

“Though it concluded only fifty years ago, Vatican II played out in a different world and in ways that seem complicated and even mysterious to today’s readers. This collection will long remain a valuable resource for unlocking the meaning of the council and its interpretation. Some of the best scholars in this field contributed to several issues of *Theological Studies* during the council’s jubilee, and these selections comprise a truly fitting tribute to the council that created the contemporary Catholic Church and shaped relations among Christians and among all people of goodwill into the present century.”

—John Borelli
Georgetown University

“Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) some of the world’s finest Catholic scholars explore the continuing significance of the council’s teaching for our time, including its capacity to inform the mission of the church in a vastly different context. This collection is required reading for anyone interested in exploring the interpretation and reception of the council’s insights today.”

—Catherine E. Clifford
Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario Canada

“Finally, there is no longer the need to search repeatedly through the issues of *Theological Studies* looking for recent articles on Vatican II. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the council’s closing, the journal’s editor, David Schultenover, has gathered in one volume a masterful and contemporary compendium of the finest contributions by top scholars. The cohesion and complementarity of the collection is truly remarkable, allowing it to be read easily from cover to cover. In fifty years, it will still stand as one of the most valuable contributions of our time. This is a golden collection to mark a golden anniversary!”

—Michael Attridge
University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, Ontario Canada

“This book offers very challenging and diverse insights on the worldwide reception and hermeneutics of Vatican II and postconciliar Catholic thought.”

—Dr. Jürgen Mettepenningen
Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium
Author of *Nouvelle Théologie—New Theology: Inheritor of
Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II*

“Already when reading many of these articles in *Theological Studies* I was hoping they would become available as a book. I am sure that this collection will become a landmark in the reception of Vatican II 50 years on, as was the case with the *Herder Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil* 10 years ago. Even if the Council documents hesitated to use the term “reform,” the famous 2005 speech by Pope Benedict on the hermeneutics of reform inspires many authors in this volume to take the implicit pleas of Vatican II for a reform of the Church more seriously. Very prophetic indeed, if one realizes that most contributions were written before the start of the current pontificate.

“Most of all, this book asks critical questions to the postconciliar magisterium in the name of the Council: Do they not overestimate their own authority? Are they really willing to listen to the *sensus fidelium* (as expressed, e.g., by American nuns)? What has happened to the primacy of the conscience as expressed in *Dignitatis Humanae*? Has the Catholic Church in Africa truly received the reflections of the Council on the mission of the laity? Whence the suspicious attitude of Rome toward attempts to develop a decentralized magisterium in Asia and Latin America? Has the Catholic Church somehow lost its prophetic enthusiasm in its relationship to the Jews since Vatican II? For specialists in Vatican II studies the most important advice comes at the end, in the postscript by Gilles Routhier: now the time has come to leave the detailed redaction history of particular paragraphs behind and to develop a synthetic approach on the Council.”

—Peter De Mey
Katholieke Universiteit
Leuven, Belgium
Chair of the Vatican II Studies Group within the American Academy
of Religion

50 Years On

Probing the Riches of Vatican II

Edited by David G. Schultenover, SJ

Introduction by Stephen Schloesser, SJ



A Michael Glazier Book

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The cover image—of a segment of the all-male hierarchy—is intentionally meant to illustrate a focus of significant progress around the notions of council, synod, “The Vatican,” and global and intercultural dialogue *ad intra* over the last fifty years while at the same time emphasizing that there is still much work to do on behalf of the people of God on many levels.

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

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Contents

Preface vii

Introduction Reproach vs. *Rapprochement*: Historical Preconditions of a Paradigm Shift in the Reform of Vatican II xi
Stephen Schloesser, SJ

Part 1: General Interpretations

Chapter 1 “The Hermeneutic of Reform”: A Historical Analysis 3
John W. O’Malley, SJ

Chapter 2 Toward a Comprehensive Interpretation of the Council and Its Documents 35
Ormond Rush

Chapter 3 Vatican II: The History and the Narratives 61
Massimo Faggioli

Chapter 4 Does Vatican II Represent Continuity or Discontinuity? 83
Gerald O’Collins, SJ

Part 2: Specific Interpretations

Chapter 5 Developments in Teaching Authority since Vatican II 115
Francis A. Sullivan, SJ

Chapter 6 The Trinitarian Depths of Vatican II 137
Anne Hunt

Chapter 7 Ecclesial Conversion after Vatican II: Renewing “the Face of the Church” to Reflect “the Genuine Face of God” 155
Ormond Rush

Chapter 8 Sin, Intimacy, and the Genuine Face of the Church: A Response to Ormond Rush 175
Natalia Imperatori-Lee

Part 3: Church Mission

- Chapter 9 Revisiting Mission at Vatican II: Theology and Practice for Today's Missionary Church 183
Stephen B. Bevans, SVD
- Chapter 10 "I Am Joseph, Your Brother": A Jewish Perspective on Catholic-Jewish Relations since *Nostra Aetate* No. 4 207
Edward Kessler
- Chapter 11 What *Nostra Aetate* Inaugurated: A Conversion to the "Providential Mystery of Otherness" 235
Mary C. Boys, SNJM

Part 4: Reception of Vatican II

- Chapter 12 "After All, Africa Is Largely a Nonliterate Continent": The Reception of Vatican II in Africa 273
Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ
- Chapter 13 Reception of and Trajectories for Vatican II in Asia 293
Peter C. Phan
- Chapter 14 The Reception of Vatican II in Latin America 313
O. Ernesto Valiente

Part 5: Specific Documents

- Chapter 15 The Divine Dignity of Human Persons in *Dignitatis Humanae* 347
Ladislav Orsy, SJ
- Chapter 16 Scripture Reading Urged *Vehementer* (*Dei Verbum* No. 25): Background and Development 365
Jared Wicks, SJ
- Chapter 17 Religious Life in the Vatican II Era: "State of Perfection" or Living Charism? 391
Maryanne Confoy, RSC

- Afterword Vatican II: Relevance and Future 419
Gilles Routhier

- Contributors 439

Preface

Let me here confess to a primary motive for publishing this collection of articles commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. As a youth I found church history boring. Everything seemed to happen by divine plan. So I took up something more interesting: I was working on a PhD in organic chemistry while the world's bishops met for the council in Rome. In 1966, however, when I was just one year from completing my degree, Vatican II happened for me personally—and expelled boredom. That was the year when the collected *Documents of Vatican II* (edited by Walter Abbott and Joseph Gallagher) appeared in English translation.

How can I convey the excitement I felt upon reading them? The documents fired my imagination for what this council could mean for Catholics as well as for all with whom a renovated Church might interact. This was a council like none other: a reform council addressed to Catholics and a pastoral council addressed to all persons of good will, believers and unbelievers alike. Its vision was breathtaking. That experience of reading in 1966 changed my life in the most literal way. It impelled me to end my quest for the scientific doctorate and turn instead to a quest for the once and future Church.

Fifty years later, the council's anniversary seems an appropriate moment to take stock: to return to those documents, reconsider them, and assess their reception and effect not only on the Catholic Church but also on all other churches, religions, and indeed the world itself. This collection of articles is an effort in that direction.

My intention from the moment I first considered running a series of articles in *Theological Studies* to commemorate the council's golden jubilee was to eventually gather them under one cover as a textbook for upper-level college students, graduate students, and educated laypersons in parishes, as well as for clergy, religious, and seminarians. My motive, apart from the one already mentioned, was twofold: (1) to provide a text

that informs readers about the reception of the conciliar documents during the 50 years following the council; and (2) to inspire readers to return to the documents themselves to see where the articles published here came from. Older readers will remember the council, while nobody under 50 will have the slightest memory of it. But all will benefit by reading the assessments of Vatican II experts 50 years on, and by returning to the documents themselves over and over again.

Initially, I had a plan for the articles' order of appearance, but early on, the plan had to give way to reality. Circumstances beyond control prevented some manuscripts from arriving on my schedule. Now, however, having all the articles in hand, I was able to group them in what seems a reasonable sequence: general interpretations of the council; specific interpretations; the Church's mission; reception of the council worldwide; treatments of specific documents; and finally an afterword assessing the council, its reception, and promise. The tone is scholarly, as befits such a deeply theological, momentous event in living history, but the articles are also accessible to nonspecialists.

Without context, however, authorial intention of documents is indiscernible and the documents themselves unintelligible. Stephen Schloesser's introduction to this collection provides the necessary historical context. Readers will notice that Schloesser spends roughly 75 percent of his introduction on the long 19th century (from the Enlightenment to the beginning of World War I) and 25 percent on the period from WWI to the present.

His rationale, as I interpret it, is this: a number of events—including the Enlightenment, French Revolution, Napoleon, and post-1815 liberal nationalism—led the papal monarchy to construct a bitter opposition between Church and world. However, post-World War I circumstances—especially the Vatican concordats concluded with both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany—led to horrifying unintended consequences. After the defeat of those regimes in World War II, the Cold War binary offered stark alternatives: a choice between American-led liberalism and Soviet-led communism. Both the popes and the council needed to realize that the world had changed profoundly and irrevocably: the papal monarchy had disappeared a century earlier; and “liberalism” was no longer its enemy. It was time to transcend the church-world opposition. The end result of that transcendence was enshrined in the opening paragraph of *Gaudium et spes*: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age . . . are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. . . . [This Church] community realizes that it is truly linked with humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds.”

I wish to express my profound gratitude first to all the contributing authors, who generously gave their time, energy, and talent to produce such outstanding works for the benefit of the Church; to my astute editorial consultants, who advised me in this project; and to Stephen Schloesser, who interrupted his already overcommitted schedule to provide the introduction. Special thanks to Hans Christoffersen, publisher of Liturgical Press, who happened to be seated next to me on a long flight . . . ; to Colleen Stiller, his production manager, and Lauren Murphy, his managing editor, who had to pick up the pieces consequent on that conversation; and finally, to my own graduate assistant, Andrew Harmon, who applied his highly developed skills and sharp eye to all the texts as they reached his inbox. These and many others contributed to this collection in the hope that it will provide reliable guidance to the council's meaning and our ongoing appropriation of it.

Reproach vs. *Rapprochement*

Historical Preconditions of a Paradigm Shift in the Reform of Vatican II

STEPHEN SCHLOESSER, SJ

But we cannot pass over one important consideration in our analysis of the religious meaning of the council: it has been deeply committed to the study of the modern world. Never before perhaps, so much as on this occasion, has the Church felt the need to know, to draw near to, to understand, to penetrate, serve and evangelize the society in which she lives; and to get to grips with it, almost to run after it, in its rapid and continuous change. This attitude, a response to the distances and divisions we have witnessed over recent centuries, in the last century and in our own especially, between the Church and secular society—this attitude has been strongly and unceasingly at work in the council; so much so that some have been inclined to suspect that an easy-going and excessive responsiveness to the outside world, to passing events, cultural fashions, temporary needs, an alien way of thinking . . . may have swayed persons and acts of the ecumenical synod, at the expense of the fidelity which is due to tradition, and this to the detriment of the religious orientation of the council itself. We do not believe that this shortcoming should be imputed to it, to its real and deep intentions, to its authentic manifestations.

—Pope Paul VI

Address during the last general meeting of the Second Vatican Council (December 7, 1965)¹

1. Emphasis added. Except where noted, council documents, papal speeches and documents, and synod documents are taken from the Vatican website (www.vatican.va).

What is the religious meaning of Vatican Council II? How should it be interpreted? Does it represent continuity or discontinuity with Catholicism's past? Did anything happen—did anything change—at the council? Was the Church any different in its wake? And if so, what significance, if any, does this change have for the present moment—a half century later—and for the future? As a professor of mine liked to say, the most important question in theology is: “So what?”

As the essays collected in this volume abundantly demonstrate, theologians and historians have been debating the meaning of Vatican II for 50 years—asking “So what?” in multiple ways. And as Paul VI's words at the closing meeting demonstrate, the “religious meaning” of the council had been hotly contested even before it had been completed. Conservative critics had accused the event (in Paul's words) of being “an easy-going and excessive responsiveness to the outside world, to passing events, cultural fashions, temporary needs, an alien way of thinking.” In wanting to keep up with the trends of a quickly changing world, it had minimized its “fidelity” to the “tradition.” Discontinuity—rupture—had outweighed continuity. Even worse, the council was accused of having lost its “religious orientation,” a specifically “religious” meaning. It had engaged psychology, sociology, economics, geopolitics, history, postwar existentialism, and atheism—but in doing so, its final meaning and purpose had not been religious.

Clearly, Paul VI interpreted Vatican II from a vastly different perspective. For him, the desire to “get to grips” with the modern world—“almost to run after it”—was itself the council's fundamental “religious meaning.” The council's explicit, overt, and self-conscious overtures to “secular society” were not accidents of the moment, not whimsical enthusiasms for getting in groove with the 1960s. Rather, the council's *rapprochement* had been long in the making: a studied and deliberate response “to the distances and divisions we have witnessed over recent centuries, in the last century and in our own especially.” Paul VI viewed the council from the long-duration perspective. Although the conciliar events happened to take place within the very brief 1962–1965 time span, they were in fact the culmination of unhealed wounds and fissures festering since at least the 1700s.

Reading the December 1965 closing address with a half-century's hindsight, one can see the picture inverted. Paul VI's critics seem to have been caught up in the moment's uncertainty, while he spoke with surety. He understood what had been at stake. A yawning chasm had separated church and world. The council had built a bridge. The bridge answered the question: “So what?”

In his essay on “The Hermeneutic of Reform,” John O'Malley proposes that we too step back and attempt to synthesize the larger picture in order

to interpret the council's religious meaning.² Considered superficially, the council appears to have spread itself very thin as it touched on a dizzying number of topics: liturgy; ecumenism; religious liberty; Judaism; atheism; media; nuclear war; environment and population; the nature, purpose, and structure of the Church; the place of laity within that structure; and so on. Such an expansive canvas defies the viewer to comprehend the whole in a single grasp.

And yet, without such synthesis, the parts spin off into splendid isolation; no overall meaning can be discerned within them; and the whole becomes even less than the sum of its parts. O'Malley specifies the challenge:

The further, absolutely essential step of considering the documents as constituting a single corpus and thus of showing how each document is in some measure an expression of larger orientations and part of an integral and coherent whole. . . . Once the documents are thus examined, they are striking in that they express themselves in a style different from the legislative, judicial, and often punitive style employed by previous councils.

That seismic shift in style, argues O'Malley, is a "reform that is a system replacement or paradigm replacement, not merely an adjustment or correction of the status quo."

O'Malley's "paradigm shift" metaphor draws on Thomas Kuhn's now classic *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), a work published—not insignificantly—the same year the council opened.³ In it, Kuhn argues that scientific "paradigms" are the basic assumptions in a scientific community's "ruling theory." Historically speaking, a paradigm shift is provoked when "normal science" has become inadequate to—can no longer accommodate—new factual data produced by experiment and experience. The fundamental ruling assumptions or paradigms of "normal science" have to change in order to account for incommensurable data. This change entails a "paradigm shift" or "revolutionary science."

