in some way imposed by the literal sense of Scripture.[...]

In fact, the Bible does not concern itself with the details of the physical world, the understanding of which is the competence of human experience and reasoning. There exist two realms of knowledge, one that has its source in revelation and one that reason can discover by its own power. To the latter belong especially the experimental sciences and philosophy. The
distinction between the two realms of knowledge ought not to be understood as opposition. The two realms are not altogether foreign to each other; they have points of contact. The methodologies proper to each make it possible to bring out different aspects of reality.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
(7 December 1992)

The 1985 extraordinary synod of bishops, meeting on the twentieth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council, gave voice to the desire of many for a compendious statement of all of Catholic doctrine, to serve as a universal point of reference for teaching, as, for example, in catechisms composed in particular regions of the world.

After six years of preparation, Pope John Paul II approved the text of the new universal catechism on 25 June 1992, and in the Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum, on 11 October, the Pope ordered that the Catechism of the Catholic Church be published "as a statement of the Church’s faith and of catholic doctrine,... a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion."

Part One of the Catechism (CCC) sets forth the profession of faith in two major sections: first, God’s revelation and our response of faith (CCC 26-184); and, second, the articles of the Creed (CCC 185-1065). On revelation, the Catechism first explains the human capacity to find God and to speak about him (CCC 27-49) and then sets forth, with selected biblical and patristic texts, the teaching of Vatican II in DV 2-4 (nn. 149-151; CCC 50-73).

In treating the communication of revelation in Tradition, the Catechism speaks of the Church’s interpretation of revelation in its dogmas, bringing out their spiritual role and inner coherence. Our excerpt from this passage (n. 185) is from the 1997 definitive edition of the Catechism, which corrects CCC 88 so as to distinguish revealed truths calling for an assent of faith from other truths taught definitively as necessarily connected with revelation, which call for firm adherence. This brings the Catechism into line with the 1990 Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian (cf. nn. 180a-b, 181). All the 1997 changes are given in Origins 27 (1997-98), pp. 257-260.

The Catechism devotes a chapter to the response given in faith to God's invitation to communion of life with himself. A first article explains faith as personal adherence to Father, Son and Holy Spirit (CCC 150-152), and offers a resume of the characteristics of personal faith (CCC 153-165), drawing on Vatican I’s Dei Filius (nn. 118-139) and DV 5 (n. 152). The account is concretized and deepened by references to Abraham as the model and to the Virgin Mary as the perfect embodiment of faith (CCC 144-149, 165).

In a second section on faith, the Catechism moves beyond recent doctrine by setting forth the ecclesial dimension of faith and by adopting St. Thomas’s account of the spiritual dynamism by which faith moves beyond formulated
propositions to attain to the realities of divine life. Then, in texts not given here, passages from St. Irenaeus of Lyons set in contrast the diversity of those who believe and the oneness of the faith they profess (CCC 172-175).

(The dogmas of the faith)

185 88. The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.

89. There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illumine it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to the light shed by the dogmas of faith [cf. Jn 8:31-32].

90. The mutual connection between dogmas, and their coherence, can be found in the whole of the Revelation of the mystery of Christ [cf. n. 132: nexus mysteriorum; LG 25]. “In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith” [UR 11].

(Faith of the individual depends on the faith of others)

186 166. Faith is a personal act—the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith.

167. “I believe” (Apostles' Creed) is the faith of the Church professed by each believer, principally during Baptism. “We believe” (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) is the faith of the Church confessed by bishops assembled in council or more generally by the liturgical assembly of believers. “I believe” is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both “I believe” and “We believe”. 
(The church's role in mediating faith)

187 168. It is the Church that believes first, and so bears, nourishes and sustains my faith. Everywhere it is the Church that first confesses the Lord: "Through the world the holy Church acclaims you", as we sing in the hymn Te Deum; with her and in her, we are won over and brought to confess: "I believe", "We believe". It is through the church that we receive faith and new life in Christ by Baptism. In the Rituale Romanum, the minister of Baptism asks the catechumen: "What do you ask of God’s Church?" And the answer is: "Faith." "What does faith offer to you?" "Eternal life."

169. Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother: "We believe the Church as the mother of our new birth, and not in the Church as if she were the author of our salvation." Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith.

(The language of faith)

188 170. We do not believe in formulae, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch. "The believer’s act [of faith] does not terminate in the propositions, but in the realities [which they express]. All the same, we do approach these realities with the help of formulations of the faith which permit us to express the faith and to hand it on, to celebrate it in community, to assimilate and live by it more and more.

171. The Church, "pillar and bulwark of the truth" [1 Tim 3:15], faithfully guards “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” [Jude 3]. She guards the memory of Christ’s words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles’ confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.

MOTU PROPRIO AD TUENDAM FIDEM
(18 May 1998)

In the Code of Canon Law of 1983, Can. 750 declares what is to be

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1. Rite of Baptism of Adults.
2. Faustus of Riez, De Spiritu Sancto, 1, 2; PL 62, 11.
3. St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II-II, 1, 2 ad 2.
believed with divine and catholic faith in adherence to God's revelation. The New Formula for the Profession of Faith of 1989 corresponds to this canon in the Creed and its first added paragraph (cf. nn. 40-41). After Can. 751 explains the differences between heresy, apostasy, and schism, Can. 752 lays down those teachings which, while not definitively taught, are to be held “with religious submission of intellect and will,” which corresponds to the third added paragraph of the Profession of Faith (cf. n. 41). Thus, the Code had no canon corresponding to the second added paragraph of the Profession, on firm adherence to truths necessarily connected with revelation and taught definitively by the Magisterium.

To remedy this lacuna, Ad tuendam fidem promulgates a revision of Can. 750. In its new form, Can. 750 §1 retains the text of Can. 750 published in 1983. But a new Can. 750 §2 is added as given below. To complete the revision, a reference to Can. 750 §2 is inserted into Can. 1371, which decrees a “just penalty” for those obstinately rejecting such definitively taught doctrines. The same revisions are also decreed in the Code of the Canons of the Eastern Churches, Canons 598 and 1436.


189 Can. 750 §2. Each and every proposition stated definitively by the magisterium of the church concerning the doctrine of the faith or morals, that is, each and every proposition required for the sacred preservation and faithful explanation of the same deposit of faith, must also be firmly embraced and maintained (firmiter etiam amplectenda ac ritinenda sunt); anyone, therefore, who rejects those propositions which are to be held definitively is opposed to the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

ENCYCICAL LETTER FIDES ET RATIO
(14 September 1998)

The documents of this chapter show the concern of the modern magisterium to clarify the right relation between faith and human reason, beginning especially with Dei Filius of Vatican I (cf. nn. 113-135) and intensified in the addresses of Pope John Paul II to scientists (cf. nn. 164-176c, 184a-c).

In Fides et Ratio the Pope takes up this problematic with special attention to philosophical reflection in relation to revelation and faith. While critical of
philosophical outlooks alien to the Christian vision of reality (Fides et Ratio, nn. 86-90), the encyclical is appreciative of insights gained by modern philosophy and appeals for new vigour in philosophical investigation (n. 48). But this must go beyond the technical and pragmatic use of reason, not being content with fragments from limited sectors of knowledge, to pursue the ultimate meaning of human existence and the foundation of reality beyond phenomena.

The encyclical underscores the positive impulses given to rational inquiry by revelation, as shown in the Wisdom literature of Israel (nn. 16-22) and by major figures of the Christian tradition from the Fathers through St. Thomas down to Newman and Edith Stein (38-44, 59, 74). In the other direction, a philosophical contribution is essential in dogmatic, fundamental, and moral theology, as well as in the Christian encounter with cultures (65-73).

(Revelation stimulates ever wider rational inquiry)

190a 14. From the teaching of the two Vatican Councils there also emerges a genuinely novel consideration for philosophical learning. Revelation has set within history a point of reference which cannot be ignored if the mystery of human life is to be known. Yet this knowledge refers back constantly to the mystery of God which the human mind cannot exhaust but can only receive and embrace in faith. Between these two poles, reason has its own specific field in which it can inquire and understand, restricted only by its finiteness before the infinite mystery of God.

Revelation therefore introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort; indeed, it impels reason continually to extend the range of its knowledge until it senses that it has done all in its power, leaving no stone unturned. [...]

15. The truth of Christian revelation, found in Jesus of Nazareth, enables all men and women to embrace the "mystery" of their own life. An absolute truth, it summons human beings to be open to the transcendent, while respecting both their autonomy as creatures and their freedom. At this point the relationship between freedom and truth is complete, and we understand the full meaning of the Lord's words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" \[Jn 8:32\].

Christian revelation is the true lodestar of men and women as they strive to make their way amid the pressures of an immanentist habit of mind and the constrictions of a technocratic logic. It is the ultimate possibility offered by God for the human
being to know in all its fullness the seminal plan of love which began with creation. To those wishing to know the truth, if they can look beyond themselves and their own concerns, there is given the possibility of taking full and harmonious possession of their lives, precisely by following the path of truth.[...]

These considerations prompt a first conclusion: the truth made known to us by revelation is neither the product nor the consummation of an argument devised 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. For all their difference of method and content, both disciplines point to that “path of life” [Ps 16:11], which, as faith tell us, leads in the end to the full and lasting joy of the contemplation of the Triune God.

(Despite philosophical gains in separation, faith and reason need each other)

190b 48. [T]he history of philosophy, then, reveals a growing separation between faith and philosophical reason. Yet closer scrutiny shows that even in the philosophical thinking of those who helped drive faith and reason further apart there are found at times precious and seminal insights which, if pursued and developed with mind and heart rightly tuned, can lead to the discovery of truth’s way. Such insights are found, for instance, in penetrating analyses of perception and experience, of the imaginary and the unconscious, of personhood and intersubjectivity, of freedom and values, of time and history. The theme of death as well can become for all thinkers an incisive appeal to seek within themselves the true meaning of their own life.

But this does not mean that the link between faith and reason as it now stands does not need to be carefully examined, because each without the other is impoverished and enfeebled. Deprived of what revelation offers, reason has taken sidetracks which expose it to the danger of losing sight of its final goal. Deprived of reason, faith has stressed feeling and experience, and runs the risk of no longer being a universal proposition. It is an illusion
to think that faith, tied to weak reasoning, might be more penetrating; on the contrary, faith then runs the 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 and radicality of being.

This is why I make this strong and insistent appeal—not, I trust, untimely—that faith and philosophy recover the profound unity which allows them to stand in harmony with their nature without compromising their mutual autonomy. The *parrhesia* [joyous confidence] of faith must be matched by the boldness of reason.