Extending the metaphor: what was the fundamental ruling assumption—what was the underlying paradigm or "normal science"—that had governed the Church's interactions with the "modern world" since the 1700s? In a word: *opposition*. In reaction to a monolithic conception of

2. John W. O'Malley, SJ, "The Hermeneutic of Reform': A Historical Analysis," in the present volume, 3–34.

3. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962).

Enlightenment thought and its offspring—incommensurable data—the Church constructed a self-image in which it stood intransigently over and against the “modern world.” What was this opposition’s corresponding style? In a word: *reproach*—rebuke, disapproval, blame.

Historical theologian Joseph Komonchak has situated this construction within an even more precisely delimited historical period. He argues that the construction of “modern *Roman* Catholicism” between 1815 and 1914 (i.e., over the “long nineteenth century”) “took the form of a counter-society, legitimated by a counter-culture, as a response to and in opposition to the emerging liberal culture and society which advanced with such apparent inexorability throughout those years.”⁴ Distinguishing “between the Church in its theological definition and the social form in which it is embodied at different times and in different places,” Komonchak identifies post-1815 Catholicism as a distinctly ultramontanist “*Roman* Catholicism” that had been “largely unknown in previous centuries”: “A single interpretation of the challenge of modernity was everywhere considered to be applicable and normative by a Roman authority.” These distinctions allow Komonchak to offer a causal explanation for a fact agreed upon by theologians and historians from left to right: the social form of “everyday Catholicism that had existed right up through the reign of Pius XII had collapsed.” Although interpreters on the left “welcomed its disappearance” and those on the right “deplored its loss,” both sides agreed: the modern Roman Catholic edifice constructed during the previous 150 years was gone.⁵

In the pages that follow, I offer a rapid chronicle of historical events contributing to the construction of this “modern Roman Catholicism.” As O’Malley suggests, if interpretive concepts like a “paradigm of opposition” or a “style of reproach” are to be helpful and make sense, they need to be grounded in historical reality.⁶ For readers familiar with modern Church history, this survey will serve as a refresher. For readers without such background, the sketch provides a starting point. In either case, the survey lays out the long-duration historical awareness with which Paul VI

4. Joseph A. Komonchak, “Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 18 (1997): 353–85, at 356.

5. *Ibid.*, 357, 373 (emphasis original), 379, 355. Quoting Joseph Ratzinger eight years after the council (1973): “In an apparent clash between faith and world, it is not Christianity that is being defended against the world, but only a particular form of its relationship to the world that is being defended against another form” (357 n. 9).

6. O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 7.

interpreted the council: “a response to the distances and divisions we have witnessed over recent centuries.”

The historical landscape of those “distances and divisions” consisted of a mutually exclusive binary opposition: an emerging liberal paradigm descended from the Enlightenment on the one side, and a reactionary counterparadigm descended from the “enemies of the Enlightenment” on the other. The reactionary style was “reproach.” By contrast, the conciliar style of *rapprochement* constituted a radical paradigm shift—the council’s religious meaning.

Enlightenment (ca. 1689–1789)

The notion of a single entity called “The Enlightenment” has been challenged and come under heavy scrutiny by scholars in recent decades. New understandings of multiple “Enlightenments”—including “Catholic Enlightenment”—add important nuances to an epoch often reduced to a one-dimensional caricature of what was in fact a complex process.⁷ Nevertheless, some general concepts generated by the period’s thinkers define the era. The Church, by contrast, came to define itself over and against these key ideas. In spite of the overgeneralization, then, it is still useful to speak of an “Enlightenment” and the revolutionary concepts it generated. Two of these would prove to be especially problematic for Roman Catholicism: the “social contract” and “toleration.”

Among the most important Enlightenment notions was the “social compact” or “contract.”⁸ The English version, drawing on the earlier thought of Thomas Hobbes, was formulated by John Locke in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1689). The French version was formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Of The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right* (1762). Although these versions differ in significant ways, both embraced an attitude toward the world that broke with millennia of tradition—a

7. Dale K. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560–1791* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1996); *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. James E. Bradley and Dale K. Van Kley (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2001); *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael O’Neill (Boston: Brill, 2010).

8. For an accessible overview, see Margaret C. Jacob, *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001). For Anglo-American and French comparisons, see Susan Dunn, *Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light* (New York: Faber & Faber, 1999).

radical paradigm shift. For them, a government's legitimacy comes from the "contract" made by the governed. Individuals are conceived as atoms who, for reasons of self-preservation, band together to form a collective body by mutual agreement (contract). Government's legitimacy is artificial, contingent, and comes from below.

Because this worldview is taken for granted today in all societies descended from the Enlightenment, it may be difficult to imagine what the alternative was. Briefly put, the traditional image of society was organic, not atomistic. An individual was born into a society and played his or her destined role in the social organism. Eyes, ears, arms, hands, legs, feet, hearts, heads—all played their parts in the social body that preceded their births and would endure after their deaths. In practical terms, this meant hierarchical divisions of society largely perpetuated by blood inheritance.

Medieval society in particular was imagined as divided into three "orders" or "estates." The First Estate was composed of those who "pray": clergy, monks, and nuns. The Second Estate derived from those who "fight," i.e., those descended from knights of former days. This was the nobility or aristocracy, families who owned great tracts of land and passed this property down via blood inheritance. The Third Estate—composed of the other 97 percent of people—was made up of those who "work": peasants on landed estates, artisans who worked in villages and urban areas, merchants, and so on. Over these estates reigned the divinely appointed and anointed monarchs. The legitimacy of such social and political bodies was considered to be rooted in both "nature" (blood inheritance) and "God."

The notion of legitimacy deriving from a social contract agreed upon by mutually consenting individuals demolished traditional notions of society. At the heart of the Enlightenment worldview was a society whose hierarchical ranks were based on individual "merit," not on privileges derived from land ownership and blood inheritance.

A second concept essential to the demolition of traditional society was "toleration" of those whose faith deviated from the official state religion. Enlightenment thought drew upon earlier precedents: the Peace of Augsburg (1555) was settled by allowing both Catholic and Lutheran states in the Holy Roman Empire, depending on the religion of the ruler (*Cuius regio, eius religio* = "Whose realm, his religion"); the Dutch and English had tolerated various forms of Protestantism not conforming to the state church (e.g., the Church of England); and Henri IV had ended France's Wars of Religion by issuing the Edict of Nantes (1598), tolerating Huguenots (Calvinists) in certain regions of the officially Catholic state. These precedents had been set a full century before the Enlightenment of the 1700s.

However, it was Locke (again) who systematically argued for religious toleration in “A Letter Concerning Toleration” (again in 1689). The most popular French version was Voltaire’s “Treatise on Tolerance” (1763). Voltaire wrote his impassioned work in response to that year’s excruciating torture and eventual execution of Jean Calas, a Huguenot merchant wrongfully convicted of murder. Voltaire developed a variation on Locke’s thought just as Rousseau had adapted Locke’s social contract. Although here again English and French thinkers differed, the differences were outweighed by commonalities. Both refuted centuries of practices in which deviations from state-sanctioned religions were not tolerated.

Indeed, in traditional European states (both Catholic and Protestant), religious nonconformists were disciplined and punished in ghastly ways, including torture, drawing and quartering, beheading, and burning at the stake. Nontoleration was based on at least two presuppositions: first, error has no rights; second, a unitary nation state must have only one head (the monarch), one language, one religion, and, more broadly, one people.

Within this overall landscape of nontoleration, Jews occupied an ambivalent position in prerevolutionary Europe. On the one hand, their presence was “tolerated” for the most part—excepting numerous occasions in which various states either expelled or executed them (e.g., Spain’s Alhambra Decree [1492]). On the other hand, they were not actually citizens. They occupied an unsteady third place, not unlike “resident aliens” in the ancient Roman Empire. They were obviously not orthodox Christians, but they were also not subject to the punishments dealt out to nonconformist or heterodox Christians (“heretics”).

Eighteenth-century popes vacillated on the “Jewish Question.”⁹ In 1769, Clement XIV relaxed some of the restrictions on Jews and reassigned control over Rome’s Jewish ghetto from the Holy Office of the Inquisition to the city’s cardinal vicar. However, just six years later, Clement’s successor, Pius VI, reversed those measures and instituted draconian ones. He rescinded all of the Jews’ previous privileges, set up ghettos in all the towns of the Papal States, forbade Jews to “speak familiarly” to Christians, and reintroduced a 16th-century papal provision requiring Jews to wear a special badge of identification. Note that the measures took place in the very midst of the Enlightenment—just one year before the American

9. For fuller treatment of the “Jewish Question” with references, see Stephen Schloesser, “Against Forgetting: Memory, History, Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 275–319, at 289–97.

Declaration of Independence (1776). Jewish emancipation was a logical corollary of “toleration.”

The French Revolution (1789–1799)

The French Revolution’s causes and meanings have been debated ever since the revolution itself.¹⁰ Some historians have argued that it was a peasants’ revolt; others a revolt of the newly arrived bourgeoisie. Some have argued that the Terror was an accidental byproduct of particular choices made by particular individuals; others have argued that it was a necessary outcome of the way “social contract” was articulated. Here again, differences in interpretation are outweighed by commonalities, i.e., concrete events with which Catholicism would struggle to reconcile itself. Two in particular are of significance: the abolition of feudalism (and monarchy in particular) and the dechristianization project. A corollary event should be noted: Jewish emancipation in late 1791.

In August 1789, the National Assembly put an end to the feudal system of “Three Estates” by mutual agreement—the two privileged estates (clergy and aristocrats) sacrificed their ancient privileges and inaugurated a new era. At the same time, the state confiscated church properties (the old “First Estate”), including especially the vast landowning monasteries and convents. These would soon be sold and the monies used to assist the nearly bankrupt government—monetary problems having been an initial catalyst for the revolution—just as Henry VIII’s dissolution of the English monasteries had filled royal coffers two centuries earlier.

Although perhaps not intended, the practical effect of these two legislative acts was the demolition of Christianity as it had existed for at least twelve centuries. Without monasteries, abbeys, and convents, the world of monks and nuns—male and female “religious”—had come to an end. All that was left of the “Church” was the “diocesan” or “secular” clergy: that is, (male) bishops and priests. Even this remnant of the old religion would be radically changed just eleven months later. According to the “Civil Constitution of the Clergy” (July 1791), bishops and priests effectively became civil servants paid by the state. On the positive side, this meant that the gross inequalities that had divided the clergy into princes

10. For an overview, see Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s, 1996); Jack Richard Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001).

and paupers—bishops and privileged priests living in luxury paid for by great benefices, while lowly parish priests lived in dire poverty—was eliminated. On the negative side, however—at least for those (including the pope) who thought of religion and the “church” as being something separate from the state—this meant that the Church effectively became a state subsidiary, not unlike the post office. Clerics were required to swear (*juror*) an oath of loyalty to the state alone, severing ties to any nonstate authority (e.g., the foreign pope). Catholicism in France became divided into “jurors” (those who swore the oath) and “nonjurors” (those who refused). Laity also split in their allegiances toward jurors and nonjurors.¹¹

The larger story of the revolution is well known: as events wore on and national unity turned out to be more difficult to achieve than previously thought, the revolution was exported abroad in wars against (Catholic) Austria and (Lutheran) Prussia. Meanwhile, domestic massacres were perpetrated against former members of the privileged two estates (religious and aristocrats) accused of being counterrevolutionaries. Eventually the monarchy itself was abolished and both Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were executed. As the Terror was carried out by Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety, thousands more suspected counterrevolutionaries would meet their deaths at the guillotine. Drowning was another method of executing clergy and nuns: they were fastened to boats filled with holes that sank to river bottoms. (Drowning a priest and nun tied together by ropes was known as a “Republican Wedding.”) Stiffened penalties proscribed death not only for nonjuring priests but also for sympathetic laity sheltering them. In November 1793, dechristianization seemed to have reached its symbolic peak when prostitutes were enthroned as “Goddesses of Reason” in cathedrals at Paris and Strasbourg. In June 1794, Robespierre, convinced that atheism could not provide necessary social cohesion, invented the “Cult of the Supreme Being.” He was soon thereafter deposed and guillotined in the hot month of “Thermidor” (July 1794).

To what extent were the abolition of the monarchy, dechristianization, and the Terror contingent accidents or logical consequences? These questions have been debated during the two centuries since. Regardless of the causes, the fact remains: the Revolution—and, as a corollary, Enlightenment thought seen as having caused it—profoundly traumatized

11. For background, see Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett, eds., *Religion, Society, and Politics in France since 1789* (London: Hambledon, 1991); Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2005).

Catholicism. In its aftermath, Catholic “enemies of the Enlightenment” would intransigently insist on monarchy being the sole legitimate form of government; on government’s identification with a single state religion; on the erroneous character of social contract, tolerance, and rights; and, as a corollary, on Jewish citizenship in Christian states.¹²

Above all these particulars, counterrevolutionaries would deny the very possibility of human progress—indeed, deny any positive value to historical change itself, which had been a cornerstone of Enlightenment thought and value extending as far back as the *Encyclopédie*.¹³ In 1795, one year after the Marquis de Condorcet mysteriously died in prison, his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Spirit* had been published posthumously. Five years later, in 1800, a royalist countered:

Not only does human reason not perfect itself with time, but this perfection is impossible. It would be necessary to discover new relationships among men, new duties, new moral truths—something that cannot take place in the wake of the Gospel. . . . Nothing beyond Christian morality has been discovered. It is evident that it is the *non plus ultra* of true philosophy, that it is beyond the capacity of human faculties to go further.¹⁴

Napoleon Bonaparte (1799–1815)

Napoleon is famous for reputedly having declared: “The French Revolution is over. I am the French Revolution.”¹⁵ What does this cryptic paradox mean? On the one hand, Napoleon is the figure who, by seizing control

12. Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University, 2001); *Critics of the Enlightenment: Readings in the French Counter-Revolutionary Tradition*, ed. and trans. Christopher Olaf Blum (Wilmington: ISI, 2004).

13. Philipp Blom, *Enlightening the World: Encyclopédie, the Book That Changed the Course of History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

14. Julien Louis Geoffroy; in Schloesser, “Against Forgetting: Memory, History, Vatican II,” 307. For more on “temporalization,” see *ibid.*, 306–7; and Schloesser, “*Vivo ergo cogito*: Modernism as Temporalization and Its Discontents: A Propaedeutic to This Collection,” in *The Reception of Pragmatism in France and the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890–1914*, ed. David G. Schultenover, SJ (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2009), 21–58.

15. For succinct overviews, see Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008); Blaufarb and Claudia Liebeskind, *Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011).

of France in his *coup d'état* of November 1799 (“Brumaire”), put an end to the chaotic succession of unstable governments following the fall of Robespierre. Naming himself “Consul for Life,” Napoleon was able to rule largely as an autocratic military dictator, thus ending the revolution. In 1800, he granted amnesty to French emigrés, “counterrevolutionary” aristocrats and clergy who had sought refuge abroad from the Terror, especially by fleeing to England. Returning exiles brought their riches and bloodlines back to France as well as devotion to the old Catholic religion.