(Affirmation of the capabilities of human language and rational inquiry)

190c 84. The importance of metaphysics becomes still more evident if we consider current developments in hermeneutics and the analysis of language. The results of such studies can be very helpful to the understanding of faith, since they bring to light the structure of our thought and speech and the meaning which language bears. However, some scholars working in these fields tend to stop short at the question of how reality is understood and expressed, without going further to see whether reason can discover its essence. How can we fail to see in such a frame of mind the confirmation of our present crisis of confidence in the powers of reason? [...] Faith clearly presupposes that human language is capable of expressing divine and transcendent reality in a universal way—analogically, it is true, but no less meaningfully for that.1 Were this not so, the word of God, which is always a divine word in human language, would not be capable of saying anything about God. [...] 85. I am well aware that these requirements which the word of God imposes upon philosophy may seem daunting to many people involved in philosophical research today. Yet this is why, taking up what has been taught repeatedly by the Popes for several generations and reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council itself, I wish to reaffirm strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge [*cf. GS 15*]. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will

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1Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council, *De errore Abbatis Ioachim*, II; *cf. n. 320.*
have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era. The segmentation of knowledge, with its splintered approach to truth and consequent fragmentation of meaning, keeps people today from coming to an interior unity. How could the Church not be concerned by this? It is the Gospel which imposes this sapiential task directly upon her pastors, and they cannot shrink from their duty to undertake it.

(The meaning of Scripture and dogmas; cf. nn. 147-148, 160-162, 272-274)

190d 94. An initial problem is that of the relationship between meaning and truth. Like every other text, the sources which the theologian interprets primarily transmit a meaning which needs to be grasped and explained. This meaning presents itself as the truth about God which God himself communicates through the sacred text. Human language thus embodies the language of God, who communicates his own truth with that wonderful “condescension” which mirrors the logic of the incarnation.¹ In interpreting the sources of revelation, then, the theologian needs to ask what is the deep and authentic truth which the texts wish to communicate, even within the limits of biblical language.

The truth of the biblical texts, and of the Gospels in particular, is certainly not restricted to the narration of simple historical events or the statement of neutral facts, as historicist positivism would claim.² Beyond simple historical occurrence, the truth of the events which these texts relate lies rather in the meaning they have in and for the history of salvation. This truth is elaborated fully in the Church’s constant reading of these texts over the centuries, a reading which preserves intact their original meaning. There is a pressing need, therefore, that the relationship between fact and meaning, a relationship which constitutes the specific sense of history, be examined also from the philosophical point of view.

95. The word of God is not addressed to any one people or any period of history. Similarly, dogmatic statements, while

¹ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum, 13; cf. n. 251.
reflecting at times the culture of the period in which they were defined, formulate an unchanging and ultimate truth. This prompts the question of how one can reconcile the absoluteness and the universality of truth with the unavoidable historical and cultural conditioning of the formulas which express that truth. The claims of historicism, I noted earlier, are untenable; but the use of a hermeneutic open to the appeal of metaphysics can show how it is possible to move from the historical and contingent circumstances in which the texts developed to the truth which they express, a truth transcending those circumstances.

Human language may be conditioned by history and constricted in other ways, but the human being can still express truths which surpass the phenomenon of language. Truth can never be confined to time and culture; in history it is known, but it also reaches beyond history.

96. [The enduring validity of concepts used in dogmatic definitions] is a complex theme to ponder, since one must reckon seriously with the meaning which words assume in different times and cultures. Nonetheless, the history of thought shows that across the range of cultures and their development certain basic concepts retain their universal epistemological value and thus retain the truth of the propositions in which they are expressed.1 Were this not the case, philosophy and the sciences could not communicate with each other, nor could they find a place in cultures different from those in which they were conceived and developed. The hermeneutical problem exists, to be sure, but it is not insoluble. Moreover, the objective value of many concepts does not exclude that their meaning is often imperfect. There is where philosophical speculation is often helpful. We may hope, then, that philosophy will be especially concerned to deepen the understanding of the relationship between conceptual language and truth, and to propose ways which will lead to a right understanding of that relationship.

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CHAPTER II

TRADITION AND SCRIPTURE

God has manifested himself as Saviour of all humankind "in deeds and words" (DV 2). In Israel he chose a people, formed them in authentic worship and morality, and engendered in them the hope of future salvation. The Scriptures of Israel tell of the life of this people in a way that gives testimony to God himself and to his design for human salvation. The New Testament centres on the culmination of saving history in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Its books tell of his teaching and healing, his death and exaltation, and his sending of the Holy Spirit to animate the faith of those who confess him as risen Lord and seek to extend his message and presence to all people.

Christian revelation took form once and for all in the gospel announced by Christ's apostles. This gospel, as a source of new life in the Spirit, Tradition and Scripture make present in every age. Tradition, in general, is the collective acceptance of truths and a way of life in community. In Christian parlance, it is first the process of communication by which God's word and the corresponding way of life, coming from Christ through his apostles, becomes continually and freshly present in the Church in every age. Animated by God's Spirit, Tradition develops dynamically as the Church transmits her faith and life, especially in facing the challenges posed by her encounters with cultures. Tradition then also refers to the content of the message and norms of life that the Church receives and transmits.

Scripture is the fixed, textual form of what was vital discourse in Israel and the apostolic Church. In Scripture, chosen ministers of the word speak to their communities about salvation history and its present significance, about prayer and worship in response to the Lord of this history, and about the way of life by which community members are called and encouraged to put their faith into action. Thus Scripture derives from key moments within the dynamic of tradition in Israel and the apostolic Church. In time the Church recognized the biblical writings as "canonical", that is, as normative expressions of God's word in human mediation.
The Scriptures were written in communities abundantly blessed by God's animating Spirit, and so are accepted as "inspired" books, that is, as works of authors in whom God was acting to give truthful and efficacious expression to his saving word and work.

From Scripture's origin in foundational Tradition, it follows that it must be applied and further interpreted in the subsequent tradition of the Church's faith and doctrine, in her worship and life. In such an ambience, Scripture comes alive to engender faith and inspire evangelical living.

The earliest documents stem from eras in which Tradition was more lived than reflected upon, to say nothing of being a topic of debate. A number of early interventions, against gnostic views, defend the ongoing relevance of Israel's Scriptures for Christians and their unity with the apostolic writings of the New Testament. Also at issue was the gradual determination of the canon of books accepted as normative by the Church.

With the Council of Trent, the relation between Scripture and the Church, with its traditions and teaching authority, became a theme of explicit teaching. Against Protestant denials, Trent lays down that both traditions of apostolic origin and Scripture, as interpreted in the Church, are necessary for an integral communication of the Gospel. The Second Vatican Council expresses the global sense of Tradition, with its fecundity for development, and correlates this with Scripture and the magisterium.

The biblical encyclicals of Leo XIII and Benedict XV sought to promote scholarly study of the Bible in order to defend its inerrant witness to revelation. More recent interventions, especially by Pius XII and Vatican II, give guidance toward the exegetical recovery of the meaning of Scripture, both as the discourse of the prophets and apostles in their original situation and as a present message through inspired texts of perennial significance for Christian faith and life.

The main points of doctrine contained in this chapter fall under the following headings:

Divine Revelation is attested both in Tradition and Scripture: 31, 39/13, 121, 209, 210, 216, 219, 246, 247.

Tradition transmits the word of God: 31, 143/11, 204, 205, 210, 215, 216, 219, 265a-b, 266a, 270
Tradition is found in the teaching of the Fathers, in liturgy, in the doctrine of the Councils: 31, 37, 143/12, 204, 205, 209, 219, 222, 266a-b.

Tradition develops dynamically in the Church: 136, 246, 260, 265b, 266b, 268, 270.

The Bible comprises the books of the Old and New Testaments: (201), (202), (203), 208, 210-213, 216, 218, 252-254, 263-264.

The Latin Vulgate is the accepted standard version: 213, 214, 233
The books of the Bible are, with all their parts, inspired and have God as author: 207, 208, 210, 216, 218, 221, 226, 227, 228/9-16, 229, 230, 249.

They contain salvific truth free from error: 128, 216, 226, 227, 228/11-16, 230, 231, 240, 249.

Their inerrancy is not limited to their moral and religious doctrine: 226, 230, 238.

The Bible is entrusted to the Church and is to be interpreted by her: 31, 39/13, 143/9, 208, 210, 215, 217, 220, 221, 228/1.4, 238, 248, 259, 271.

Its literal sense must be found: 234; 273-274;
according to the literary genres: 236, 237, 239, 240-245.

The spiritual sense must be ascertained: 235, 250, 263-264, 271, 276-277.

The interpretation must be based on Tradition: 143/9, 215, 217, 220-222, 228/23, 238, 250, 260, 267-268, 271.

Modern sciences are to be used as helps: 223, 232, 234.
There is no ultimate conflict between Scripture and the natural sciences: 224, 226:

nor with history: 225, 228/14.16.24, 231.

The spiritual and theological use of Scripture: 255-257, 267a-b.

The role of Scripture in theology: 256, 258.
THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA (360?)

(The canon of Scripture)

(201) (Canon 60 of the Council enumerates the books recognised as Sacred Scripture. Baruch is explicitly mentioned with Jeremiah but Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Revelation do not figure on the list).

INNOCENT I (402-417)

LETTER CONSULENTI TIBI TO EXSUPERIUS, BISHOP OF TOULOUSE (405)

(The canon of Scripture)

(202) (All the deuto-canonical books of the Old Testament are listed. Baruch is not explicitly mentioned but is most probably considered as a part of Jeremiah).

GELASIUS I (492-496)

DECREE OF GELASIUS (time unknown)

This decree is a compilation of documents, the various parts of which pertain to various periods. Its part II on the canon of scriptures goes back in substance to Pope Damasus I (366-384), even though the text as found in the Decree of Gelasius cannot be attributed to the Decree of Damasus (382).

(The canon of Scripture)

(203) (Judith is placed at times before Esther and Ezra-Nehemiah, at times after these, and at times is omitted. Baruch is mentioned with Jeremiah, "cum uno Baruch", or omitted).

THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

PROFESSION OF FAITH (553)

The ultimate foundation for the inerrant Christian doctrine is not a proof drawn from Holy Scripture alone; still less is it one that is based on theological reasoning. It is the living Tradition itself, inherited from apostolic times. On this Council, see n. 619i and n. 620i.