On the other hand, Napoleon continued France’s revolutionary wars abroad—they now became the “Napoleonic Wars”—and as he conquered Europe, he dethroned monarchs (including the pope), abolished the feudal system, and instituted his Napoleonic Code based on Enlightenment ideals. For example, he emancipated Jews in all the areas he conquered. In this way, paradoxically, he continued the French Revolution’s exportation abroad even as he ruled at home with an autocrat’s iron fist.

In 1801, Napoleon concluded a concordat with Pope Pius VII.¹⁶ Napoleon’s reasons were at least in part politically expedient and cynical. Not unlike Robespierre before him, Napoleon believed that a state needed religion—or at least religious structures, symbols, and rituals—for social cohesion. In concluding his concordat with the pope, Napoleon acted out of self-interest. Catholicism’s symbols and rituals would strike a deep chord in much of the French populace. Religion could forge ties that bind.

However, the concordat is at least as significant for what it did *not* do. First, while it established “that the Catholic Apostolic and Roman religion is the religion of the great majority of French citizens,” it did not restore Catholicism as a state religion.¹⁷ Religious toleration was maintained, protecting Protestants, Jews, and nonbelievers. Second, the Church did not regain any of the vast tracts of land confiscated in the early days of 1789. In other words, Catholicism did not return in its ancient form—primarily marked by numerous monasteries, abbeys, and convents filled with religious men and women. Instead, the revolutionary form of Catholicism remained largely in place: the Church’s institution—and, by extension, French “religion” itself—was composed almost exclusively of “secular” bishops and priests serving in diocesan structures. And with the elimination of religious orders, the face of the French Catholic Church became

16. “Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of France, 15 July 1801,” in *Readings in Church History*, ed. Colman J. Barry, 3 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1965), 3:13–15.

17. See Schloesser, “Against Forgetting,” 298.

effectively male. Thus, the 1801 concordat was what historians call an “invention of tradition”: although it has the outward appearance of “restoring” something ancient, it is in fact a modern invention.¹⁸ In this case, it was the beginning of postrevolutionary “modern” Roman Catholicism: a private and voluntary choice not intrinsically connected to the state’s social body; and a largely diocesan (male) institution stripped of the many monks and nuns with their vast landed abbeys, monasteries, and convents of old.

In his foreign wars of aggression as well, Napoleon irrevocably altered the future of Catholicism. First, the imposed Napoleonic Code abolished feudalism (including the privileged estates based on land ownership by religious and aristocrats), enforced meritocracy (instead of blood-inherited privilege), legalized divorce, established religious toleration, emancipated Jews, and eliminated ghettos. In 1809, after exiling Pius VII, Napoleon emancipated Jews and abolished the ancient ghetto in occupied Rome.

Second, after he deposed monarchs and installed puppet rulers, Napoleon rearranged state boundaries and streamlined Europe’s maps, often by simply eliminating old states. Most important for Catholicism, he erased ancient divisions of the Italian peninsula, including the Papal States, and invented a “Kingdom of Italy,” a political entity without precedent in the Roman Republic, Roman Empire, or multiple Renaissance city-states. The pope effectively became the bishop of Rome without temporal jurisdiction. These actions foreshadowed Roman Catholicism’s conflicts for the next hundred years.

Romantic Invented Traditions (1815–1846)

After Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna (1815) set about the “Restoration” of Europe. The word is misleading: since there was no going back to the old world, the 1815 “restoration” was yet another invented tradition. For example, by dismantling the old Holy Roman Empire and inventing the “Confederation of the Rhine,” Napoleon had given German-speaking peoples the vision of a possible future nation state called “Germany.” German nationalism would be a driving force throughout the century. The same held true for the Italian peninsula: by destroying various smaller states and inventing a “Kingdom of Italy,” Napoleon had engendered the vision of a possible future “Italy.” As the

18. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University, 1983). See also Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), 27.

peninsula gradually unified (*risorgimento*) over the coming decades—*la forza del destino!*—the Papal States faced the ever-growing prospect of extinction.¹⁹ The ultimate nationalist goal was a “future past”: ancient Rome as the capital of a modern nation state.²⁰

In response, intransigent papal opposition to this political “modernity” gradually acquired the force of doctrine—literally. At every level of existence, “modern civilization”—ideas and values stemming from the Enlightenment and French Revolution—was judged as intellectually and morally wrong. By contrast, the Church imagined itself as a besieged remnant and guardian of truth. It defended monarchy as opposed to social contract, and it denounced the various “liberties” identified with liberal democracy: free speech, the right to assembly, freedom of the press, the right to vote (suffrage), and religious liberty. If Jewish emancipation served as a marker of the “modern,” Pius VII’s reinstatement of the Roman ghetto immediately upon his “restoration” as Rome’s monarch symbolized Catholicism’s antimodernism.

The Romantic movement provided this antimodernist stance with assistance from unexpected quarters.²¹ Even artists and intellectuals who may not have believed in religious doctrines nevertheless embraced neo-Gothic Catholicism as an antidote to urban industrialized society. They saw in their nostalgic re-creations of the Middle Ages a bygone world of organic unity, sharply contrasting with their own felt class and national divisions. One important moment in this movement was a large work written by François-René de Chateaubriand, an aristocrat who had fled the Terror and taken refuge in England. After Napoleon’s 1800 amnesty for emigrés, Chateaubriand returned to France and published *The Genius of Christianity, or Beauties of the Christian Religion* (1802). This work might be thought of as the first example of “cultural Catholicism”: a lavishly detailed account of Catholicism’s symbols and rituals, appealing even to those who might not religiously assent to doctrines. Chateaubriand laid the cornerstone in Romantic Catholicism’s edifice.

19. For an overview, see Derek Edward Dawson Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2002).

20. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1985).

21. For an overview, see Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008). See also Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 27–35.

Another such work was Joseph de Maistre's *On the Pope* (1819), published four years after the Congress of Vienna's "restoration" of the papal monarchy. De Maistre, one of the extreme right's most articulate and influential "enemies of the Enlightenment," theorized the pope as an absolutist global ruler possessed of "infallibility." As the papacy's temporal power became increasingly threatened by nationalist advances, de Maistre's invented tradition of the global papal monarch served as a powerful neo-medievalist unifying symbol. Paradoxically, it modernized medieval and Baroque ultramontanist precisely through its antimodernism.²²

In 1832, Gregory XVI summarized this adversarial stance in his encyclical *Mirari vos* (August 15, 1832).²³ During the 1830s, "liberalism" became consolidated as the dominant transatlantic political and cultural paradigm.²⁴ Gregory, by contrast, conservative to the point of being reactionary, refused to allow gas street lighting and steam engine trains in the Papal States. *Mirari vos* articulated the fear of "indifferentism," seen as the inevitable consequence of religious "toleration." "This perverse opinion," wrote Gregory,

is spread on all sides by the fraud of the wicked who claim that it is possible to obtain the eternal salvation of the soul by the profession of any kind of religion, as long as morality is maintained. Surely, in so clear a matter, you will drive this deadly error far from the people committed to your care. With the admonition of the apostle that "there is one God, one faith, one baptism" [Eph 4:5] may those fear who contrive the notion that the safe harbor of salvation is open to persons of any religion whatever.

From indifferentism flowed liberty of conscience, and this too was condemned:

This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that *liberty of conscience* must be maintained for everyone. . . . Thence comes transformation of minds,

22. Useful excerpts from both Chateaubriand and de Maistre may be found in Joseph Fitzer, *Romance and the Rock: Nineteenth-Century Catholics on Faith and Reason* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

23. For what follows, see Gregory XVI, *Mirari vos* (August 15, 1832), in *The Papal Encyclicals*, 5 vols., ed. Claudia Carlen (Raleigh, NC: Pierian, 1990), 1:235–41, emphasis original.

24. Edmund Fawcett, *Liberalism: The Life of an Idea* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2014).

corruption of youths, contempt of sacred things and holy laws—in other words, a pestilence more deadly to the state than any other. Experience shows, even from earliest times, that cities renowned for wealth, dominion, and glory perished as a result of this single evil, namely, immoderate freedom of opinion, license of free speech, and desire for novelty.

From liberty of conscience and free speech flowed freedom of the press:

Here We must include that harmful and never sufficiently denounced freedom to publish any writings whatever and disseminate them to the people, which some dare to demand and promote with so great a clamor. We are horrified to see what monstrous doctrines and prodigious errors are disseminated far and wide in countless books, pamphlets, and other writings which, though small in weight, are very great in malice. We are in tears at the abuse which proceeds from them over the face of the earth. . . . Is there any sane man who would say poison ought to be distributed, sold publicly, stored, and even drunk because some antidote is available and those who use it may be snatched from death again and again?

Finally, Gregory condemned liberal political theories—stemming from the Enlightenment notion of social contract—that questioned the legitimacy of divinely appointed monarchy:

We have learned that certain teachings are being spread among the common people in writings which attack the trust and submission due to princes; the torches of treason are being lit everywhere. . . . May all recall, according to the admonition of the apostle that “there is no authority except from God; what authority there is has been appointed by God. Therefore he who resists authority resists the ordinances of God; and those who resist bring on themselves condemnation” [Rom 13:2]. Therefore both divine and human laws cry out against those who strive by treason and sedition to drive the people from confidence in their princes and force them from their government.

As a corollary, Gregory also condemned the separation of church and state, breaking “the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood. It is certain that that concord which always was favorable and beneficial for the sacred and the civil order is feared by the shameless lovers of liberty.”

Mirari vos, published just a little over the quarter mark of the 19th century, summarized the Church’s opposition to the Enlightenment’s descendants. Opposition to liberal nationalism—the force of destiny—had acquired the force of doctrine.

Dueling Civilizations: Supernaturalism vs. Materialism (1846–1860)

In 1846, Gregory died and was succeeded by Pius IX (“Pionono”). Pius was initially seen and embraced as a progressive liberalizing monarch. Immediately after his accession to the throne, he issued a pardon freeing all political prisoners and opened the Jewish ghetto in Rome. He would later build gas lighting, railroads, and telegraph lines in the Papal States. However, there was underlying continuity: Pius’s first encyclical, *Qui pluribus* (November 9, 1846), published immediately after his accession, extended his predecessor’s concerns.²⁵ Pius condemned those “enemies of divine revelation, [who] with reckless and sacrilegious effrontery want to import the doctrine of human progress into the Catholic religion.” In particular, he singled out scripture scholars and publishers who capitalized on freedom of the press: “the crafty Bible Societies which renew the old skill of the heretics and ceaselessly force on people of all kinds, even the uneducated, gifts of the Bible. They issue these in large numbers and at great cost, in vernacular translations, which infringe the holy rules of the Church.” And he condemned the indifferentism resulting from conflicting biblical interpretations: “Also perverse is the shocking theory that it makes no difference to which religion one belongs, a theory which is greatly at variance even with reason. By means of this theory, those crafty men remove all distinction between virtue and vice, truth and error, honorable and vile action.” This “filthy medley of errors which creeps in from every side” was a legacy of Enlightenment thought, “the result of the unbridled license to think, speak and write.”

History, however, was against Pius. Almost immediately after his accession to the throne, Europe was rocked by the revolutions of 1848, revolts by liberal bourgeoisie against autocratic monarchs and by industrial workers against those same bourgeois capitalists who owned and ran factories. Fearing for his life, Pius IX had to flee Rome as the brief but fiercely anticlerical “Roman Republic” was established by republicans (later excommunicated by the pope). After 1850, when Pius was once again “restored” to Rome, the fragile papal monarchy was propped up against nationalists by foreign French troops. Traumatized by the events of 1848–1849, Pius passed a number of reactionary measures including the reinstatement of Rome’s Jewish ghetto.

25. For what follows, see Pius IX, *Qui pluribus* (November 9, 1846); in Carlen, *Papal Encyclicals*, 1:277–84.

During the following 1850s, Pius IX used various means to create an emotionally charged antimodernist counterculture and countersociety. First, immediately on his return after the revolution, the pope instructed the Jesuits to found a journal titled *La Civiltà Cattolica*—“Catholic Civilization” or, equivalently in Rome’s view, “Christian Civilization.” Perhaps realizing that condemnations of “liberty of the press” were futile, he founded his own journalistic arm. This concept of an antimodernist “Christian civilization” was a seedling soon to blossom in Pius’s imaginary. It might also be noted that *La Civiltà Cattolica* adopted a significantly anti-Semitic stance, of a piece with the accompanying reinstatement of the Jewish ghetto.

This anti-Semitism would surface in the journal eight years later during the bizarre affair of Edgardo Mortara.²⁶ The Jewish six-year-old had allegedly been surreptitiously baptized—perhaps out of malicious intent—by a Christian servant girl who sprinkled water on the boy and recited the trinitarian formula. (Needless to say, the implicit sacramental theology, in which no one except the mischievous servant made an affirmation of faith, was of a piece with the supernaturalist era.) Police then forcibly removed Edgardo from his parents’ home in Bologna (Papal States) on the grounds that Jewish parents could not raise a baptized Christian. After authorities transported the boy to Rome to be raised under papal care, journalists throughout Europe waged a war of words on behalf of the Mortaras. By contrast, *La Civiltà Cattolica* (“Christian Civilization”) defended the papal position.

In 1854, Pius IX defined the doctrine of the “Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God,” the belief that Mary had been conceived in her mother’s womb without inheriting the stain of Original Sin. Four years later, in 1858, the Virgin Mary seemed to confirm this doctrine herself. She was said to have appeared multiple times to Bernadette Soubirous, a young peasant girl in the remote French village of Lourdes. After Bernadette’s numerous requests for a name, the apparition replied, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” This belief had been debated for many centuries, and perhaps the main reason it had not received more official recognition is that it had been opposed by Saint Thomas Aquinas (while advocated by Duns Scotus). In its acute mid-19th-century context, however, it had a specifically supernaturalist function: it was directed against “naturalism”

26. See David I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1997); Schloesser, “Against Forgetting,” 302; and Kertzer, *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican’s Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Knopf, 2001).

(and its corollary determinism), the belief that everything in the world has only material or “natural” causes—or, more to the point, no divinely intervening “supernatural” causes. Pius correctly read the *Zeitgeist*: one year after Lourdes, Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* (1859), a thoroughly materialist account of evolution by means of natural selection via species extinction.

The year 1858 has been highlighted by recent scholarship. Hubert Wolf’s *The Nuns of Sant’Ambrogio*, based on Inquisition archives only recently opened by Pope John Paul II, uncovers a long-suppressed scandal at the Roman convent of Sant’Ambrogio.²⁷ Wolf’s lurid yet mesmerizing account features the fraudulent visionary Sister Maria Luisa Firrao, whose intrigues included embezzlement, sexual abuse, and murder. They were enabled by her Jesuit confessor, Josef Kleutgen (with whom she was sexually involved). Kleutgen was one of his era’s most influential conservative proponents of neo-Scholastic philosophy; he would soon be intimately involved with preparing for Pius IX’s forthcoming Vatican Council.²⁸ Apart from moral blindness induced by sexual desire, what might account for the extreme gullibility that led Kleutgen and others to be duped by the fraudulent visionary? Wolf suggests one causal factor: a fervent supernaturalism, ideologically antimodernist, predisposed minds to imagine they had found the visions they sought.