(Tradition)

204 We profess that we hold and preach the faith which from the beginning was given to the apostles by our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and was proclaimed by them to the
whole world. The Holy Fathers professed, explained and handed on this faith to the holy Church, particularly those Fathers who took part in the four holy Councils which we follow and accept entirely for everything.[...]

THE LATERAN COUNCIL (649)

(Tradition)

Canon 17: Whosoever does not confess, in accordance with the holy Fathers, by word and from the heart, really and in truth, to the last word, all that has been handed down and proclaimed to the holy, catholic and apostolic Church by the holy Fathers and by the five venerable General Councils, condennatus sit.

THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL OF NICAEA (787)

(On ecclesiastical Tradition)

Anyone who does not accept the whole of the Church’s Tradition, both written and unwritten, anathema sit.

LEO IX

LETTER CONGRATULAMUR VEHEMENTER TO PETER, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH (1053)

The classic formula ‘God is the author of both the Old and New Testaments’ is taken from the Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua. Since the fifth century, the newly consecrated bishops had to profess their belief in the divine authorship of the Old Testament; Marcion had asserted that the Old Testament was inspired by the Devil.

The formula occurs in most of the official documents on Biblical inspiration:

—The Creed of Leo IX (1053) (DS 685)
—The profession of faith for the Waldensians (1208) (DS 790)
—The Council of Lyons (M. Palaeologus) (1274) (DS 854)
—The Council of Florence (Copts) (1441) (DS 1334)
—The Council of Trent (Session IV) (1546) (DS 1501)
—The First Vatican Council (Session III) (1870) (DS 3006)
—Providentissimus Deus, Leo XIII (1893) (DS 3293)
—The Decree Lamentabili, Pius X (1907) (DS 3409)
—The Second Vatican Council, Dei Verbum, 11 (1965)
The letter of Pope Leo IX, mentioned here, contains a profession of faith.

(God is the author of Scripture)

I also believe that God, the Lord almighty, is the only author of both the Old and the New Testaments, i.e., the Law and the Prophets, and the Apostles.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF FLORENCE
DECREE FOR THE COPTS (1442)

This decree reaffirms that God is the author of both Old and New Testaments, against gnostic ideas which were still surviving. The Coptic Church held a number of apocryphal books to be inspired. Hence the list of the canonical books was also included. It will be repeated later by the Council of Trent.

(God is the author of the books of the Old and New Testaments)

[The holy Roman Church] professes that one and the same God is author of the Old and New Testaments, i.e., of the Law, the Prophets and the Gospel, because by inspiration of one and the same Holy Spirit, the saints of both covenants have spoken. She accepts and venerates their books.[...]

(There follows the list of canonical books: DS 1335; cf. the Council of Trent: nn. 211-212).

THE COUNCIL OF SENS (PARIS) (1528)

The Reformers rejected Tradition and adhered to Scripture only, sola Scriptura. This regional Council condemns this teaching in its fifth decree. The text is found in Enchiridion Biblicum (1993), n. 55.

(Some things which are not explicitly contained in Scripture must be firmly adhered to)

There is no doubt that Scripture covers a vast field of religious doctrines and expounds them with ineffable profundity. It is nevertheless a pernicious error to think that nothing has to be accepted that is not expressed in Scripture; indeed many things have come from Christ through the apostles to later generations and have been transmitted from mouth to mouth by familiar discourse. All these must be held with
unshakable conviction, even though they are not contained explicitly in sacred Scripture.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF TRENT
FOURTH SESSION (8 April 1546)

In the initial crossfire of Reformation controversy over purgatory and indulgences, the Catholic apologist Johann Eck appealed to 2 Macc 12, on Judas Maccabeus’s offerings and prayer to atone for the sins of his fallen soldiers. Luther responded with an attack on the canonical standing of such a text, which belongs to a deuto-canonical book not found in the Jewish canon. These books were placed in an appendix of the first Protestant bibles, for edifying reading but not as authoritative Scripture, but soon were excluded from printed bibles as apocryphal works.

In the New Testament, Luther’s immensely popular translation expressed his reservations regarding Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation by placing them at the end and introducing them with prefaces highlighting their points of contrast with books like Romans, Galatians, 1 Peter, and the Gospel of John, which give unalloyed witness to the saving grace of Christ. Luther’s practice was followed in William Tyndale’s English New Testament of 1525, but was not taken up in other Protestant Bibles.

Luther criticized many practices of the medieval church, such as masses for the dead, invocation of the saints, monastic vows and clerical celibacy, branding them “human traditions” not grounded in Scripture. Protestants also applied the “Scripture principle” to exclude the sacraments other than Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

The Council of Trent’s Fourth Session, following the lines of apologists like Johann Eck, Johann Dietenberger and St. John Fisher, accepted as binding those traditions of doctrine and practice that come down from the Apostles, linking these with the Scriptures, not as “sources” of revelation, but as essential mediations of the saving truth and rule of the gospel of Christ for all later ages. The Council also declared once more the normativity of the fuller canon of the Old Testament, including the deuto-canonical books, as long accepted in the Western Church.

In a second decree the Council declared “authentic” the Latin Vulgate, in reference to its reliability for liturgical and theological use. Here “authenticity” does not involve issues of the authorship of biblical books nor does it exclude a revision of the Vulgate, as many Tridentine theologians and bishops had desired and the post-Tridentine popes carried out.

The second decree includes as well a point of fundamental difference with the Protestant Reformation, in Trent’s declaration that the Fathers of the Church constitute a negative norm of biblical interpretation and that the Church’s tradition, that is, her creeds, dogma, and liturgy, embodies the global meaning of Scripture in a manner that makes her able to pass judgment on interpretations of the Bible’s meaning for faith and life.
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

DECREE OF RECEPTION OF THE SACRED BOOKS AND APOSTOLIC TRADITIONS

(Written books and unwritten traditions)

210 The holy ecumenical and general Council of Trent[...] has always this purpose in mind that in the Church errors be removed and the purity of the Gospel be preserved. This Gospel was promised of old through the prophets in the Sacred Scriptures; Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first promulgated it from his own lips; he in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures as the source of all saving truth and norms of conduct. The Council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself or from the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand. Following, then, the example of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testament—for the one God is the author of both—together with all the traditions concerning faith and practice, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.

(The Canon of Scripture)

211 The Council has thought it proper to insert in this decree a list of the sacred books, so that no doubt may remain as to which books are recognised by the Council. They are the following:

Old Testament: The five books of Moses, i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Chronicles, the first book of Ezra, the second book of Ezra called the book of Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job, the Psalter of David containing 150 psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah with Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets, i.e., Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi; two books of Maccabees, i.e., the first and the second.
212 New Testament: The four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul, i.e., to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, to Titus, Philemon, and the Hebrews; two epistles of the apostle Peter, three of the apostle John, one of the apostle James, one of the apostle Jude, and the revelation of the apostle John.

213 If anyone does not accept all these books in their entirety, with all their parts, as they are being read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the ancient Latin Vulgate editions, as sacred and canonical, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, anathema sit.

DECREES ON THE VULGATE
AND ON HOW SCRIPTURE IS TO BE INTERPRETED
(The Vulgate as the standard version)

214 Moreover, because the same holy Council thought it very useful to the Church if it were known which of all the Latin editions of the sacred books now in circulation is to be regarded as the authentic version, it declares and decrees: This same ancient Vulgate version which has been preserved by the Church for so many centuries is to be regarded as the authentic translation in public readings, disputations, sermons and expositions, and let no one dare or presume to reject it on any grounds.

(The Church as interpreter of Holy Scripture)

215 Furthermore, to restrain irresponsible minds, it decrees that no one, relying on his own prudence, twist Holy Scripture in matters of faith and practice that pertain to the building up of Christian doctrine, according to his own mind, contrary to the meaning that holy mother the Church has held and holds—since it belongs to her to judge the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture—and that no one dare to interpret the Scripture in a way contrary to the unanimous consensus of the Fathers, even though such interpretations not be intended for publication.
In conjunction with the doctrine of revelation, Vatican I had to deal also with the question of the transmission of revelation. It reiterated the doctrine of Trent concerning Tradition and Scripture and interpreted it in view of contemporary opinions. It described inspiration against the doctrines of D. Haneberg who saw in it only a subsequent approbation by the Church and of J. Jahn who considered it as an external and negative assistance which wards off any and all errors.

Chapter II: On Revelation

(Scripture and Tradition as sources from which we know revelation)

Further, this supernatural revelation, according to the universal belief of the Church, declared by the sacred Synod of Trent, "is contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles themselves by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand" [cf. n.210]. These books of the Old and New Testaments are to be received as sacred and canonical in their integrity, with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the same Council and are contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate. These the Church holds to be sacred and canonical, not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority, nor merely because they contain revelation with no admixture of error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God for their author and have been delivered as such to the Church herself.

(Interpretation of Holy Scripture)

However, what the holy Council of Trent has laid down concerning the interpretation of the divine Scripture for the good purpose of restraining indisciplined minds, has been explained by certain people in a distorted manner. Hence we renew the same decree and declare this to be its sense. In matters of faith and morals, affecting the building up of Christian
TRADITION AND SCRIPTURE

doctrine, that is to be held as the true sense of Holy Scripture which Holy Mother the Church has held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scriptures. Therefore no one is allowed to interpret the same Sacred Scripture contrary to this sense, or contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

Canon 4 to Chapter II

218 If anyone does not receive as sacred and canonical the books of Holy Scripture, entire and with all their parts, as the sacred Synod of Trent has enumerated them, or denies that they have been divinely inspired, anathema sit.

Chapter III: On Faith

(Scripture and Tradition contain the divine revelation)

219 [...] All those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which by the Church, either in solemn judgment or through her ordinary and universal magisterium, are proposed for belief as having been divinely revealed.

LEO XIII

ENCYCLICAL LETTER PROVIDENTISSIMUS DEUS (1893)

This encyclical on the study of Holy Scripture represents the magisterium's first treatment of the questions raised by modern Bible criticism. Leo XIII unhesitatingly recognises the services rendered by scientific methods of biblical research and wishes them to be used for a deeper understanding of the sacred books. But the Bible is inspired in all its parts (n.227) and is therefore inerrant. Scientific research can never ignore this fact. Therefore, no interpretation can neglect the criteria of faith and tradition.

The encyclical is based on the firm conviction that there can be no contradiction between the word of God and the findings of sciences, provided that on both sides researchers honestly seek the truth and are aware of their own limitations. God who created nature and is the author of Scripture cannot contradict himself.