The year 1858 marks three pertinent events: the Lourdes apparitions, the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, and the Sant’Ambrogio affair. All three vividly exemplify Catholicism’s militant supernaturalism in the age of Darwin.

Spatial Turn: A Tale of Two Kingdoms (1861–1870)

On March 17, 1861, Victor Emmanuel II proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy with himself as its first monarch and Turin (1861–1864) as its capital city. The very next day, Pius IX quickly countered with his allocution, *Jamdudum cernimus* (March 18, 1861).²⁹ A transatlantic comparison might assist American readers in finding their bearings. Exactly two weeks

27. Hubert Wolf, *The Nuns of Sant’Ambrogio: The True Story of a Convent in Scandal*, trans. Ruth Martin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

28. John Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy* (Boston: Brill, 1998), 62–167.

29. For what follows, see Pius IX, *Jamdudum cernimus* (March 18, 1861); in Pius IX, *Les actes pontificaux cités dans l’encyclique et le syllabus du 8 décembre 1864: Suivis de divers autres documents*, ed. J. Chantrel (Paris: Poussielgue, 1865), 372–87.

earlier, Abraham Lincoln had been inaugurated president (March 4, 1861). One month later, the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter began the Civil War (April 12, 1861). Almost exactly four years later to the date, Lincoln would be assassinated (April 15, 1865). The Italian *risorgimento* was one episode in the broader transatlantic age of democratic civil wars.³⁰

In *Jamdudum cernimus*, Pius IX laid out a vision of two irreconcilable forms of “civilization”: “Christian civilization” versus modern liberal civilization. The purpose of the latter, he suggested, was the world’s dechristianization—a reference to the French Revolution. The implicit opposition was an extremely concrete historical one between two conflicting monarchies: the Kingdom of Italy versus the Papal States. However, the pope’s rhetorical transmutation of this opposition into a quasi-apocalyptic “clash of civilizations” solidified the Church versus world binary in play since Napoleon’s defeat nearly 50 years earlier.

In 1864, this initial seed fully blossomed in the Syllabus of Errors (December 8, 1864).³¹ The Syllabus was a compendium of 80 condemned propositions. In other words, the proposition stated a belief held by moderns but condemned by the Church. For example, the following four propositions related to indifferentism and disestablishment were condemned:

18: Protestantism is nothing else than a different form of the same Christian religion, in which it is permitted to please God equally as in the true Catholic Church.

55: The Church should be separated from the state, and the state from the Church.

77: In this our age it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be treated as the only religion of the state, all other worships whatsoever being excluded.

78: Hence it has been laudably provided by law in some Catholic countries, that men thither immigrating should be permitted the public exercise of their own several worships.

The propositions were wide-ranging and provided a summary of 19th-century ideologies. They included philosophical schools like pantheism, naturalism, and rationalism; religious stances like indifferentism, church-state separation, and Bible societies (both historical exegesis and

30. See Philip Mark Katz, *From Appomattox to Montmartre: Americans and the Paris Commune* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1998).

31. For what follows, see “Pope Pius IX: Syllabus of Errors, 8 December 1864,” in Barry, *Readings*, 3:70–74; and Schloesser, “Against Forgetting,” 299.

publications); socioeconomic and political movements like liberalism, socialism, and Communism; and the legitimacy of the pope's temporal power as monarch of the Papal States. The Syllabus concluded with a fiery all-inclusive condemnation: "The Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and harmonize himself with progress, liberalism, and with modern civilization" (no. 80).

The Syllabus was actually an annex to the encyclical *Quanta cura* (December 8, 1864).³² Pius opened his encyclical by reminding Catholics that he had "again and again admonished and exhorted" them to "flee from the contagion of so dire a pestilence," that is, "the monstrous portents of opinion which prevail especially in this age." In a single sentence quoted from his predecessor Gregory's *Mirari vos*, Pius IX linked freedom of conscience, religion, speech, and (implicitly) assembly as erroneous beliefs that

liberty of conscience and worship is each man's personal right, . . . and that a right resides in the citizens to an absolute liberty, which should be restrained by no authority whether ecclesiastical or civil, whereby they may be able openly and publicly to manifest and declare any of their ideas whatever, either by word of mouth, by the press, or in any other way.

At the end of this year (1864), Pius IX began preparations for an ecumenical council, the first to be held in three centuries. In particular, he wanted the council to address these post-Enlightenment and postrevolutionary issues: rationalism, materialism, liberalism, scriptural inspiration and interpretation, and—most radically—papal infallibility, an ultramontanist idea given a uniquely Romantic spin in de Maistre's *On the Pope* (1819) 50 years earlier.

Meanwhile, the Papal States' days were numbered. In 1864, after the September Convention, French Emperor Napoleon III agreed to withdraw his troops from Rome. However, in 1867, just one year after French troops had left, Italian nationalists attempted another invasion of Rome. Napoleon III immediately sent troops back to defeat them and left a garrison to protect the papal monarchy. It was a fragile measure completely dependent on the French Second Empire's stability. That was soon threatened in August 1866 when the northern German states were unified under Prussian direction following the Austro-Prussian War (or "Unification War").

32. For what follows, see Pius IX, *Quanta cura* (December 8, 1864); in Carlen, *Papal Encyclicals*, 1:381–86.

In 1870, this potent brew of intellectual, cultural, religious, and political ingredients boiled over. Pius IX's ecumenical council, in the planning since 1864 and announced in 1868, opened on December 8, 1869, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Its title was "The Vatican Council."³³ Two constitutions were discussed and approved: the Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith (*Dei Filius*) and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ (*Pastor Aeternus*).³⁴

Dei Filius set boundaries limiting rationalism—"the natural light of reason"—and underscored the necessity of "supernatural revelation" for knowing truth. At the same time, it also set limits to "fideism," an irrational and blind faith that bypassed any need for human reason at all. Stating that the Catholic Church, "with one consent, has also ever held and does hold that there is a twofold order of knowledge"—that is, both faith and reason—"distinct both in principle and also in object," the constitution drew this remarkable conclusion:

But although faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy 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 false appearance of such a contradiction is mainly due, either to the dogmas of faith not having been understood and expounded according to the mind of the Church, or to the inventions of opinion having been taken for the verdicts of reason. We define, therefore, that every assertion contrary to a truth of enlightened faith is utterly false.³⁵

Especially read within the light of relentlessly negative papal reproaches during the past hundred years, this paragraph seems surprisingly optimistic.

33. Herbert Vaughan, *The Year of Preparation for the Vatican Council: Including the Original and English of the Encyclical and Syllabus and of the Papal Documents Connected with Its Convocation* (London: Burns, Oates, 1869).

34. For what follows, see "First Vatican Council—1869–1870," in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1990), 2:801–16.

35. *Dei Filius*, chap. 4 ("De fide et ratione"); in Tanner, *Decrees*, 2:808. See also Stephen Schloesser, "Jesuit Hybrids, Catholic Moderns, Futural Pasts," in *For the City and the World: Conversations in Catholic Studies and Social Thought*, Lane Center Lectures 2005–2010, ed. Julia Dowd (San Francisco: University of San Francisco, Association of Jesuit University Presses, 2010), 114–41, at 116; and Stephen Schloesser, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being: Re-Sourcing Catholic Intellectual Traditions," *Cross Currents* 58 (2008): 65–94, at 75.

The second constitution, *Pastor Aeternus*, had a rougher ride. Although the majority party favored infallibility, the minority party included some extremely strong and articulate opponents. Moreover, since a war between France and Prussia was imminent and hence time short, discussion was limited. Once the French withdrew their troops and left Rome unprotected, Italian nationalists were sure to seize the day and capture the city. Thus, as the infallibility discussion took place in July 1870, the heat was unbearable, many bishops took sick, and the city braced for battle.³⁶ An initial vote on July 13 garnered 451 votes for, 88 against, and 62 in favor but with an amendment. As the outcome became clear, 60 bishops left Rome so as not to cast an opposition vote.

The final tally, offering only a yes or no option, was taken on July 18: 433 voted yes while only 2—Sicilian Aloisio Riccio and American Edward Fitzgerald of Little Rock, Arkansas—voted no. The next day, July 19, France sent a declaration of war to the Prussian government. As French troops departed Rome for battle, Foreign Minister Otto von Bismarck received what he had been looking for all along: southern German states joined the northern Prussian war effort. Six decades after Napoleon dissolved the Holy Roman Empire and invented the Confederation of the Rhine (1806–1813), a united German nation state had finally been achieved.

In contrast to 19th-century critics who joked that the pope would soon be infallibly predicting the weather, *Pastor Aeternus*'s final wording significantly circumscribed the definition. First, the pope needed to be explicitly speaking *ex cathedra*, i.e., from his “chair”; second, he had to be defining a doctrine regarding faith or morals; and third, it needed “to be held by the universal Church.” Most significantly, “infallibility” was not an attribute possessed by the pope; rather, it was “that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed.” Thus, the pope’s teaching *ex cathedra* was infallible insofar as he—as head—articulated teaching “held by the universal Church.”

Thus the paradox: just as Pius IX achieved defined infallibility in faith and morals, he became the first pope in over 1,100 years not to reign as a temporal monarch. After Rome was captured on September 20, 1870, Pius declared himself a self-imposed “Prisoner of the Vatican.”³⁷ One month later, on October 20, he indefinitely suspended the Vatican Council.

36. Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, *Letters from Rome on the Council* (New York: Pott & Amery, 1870), 685, 689, 712.

37. David I. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Popes' Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

Today, perhaps, the very notion of a papal state monarchy seems unimaginably quaint or archaic—something seen only on *The Borgias*. By contrast, for pro-papal antinationalists of the 1800s, the evaporation of a political entity that had survived since the mid-700s seemed unthinkable. In either case, papal monarchy today is a nonissue. And yet, a somewhat disturbing deeper issue is at play.

The “spatial turn” in recent decades reminds historians and other humanities scholars of the importance of particular geographical places situated in time: place matters.³⁸ Taking spatiotemporal location seriously reframes 19th-century Roman Catholic teaching. The “ordinary magisterium”—a term first coined by Kleutgen—is often imagined as transcending space and time, indeed, transcending history itself.³⁹ However, seen through the lens of spatiality, the heated rhetoric of a clash of civilizations actually concerned a highly specific and extremely circumscribed territorial dispute: the Papal States versus the Kingdom of Italy. Although this civil war soon fell down the memory chute, the binary opposition between Roman Catholicism and “modernity” would shape the Church for nearly another century. Far from being apocalyptic, it was human, all too human.

Restoration: Christian Philosophy for a Christian Civilization (1879)⁴⁰

In February 1878, Pius IX died and was succeeded by Leo XIII. Only 18 months later, Leo promulgated *Aeterni Patris* (August 4, 1879).⁴¹ The quickness with which this encyclical appeared testifies to Leo’s vision of causal connections: bad thought leads to bad politics. The document

38. See Barney Warf and Santa Arias, eds., *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin, *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (London: Sage, 2010); Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

39. Paul Collins, *Upon This Rock: The Popes and Their Changing Role* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 244; citing John P. Boyle, “The Ordinary Magisterium,” *Heythrop Journal* 20 (1979): 380–98, and 21 (1980): 14–29.

40. For “Christian philosophy,” see Stephen Schloesser’s review of *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930s Christian Philosophy Debates in France*, ed. and trans. Gregory B. Sadler (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2011), in *H-France Review* 11, no. 233 (October 2011): no. 233, <http://www.h-france.net/vol11reviews/vol11no233Schloesser.pdf>.

41. For fuller treatment with references, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 33–35.

established the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas as Roman Catholicism's official intellectual system and mandated its teaching in all Catholic institutions, including seminaries and universities:

Domestic and civil society even, which, as all see, is exposed to great danger from this plague of perverse opinions, would certainly enjoy a far more peaceful and secure existence if a more wholesome doctrine were taught in the universities and high schools—one more in conformity with the teaching of the Church, such as is contained in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

Nine years earlier, the Vatican Council's declaration on faith and reason had sounded a surprisingly optimistic note: "there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason." But these eight years had been tumultuous: the Papal States had vanished; Rome became Italy's capital; and the popes—first Pius and now Leo—adopted the official position of being "Prisoners of the Vatican." Moreover, the decade had been traumatized by Pius's final struggle: the *Kulturkampf* (Culture Struggle) with Bismarck's Germany (1871–1878).⁴²

Not surprisingly, then, Leo's estimation of human reason was somewhat more tempered than the Council's. His map of the faith-and-reason landscape made the two parties seem less like overlapping territories and more like divided continents:

We know that there are some who, in their overestimate of the human faculties, maintain that as soon as man's intellect becomes subject to divine authority it falls from its native dignity, and hampered by the yoke of this species of slavery, is much retarded and hindered in its progress toward the supreme truth and excellence. Such an idea is most false and deceptive. . . . For the human mind, being confined within certain limits, and those narrow enough, is exposed to many errors and is ignorant of many things; whereas the Christian faith, reposing on the authority of God, is the unfailing mistress of truth, whom whoso followeth he will be neither enmeshed in the snares of error nor tossed hither and thither on the waves of fluctuating opinion. Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophizing in the best possible way. . . . For surely that is a worthy and most useful exercise of reason when men give their minds to disproving those things which are repugnant to faith and proving the things which conform to faith.

42. Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004).

What was reason's most useful function? It provided rational arguments defending truths already revealed in Scripture and tradition.

The rhetoric of this Thomistic "restoration" exemplified the word's 1854 definition by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc: "RESTORATION. Both the word and the thing are modern. To restore an edifice means neither to maintain it, nor to repair it, nor to rebuild it; it means to reestablish it in a finished state, which may in fact never have actually existed at any given time."⁴³ As with the invented traditions already noted (e.g., Napoleon's Concordat Catholicism, Chateaubriand's *Genius of Christianity*, de Maistre's *On the Pope*), neo-Thomism (or neo-Scholasticism) wore antique clothing seemingly steeped in misty prehistoric origins. And yet, neo-Thomism was a modern invention responding to contemporary problems. Whereas neo-Thomism was primarily concerned with the problem of knowledge ("epistemology"), the historical Aquinas would not have doubted that we know things outside our minds. Indeed, by means of analogy, he was extremely optimistic that we could know a great deal even about the ineffable God.

In actual practice, seminarians did not read much of Aquinas's original texts. Rather, they were trained with "manuals" of philosophy and theology—a practice dubbed "manualist theology." These manuals were largely compilations of textual fragments from numerous sources—Scripture, magisterial teachings, philosophers, and theologians (including Thomas himself)—assembled in order to proof-text various doctrines and dogmas.⁴⁴ The method was deductive, not inductive. It began with a proposition and proceeded to prove it with internal evidence; it did not begin with observation or research and then see where the empirical data led.