(Catholic doctrine as norm for the interpretation of Scripture)

220 Where the sense of biblical texts has been authoritatively declared, either by the sacred authors themselves under
the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as in many passages of the New Testament, or by the Church assisted by the same Holy Spirit, whether by means of a solemn judgement or by her ordinary and universal magisterium [cf. n. 219], it should be the religious concern of the Catholic interpreter to explain them in the same way and to prove by the help which science supplies that it is the only interpretation which can rightly be approved according to the laws of sound exegesis.

221 In other points the analogy of faith must be followed, and Catholic doctrine as it has been received from the authority of the Church must be considered as the supreme criterion. For, since it is the same God who is author of the sacred books and of the doctrine handed down by the Church, it is surely impossible to extract from the former a legitimate interpretation which in any way conflicts with the latter.

(The Catholic interpretation draws from the wealth of Tradition, mainly the Fathers of the Church)

222 The authority of the holy Fathers is very great whenever they explain unanimously in one and the same manner a biblical testimony as belonging to the doctrine of faith and morals, as "after the apostles they were the ones to plant and water, build, shepherd, and rear the Holy Church in her growth".1 For, through their consensus, it becomes evident that such an explanation has been handed down from the apostles in accordance with the Catholic faith.

(Higher Criticism, and the limits for 'inner criteria')

223 Without foundation and to the detriment of religion a method has been introduced which parades under the name of higher criticism, according to which the origin, integrity, and authority of any book can be judged by what are called internal criteria. On the contrary, it is evident that in historical questions, such as the origin and preservation of books, historical testimonies are of greater value than others and should be sought out and weighed with greatest care. On the other hand, internal criteria are generally not important enough to be admitted except as a sort of confirmatory evidence.

(The Bible and natural sciences)

224 No real disagreement can exist between the theologian and the scientist provided each keeps within his own limits.[...]

3287 If nevertheless there is disagreement, [...] it should be remembered that the sacred writers, or more truly “the Spirit of God who spoke through them, did not wish to teach us such truths (as the inner structure of visible objects) which are of no help to salvation”; and that, for this reason, rather than trying to provide a scientific exposition of nature, they sometimes describe and treat these matters either in figurative language or as the common manner of speech in those times required, and indeed still requires nowadays in everyday life, even among learned people.

(Historicity)

225 The same principles can also be transferred to related branches of knowledge, especially to history.

(Divine origin and inerrancy of Sacred Scripture)

226 It would be utterly impious to limit inspiration to some portions only of Sacred Scripture or to admit that the sacred author himself has erred. Nor can one tolerate the method of those who extricate themselves from difficulties by allowing without hesitation that divine inspiration extends to matters of faith and morals and to nothing more.[...]

3292 For all the books in their entirety, which the Church receives as sacred and canonical, with all their parts, have been written under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Now it is utterly impossible that divine inspiration could give rise to any error; it not only by its very nature excludes all error, but excludes and rejects it with the same necessity by which it is impossible that God, the highest Truth, be the author of any error whatsoever.

3293 This is the ancient and constant faith of the Church.

It is futile to argue that the Holy Spirit took human beings as his instruments in writing, implying that some error could slip in, not indeed from the principal author, but from the inspired writers. For by his supernatural power he so stimulated and moved them to write, and so assisted them while they were writing, that they properly conceived in their mind, wished to write down faithfully, and expressed aptly with infallible truth all those things, and only those things, which he himself ordered; otherwise he could not himself be the author of the whole of Sacred Scripture.

PIUS X

DECREE LAMENTABILI OF THE HOLY OFFICE (1907)
ARTICLES OF MODERNISM CONDEMNED

Modemism (cf. n. 143) subscribed to liberal scriptural sciences in matters of biblical criticism and exegesis. The articles condemned concern the relation of the Church’s magisterium to Scripture (1-4), the modernist view on divine inspiration (9-12), and some specific questions (13-24).

[228/1] The ecclesiastical law which requires that books treating of Holy Scripture be submitted to previous censorship does not apply to workers in the field of criticism or of scientific exegesis of the Old and New Testaments.

[228/4] The Church’s teaching office cannot, even by dogmatic definition, declare the genuine meaning of Sacred Scripture.

[228/9] Those who believe that God is really the author of Holy Scripture show too much simplicity or ignorance.

[228/11] Divine inspiration does not extend to the whole of Scripture in such a way that each and every part of it is kept free from error.

[228/14] In many of their accounts the Evangelists narrated not so much the truth as what they thought would—even though it be false—be more helpful to their readers.
Until the canon was defined and established, the gospels were constantly enlarged and amended: therefore in them no more than a slight and uncertain trace of Christ's teaching has remained.

John's narrations are not really historical but a mystical contemplation of the Gospel. The discourses in his gospel are theological meditations about the mystery of salvation, devoid of historical truth.

There can and in fact there does exist conflict between the facts related by Holy Scripture and the Church's dogma based upon them. The critic can thus reject as false things which the Church believes as most certain.

An exegete is not to be censured when he sets up premises from which it follows that dogmas are historically false or doubtful, provided that he does not directly deny the dogmas themselves.

BENEDICT XV

ENCYCLICAL LETTER SPIRITUS PARACLITUS (1920)

The occasion for the encyclical was the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Jerome, the great translator and interpreter of Sacred Scripture. The doctrine developed is essentially that expressed by Leo XIII, but Benedict XV's main task was to deal with the misinterpretation of the passage in which his predecessor dealt with the historicity of the inspired books.

(Divine inspiration of the Bible)

[St. Jerome consistently teaches the Catholic doctrine] that the sacred books were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have God for their author, and were as such entrusted to the Church [cf. n. 216]. Indeed he asserts that the books of Holy Scripture were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by his instruction, stimulus, and even dictation, and were indeed written and produced by him. Besides he has no doubts that the individual writers freely placed themselves at the service of God's inspiration according to each one's nature and gifts. For he not only consistently asserts the common features of all sacred writers, viz., that in writing they followed the Spirit of God, so that God must be considered the
primary cause of every expression and affirmation of Scripture, but he also accurately distinguishes the special characteristics of each writer.

*(Inspiration extends to both religious and profane matters)*

230 Some recent writers distinguish between a primary or religious and a secondary or profane element in Scripture; while admitting that divine inspiration applies to every affirmation, even to every word of Holy Scripture, they restrict and narrow down its effects, especially its absolute truth and inerrancy, to the primary or religious element. They believe that only what deals with religion is intended and taught by God in the Scriptures. Everything else that belongs to profane subjects and serves the revealed doctrine, as it were as an outer garment of divine truth, was merely permitted and was left subject to the shortcomings of the writer. No wonder therefore that there are many things in Scripture concerning natural sciences, history, and the like, which cannot be reconciled with modern scientific progress[...]

But it is apparent from the very words of the Pope (Leo XIII) how rash and wrong such contentions are. [...] He rejected any distinction between primary and secondary elements, as they are called, removed all ambiguity, and clearly showed that the opinion of those who believe that concerning the truth of statements one does not need to ask what God said so much as why he said it, is very far from the truth. He likewise taught that the divine inspiration extends to all parts of Scripture without distinction, and that no error could occur in the inspired text. "It would be utterly impious to limit inspiration to some portions only of Sacred Scripture or to admit that the sacred author himself has erred" [cf. n. 226]

*(Historical truth)*

231 And those depart no less from the teaching of the Church [...] who hold the view that the historical parts of Holy Scripture are not based on the absolute truth of facts, but upon what they call relative truths, and upon the views of ordinary people. They are even bold enough to argue from the very words of Pope Leo, for he said that the principles of natural science could be transferred to historical disciplines [cf. n. 225]. Thus they maintain that, as the sacred writers wrote about the
physical order according to its outward appearance, so too, they reported events without accurate knowledge as they appeared in the eyes of ordinary people or from the false testimony of others, without indicating the source of their information or making the accounts of others their own.

Why should we refute with many words this entirely misleading and false assumption, unjust as it is to our predecessor? The physical order has to do with the appearances. But the principal law of history is that accounts of facts must agree with the facts as they actually occurred. If the false opinion just mentioned were once accepted, how would the truth of the sacred narration still be free from all error, as our predecessor in the whole context of his letter declared that we must believe?

PIUS XII

ENCYClical LETTER DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU (1943)

On the fiftieth anniversary of Leo XIII's Providentissimus Deus, Pius XII published the landmark document for modern Catholic biblical studies. The proximate occasion was a booklet circulated in 1941 by an Italian priest among the cardinals and Italian bishops. The booklet decried the grave danger for souls represented by the scholarly study of Scripture in the original languages. In place of philology and critical history, the author urged a meditative and spiritual interpretation based on the Latin Vulgate.

Pius XII responded with a strong recommendation of scholarly biblical studies: the knowledge and mastery of biblical and Oriental languages is fostered; the position of the Church with regard to the Latin Vulgate is clarified; Catholic exegetes are encouraged to make proper use of textual criticism and literary analysis of the sacred books, according to literary genres and form criticism; they must attach great importance to the literal meaning without neglecting the 'spiritual' or theological sense of the sacred texts.

(Original texts and the Latin Vulgate version)

232 One must explain the text in the original language which, since it was written by the sacred author himself, has greater weight and authority than even the best translation, either ancient or modern. Exegetes will be able to accomplish their task more easily and in a more effective way if to the knowledge of biblical languages they add a sound skill in textual criticism.

233 As for the decree of the Council of Trent requiring that the Vulgate be used by all as the authentic Latin version [cf. n.214], it is common knowledge that this
concerns only the Latin Church and her public use of Scriptures, and obviously in no way detracts from the authority and value of the original texts. [...] This special authority or, as it is called, ‘authenticity’ which the Council attributes to the Vulgate was not given on account of special critical reasons but rather because of the lawful use the Vulgate had enjoyed in the Church for so many centuries. This long use proves that the Vulgate as the Church has understood and now understands, is free from all error in matters of faith and morals so that, as the Church herself testifies and confirms, it can be safely quoted, without the least fear of erring, in disputations, public readings, and sermons. Its authenticity is therefore more properly called ‘juridical’ than ‘critical’.

Therefore this authority of the Vulgate in matters of doctrine by no means prevents—but instead today practically demands—both the verification and confirmation of this doctrine from the original texts, as well as constant recourse to these texts, by which the correct meaning of Holy Scripture is everywhere and each day being made more clear and evident. Neither does the Tridentine decree forbid translations into modern languages, also from the original texts themselves, for the use and benefit of the faithful and the easier understanding of the divine word, as, we know, has already been done in many places laudably and with the approval of the authority of the Church.

(Literal and spiritual meaning)

Equipped with knowledge of languages and skill in the tools of the critical method, Catholic exegetes should undertake as their most important task to ascertain and to explain the true meaning of the sacred books. In carrying out this task the exegetes should keep in mind that their chief task must be to discern and determine what is known as the literal sense of the words of the Bible. [...] Commentators must first and foremost show what is the theological doctrine concerning faith and practice of each book and text.[...]

By giving an interpretation [...] that is primarily theological, they will effectively silence those who assert that in biblical commentaries they find hardly anything to raise their minds to God, nourish their souls and foster their interior life, and therefore maintain that we must have recourse to a spiritual and so-called mystical interpretation.[...]

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235 It is true that not every spiritual sense is excluded from Sacred Scripture; what was said and done in the Old Testament was wisely ordained and disposed by God so that the past would spiritually foreshadow what was to happen in the new covenant of grace. It is therefore the duty of the exegete to discover and explain not only the literal meaning of the words, i.e., that which the sacred writers intended and expressed, but also their spiritual significance, provided that it be established that such meaning has been given to them by God himself. For God alone was able to know this spiritual significance and to reveal it to us. In the gospels our divine Saviour himself points out and teaches this kind of meaning: the apostles, following the example of the Master, make use of it in their preaching and writings; the traditional teaching of the Church continuously gives proof of it; finally the ancient practice of the liturgy bears out this meaning, wherever the well-known saying can be applied in truth: the norm of prayer is the norm of belief [cf. n. 1913]. Catholic exegetes should bring this divinely intended spiritual meaning to light and propound it with the carefulness that the dignity of the divine word demands. They should be scrupulously careful not to propose other figurative senses as though they were the original meaning of Holy Scripture.

(Literary genres)

236 It is absolutely necessary for the interpreter to go back in spirit to those remote centuries of the East, and to make proper use of the help given by history, archaeology, ethnology and other sciences, in order to discover what literary forms the writers of those early ages intended to use and did in fact use. For, to express what they had in mind, the ancients of the East did not always avail themselves of the same forms and expression as we do today, they used those that were current among people of their own time and place. The exegete cannot determine what these were by an a priori judgement but must first make a careful study of ancient literature. [...] The sacred writers, like the other ancients, use certain arts of exposition and narration, certain idioms known as ‘approximations’ which are typical of Semitic languages, certain hyperbolic ways of speaking, and certain paradoxes intended for emphasis—all of which will cause no surprise to
those who understand biblical inspiration correctly. The sacred books need not exclude any of the forms of expression that were commonly used in human speech among the ancient peoples, especially of the East, so long as they are not incompatible with God's sanctity and veracity.[...]

In many cases in which the authors are accused of some historical inaccuracy or some inexact recording of certain events, there is in fact nothing else to be found than those customary and characteristic forms of expression or style of narration which were current among people of that time, and were in fact quite legitimately and commonly used. Just impartiality demands that when these are found in the word of God [...] they should no more be considered as error than when similar expressions are used in everyday speech.

LETTER OF THE BIBLICAL COMMISSION TO CARDINAL SUHARD, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS (1948)

This letter, written by the Secretary, J.M. Voste, has in fact the authority of a decree of the Biblical Commission; it contains an important application of the above principles (cf. n. 236) to the literary genre of Genesis, chapters 1-11, and stresses the caution needed to decide their historicity. It also somewhat rectifies previous decrees regarding the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch and accepts "written documents or oral traditions and post-Mosaic modifications and additions".

237 The question of the literary forms of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is much more complicated and obscure. These literary forms do not correspond to any of our classic categories and cannot be judged in the light of Greco-Latin or modern literary genres. Their historicity can be neither affirmed nor denied en bloc without unjustifiably applying to them the rules of a literary genre in which they cannot be classified.[...] To declare a priori that the accounts found in them do not contain history in the modern sense of the word would easily lead to the misunderstanding that they contain no history in any sense of the word, while they do actually relate in simple and figurative language, adapted to the intelligence of less educated people, the fundamental truths underlying the divine plan of salvation. They are a popular description of the origins of the human race and of the chosen people.
TRADITION AND SCRIPTURE

ENCYClical Letter HUMANI GENERIS (1950)

From this document (cf. n. 144i) two texts referring to Scripture are quoted here:

The first text rejects once more the theory of the double meaning of Scripture, one human and one divine, the former fallible, the latter inerrant.

The second clarifies the letter to Cardinal Suhard (cf. n. 237) concerning the historical value of the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

(Interpretation of Scriptural inerrancy)

238 There are some who clearly distort the sense of the definition laid down by the first Vatican Council as to the divine authorship of the Bible. [...] They even use misguided language about the human meaning of the sacred books, under which a divine meaning is said to be concealed, and claim that only this divine meaning is infallible. In their interpretation of Scripture they will not take into consideration the analogy of faith, nor pay attention to the tradition of the Church.

(Comment on the letter to Cardinal Suhard)

239 It was clearly laid down in that letter that the first eleven chapters of Genesis [...] do in some true sense come under the heading of history; in what exact sense, it is for the further study of exegetes to determine. These chapters have a naive, symbolic way of speaking, well suited to the understanding of primitive people. But they do disclose important truths, upon which the attainment of our eternal salvation depends, and they do also give a popular description of the origin of the human race and of the chosen people. It may be true that the ancient authors of sacred history drew some of their material from current popular stories. So much may be granted. But it must be remembered that they did so under the impulse of divine inspiration which preserved them from all error in selecting and assessing the documents they used.

These excerpts from popular stories, which are taken over in the sacred books, must not be put on a level with mere myths, or with legend in general. [...] In the Old Testament a love of truth and a cult of simplicity shine out in such a way as to put these writers on a distinctly different level from their profane contemporaries.
INSTRUCTION OF THE BIBLICAL COMMISSION
SANCTA MATER ECCLESIA (1964)
ON THE HISTORICAL TRUTH OF THE GOSPELS

In this Instruction, concerned mainly with the genesis of the gospels, biblical scholars are encouraged and protected against unfair criticism. The most modern and scientific methods of research are approved, including a sane and balanced Form Criticism (5).

The three stages in which the Gospel message has come down to us are described at length: from Christ's own words and actions to the apostolic preaching, and from the Sitz im Leben of the apostolic Church to the writers of the gospels (6-10).

Besides, the Instruction points out the complexity of many problems of exegesis and insists on the ultimate pastoral purpose of biblical studies: to nourish the spiritual life and to bring people to salvation. The text is found in AAS (1964) 712 ff., and in Enchiridion Biblicum (1993) nn. 644-659.

(Form Criticism)

5. In appropriate cases the interpreter is free to seek out what sound elements there are in the method of form-criticism; one can freely make use of these to gain a fuller understanding of the gospels.

(The three stages in the formation of the Gospels)

6. In order to determine correctly the trustworthiness of what is transmitted in the gospels, the interpreter must take careful note of the three stages of tradition by which the teaching and the life of Jesus came down to us.

7. (1) Christ our Lord attached to himself certain chosen disciples who had followed him from the beginning, had seen his works and heard his words, and thus were qualified to become witnesses of his life and teaching. Our Lord, when expounding his teaching by word of mouth, used the ways of reasoning and of expression which were in common use at that time.[...] He accommodated himself to the mentality of his hearers, and ensured that his teaching would be deeply impressed on their mind and would easily be remembered by the disciples.

8. (2) The apostles, bearing witness to Jesus, proclaimed first and foremost the death and resurrection of the Lord. They faithfully recounted his life and words and, as regards the manner of their preaching, took into account the
circumstances of their hearers. After Jesus had risen from the dead and his divinity was clearly perceived, the faith of the disciples, far from blotting out the remembrance of the events that had happened, rather consolidated it since their faith was based on what Jesus had done and taught. [...] Yet, it need not be denied that the apostles, when handing on to their hearers the things which in actual fact the Lord had said and done, did so in the light of that fuller understanding which they enjoyed as the result of being instructed by the glorious events accomplished in Christ, and illumined by the Spirit of Truth. [...] They made use of such various forms of speech as were adapted to their own purpose and to the mentality of their hearers.

244 9. (3) The sacred authors took this earliest body of instruction, which had been handed down orally at first and then in writing [...], and set it down for the benefit of the churches in the four gospels. In doing so, each of them followed a method suitable to the special purpose which he had in view. They selected certain things out of the many traditions; some they synthesised, some they elaborated in view of the situation of the churches, painstakingly using every means of bringing home to their readers the firm truth in which they had been instructed [cf. Lk 1:4]. For, out of the material which they had received, the sacred authors selected especially those items which were adapted to the various circumstances of the faithful as well as to the end which they themselves had in view; these items they recounted in a manner fitting those circumstances and that end. [...] In handing on the words and deeds of our Saviour, they explained them [...], one Evangelist setting them in one context, another in another. [...] The truth of the narrative is not affected in the least by the fact that the Evangelists report the sayings or doings of our Lord in a different order or that they use different words to express what he said, not keeping to the letter but nevertheless preserving the sense.

245 10. The result of recent studies has made it clear that the teaching and the life of Jesus were not simply recounted for the purpose of being kept in remembrance, but were ‘preached’ in such a way as to provide the Church with the foundation on which to build faith and practice.
Chapter II: The Transmission of Divine Revelation

This Chapter unfolds the Council’s teaching on the nature of revelation (nos. 149-153) by showing how Tradition, Scripture and the ecclesial magisterium work together to bring to every age a testimony of God’s saving word, by which he continues to speak to believers and lead them into fuller communion of life with himself (cf. n. 149).

God’s consummate revelation of himself in Christ (cf. n.151) was proclaimed in the apostolic gospel, which is the source of saving truth and rule of life (cf. n. 201, incorporated in DV 7). The gospel is further communicated through the Tradition of the church and the inspired books of the New Testament. Tradition is the global apostolic patrimony that the church hands on by prolonging her own life as a community of faith, worship and witness. Tradition develops and provides the ambience in which Scripture becomes God’s loving discourse with believers and a vital evangelical message for the world (DV 8).

Scripture and Tradition differ, since the former is a fixed text and the latter includes a vital process of transmitting faith and a style of life, but they are intrinsically connected (DV 9). They are a single treasure entrusted to the whole church, within which the episcopal and papal magisterium has an interpretive and protective function that serves the integrity and vitality of the revealed message (DV 10).