More to the point: neo-Scholasticism was fundamentally ahistorical. It paid no attention to the original historical (or even textual) contexts in which its cut-and-pasted excerpts had been written or to what acute problems they had been responding. The claim can be made even stronger: neo-Scholasticism was intentionally *anti*historical. The method was explicitly meant to ignore the historical research that would retrieve the actual *tradition(s)*—as opposed to invented tradition—that might erode or undermine the doctrines or dogmas taken at face value. Reaction against this profound opposition to history—change itself—would soon lead to the "Modernist Crisis."

43. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *The Foundations of Architecture: Selections from the Dictionnaire raisonné*, trans. Kenneth D. Whitehead (New York: Braziller, 1990), 195.

44. For an example in English, see Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch, ed. James Canon Bastible (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1964).

Before leaving *Aeterni Patris*, it seems worth recalling that neo-Scholasticism's preeminent champion had been the Jesuit Josef Kleutgen who considered the encyclical a vindication of his life's work. Exactly 20 years earlier, he had been entangled in the 1858 Sant'Ambrogio sex scandal. The "purity and pollution" rhetoric in *Aeterni Patris* is muted when compared to the earlier fulminations of Gregory XVI and Pius IX: "perverse opinion"; "shameful font"; "corruption of youths"; "deadly pestilence"; "monstrous doctrines" (all from *Mirari vos*); "perverse and shocking theory"; "crafty men"; "vile action"; "filthy medley of errors" (all from *Qui pluribus*); "the contagion of so dire a pestilence"; "monstrous portents" (from *Quanta cura*). And yet, albeit muted, purity and pollution anxieties also underlay *Aeterni Patris's* proposal to counter a "plague of perverse opinions" with "a more wholesome doctrine." Whether read through the lens of cultural anthropology or psychoanalytic theory, the condemnatory rhetorical style of the 19th-century magisterium is shot through with fears of impurity, pollution, and contamination. As anthropologist Mary Douglas notes: "The final paradox of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction."⁴⁵

Anti-Semitism's Wages: From *Ralliement* to Divorce (1892–1905)

In 1892, departing from the tradition of encyclicals published in Latin, Leo XIII promulgated *Au milieu des sollicitudes* (February 16, 1892) in French. In it, he came to grips with the fact that republicanism (popularly elected government) needed to be accommodated. In fact, it had been exactly a century (September 21, 1792) since the French had abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the First Republic.

In 1875, France's Third Republic, originally intended as a transitional government after the disastrous defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870) and the end of Napoleon III's Second Empire, had become a permanent one. In 1881–1882, as part of a broader republican anticlerical agenda, the Jules Ferry Laws established free and mandatory public (i.e., "laicist") education and suppressed Catholic schools and religious teaching orders (like the Jesuits). In 1882, reacting to the growing laicist offensive, the Assumptionist religious order founded the daily newspaper *La Croix* (*The Cross*). It would quickly come to be treated as gospel truth by many clergy. This new "culture struggle" in France, coming immediately on the heels of the *Kul-*

45. Mary Douglas, as quoted in Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 49.

turkampf in Germany, alarmed Leo. He realized that the Republic needed to be accommodated if the Church were not to be completely shut out of the public sphere (recently attempted in the Paris Commune of 1870–1871).

In 1888, four years prior to *Au milieu des sollicitudes*, Leo had begun forging a middle way in his encyclical *Libertas* (June 20, 1888). He first reaffirmed continuity with his predecessors: “Justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges.” But Leo then began a shift in tone. A certain measure of “tolerance”—even of a “godless” Republic—was permissible in particular circumstances: “While not conceding any right to anything save what is true and honest, [the Church] does not forbid public authority to tolerate what is at variance with truth and justice, for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, or of obtaining or preserving some greater good.”

In 1892, applying and expanding this same line, Leo used *Au milieu des sollicitudes* to appeal directly to France’s Catholics and urge them to embrace a policy of *ralliement*—“rallying to the Republic.” How did he justify this appeal? He did not accept the legitimacy of popular sovereignty or the social contract. To do so would have reversed the magisterial papal teachings pronounced with such vehemence over the preceding 60 years; effectively it would also have undermined the legitimacy of his own teachings as well as his status as “Prisoner of the Vatican.”

Instead, Leo made a razor sharp distinction between “constituted political power” and the “legislation” it produced. The most legitimately established government can pass bad laws; and a thoroughly illegitimate government can pass good laws: “In so much does legislation differ from political power and its form, that under a system of government most excellent in form legislation could be detestable; while quite the opposite under a regime most imperfect in form, might be found excellent legislation.” From this distinction, Leo went on to note that the quality of laws depends on the quality of the legislators, “of men invested with power.”

[They] in fact, govern the nation; therefore it follows that, practically, the quality of the laws depends more upon the quality of these men than upon the power. The laws will be good or bad accordingly as the minds of the legislators are imbued with good or bad principles, and as they allow themselves to be guided by political prudence or by passion.

Catholics, therefore, needed to “rally” to the Republic, engage the political process, run for office and become representatives, regardless of whether

the Republic was a legitimate government. The goodness or badness of laws depended on the quality of legislators: the “constituted political power” (the Republic) was distinct from those individuals “invested with power” (the legislators).

Leo’s encyclical did, in fact, affect the French political scene, especially when taken in tandem with his encyclical *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891), published the previous year, and generally regarded as the inauguration of modern Catholic social teaching. Count Albert de Mun, for example, was a practicing Roman Catholic elected legislator who worked on behalf of Leo’s social reforms.⁴⁶ However, many other Catholics saw in Leo a betrayal of everything the Church had stood for during the long century of intransigence since the French Revolution. They rallied to neither the Republic nor the pope.

Enter anti-Semitism. In 1892, the same year as Leo’s *ralliement* encyclical, Edouard Drumont, the most powerful anti-Semitic voice of the fin-de-siècle, founded his newspaper *La Libre Parole* (*Free Speech*).⁴⁷ (Drumont’s *La France juive* [*Jewish France*, 1886], published six years earlier, would reach 200 editions by the turn of the century.) With the founding of *Libre Parole*, Drumont launched a crusade to purge Jewish “pollution” in the French army. “The Semitic invasion is like the breeding of microbes,” he wrote. “Though there have been some hints of weakness, the army has joined the combat with a remarkable strength of resistance. . . . We want to encourage the army in this holy struggle.” Drumont’s journal, like his earlier book, was popular among Catholic clergy and laity.

Two years later, the Dreyfus Affair erupted. In 1894, a Jewish artillery officer named Captain Alfred Dreyfus was indicted for passing on classified documents. A highly placed military source leaked word of the indictment to Drumont, who in turn published the news on November 1, 1894. Prominently displayed beneath the xenophobic masthead motto, “France for the French,” the *Libre Parole* headline read: “High Treason: Arrest of the Jewish Officer A. Dreyfus.” A month later, Dreyfus was found guilty of high treason. Four months later, he was transferred to Devil’s Island to serve out his life sentence of solitary confinement.

After much cajoling over the next two years, the popular naturalist novelist Émile Zola, laicist by conviction, was persuaded to take up a campaign in favor of Dreyfus. On January 13, 1898, Zola published his now famous

46. Benjamin F. Martin, *Count Albert de Mun, Paladin of the Third Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1978).

47. For fuller treatment of the Dreyfus Affair with references, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 50–54. For an overview, see also Michael Burns, *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999).

open letter “J’Accuse!” The government brought Zola to trial, convicted him, and gave him the maximum sentence for libel. Zola’s loss was the left’s gain. Jean Jaurès founded the newspaper *La Petite République* and reanimated the moribund socialists. In reaction, fanatical Assumptionists waged a bitter campaign in *La Croix* to strip all Jews of citizenship. *La Croix* had an influence disproportionate to its circulation numbers, thanks to the clergy’s dissemination of its ideas. The Assumptionists also used another of their journals, *Le Pèlerin* (The Pilgrim), published at the Lourdes healing shrine, to peddle a particularly violent racial anti-Semitism.

In 1899, the left triumphed when the Republic’s president pardoned Dreyfus. (His innocence would wait several more years to be proven.) In the 1902 elections, a political backlash against the right swept in a radical left coalition government. Between 1902 and 1905 a series of anticlerical laws was passed, culminating in the 1905 Act of Separation of Church and State. The state confiscated all Church properties, and members of religious orders were exiled. Perhaps it is just as well that Leo XIII had died two years earlier; he was spared seeing the utter collapse of his *ralliement* dreams. French Catholics had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Pius X, who had only just succeeded Leo in 1903, excommunicated all Catholic deputies who had voted for the separation. This action accorded with his namesake’s condemned proposition in the Syllabus (1864): “The Church should be separated from the state, and the state from the Church.” Pius also forbade Catholics to participate in the new lay committees that would oversee parishes. What effect did this have on the Church in France? Statistics from the Limoges area provide one limited yet illuminating case study. Between 1899 and 1914, the number of unbaptized children rose from 2.5 to 33.9 percent; the number of civil marriages from 14 to 60 percent; and the number of civil burials quadrupled. For France as a whole, the annual number of ordinations fell from 1,518 in 1904 to 704 by 1914. One catastrophic long-term effect of the Dreyfus Affair: Catholics chose state over Church.

Non-Integralists: “Cafeteria Catholics”? (1898–1914)

In addition to the external crisis of church-state relations, the Church also underwent one internal to itself, known to history as the “Modernist Crisis.”⁴⁸ In 1905, besides excommunicating the Catholic deputies who

48. For fuller treatment of the following (Modernist Crisis) with references, see Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 54–56; “*Vivo ergo cogito*,” 46–47, 49–51; and “Jesuit Hybrids,” 122–23.

had voted for separation, the Holy See also placed five of the Abbé Alfred Loisy's books on the Index of Forbidden Books. Twenty-five years earlier, Leo XIII's encyclical mandating the restoration of Thomism in Catholic schools had causally linked thought and politics: "Many of those who, with minds alienated from the faith, hate Catholic institutions, claim reason as their sole mistress and guide." The events of 1902–1905 seemed to verify Leo's vision.

What was "Roman Catholic Modernism"? Fundamentally, it was an attempt to come to terms with the 19th century's embrace of history. Scripture scholars, Church scholars, historical theologians—all were using historical methods to trace developments in the Bible, the Church, and doctrines back to their beginnings. The embrace of history—or, more pointedly, the affirmation of change over time—challenged the Church's denial of change, especially as embodied in neo-Thomism and manualist theology.

Two years after France's Act of Separation, the Inquisition issued the syllabus *Lamentabili sane* (July 3, 1907). Like the Syllabus of Pius X's namesake issued 50 years earlier, it condemned 65 propositions expressing "dangerous errors concerning the natural sciences, the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and the principal mysteries of the faith." Proposition 22 exemplified the antihistorical stance: "The dogmas the Church holds out as revealed are not truths which have fallen from heaven. They are an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has acquired by laborious effort." In other words, revealed church dogmas actually *had* fallen from heaven, fully formed and independently of human thought.

Whether any individual person actually believed all that "Modernists" were said to believe, the outcome of this episode was the reclothing of an old binary in new language: "integralists" versus "Modernists." Integralists (*intégristes*) imagined a total "integration" of all facets of life into an indivisible organic unity, hierarchically ordered beneath the ultramontanist pope. A simplistic metaphor with popular appeal, the term "integralism" suggested a body that was integrally perfect and hence pure. If one held fast to the whole and did not question the parts, one could be guaranteed safety from polluted contaminants. Although the *intégristes* had never shown much enthusiasm for Leo XIII or his *ralliement*, they were now ardent zealots for the fiercely antimodernist Pius X. "We are integral Roman Catholics," they announced. "That is, we set above all and everyone not only the Church's traditional teaching in the order of absolute truths but also the pope's directions in the order of practical contingencies. For the Church and the pope are one." In today's parlance, integralists regarded non-integralists—i.e., Modernists—as "cafeteria Catholics."

In 1909, a secret international antimodernist network was set up. Its Latin title, the Sodalitium Pianum (S.P., i.e., “Sodality of St. Pius V”), was known in France by its code name Sapinière. Pius X both encouraged and subsidized the activities of this “secret police.” In 1910, the Holy See required all priests having pastoral charge to sign the “Oath Against Modernism.” This oath included affirming an antihistorical agenda: dogmas were immutable. The integralist reaction peaked during the years 1912–1913.

This was the state of affairs on the eve of the Great War in July 1914: an absolute binary drawn between two opposing camps—Catholicism versus modern civilization. Ninety-nine years had passed since Napoleon’s 1815 defeat at Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna’s “restoration.” Numerous tumultuous events located in space-time had reinforced and calcified the opposition. However, even as those events faded from spatiality into history, the opposition seemingly transcended time, a quasi-apocalyptic clash of civilizations.

Fascism: Making Liberalism Look Good (1919–1939)

In January 1919, the Paris Peace Conference was convened at Versailles to settle the Great War of 1914–1918.⁴⁹ On a basic level, it needed to negotiate the usual items of peace settlements: new boundaries with exchanges of land, war reparations, demands for demilitarization. However, like its predecessor exactly one century earlier (Vienna 1815), Paris 1919 had an unusually large number of additional tasks. As great powers sat at the negotiating table, they redrew much of the world’s map as they invented new states. This was even truer in 1919 than in 1815 because three empires had collapsed as a result of the Great War: the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires. As a result, new states were invented: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland (resurrected). The League of Nations, founded in 1920 after Paris 1919, established the “mandate” system to govern the former Ottoman territories. Nation states eventually created out of British and French mandates include present-day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel.

The guiding aura of Paris 1919, embodied in the person of President Woodrow Wilson, was the liberal principle of “self-determination” descended from the Enlightenment’s social contract. Just as individuals have

49. Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002).

the inalienable right to self-determination, so too did a “people” or “nation”—what we today might call an “ethnicity”—have a right to their own nation state. The state’s legitimacy was founded on popular sovereignty. Although reality substantially departed from rhetoric, Wilsonian self-determination—seen as the logical outcome of Enlightenment values—was meant to endow the 1914–1918 slaughterhouse with lasting meaning. The Great War had been the war to end all wars. Incalculable sacrifice had not been in vain. Mourning could end in comfort.

However, challenging this apparently final triumphant chapter in the Enlightenment story simmered two competing worldviews. The first was Communism: a driving intellectual and social force throughout the long 19th century, it had achieved political embodiment in 1917 during the Russian revolutions of February and then October.⁵⁰ In 1922, the Soviet Union would be created under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin. In 1924, Lenin died and was succeeded by Joseph Stalin. Soviet Communism imagined itself as the French Revolution’s true heir. A proletarian dictatorship would enforce genuine equality and fraternity, social as well as political. Stalin’s purges, state confiscation of private property, and forced collectivization could all be interpreted as distant echoes of Robespierre’s Terror.⁵¹

However, also in 1922, another (and more recent) competitor for true political modernity appeared on the streets—quite literally.⁵² One year after the Fascist Party was created (November 1921), it hit the pavement in the audacious and utterly improbable March on Rome (October 1922). The scheme worked. On October 30, one day after being summoned to the palace of King Victor Emmanuel III, Benito Mussolini became prime minister of the Kingdom of Italy. Like Napoleon Bonaparte a century earlier, Mussolini understood the advantages of solidifying political cohesion with religious symbols and rituals. In 1926, negotiations began in an attempt to settle the “Roman Question” of the papacy, now a self-imposed “Prisoner of the Vatican” for over two generations.