(Sacred Tradition)

The Tradition handed on by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the living of a holy life by the people of God and the increase of their faith; thus the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

This Tradition, derived from the apostles, progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit [cf. n. 136], for there is growth in the understanding both of the realities and of the words handed down. This happens through study and contemplation on the part of the believers who ponder them in their hearts [cf. Lk 2:19, 51], through their interior understanding of the spiritual realities of their own experience, and through the preaching of those who have received a sure charism of truth together with episcopal succession. Thus the Church tends continually through the centuries towards the fulness of divine truth.[...]

(Sacred Tradition)
The words of the holy Fathers bear witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, the riches of which are poured out in the practice and life of the Church that believes and prays. By the same tradition the entire canon of Sacred Scripture becomes known to the Church, and these Scriptures are more deeply understood and constantly actualized in the Church. In this way God, who spoke of old, still holds unbroken converse with the spouse of his beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her in the world, introduces believers into all truth, and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them [cf Col 3:16].

(Relation between Tradition and Scripture)

247 9. Hence there exists a close connection and commonality between Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine well-spring, in a certain way merge into unity, and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God in as much as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the Holy 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 integrity, so that, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may, in their preaching of this word, preserve it faithfully, explain it and cause it to spread. Consequently, it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church derives her certainty about the whole content of revelation. And so, both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence [cf. n. 210].

(Scripture and Tradition in relation to the Church’s magisterium)

248 10. [...] The office of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed down, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone [cf. n. 859], whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office, however, is not above the word of God, but ministers to it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to this word devoutly, guarding it religiously and expounding it faithfully, by divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from the one deposit of faith everything which it proposes for belief as divinely revealed.
It is clear therefore, that, by God's most wise design, Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Church's teaching authority are so linked and so associated together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way contribute effectively to the salvation of souls under the action of the one Holy Spirit.

Chapter III: The Divine Inspiration of Sacred Scripture and its Interpretation

The Council affirms the inspiration of Scripture as a tenet of apostolic faith, adding a simple statement that God acted in and through the chosen human authors, leaving aside the often cited account given by Leo XIII of how the Spirit worked in their faculties (cf. n.227). Instead of "inerrancy", as in the biblical encyclicals, the Council affirms the saving truth of Scripture, as attested in 2 Tim 3:16-17 on the many-sided pastoral efficacy of the Bible.

The norms of correct interpretation begin with a concise recapitulation of Divino afflante (nn. 234, 236), but Vatican II then insists on reading Scripture "in the Spirit" with attention to factors that carry the interpreter beyond historical and literary considerations.

Finally, God's words to us in Scripture are marvelously tempered to our limitations, in analogy with his coming to us in the weakness of flesh in the incarnation of the eternal Word.

(Inspiration and truth of Holy Scripture)

11. [...] For the composing of these sacred books God chose human beings, and while he employed them, they made use of their own powers and abilities, so that with God acting in them and through them, they—as true authors—committed to writing all those things and only those that he wanted [cf. n.227].

Since therefore everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it must be acknowledged that the books of Scripture teach firmly, faithfully and without error the truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wanted to be set down in the sacred writings.

(Interpretation)

12. [...] Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the same Spirit in which it was written. In order therefore to discover the correct meaning of the sacred texts, no less serious
attention must be paid to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture in the light of the living Tradition of the whole Church and of the analogy of faith.

(God's condescension)

251 13. [...] The words of God, expressed in human language, resemble human speech, just as once the Word of the eternal Father, taking to himself the weak flesh of humanity, became similar to human beings.

Chapters IV and V: The Old and the New Testaments

After a brief description of salvation history (14), the Constitution shows the importance of the Old Testament and its relation to the New Testament. According to the saying of St. Augustine, “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old is made manifest in the New”¹

The New Testament has an excellence of its own (17), especially the gospels which are of apostolic origin and have a historical character; number 19 is a summary of the instruction of the Biblical Commission ‘Sancta Mater Ecclesia’ (cf. nn. 240-245). The chapter concludes with an extremely brief account of all the other New Testament writings (20).

(Importance of the Old Testament for Christians)

252 15. [...] Though these books contain also certain things which are imperfect and merely temporary, they still exhibit a true divine pedagogy. [...] They give expression to a lively sense of God, contain a storehouse of sublime teachings about God, of saving wisdom about human life, and a wonderful treasury of prayers; in sum, the mystery of our salvation is present in them in a hidden way.

(The unity of the two Testaments)

253 16. [...] The books of the Old Testament in their entirety have been assumed into the proclamation of Gospel, and it is in the New Testament that they acquire and manifest their full significance [cf. Mt 5:17; Lk 24:27; Rom 16:25-26; 2 Cor 3:14-16]. In their turn the Old Testament books shed light on the New Testament and explain it.

¹ St. Augustine, Quaest. in Hept., 2, 73.
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(The apostolic origin of the gospels)

254  18. [...] What the apostles preached by the command of Christ, afterwards they and others of the apostolic circle under the inspiration of the divine Spirit handed on to us in writings which are the foundation of our faith, namely, the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Chapter VI: Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

All preaching must be nourished and governed by Sacred Scripture. Suitable translations from the original text must be made available in the language of the people; when possible, these may be made in collaboration with other Christians (22).

Exegetes and theologians are encouraged in the apostolic use of the Bible (23). Theology must become more and more biblical. Finally, the Council recommends guided reading of Holy Scripture as a stimulus to the life in the Spirit (25).

(The importance of Holy Scripture for the Church)

255  21. [...] In the sacred books it is the heavenly Father himself who meets his children with tender love and enters into conversation with them. Now there is such force and efficacy in the word of God that it constitutes strength and support for the Church, and for her children it provides strength of faith, the food of the soul and a pure unfailing source of the spiritual life.

(The importance of Scripture for theology)

256  24. [...] Let the study of the sacred page be as it were the soul of sacred theology. Through the same word of Scripture the ministry of the word, which includes pastoral preaching, catechesis, and all Christian instruction, where the liturgical homily ought to have a privileged place, also must find healthy nourishment and holy growth.

(The reading of Holy Scripture is recommended)

257  26. [...] Just as the life of the Church is strengthened through the persistent frequenting of the eucharistic mystery, so also we may hope for a new stimulus for the life of the Spirit from a growing devotion to the word of God which lasts for ever [Is 40:8; cf. 1 Pet 1:23-25].
PAUL VI

S. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

THE THEOLOGICAL FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS

(22 February 1976)

This lengthy document, issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, was sent to all bishops and Directors of Seminaries. In an important section it outlines the principles to be observed in the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the relation of Scripture to Tradition and its place as the basis of all theological disciplines. The text is found in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 21 (1976), pp. 265-366.

(The place of Scripture in theology)

258 79. The basic fact which theological teaching must take into account is that Sacred Scripture is the starting point, the permanent foundation, and the life-giving and animating principle of all theology [cf. DV 24; n. 256]. The professor of biblical sciences must therefore carry out his mission with the competence and thorough scientific preparation that the importance of his discipline requires. To be faithful to his mission, he must deal, at different levels, with the text, with the event to which the text relates, and with the tradition which communicates and interprets the text. But, while he applies textual, literary and historical analysis, he must also keep alive in the minds of his students an awareness of the unity of the mystery and plan of God. Since Scripture is passed on to us by the Church and in part came into existence within the Church, it should be read and understood in the light of ecclesiastical tradition.¹

80. The primordial role of Sacred Scripture determines the nature of its relation to theology and its various disciplines. We must recall here that Sacred Scripture cannot be taken into account in function solely of these disciplines (as though it were but a source of probative texts); on the contrary, theology in its entirety is called upon to help to a better and increasingly profound understanding of the sacred texts, that is, of the dogmatic and moral truths they contain. Consequently, after the introductory questions have been handled, the teaching of Sacred Scripture must culminate in a biblical theology which gives a unified vision of the Christian mystery.

¹ Cf. Instruction Sancta Mater Ecclesia, 21 April 1964, AAS 56 (1964) 713f.
259 27. To speak of Tradition and Scripture as the source of catechesis is to draw attention to the fact that catechesis must be impregnated and penetrated by the thought, the spirit and the outlook of the Bible and the Gospels through assiduous contact with the texts themselves; but it is also a reminder that catechesis will be all the richer and more effective for reading the texts with the intelligence and the heart of the Church and for drawing inspiration from the two thousand years of the Church's reflection and life.

The Church's teaching, liturgy and life spring from this source and lead back to it, under the guidance of the pastors and, in particular, of the doctrinal Magisterium entrusted to them by the Lord.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

LETTER TO THE BISHOPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST
(6 August 1983)

Although this document deals with questions concerning the minister of the Eucharist (cf. n 1756i), there is a relevant passage on the erroneous use of Scripture texts. The text of the letter is found in AAS 75 (1983) 1001-1009.

260 This apostolic succession which constitutes the entire Church as apostolic is part of the living tradition which has been for the Church from the beginning, and continues to be, her particular form of life. And so, those who cite isolated texts of Scripture in opposition to this living tradition, trying thereby to justify different structures, stray from the truth.
CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

INSTRUCTION LIBERTATIS NUNTIUS ON CERTAIN
ASPECTS OF THE THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION
(6 August 1984)

This Instruction purposes to give guidelines on the "theologies of liberation". It is not intended as a treatise on the theme of "Christian Freedom and Liberation" (as a subsequent Instruction, dated 22 March, 1986, will be), but only draws attention to the deviations and risks of deviation on the part of certain forms of liberation theology which use in an insufficiently critical manner concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought. A passage from the fourth section, "Biblical Foundations", on the interpretation of the Exodus event, and another from the tenth section denounce a new, 'reductionist' hermeneutics. The text is found in AAS 76 (1984) 876-909.

(Against a reductionist interpretation of Exodus)

261 IV,3. The "theologies of liberation" make wide use of readings from the book of Exodus. The exodus, in fact, is the fundamental event in the formation of the chosen people. It represents freedom from foreign domination and from slavery. One will note that the specific significance of the event comes from its purpose, for this liberation is ordered to the foundation of the people of God and the Covenant cult celebrated on Mount Sinai [cf. Ex 24]. That is why the liberation of the Exodus cannot be reduced to a liberation which is principally or exclusively political in nature. Moreover, it is significant that the term freedom is often replaced in Scripture by the very closely related term, redemption.

(New hermeneutic: reductionist reading of the Bible)

262 X,5. The new hermeneutic inherent in the "theologies of liberation" leads to an essentially political re-reading of the Scriptures. Thus, a major importance is given to the Exodus event in as much as it is a liberation from political servitude. Likewise, a political reading of the Magnificat is proposed. The mistake here is not in bringing attention to a political dimension of the reading of Scripture, but in making of this one dimension the principal or exclusive component. This leads to a reductionist reading of the Bible.[...]

X,7. In giving such priority to the political dimension, one is lead to deny the radical newness of the New Testament and above all to misunderstand the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
true God and true man, and thus the specific character of the salvation he gave us, that is above all liberation from sin, which is the source of all evils.

PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

NOTES ON THE PROPER WAY TO PRESENT THE JEWISH FAITH IN ROMAN CATHOLIC PREACHING AND TEACHING
(24 June 1985)

The Secretariat for Christian Unity previously published Guidelines and Suggestions for the implementation of the Declaration Nostra Aetate (n.4) in relation to the Jews (1974). In this subsequent document, the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews of the Secretariat not only urges the faithful to avoid any anti-semitism, but also to learn to appreciate and love Jews and Judaism. The "Notes" recall the organic unity and explain the relationship between the "Old" (in the sense of 'first', not of 'out-of-date') and the New Testaments. In this connection the document explains the use of typology and the right method of typological interpretation. The text is found in Osservatore Romano, 24-25 June, 1985, pp. 6-7.

(Relation between the two Testaments and typology)

263 II,3. From the unity of the divine plan derives the problem of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. The Church already from apostolic times [cf. 1 Cor 10:11; Heb 10:1] and then constantly in tradition resolved this problem by means of typology, which emphasises the primordial value that the Old Testament must have in the Christian view. Typology, however, makes many people uneasy and is, perhaps, the sign of a problem unresolved.

4. Hence in using typology [...] we should be careful to avoid any transition from the Old to the New Testament which might seem merely a rupture.[...]

(Typological interpretation and Christian reading)

264 II,5. It should[...] be emphasised that typological interpretation consists in reading the Old Testament as preparation and, in certain aspects, outline and foreshadowing of the New [cf. e.g. Heb 5:5-10, etc]. Christ is henceforth the key and point of reference to the Scriptures: "The rock was Christ" [1 Cor 10:4].
6. It is true then and should be stressed that Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the event of the dead and risen Christ and that on these grounds there is a Christian reading of the Old Testament which does not necessarily coincide with the Jewish reading. [...] But this detracts nothing from the value of the Old Testament in the Church and does nothing to hinder Christians from profiting discerningly from the traditions of Jewish reading.

7. Typological reading only manifests the unfathomable riches of the Old Testament, its inexhaustible content and the mystery of which it is full, and should not lead us to forget that it retains its own value as revelation which the New Testament often does no more than reiterate [cf. Mk 12:29-31]. Moreover, the New Testament itself demands to be read in the light of the Old. Primitive catechism constantly had recourse to this [cf. e.g. 1 Cor 5:6-8; 10:1-11].

JOHN PAUL II

LETTER REGARDING ARCHBISHOP LEFEBVRE
(8 April 1988)

In 1976 Pope Paul VI suspended Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre from his priestly functions after the Archbishop had ordained members of the traditionalist Fraternity of Pius X. In 1988, Pope John Paul II wrote to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to encourage him in his efforts to achieve reconciliation with Archbishop Lefebvre.

The letter was the occasion for the Pope to speak of two extreme tendencies in the church after Vatican II and to clarify the nature of tradition and its relation to church teaching authority (cf. n. 246-248).

Unfortunately, negotiations with Archbishop Lefebvre broke down and on June 30, 1988, he proceeded to ordain four members of the Fraternity to the episcopate. On July 2, he was declared excommunicated in the decree “Ecclesiam Dei” (AAS 80 [1988] 1495-98). The following text on progressivist and integrist reactions to Vatican II, found in the letter to Cardinal Ratzinger, is taken from Origins 17 (1987-88), pp. 803-804.

(Progressivism heedless of fidelity to tradition)

265a In the period since the council [...] there have appeared tendencies which create a certain difficulty in putting the council into practice. One of the tendencies is characterized by a desire for changes which are not always in harmony with the teaching and spirit of Vatican II, even though they seek to
appeal to the council. These changes claim to express progress, and this tendency is given the name progressivism. In this case, progress consists in an aspiration toward the future which breaks with the past, without taking into consideration the function of tradition, which is fundamental to the church’s mission in order that she may continue in the truth which was transmitted to her by Christ the Lord and by the apostles, and which is diligently safeguarded by the magisterium.

(Integrism heedless of the dynamic character of tradition)

265b The opposite tendency, which is usually called traditionalism or integrism, stops at the past itself, without taking into account the correct aspiration toward the future which manifested itself precisely in the work of Vatican II. While the former tendency seems to recognize the correctness of what is new, the latter sees correctness only in what is ancient, considering it synonymous with tradition.

But it is not what is ancient as such, or what is new per se, which corresponds to the correct idea of tradition in the life of the church. Rather that idea means the church’s remaining faithful to the truth received from God, throughout the changing circumstances of history. The church, like that householder in the Gospel, wisely brings “from the storeroom both the new and the old” [Mt 13:52], while remaining absolutely obedient to the Spirit of truth whom Christ has given to the church as her divine guide. And the church performs the delicate task of discernment through her authentic magisterium [cf. LG 25].

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

INSTRUCTION ON THE STUDY OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH IN THE FORMATION OF PRIESTS
(10 November 1989)

In early 1990 the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education released an instruction on the contribution of patristic studies to the programmes of seminaries and theological faculties. Recalling the place of the fathers in the genetic study of doctrine, as prescribed by Vatican II in Optatam totius, n. 16, the Congregation noted that some currents of theology were attempting to relate biblical texts directly to today’s questions without attending to the early tradition in which the church fathers set the direction for doctrinal development. Study of the fathers should be cultivated because of their essential role as witnesses of tradition and practitioners of sound theological method.

(The fathers and the “constitutive” tradition of Christianity)

266a In the flow of living tradition that continues from the beginning of Christianity through the centuries to our present time, [the fathers] occupy a quite special place, which distinguishes them from other figures in the history of the church. They laid down the first basic structures of the church, together with doctrinal and pastoral traditions that remain valid for all times. [...] Some of them are witnesses to the apostolic tradition, the source from which subsequent tradition is drawn. The fathers of the first centuries especially can be considered the founders and teachers of a “constitutive” tradition, which has been preserved and continuously elucidated in subsequent ages.

It is from them that “the full canon of the sacred books” is known [DV 8; n. 246]; they composed the basic professions of faith, which are in fact the regulae fidei that defined the deposit of faith in response to heresies and contemporary culture, thus giving rise to theology. Furthermore, they laid the foundations of canonical discipline [...] and created the first forms of liturgy that remained an obligatory reference point for all subsequent liturgical reforms. In this way the fathers gave the first conscious and reflective response to Sacred Scripture, formulating this, not as an abstract theory, but as daily pastoral practice and teaching in the heart of the liturgical assemblies gathered together to profess the faith and celebrate the worship of the risen Lord. They were in this way the authors of the first great Christian catechesis.

(The dynamism of tradition)

266b The tradition to which the fathers are witnesses is a living tradition that manifests unity amid variety and continuity in progress. This is seen in the great number of liturgical families and in the spiritual, disciplinary and exegetical-theological traditions that existed in the first centuries. [...] These were diverse traditions, which though were connected by being rooted in the firm and unchanging common foundations of the faith.
Tradition, therefore, as it was known and lived by the fathers, is not like a monolithic, immovable and obsolete block, but a pluriform organism pulsating with life. It is a way of life and teaching that on the one hand experienced uncertainty and controversy, while searching tentatively for answers, but on the other hand also reached timely decisions of notable creativity and decisive importance for the future. Following the living tradition of the fathers does not mean orienting oneself to the past as such, but adhering to the rule of faith in a spirit of assurance and interior freedom, with continuing attention to the foundations of everything, to that which is essential, enduring and unchanging. An absolute fidelity is at stake here, which is often tested usque ad sanguinis effusionem, for the sake of dogma and those moral and disciplinary principles that manifest their fecundity precisely at those times that open the way to innovations.

(The patristic approach to Scripture)

267a The fathers are primarily and principally expositors of Sacred Scripture. [...] In this task, from our present-day point of view, their interpretative method is marked by certain undeniable limitations. [...] Nonetheless, their contribution toward a better understanding of the sacred books is of enormous value. They are still truly our teachers and are superior in many ways to the exeges of the Middle Ages and the modern era due to “a sort of sweet intuition about heavenly things through an admirable penetration of spirit, whereby they go farther into the depths of the divine word”.

The example of the fathers can indeed teach modern exeges a truly religious approach to Scripture as well as an interpretation that constantly adheres to the criterion of communion with the experience of the church proceeding through history under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When these two interpretative principles, namely the religious and the specifically Catholic, are neglected or forgotten, modern exegetical studies often turn out to be impoverished and distorted.

For the fathers, Sacred Scripture was the object of supreme veneration, the foundation of the faith, the constant content of preaching, nourishment of devotion, the soul of theology. They

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1. Pope Pius XII, Divino afflante Spiritu, AAS 35 (1943), 312.
always maintained its divine origin, lack of error, normativity and inexhaustible wealth and power for spirituality and doctrine.

(Characteristics of patristic interpretation of Scripture)

267b Theology was born out of the exegetical activity of the fathers in medio ecclesiae and especially in the liturgical assemblies where they responded to the spiritual needs of the people of God. Their exegesis, with its blend of the spiritual life and rational theological reflection, always aims at the essential point while being faithful to the entire sacred deposit of the faith. It is centred on the mystery of Christ, the point of reference and compendious expression of all particular truths. Rather than pursuing numerous marginal problems, the fathers seek to embrace the fullness of the Christian mystery and follow the basic movement of revelation and of the economy of salvation that goes from God through Christ to the church, sacrament of communion with God and dispenser of divine grace, in order to return to God. This insight gives rise to the fathers' lively sense of ecclesial communion. Their proximity to Christian origins and familiarity with Scripture make them see all things in reference to the centre and sense how this is present in each of its parts, so that secondary questions are answered in terms of the centre. Following the theological path of the fathers means, therefore, grasping more easily the essential nucleus of our faith and the specificum of our Christian identity.