50. For an overview, see Jeffrey Brooks and Georgiy Chernyavskiy, *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007).

51. For differing but classic interpretations, see E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1994); and François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Deborah Furet (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999).

52. For an overview, see Marla Stone, *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s, 2013).

Three years later, in February 1929, the Lateran Treaty was signed by Mussolini and Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the Holy See's secretary of state.⁵³ The treaty created the state of Vatican City with independent sovereignty. In exchange, the pope, as head of state, promised perpetual neutrality in international affairs. Unlike the concordat with Napoleon a century earlier, the treaty affirmed that "the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Religion is the only religion of the [Italian] State"; and the Vatican also received a financial settlement in exchange for properties lost in 1870. The good news for the papacy: the "Roman Question" had been settled. The bad news: Vatican City owed its existence to a Fascist government.

In late October 1929, eight months after the Lateran Treaty, the New York stock market crashed. The financial collapse set into motion a series of events that would result in a decade-long Great Depression. More particularly, it laid the groundwork for the Nazi accession to power in Germany under the strong arm of Adolph Hitler.⁵⁴ Because of unique circumstances owed to war reparations mandated in Paris 1919 (and heavy American postwar investments in German banks), the 1929 crash had a disproportionate and catastrophic effect on Germans. Electoral numbers tell the story. In 1928, the Nazis had received just 800,000 votes and 12 seats in parliament. But in 1930, just two years later—following the crash—they received 6,400,000 votes and 107 parliamentary seats. Mass panic fueled movement toward National Socialism.

In 1931, only two years after Mussolini's creation of the Vatican state, Pius XI felt compelled to publish an encyclical (in Italian, not Latin) titled *Non abbiamo bisogno* (June 29, 1931). Rebuking Fascist attacks on Catholic Action lay associations,⁵⁵ Pius wrote:

We have protested against the campaign of false and unjust accusations which preceded the disbanding of the Associations of the young people and of the University students affiliated to Catholic Action. . . . How many acts of brutality and of violence there have been, even to the striking of blows and the drawing of blood! How many insults in the press, how

53. "The Lateran Treaty and Concordat Between the Holy See and Italy, 11 February 1929," in Barry, *Readings*, 3:348–63.

54. For an overview, see Robert G. Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010).

55. On "Catholic Action," see Jeremy Bonner, Christopher D. Denny, and Mary Beth Fraser Connolly, eds., *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action before and after Vatican II* (New York: Fordham University, 2014). See also Tallett and Atkin, eds., *Religion, Society, and Politics in France*.

many injurious words and acts against things and persons not excluding Ourselves, have preceded, accompanied and followed the carrying into effect of this lightning-like police-order. . . . The inventions, falsehoods and real calumnies diffused by the hostile press of the party, which is the only press which is free to say and to dare to say anything and is often ordered or almost ordered what it must say, were largely summarized in a message which was cautiously characterized as unofficial and yet was broadcast to the general public by the most powerful means of diffusion which exist at present.

Non abbiamo marks a significant moment. In Pius XI's explicit acknowledgment that freedom of the press might have provided a counterpoint to the totalitarian state's monopoly on information dissemination—now made not only in printed matter but also on wireless radio (“the most powerful means of diffusion”)—the pope embraced a fundamental Enlightenment principle. Fascism made liberalism look good.

In 1933, two years after *Non abbiamo*, Hitler effectively became the dictator of a German “Reich” (empire) dominated by the Nazi party. On July 20, a “Concordat Between the Holy See and the German Reich” was concluded in order “to consolidate and enhance the existing friendly relations between the Catholic Church and the state in the whole territory of the German Reich in a stable and satisfactory manner for both parties.”⁵⁶ The Vatican's side was negotiated by the secretary of state, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pius XII. The Vatican received guarantees it customarily sought in concordats, including the right to appoint bishops, the administration of confessional (nonpublic) schools, and the regulation of Catholic marriages.

However, two Church concessions in particular foreshadowed storm clouds. Article 31 provided for the protection of “Catholic organizations and associations whose activity is devoted *exclusively to religious, purely cultural and charitable purposes* and which are, as such, subordinated to Church authorities” (emphasis added). The article's paragraph 2 further specified that associations having “other tasks such as social or professional aims” would also be tolerated “provided they guarantee to develop their activities *outside political parties*” (emphasis added). Paragraph 3 stipulated that it would be up to the “Reich government and German episcopate to determine, by mutual agreement,” which organizations and

56. “Concordat Between the Holy See and the German Reich, 20 July 1933”; in Barry, *Readings*, 3:363–70.

associations qualified for such protection—that is, which associations were *not political*.

Article 32 extended this prohibition from associations to individuals: “The Holy See will issue ordinances by which the clergy and the religious will be forbidden to be members of political parties or to be active on their behalf.” If a divergence of opinion were to arise about what constituted the “political,” the Holy See and the German Reich would “arrive at an amicable solution by mutual agreement” (art. 33). In the additional protocol accompanying and explaining these provisions, the “duty for the German clergy and members of religious orders” in Article 32—that is, abstention from “political” parties or activity—was underscored as not meaning “any restriction on their preaching and exposition of the dogmatic and moral teachings and principles of the Church, as it is their duty to do.”

Just as the concordat with Napoleon radically altered the nature of Catholicism, so too did the concordat with the German Reich. After all, how does a “dogmatic” or “moral” teaching differ from the “political”? Antimiscegenation laws, stripping Jews of citizenship, mass incarcerations in concentration camps, involuntary sterilization, euthanasia of the mentally disabled—are these “moral” issues? Are they “political” issues? Are the two mutually exclusive?

For a century and a half, the Church had struggled against being excluded from political and economic activity in everyday public life. In the classic terms of Ernst Troeltsch, the Church had militantly insisted on being a “church,” not a “sect”; a player in the world (albeit on the Church’s own terms), not an isolationist.⁵⁷ And yet now, just four years after achieving the victory of a papal city state with territorial sovereignty, it had acquiesced in effectively granting the *polis* its independent sovereignty. The concordat embodied a modern notion that the “secular” (*saeculum* = “worldliness”) is the space (critiqued by Talal Asad) “in which real human life gradually emancipates itself from the controlling power of ‘religion’ and thus achieves the latter’s relocation.”⁵⁸ By signing the Reich concordat, the

57. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931); originally *Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (1912).

58. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2003), 191–92; see also Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1993); and Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University, 2013).

Church seemed to accept modern “religion”: a private voluntary sphere restricted to “faith and morals.”

The first challenge to this newly invented “religion” would come just two years later in the form of the Nuremberg Laws (1935). Enacted on September 15, the laws used scientific racism to distinguish between “German or kindred blood,” “mixed blood,” and racially unacceptable (Jewish) blood. This distinction was then used in two laws. First, “The Reich Citizenship Law” provided for the distinction between “Reich citizens” and “state subjects.” German blood was established as a prerequisite for citizenship. Jews had now been effectively stripped of citizenship. Given the long tortuous history—of Christians refusing citizenship to Jews; the inextricable link between Jewish emancipation and the French Revolution (especially under Napoleon); and the papacy’s endless vacillation over its own Jewish ghettos—the turned tables were now bitterly ironic.

Second, “The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor” prohibited marriages and sexual intercourse more generally between “Germans” and “Jews” (now stripped of citizenship). Just five years earlier, in his encyclical *Casti connubii* (December 31, 1930), Pius XI had condemned such antimiscegenation laws—responding at that time to such laws in force for centuries in the United States, which served as precedent and model for the Nazis: “Finally, that pernicious practice must be condemned which closely touches upon the natural right of man to enter matrimony but affects also in a real way the welfare of the offspring. . . . Public magistrates have no direct power over the bodies of their subjects.” And yet the question arose: could antimiscegenation be challenged without violating the 1933 concordat? Was such legislation a question of “politics” or merely “morals”?

Two years later, on Passion Sunday 1937, Pius XI promulgated his encyclical (in German, not Latin) *Mit brennender sorge* (March 14, 1937). (Perhaps to avoid any accusations of favoritism, he also promulgated *Divini Redemptoris* [March 19, 1937], an encyclical on atheistic communism, five days later on the feast of St. Joseph.) *Mit brennender Sorge* was smuggled into Germany and read from the pulpits the following Palm Sunday (March 21). “We thank you, Venerable Brethren,” wrote the pope, “who have persisted in their Christian duty and in the defense of God’s rights in the teeth of an aggressive paganism.” He attacked the identification of God with the universe, “by pantheistic confusion,” as atheism: “Whoever follows that so-called pre-Christian Germanic conception of substituting a dark and impersonal destiny for the personal God, denies thereby the Wisdom and Providence of God. . . . Neither is he a believer

in God.” Implicitly defending the role of Judaism in salvation history, the pope underscored the value of Hebrew Scriptures: “Nothing but ignorance and pride could blind one to the treasures hoarded in the Old Testament.” Finally, without naming names, the pope equated Nazism with idolatry:

Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State, or a particular form of State, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community—however necessary and honorable be their function in worldly things—whoever raises these notions above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God.

The following year, on November 9 and 10, 1938, a coordinated wave of anti-Jewish pogroms swept across Germany. The night came to be called *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass. During a visit to Rome, American Jesuit John LaFarge was asked by Pius XI to write an encyclical specifically on racism. LaFarge did write this “hidden encyclical” in 1938, but it was never promulgated.⁵⁹ Pius XI died on February 10, 1939, and was succeeded on March 2 by Pius XII. On September 1, Hitler invaded Poland. The “Great War” became the “First World War” as a Second World War began.

Cold War Binary: Liberalism vs. Communism (1945–1962)

It would not be until Pius XII’s Christmas allocution of 1945 that, for the first time in history, a pope unequivocally embraced the value of democratic government.⁶⁰ With the Allied defeat of Germany and Italy, Fascism had been eliminated as a third major political alternative (excepting the outlier Spain). This left liberal democracy and Soviet Communism as the two main alternatives in the postwar era. Communism had emerged from the war as a moral hero, embraced as the party of antifascist resistance; and Soviet-style Communism offered an international coalition. Pius XII faced the reality of a third phase in the politics of modernity. The first, liberal democracy versus divinely appointed monarchy, had disappeared after the First World War. The second, liberal democracy versus Communism and Fascism, evaporated at the end of the Second World War. This third

59. Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*, trans. Steven Rendall (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997).

60. Schloesser, “Against Forgetting,” 300.

phase, that of the Cold War, once again divided the political world into an absolute binary: liberalism (West) versus Communism (East). Pius XII chose liberalism. “Within the confines of each particular nation as much as in the whole family of peoples,” he declared, “state totalitarianism is incompatible with *a true and healthy democracy*” (emphasis added).

Pius correctly perceived that there was little time to grieve over the recent catastrophe. A new world order demanded an immediate pivot away from the Church’s long-standing antiliberalism. “Christian Democracy” was invented as a hybrid political movement that would ultimately rescue Catholicism across most of post-1945 Western Europe.⁶¹ In April 1948, elections were held in Italy’s newly formed “First Republic.”⁶² Partly mobilized by fear after the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia only weeks earlier, Christian Democrats won a sizable majority. They would dominate Italian politics for a half century, opposed by the Italian Communist Party. On July 15, 1948, *L’Osservatore Romano* published a decree excommunicating those propagating Communism. Other condemnations soon followed, including membership in Communist parties (1949).⁶³

During the next decade of the 1950s, the world would be fundamentally reshaped by three overarching realities: a Cold War dividing the world into a liberal democratic “West” and a Soviet communist “East”; the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation of the planet during the USA-USSR arms race; and the decolonization of Africa and Asia.⁶⁴ Within the Catholic Church, the 1940s and 1950s were also marked by an exhausting effort that often seemed futile to come to terms with “the Jewish Question” after the Holocaust.

On October 9, 1958, Pope Pius XII died and was immediately succeeded by John XXIII. Only three months later, on January 25, 1959, the pope surprised the world with his announcement of a Second Vatican Council. Documents prepared for consideration in October 1962 reflected the neo-Scholastic style. “All dangers were carefully noted. The predominantly negative tone was already perceptible in the titles: ‘Maintaining the

61. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1996); Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (New York: Cambridge University, 2007); see also Atkin and Tallett, eds., *Religion, Society, and Politics in France*.

62. Robert Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004).

63. “Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on Joining or Supporting Communist Parties, 1 July 1949,” in Barry, *Readings*, 503–4.

64. For fuller treatment with references, see Schloesser, “Against Forgetting,” 279–85.

purity,' 'Moral order,' 'Chastity,' and these were then followed by lists of condemnations."⁶⁵ However, within weeks those documents were rejected and ordered rewritten. The continuity versus discontinuity contest had begun.

As O'Malley notes, in the council's final documents, a rhetoric of "adapting" and "accommodating" displaced the traditional rhetoric of "correcting" and "remedying." The Church embraced history. Latin equivalents of "evolution" and "development" occur 42 times in the documents; equivalents of "progress" and "advance" occur 120 times.⁶⁶ In 1966, one year after the council's conclusion, Bernard Lonergan explicitly identified the Church's transition from a classicist worldview to historical mindedness: one in which meaning is "not fixed, static, immutable, but [rather] shifting, developing, going astray, capable of redemption." In 1800, the royalist Geoffroy had claimed that nothing new could "take place in the wake of the Gospel." Some 166 years later, Lonergan stood that claim on its head: "I think our Scripture scholars would agree that [classicism's] abstractness, and the omissions due to abstraction, have no foundation in the revealed word of God."⁶⁷

History of the Present: *Reproach vs. Rapprochement* Redux

This introduction began with a set of questions. Did anything happen—did anything change—at the council? Was the Church any different in its wake? And if so, what significance, if any, does this change have for the present moment—a half century later—and for the future? The Synod on the Family, called by Pope Francis to meet in two sessions (October 2014 and October 2015), offers a case study.

On October 13, 2014, the Synod received the *Relatio post disceptationem* for debate.⁶⁸ The *Relatio* explicitly and self-consciously retrieved

65. Mario von Galli and Bernhard Moosbrugger; in *History of Vatican II*, 5 vols., ed. Giuseppe Alberigo; English version ed. Joseph A Komonchak; trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995–2006), 1:415.