(The faith initiated the inculturation of the Gospel)

268 Another important and very relevant characteristic of the fathers' theological method is that it sheds light on understanding "by what means the faith can be explained in terms of the philosophy and wisdom of the peoples" [AG 22; n. 1144]. They have in fact drawn from Scripture and tradition a clear awareness of Christian originality, that is, the firm conviction that Christian teaching contains an essential nucleus of revealed truths that then are normative in judging human wisdom and distinguishing truth from error. [...] Being anchored in the norm of faith, the fathers accepted many contributions from Greco-Roman philosophy, but they also rejected its grave errors and especially avoided the danger of syncretism which was then so widespread in the prevailing Hellenistic culture.[...]
Thanks to this careful discernment of the values and the limitations hidden in the various forms of ancient culture, new paths were opened up toward the truth and new possibilities realized for announcing the Gospel. Taught by the Greek, Latin and Syriac fathers, the church “learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and language of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers. It was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all people and the requirements of the learned” [GS 44; n. 1145]. In other words, the fathers, being aware of the universal value of revelation, began the great task of Christian inculturation. [...] They become the example of a fruitful encounter between faith and culture, [...] which continues to be a guide for the church of all ages that is committed to preaching the Gospel to people of such different cultures and working in their midst.

(Thology both rational and religious)

269 Within the church, the encounter of reason with faith has given rise to many and long controversies regarding the major themes of trinitarian, christological, ecclesiological, anthropological and eschatological dogma. On such occasions, in defending the truths that touch on the very essence of faith, the fathers originated a notable advance in the understanding of dogmatic content and rendered a valuable service to the progress of theology. [...] The fathers became the initiators of rational procedures suitable for the content of revelation and astute promoters of that intellectus fidei that belongs to the essence of every authentic theology. It was their providential task not only to defend Christianity, but also to rethink it in the Greco-Roman cultural environment; to find new formulas for expressing an ancient doctrine and non-biblical forms for a biblical doctrine; to present, in a word, the faith in the forms of human discourse that is fully Catholic and capable of expressing the divine content of revelation while always safeguarding its identity and transcendence. [...] As theologians they did not use only the resources of reason, but much more the religious resources gained through their affective existential knowledge, rooted in intimate union with
Christ, nourished by prayer and sustained by grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In their activities as theologians and pastors they showed to a marked degree a deep sense of mystery and experience of the things of God. This protected them against the recurring temptations both of exaggerated rationalism or of a flat and resigned fideism.

The first thing that strikes us in patristic theology is the vivid sense of the transcendence of divine truth contained in revelation.[...] Given this lively spiritual sense, the image of themselves that the fathers offer is that of men who are not only learning but even more are experiencing divine things.[...] Mostly they are specialists in the supernatural life who communicate what they have seen and experienced in their contemplation of divine things and what they have known through the path of love, "per quandam connaturalitatem," as St. Thomas Aquinas said.1 In their way of speaking and explaining, the delightful tones of the mystics are often perceptible, revealing an intense familiarity with God, a lived experience of the mystery of Christ and the church, and constant contact with the genuine sources of a theological existence that the Fathers see as fundamental to Christian life.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
(7 December 1992)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (cf. introduction to n. 185) devoted articles to the ecclesial transmission of revelation and to Scripture's witness to revelation (CCC 74-141).

After explaining tradition in terms of DV 7-9, the Catechism set forth the distinction between Apostolic Tradition, given once for all, and the ecclesial traditions that form a variable complex of teachings and practices.

On Scripture, the Catechism goes beyond Vatican II by explaining more fully what DV 12 stated, after its recommendation of historical and literary study of authorial intention, about reading and interpreting Scripture "in the Spirit in which it was written" (cf. n. 250).

(Apostolic Tradition and ecclesial tradition)

270 83. The Tradition here in question [CCC 75-82] comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from

1. S. T., II-II, 45, 2

Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church’s Magisterium. [...]

(Interpreting Scripture “in the Spirit”)

271 111. But since Sacred Scripture is inspired, there is another and no less important principle of correct interpretation, without which Scripture would remain a dead letter. [...]

The Second Vatican Council indicates three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it [cf. n. 250].

112. Be especially attentive “to the content and unity of the whole Scripture”. Different as the books which compose it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God’s plan, of which Christ is the centre and heart, open since his Passover [cf. Lk 24:25-27; 44-46]. [...]

113. Read the Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church”. According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (“[...] according to the Spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church”).

114. Be attentive to the analogy of faith [cf. Rom 12:6]. By “analogy of faith” we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and with the whole plan of Revelation.

1. ORIGEN, Homily on Leviticus, 5, 5; PG 112, 454D.
The Pope underscored the importance of the new document in view of recent discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls and recent innovations in exegetical method, such as sociological and rhetorical analysis. He praised the breadth of vision of the new study along with its balance in evaluating current approaches to interpretation. It avoids a fundamentalist reduction of the true humanity of Scripture while recognizing that Catholic exegesis must serve the actualization of Scripture for the good of the whole world.

We give below sections of the document that clarify the interpretative task beyond what has gone before (cf. nn. 234-236, 250, 261-264, 271). The Commission clarifies the importance of the literal sense of the biblical text, while relating this to the "spiritual sense" which is given clear contours by relation to Christ's paschal mystery and our new life in the Spirit.

An English translation of the Pope's address and of the Commission document came out as a booklet published by the Liberia Editrice Vaticana, while the document is found in Origins 23 (1993-94), pp. 497-524.

(Historical shifts regarding textual meaning)

272 The contribution made by modern philosophical hermeneutics and the recent developments of literary theory allows biblical exegesis to deepen its understanding of the task before it, the complexity of which has become ever more evident.

Ancient exegesis [...] attributed to every text of Scripture several levels of meaning. The most prevalent distinction was that between the literal sense and the spiritual sense. Medieval exegesis distinguished within the spiritual sense three different senses, relating, respectively, to the truth revealed, to the way of life commended and to the final goal to be achieved. [...]
this or that biblical text seen within the circumstances in which it was produced.

But now this has run aground on the conclusions of theories of language and of philosophical hermeneutics, both of which affirm that written texts are open to a plurality of meaning.[...]

(The literal sense of Scripture)

273 It is not only legitimate, it is also absolutely necessary to seek to define the precise meaning of texts as produced by their authors—what is called the "literal" meaning. St. Thomas Aquinas had already affirmed the fundamental importance of this sense.[...]

The literal sense of Scripture is that which has been expressed directly by the inspired human authors. Since it is the fruit of inspiration, this sense is also intended by God, as the principal author. One arrives at this sense by means of a careful analysis of the text, within its literary and historical context.[...] To this end, the study of ancient literary genres is particularly necessary [cf. n. 236].

(The literal sense can develop in new directions)

274 One should be especially attentive to the dynamic aspect of many texts. [...] Historical-critical exegesis has too often tended to limit the meaning of texts by tying them too rigidly to precise historical circumstances. It should seek rather to determine the direction of thought expressed by the text; this direction, far from working toward a limitation of meaning, will on the contrary dispose the exegete to perceive extensions of it that are more or less foreseeable in advance.

One branch of modern hermeneutics has stressed that human speech gains an altogether fresh status when put in writing. A written text has the capacity to be placed in new circumstances, which will illuminate it in different ways, adding new meanings to the original sense. This capacity of written texts is especially operative in the case of the biblical writings, recognized as the word of God. Indeed, what encouraged the believing community to preserve these texts was the conviction that they would continue to be bearers of light and life for generations of believers to come. The literal sense is, from the start, open to further

1. S.T. I, 10 ad 3.
developments, which are produced through the re-reading of texts in new contexts.

It does not follow from this that we can attribute to the biblical text whatever meaning we like, interpreting it in a wholly subjective way. On the contrary, one must reject as unauthentic every interpretation alien to the meaning expressed by the human authors in their written text. To admit the possibility of such alien meanings would be equivalent to cutting off the biblical message from its root, which is the word of God in its historical communication; it would also mean opening the door to interpretations of a wildly subjective nature.

(The spiritual sense of biblical texts)

275 There are reasons, however, for not taking alien in so strict a sense as to exclude all possibility of higher fulfilment. The paschal event, the death and resurrection of Jesus, has established a radically new historical context, which sheds fresh light upon the ancient texts and causes them to undergo a change in meaning. In particular, certain texts which in ancient times had to be thought of as hyperbole (e.g. the oracle where God speaking of a son of David, promised to establish his throne "forever": 2 Sam 7:12-13; 1 Chron 17:11-14), must now be taken literally, because "Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more" [Rom 6:9].

In such cases one speaks of the "spiritual sense." As a general rule we can define the spiritual sense, as understood by Christian faith, as the meaning expressed by the biblical texts when read, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the paschal mystery of Christ and of the new life which flows from it. This context really exists. In it the New Testament recognizes the fulfillment of the Scriptures. It is therefore quite acceptable to re-read the Scriptures in the light of this new context, which is that of life in the Spirit.

(The interrelation of literal and spiritual senses)

276 The above definition allows us to draw some useful conclusions of a more precise nature concerning the relationship between the spiritual and literal senses.

Contrary to a current view, there is not necessarily a distinction between the two senses. When a biblical text relates directly to the paschal mystery of Christ or to the new life that
results from it, its literal sense is already a spiritual sense. Such is regularly the case in the New Testament. It follows that it is most often in dealing with the Old Testament that Christian exegesis speaks of the spiritual sense. But already in the Old Testament there are many instances where texts have a religious or spiritual sense as their literal sense. Christian faith recognizes in such cases an anticipatory relationship to the new life brought by Christ.

While there is a distinction between the two senses, the spiritual sense can never be stripped of its connection with the literal sense. The latter remains the indispensable foundation. Otherwise one could not speak of the "fulfillment" of Scripture. Indeed, in order that there be fulfillment, a relationship of continuity is essential. But it is also necessary that there be transition to a higher order of reality.

The spiritual sense is not to be confused with subjective interpretations stemming from the imagination or intellectual speculation. The spiritual sense results from setting the text in relation to real facts which are not foreign to it: the paschal event, in all its inexhaustible richness, which constitutes the summit of the divine intervention in the history of Israel, to the benefit of all humankind.

Spiritual interpretation, whether in community or in private, will discover the authentic spiritual sense only to the extent that it is kept within these perspectives. One then holds together three levels or reality: the biblical text, the paschal mystery and the present circumstances of life in the Spirit. [...]

One of the possible aspects of the spiritual sense is the typological. This is usually said to belong not to Scripture itself but to the realities expressed by Scripture: Adam as the figure of Christ [cf. Rom 5:14], and the flood as the figure of baptism [1 Pt 3:20-21], etc. Actually, the connection involved in typology is ordinarily based on the way in which Scripture describes the ancient reality (cf. the voice of Abel: Gen 4:10; Heb 11:4; 12:24) and not simply on the reality itself. Consequently, in such a case one can speak of a meaning that is truly scriptural.