66. O'Malley, "Hermeneutic of Reform," 26.

67. Schloesser, "Against Forgetting," 307–8.

68. See Stephen Schloesser, "'Dancing on the Edge of the Volcano': Biopolitics and What Happened after Vatican II," in *From Vatican II to Pope Francis: Charting a Catholic Future*, ed. Paul Crowley, SJ (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014), 3–26; and Schloesser, "Biopolitics and the Construction of Postconciliar Catholicism," in *A Realist's Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph Komonchak*, ed. Christopher Denny, Patrick Hayes, and Nicholas Rademacher (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, forthcoming).

what O'Malley has identified as Vatican II's "epideictic style," a humanist genre of "praise."⁶⁹ After first referencing the genre's use in *Nostra aetate* (October 1965)—"appreciating the positive elements present in other religions and cultures, despite their limits and their insufficiencies"—the *Relatio* then applied the principle to present-day challenges. In cases of cohabitation, civil marriages, and divorced and remarried persons, the Church was said to appreciate "the positive values they contain rather than their limitations and shortcomings." The same style was then applied to homosexuality: "Without denying the moral problems associated with homosexual unions, there are instances where mutual assistance to the point of sacrifice is a valuable support in the life of these persons." This reasoning followed the path opened by Leo XIII in *Libertas* (1888).

In the end, these formulations were not approved by the majority. However, the *Relatio* remains posted on the Vatican website, translated into five languages, an integral and permanent element in the process of the synod's first session. As I write this in March 2015, no one can foretell what the synod's second session will bring seven months from now. One thing is certain: 50 years after the council, two styles—reproach versus *rapprochement*—continue to collide. The paradigm shift in the reform of Vatican II may not always (or even often) have informed magisterial documents during the half century following it (1965–2015). Yet it remains waiting in the wings, ever ready for the wise scribe—in words used by Paul VI when paying homage to Leo XIII—who "knows how to bring both new and old things out" of the Church's treasure-house.⁷⁰

69. John W. O'Malley, SJ, "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 3–33; see also Schloesser, "Against Forgetting," 277–78.

70. Matthew 13:52; in Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam* no. 67 (August 6, 1964).

Part 1

General Interpretations

1 “The Hermeneutic of Reform”

A Historical Analysis

JOHN W. O’MALLEY, SJ

Few ideas have impacted the church more than reform, but in recent centuries it virtually disappeared from theological discourse. That changed on December 22, 2005, when Pope Benedict XVI, in his address to the Roman Curia, introduced “hermeneutic of reform” as the proper category for interpreting Vatican II. John O’Malley here traces the history of the idea of reform, describes its meaning in different contexts, and shows how the problem of change is at its very core. He then shows how Vatican II dealt with the problem and concludes with an analysis of Benedict’s address.

In the West few ideas have enjoyed a longer, more complex, and, in many instances, more disruptive history than reform. Expressed through a number of terms, of which the most direct and obvious is the Latin *reformatio*, reform has traditionally been defined as *mutatio in melius*, change for the better. Etymologically speaking, *reformatio*, whose English equivalents are both *reform* and *reformation*, indicates a re-forming or a restructuring of something already in place. Thus, although change is at its core, reform presupposes continuity with what has gone before. It is not *creatio ex nihilo*.

This definition presupposes, as well, that reform entails a self-consciously undertaken effort within an institution to effect change. It is thus different from changes that come about because of decisions taken by others. For instance, few events more radically changed the Christian church than Constantine’s recognition of it and his granting it a privileged status in his empire. Yet the changes his decisions effected, which church leaders welcomed as “for the better,” are never described as reform.

4 General Interpretations

The definition also implicitly differentiates reform from changes that come about in a gradual fashion without deliberate decision making to effect the final result. Over the course of time, institutions, for instance, have a tendency toward greater sophistication in procedures. The change is incremental, as when a business bit by bit adds more staff and eventually opens branch offices. Or, to take a concrete example from the sphere of ideas: *renaissance* was first employed in the 15th century to indicate a literary rebirth, then got applied to designate a shift in standards in painting, sculpture, and architecture, and finally was applied to a whole period of history. Rather than call such changes reform, we tend to call them developments, about which I will say more later.

Although the synonyms, quasi-synonyms, and euphemisms for reform have slightly different nuances, they express the same idea of change for the better. They too have played such important roles in cultural and political history that it is almost impossible to speak of the course of Western civilization without employing them. I refer to words such as *renewal*, *renovation*, *restoration*, *revival*, *rebirth*, and *renaissance*. To that list can be added, with less cogency, terms such as *correction*, *emendation*, and *improvement*.¹ Important though these terms are, *reform* remains the most basic and most frequently invoked in almost every sphere of human activity to indicate deliberate efforts undertaken within an institution to improve the status quo.

Important as the idea of reform has been in secular history, it has been even more important in the history of Christianity.² After all, it cuts to the very heart of the Christian message, which is a call to repentance, conversion, and reform of life. Without rebirth, according to John's Gospel, there is no entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Reform was therefore originally directed to the individual Christian. Repent! Change your ways! Nonetheless, *reform* early on began to be applied also to the church as an organized social body and was thus launched on its impressive ecclesiastical trajectory. Councils, both local and ecumenical, emerged by the third and fourth centuries as the most unquestioned institutions responsible for reform.

Despite its importance for Christian history, scholarship on reform has been notably sparse.³ Only two major monographs have ever explicitly

1. The Latin for such terms, used often in church documents: *corrigerere*, *emendare*, *meliorare*, *recreare*, *regenerare*, *renovare*, *reparare*, *restituere*, *revocare*.

2. German scholars have been particularly interested in its use in political and social discourse. See, e.g., Martin Greiffenhagen, ed., *Zur Theorie der Reform: Entwürfe und Strategien* (Heidelberg: Müller, 1978).

3. Among the relatively few studies are Gerald Strauss, "Ideas of *Reformatio* and *Renovatio* from the Middle Ages to the Reformation," in *Handbook of European*

dealt with it. Both were published in the 1950s, on the eve of Vatican II. They remain to this day the classic studies. Gerhart B. Ladner’s *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* appeared in 1959.⁴ It dealt almost exclusively with the idea’s impact on personal asceticism and monastic discipline in late antiquity. Especially significant in it is Ladner’s insistence on the multivalent character of the term: its meaning in any given instance depends on concrete circumstances.

The Idea of Reform, a work of superb historical scholarship and still indispensable for the sphere it covers, has attracted little attention outside a circle of specialists. The same cannot be said of Yves Congar’s *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’église*, published nine years earlier, in 1950.⁵ It has been described as “arguably Congar’s most important and original contribution to Christian theology.”⁶

Shortly after the publication of *Vraie et fausse réforme*, the Holy Office of the Inquisition forbade its reprinting and translation into other languages and informed Congar that in the future everything he intended to publish had first to be submitted to the master general of the Dominican

History 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation, ed. Thomas A. Brady Jr. et al., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:1–30; Konrad Repken, “Reform als Leitgedanke kirchlicher Vergangenheit und Gegenwart,” *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 84 (1989): 5–39; Giuseppe Alberigo, “‘Réforme’ en tant que critère de l’histoire de l’église,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 76 (1981): 72–81; John W. O’Malley, SJ, “Developments, Reforms, and Two Great Reformations: Towards a Historical Assessment of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 44 (1983): 373–406; Wayne J. Hankey, “Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform: Neoplatonic Paradigms for Reform by Self-knowledge from Augustine to Aquinas,” in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems, and Approaches*, ed. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis J. Hamilton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 39–60. For case studies, see, e.g., John W. O’Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1968); and Nelson H. Minnich, “Concepts of Reform Proposed at the Fifth Lateran Council,” *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 7 (1969): 163–251. Hans Norbert Janowski takes a quite different approach in “Reform als theologisch-ethisches Problem,” in *Zur Theorie der Reform*, 211–40.

4. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1959). Ladner also wrote a number of important articles on the subject. For a listing, see O’Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, 1 n. 1.

5. (Paris: Cerf, 1950); 2nd ed., rev. and corr. (Paris: Cerf, 1968); ET, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011). For an analysis of Congar’s approach to church reform that takes off from *Vraie et fausse réforme*, see Gabriel Flynn, “Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform: A Renewal of Spirit,” in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, ed. Gabriel Flynn (Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 99–133.

6. Gabriel Flynn, introduction to *Yves Congar*, 1–24, at 9.

6 General Interpretations

order for censorship.⁷ These strictures were just the beginning of Congar's difficulties with Roman authorities.⁸

What was the Holy Office's problem with *Vraie et fausse réforme*? The book, unlike Ladner's, was not a historical study in the conventional sense, but one of the early ventures by a Catholic into historical theology. This attempt to correlate doctrine and practice with historical contingencies could not but seem dangerous in certain circles and cause unease. Much of the burden of *Vraie et fausse réforme* consists in Congar's attempt to justify the method and thus anticipate potential critics.

Moreover, for reasons I will discuss below, the application to the church of the word *reform* had by the 20th century become anathema. Congar in his foreword in fact noted that "a veritable curse" seemed to hang over the word.⁹ Only in that light can we understand, for instance, how Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, could ask, when questioned about the book while he was nuncio in Paris, "Reform of the church—is such a thing possible?"¹⁰

Congar had in fact phrased his title cautiously: reform *in* the church, not reform *of* the church, but his caution did not save him. After Vatican II, however, Congar, now fully rehabilitated, felt free to undertake and publish a revised edition, which only last year appeared in English translation.¹¹ By 1969 when Congar published the revision, the idea that the church might be reformed no longer seemed unthinkable. Yet, misgivings about it persisted.

The council itself had to tread warily. In its 16 final documents it applied *reformatio* to the church only once, in the often-quoted line from the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*: "In its pilgrimage on earth Christ summons the church to continual reformation [*perennem reformationem*], of which it is always in need, in so far as it is an institution of human beings here on earth" (no. 6).¹² In the early 1960s that was a bold

7. See Yves Congar, *Journal d'un théologien (1946–1956)*, ed. Étienne Fouilloux (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 181–222.

8. See *ibid.*, esp. 232–76. See also Thomas O'Meara, "Raid on the Dominicans': The Repression of 1954," *America* 170, no. 4 (February 5, 1994): 8–16; and, more broadly, Étienne Fouilloux, *Une église en quête de liberté: La pensée française entre modernisme et Vatican II* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998).

9. Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme* (1950), 13, "une véritable malédiction."

10. Philibert, "Translator's Introduction," in Congar, *True and False Reform*, xi. Congar explicitly stated that Roncalli read the book in 1952: *Mon journal du concile*, 2 vols., ed. Éric Mahieu (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 2:441–42 (October 19, 1965).

11. See n. 5 above.

12. Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1990), 2:913; "Ecclesia in via peregrinans vocatur a Christo ad

statement and was recognized as such at the time. *Reform* was not truly applicable to the Catholic Church. Moreover, in some ears the document’s expression *perennis reformatio* sounded more Protestant than Catholic, for it seemed to be a paraphrase of the principle *ecclesia semper reformanda* that originated in 17th-century German Pietism, and was given currency in the early 20th century by Karl Barth’s circle.¹³

Nowhere else in the council’s final 16 documents is *reformatio* applied to the church. The word occurs in eight other instances but in reference to aspects of secular society needing improvement.¹⁴ For the church the council preferred euphemisms such as *renewal* or *renovation* (*renovatio*), a term that occurs 64 times, most often to indicate changes in church life or practice, that is, to indicate some aspect of reform of the church.

This queasiness about *reformatio* explains why, even a half century after the council, Catholics continue to show a decided preference for softer words in referring to Vatican II. It was a council of “renewal.” It was a council of “updating” or even “modernizing.” It was almost anything but a reform council. In late 2005, however, that situation suddenly changed. When, on December 22, Pope Benedict XVI proposed in his Christmas allocution to the Roman Curia that the proper lens for understanding Vatican II is a “hermeneutic of reform,” the term got instantaneously and powerfully rehabilitated. The pope authoritatively readmitted *reform* into Catholic theological vocabulary.¹⁵

In his allocution Benedict did not rest content with introducing the term. He went on to explain what he understood it to entail. In so doing he implicitly reinforced the point made by Congar in 1950 that the term is “a little vague” (*un peu vague*) and the point made later by Ladner that it was multivalent.¹⁶ What *reform* means in concrete circumstances is not self-evident. It is revealed only when tested against the historical phenomena it professes to describe.

Examination of the “idea of reform” in the different historical circumstances in which it came into play is precisely what I attempt to do in what follows. Because of space limitations my review will be sketchy but, I hope, sufficient for a profitable exploration of the implications and problems

hanc perennem reformationem qua ipsa, quo humanum terrenumque institutum, perpetuo indiget.” Throughout I use Tanner’s English translation, sometimes with slight modification.

13. See Repgen, “Reform als Leitgedanke,” 21–22.

14. See Tanner, *Decrees*, 2:888, 911, 915, 1067, 1114, 1115, 1120, 1128.

15. See *Acta apostolicae sedis: Commentarium officiale* 98 (2006): 40–53, at 45–53 (henceforth, *AAS*, allocution).

16. Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme* (1950), 13; and Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 1–35.

entailed in “a hermeneutic of reform” applied to Vatican II. Only by being grounded in historical reality can such a hermeneutic be helpful and make sense. When we deal with real historical happenings, it becomes clear that an abstract idea like reform has meaning only in relation to them. If, on the contrary, reform is explained by further abstractions, it degenerates into a platitude or even a mask for an ideology.¹⁷

In the survey that follows, patterns of reform emerge. I divide them into three types, each of which has different manifestations. The first type concerns leadership, which can come either “from above” or “from below.” The leaders from above are persons or institutions with authority to impose a reform, such as bishops, popes, and councils. Leaders from below may be charismatic individuals like Francis of Assisi or intellectuals like Erasmus, persons who lead movements that directly affect the religious life and mentality of the faithful, including clergy.

The second type concerns the extent of reform. The reform might look to repairing a system in place and remedying “abuses” in it. The Council of Trent, for instance, did not challenge the place of bishops in the church but aimed at making them more effective in their traditional pastoral duties. Another type of reform, however, aims at displacing or replacing a given system within the church, as when the Gregorian reformers of the eleventh century sought to reintroduce the free election of bishops by the local clergy to replace the system of episcopal nomination by lay magnates.

The final type of pattern of reform concerns content, which most often and most obviously has referred to either doctrine or practice. For the former, reform traditionally consisted in a strong reaffirmation of what presumably had always been the orthodox belief, but more recently it has had to take account of process or “development,” that is, change. The latter, which has often been designated simply “church discipline,” has been the more obvious object of reform and readier to admit change, but even it has been hedged with problems.

There is in this last type, however, a third manifestation that is not usually taken into account, but that is particularly pertinent for Vatican II. It concerns values and mind-set. As such it entails a rethinking of received patterns. It is expressed and issued in new patterns of discourse. When taken seriously, it imposes new patterns of behavior, new ways of “doing business,” and perhaps a new configuration of doctrine. Although it may seem distinct from doctrine and practice, it affects both.

17. See, e.g., Alberigo, “‘Réforme.’”

Conceptually clear though these types are, in concrete historical happenings they are never quite so distinct from one another. A reform initiated “from below,” for instance, can have repercussions on church authority and result in a decision “from above” clearly influenced by what has been going on “below.” Still, naming these types helps us discern patterns in the seemingly infinitely complex and intractable thing that is history.

The Gregorian Reform: The Crucial Turning Point

As Ladner showed, the idea of reform was alive and well in the patristic period but applied principally to the ongoing amendment of life required of the Christian. However, both the local and ecumenical councils of the era were in fact convoked to correct deviations from received church teaching and practice.¹⁸ Councils meted out sentences of guilt and innocence and made regulations to uproot abuses that here and there had sprung up. Although a number of these councils dealt with doctrinal issues and controversies, they all without exception dealt in some measure with “discipline,” or “correction,” that is, with reform. They were all, thus, “reform councils.”

The councils assumed that what they enacted as correctives consisted in reassertions, reinforcements, or even reformulations of earlier Christian teaching and practice. They further assumed that these problems were localized. Change for the worse might affect individual persons or churches but not the church as a whole. The councils remedied the problems by defining orthodox teaching, by expelling deviant individuals from the body of the church, by instituting penalties for disciplinary infractions, and by installing once again the traditional *modus operandi*.

In the eleventh century, however, the conviction arose in a group of devout churchmen that certain abuses were widespread, almost universal. These men became convinced that certain practices that they believed deviated from “the fathers”—by which they generally meant church legislation enacted between the fourth and sixth centuries—infected virtually the whole church. Only with them did the idea clearly emerge that the system in place might itself be subject to reform or even replacement and, indeed, require it.

The reformers, eventually led by Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), tried to abolish long-standing procedures and practices in the name of a return

18. See, e.g., Claire Sotinel, “The Church in the Roman Empire: Changes without Reform and Reforms without Change,” in *Reforming the Church*, 155–72.

to ancient canonical provisions. They were determined, more specifically, to accomplish principally two changes: first, as mentioned, to reinstate the free election of bishops by local clergy and thereby displace the almost universal practice of episcopal appointments being made by secular rulers; second, to reinstate clerical celibacy and thereby abolish widespread clerical marriage and concubinage.

The idea that the current system of received operating procedures needed radically to be reformed had its genesis in a revival of the study of canon law in Germany and Italy, made possible by more settled political conditions. This study of the canons was the first great renaissance of learning in the Middle Ages that would from that point forward have a continuous history.¹⁹ In it was born the first glimmerings of a sense of anachronism, of significant discrepancies between past and present—in this instance, the discrepancy between the feudal culture of the Middle Ages and the Roman culture of Christian antiquity. Although the reformers could not possibly have formulated the problem in such terms, they clearly saw that present practice differed radically from the past as they discovered it in the canons.

What they had engaged in was a process that in mid-20th century Congar called *ressourcement*, a neologism coined earlier in the century by the poet Charles Péguy.²⁰ The term came to mean returning to past sources in systematic fashion to discover what there might be of use in the present. Although *ressourcement* could be employed simply to trace how an idea or an institution got to be the way it was, it was more regularly employed in discovering discrepancies between past and present. It thus implied the possibility of a repudiation of aspects of the present in favor of a better or more authentic past. *Ressourcement* was not, therefore, an antiquarian project but a practical one and, in practice, often a virtual synonym of *reform*.

The popes and their allies, who waged against recalcitrants a vigorous war not only of propaganda but sometimes of spear and sword, became the first great church reformers. The upheaval that accompanied and followed their efforts resulted in civil war in Germany, in the most horrible sacking of the city of Rome in its history, and in several generations of bitter contest between popes and antipopes and between popes and secular rulers.

19. See the classic study by Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1927). See also Erwin Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," *Kenyon Review* 6 (1944): 201–36.

20. See Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme* (1950), 43; in the note on this page Congar cites the pertinent passages from Péguy.

The reformers eventually had to settle for compromises on their stated goals. There was no way, for instance, that secular rulers were going to relinquish all control over the appointment of such important vassals as the bishops. Such a change would have upset the very foundations upon which feudal society operated. The reformers had more success with celibacy, not so much in its enforcement as in its firm installation in canon law.

Nonetheless, the Gregorian Reform constitutes a landmark in the history of the idea of church reform. Replacement of a system normatively in place by another system is what distinguished the Gregorian Reform from preceding reforms. Earlier reforms attempted to plug leaks and repair glitches in the status quo. The Gregorians, on the contrary, repudiated the status quo in favor of a different status, one presumably better and more authentic than what was in place. Their aims and ideals constituted a new paradigm, to use the expression made famous by Thomas Kuhn. They tried to establish that paradigm to replace the regnant paradigm. This was something new in the history of the church. The fact that the reform provoked such profound political and military reactions substantiates its radical character for its age. To distinguish it from less momentous reforms I have called it “a great reformation.”²¹

From the Gregorian Reform to the Council of Trent

The Gregorian reformers gave *reform* as applied to social institutions a strikingly new prominence. Their movement helped generate a mind-set intimating that an improvement of corporate behavior and a return to more ancient norms was at times urgent in the church and in other institutions of society. By the time of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the word *reformare* had begun to appear in ecclesiastical sources with ever-greater frequency. From then until the 17th century, *reform* became one of the most characteristic and frequently invoked words in discussion of Catholic church life.

In Lateran IV, moreover, there appeared for the first time in council documents an unmistakably clear assertion that a change in discipline (*statuta humana*) might be required by a change in “the times.” The assertion is notable not only for its straightforward affirmation of the necessity of adjustment to new conditions and therefore its suggestion of discrimination between past and present, but also because it provided a criterion for deciding when such a change should be adopted: when required by

21. See O'Malley, “Developments, Reforms,” 378–91.

necessity or clear advantage—*urgens necessitas vel evidens utilitas*.²² The assertion was an anticipation of the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II.

At just the time of Lateran IV, an impetus to ideas of radical church reform entered the stage through the newly founded Franciscan order. Saint Francis saw himself as anything but a challenge to the ecclesiastical status quo. His literal interpretation of Gospel passages concerning poverty set the stage, however, for the emergence after his death of a party within the order that aggressively pursued that interpretation and began to apply it in a sharply negative way to the church at large, which they saw as operating far from the ideals of the New Testament. This party became known as the Spirituals or Spiritual Franciscans. The Spirituals' stridency and the threat they posed brought them, not surprisingly, into conflict with ecclesiastical authorities and eventually with the papacy itself, which culminated during the pontificate of John XXII (1316–1334). The pope condemned their ideas and program, especially the idea that Christ and the Apostles had no money either individually or collectively. But it was easier to condemn such ideas than to stamp them out.

The Spirituals gave impetus to ideas and aspirations that spread in different but recognizable forms among both theologians and the rank and file of the faithful. The English theologian John Wycliffe held a number of heretical ideas, among them those concerning the church's deviation from the poverty demanded by the New Testament. It was in the wake of the Great Western Schism (1378–1418), however, that reform of the church surged as an insistent, persistent, and absolutely urgent theme in upper echelons of both secular and ecclesiastical society.

The scandal of two, then three, men claiming to be the legitimate successor of Saint Peter and their refusal over the course of two generations to resolve the problem on their own fed the persuasion that radical measures were required. Emperor-elect Sigismund pressured Pope John XXIII, who seemed to be the claimant with the best credentials for legitimacy, to convoke the Council of Constance (1414–1418). The council deposed two claimants, "persuaded" the third to resign, and elected a new pope, Martin V, who soon won almost universal recognition as the true successor of Peter. It is from the line established at Constance with Martin V that all subsequent popes have descended.

The Great Western Schism had turned eyes to the papacy in a newly critical way and focused attention on grievances that were already of

22. Tanner, *Decrees*, 1:257, "50. De restricta prohibitionem matrimonii."

long standing, most especially on papal taxes, fines, and other financial exactions that, since the long residence of the popes in Avignon in the 14th century, seemed to be expanding without limit or oversight. It is no wonder, then, that in its very first document the Council of Constance set for itself the task of implementing the “necessary reform” (*debitam reformationem*).²³

Four months later, on March 26, 1415, Constance even more emphatically took the task in hand by making its own the all-inclusive expression “reform of the said church in head and members” (*pro reformatione dictae ecclesiae in capite et in membris*).²⁴ The council’s formal adoption of the expression propelled it into the imagination of concerned persons across Europe. It evolved into a powerful mantra. Reform, understood by different persons in different ways and applied to different entities, exploded as the great preoccupation of the century between Constance and the outbreak of the Reformation.²⁵ In that preoccupation “reform of the head,” that is, the papacy, achieved a special preeminence. The slogan ran: “Reform Rome, [and you will] reform the world.”

Constance itself legislated a number of reforms, many of which concerned the management and responsible use of church revenues. Other reforms concerned the proper functioning of papal conclaves and the behavior of clerics. Just before it elected Martin V, it issued a decree informing the pope-to-be that he was bound to “reform the church in head and the Roman curia” (*reformare ecclesiam in capite et curia Romana*). It then provided a list of 18 areas where abuses occurred that he was to remedy. The first was in “the number, quality, and nationality of the lord cardinals.” Many of the rest concerned the use and misuse of church funds and goods, the proliferation of church taxes and fines, simony in papal elections and other transactions, and the amount of the revenues enjoyed by the pope and cardinals.²⁶

With the Council of Constance, then, reform of the church developed into an ongoing project that preoccupied the leaders, clerical and lay, of

23. Tanner, *Decrees*, 1:406.

24. Tanner, *Decrees*, 1:407. William Durant the Younger did not coin the expression “reform of the church in head and members,” but he gave it currency when, at the Council of Vienne in 1311, he demanded such a reform. See Constantin Fasolt, *Council and Hierarchy: The Political Thought of William Durant the Younger* (New York: Cambridge University, 1991), 1, 115–76.

25. See, e.g., Erika Rummel, “Voices of Reform from Hus to Erasmus,” in *Handbook of European History*, 2:61–91.

26. See Tanner, *Decrees*, 1:438–50, at 444.

late-medieval society. In Italy at about the same time, the idea that a return to ancient sources would effect a reform of society arose in a powerfully influential mode outside ecclesiastical circles. It was set in motion principally by the poet Petrarch (1309–1374), who called for return to classical Latin prose and poetry and to a revival of the moral ideals that literature embodied. The result would be, he believed, a rebirth of good literature and good morals after the “darkness” (*tenebrae*) of the intervening centuries up to his own.²⁷ The venture, crowned with great success by the 16th century, came to be known, aptly, as the Renaissance—literally, a *rebirth*.

Ad fontes! To the sources! The leaders of the movement, known as humanists, wanted of course to revive the study of classical authors such as Virgil and Cicero but also of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church. In Erasmus (1469–1536) the reforming impulses of the humanist movement related to Christian issues found their most thoughtful, eloquent, and widely respected exponent. He was not the superficial litterateur and theological dilettante that he is often depicted as being. Virtually everything he wrote was directed, in one form or another, toward promoting *pietas*, a more authentically human and Christian style of life. He believed that the model for that *pietas* and the nourishment for it was to be found, yes, in the “good pagans,” but more pointedly and authentically in the Bible and the Fathers.²⁸

On that basis he promoted reform in several interlocking spheres, of which two are particularly pertinent. The first was reform of practices of devotion. He was an acerbic (and sometimes amusing) critic of the crass superstition that in his day often accompanied such phenomena as relics, indulgences, and pilgrimages. In place of those practices he promoted what he regarded as more authentic alternatives that he found in the Bible and the earlier Christian tradition. Important among these alternatives was the liturgy. Although virtually every line we have from him is in Latin, he in fact favored the idea of vernacular liturgy, as a proper expression of Christian devotion and *pietas*.

Even more basic to his program was installing Scripture as the principal focus of Christian life. In 1516 Erasmus published the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament along with a new Latin translation. In the preface he expressed the wish that the Scriptures be translated into every

27. See, e.g., Panofsky, “Renaissance”; and Theodore Mommsen, “Petrarch’s Conception of the Dark Ages,” *Speculum* 17 (1943): 226–49.

28. See John W. O’Malley, “Introduction,” *Spiritualia: Enchiridion, De Contemptu Mundi, De Vidua Christiana*, Collected Works of Erasmus 66, ed. John W. O’Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), ix–li.

language and made easily available to everybody. In reading and contemplating that text, he asserted, one encountered “the speaking, healing, dying, rising Christ himself.”²⁹ Thus would Christians learn to live and appropriate “the philosophy of Christ.”

The second sphere needing reform was theological method, and he campaigned against Scholastic theology because it was in its very procedures inimical to *pietas*. He attacked the method as having devolved into the pursuit of irrelevant and even irreverent questions. Its practitioners engaged in endless disputes among themselves over trivial issues and the very style in which they wrote and preached snuffed out the life of the Spirit. In its stead he promoted the “ancient and more authentic” style of the Fathers of the Church. The Fathers did not get lost in theological trivialities but kept the focus on the central mysteries of the faith—Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, and the power of grace. They wrote in a style accessible to all and in a style that touched the heart as well as the mind.

In these ways, as in others, Erasmus’s program was an anticipation of aspects of *la nouvelle théologie* of the mid-20th century promoted by theologians such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Daniélou. It is, therefore, also an anticipation of the effect “the new theology” had on Vatican II that refashioned the council into a mode different from all its predecessors.³⁰ The *ad fontes* of Renaissance reformers such as Erasmus is, after all, simply the Latin form of the French *ressourcement*—return to the past to correct the present. It was not a reform of doctrine or of church discipline, and in that regard it differs from “church reform” in the conventional sense, yet it fulfills the classic definition of reform: *mutatio in melius*. Erasmus’s reform was like the Gregorians’ in one extremely important regard. Like theirs, his was not an adjustment or repair of a system in place but the replacement of one system with another. Although he was willing at points to grant that Scholastic theology had certain merits, he wanted a different method and ethos to prevail over it. The same was true for his reform of the practices of piety. In other words, he was not engaged in paradigm adjustment but in paradigm replacement.

29. Erasmus, “Paraclesis” [preface to his *Novum Instrumentum*], in *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Desiderius Erasmus, Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. John C. Olin (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 106.

30. See John W. O’Malley, “Erasmus and Vatican II: Interpreting the Council,” in *Cristianesimo nella storia: Saggi in onore di Giuseppe Alberigo*, ed. Alberto Melloni et al. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), 195–211; and O’Malley, “*Fides quaerens et non quaerens intellectum*: Reform and the Intellectuals in the Early Modern Period,” in *Reforming the Church*, 69–84.

He was passionate about his cause because he saw its goal as engendering a deeper, more heartfelt appropriation of values that he considered most authentically Christian. For him, for instance, Christ was the Prince of Peace, which meant that the Christian worked for peace on earth and attempted to understand “the other” rather than wipe him off the face of the earth. The ideal Christian held, for instance, that the canon of saints was “wider than we might believe.” Rather than trying to solve all problems with apodictic pronouncements from on high, the Christian engaged in dialogue and conversation and was ready to assume good will on the part of “the other.” The central discipline in the humanist program was not dialectics, as in Scholasticism, but rhetoric. The former was the art of winning an argument, whereas the latter was the art of winning consensus.³¹

What Erasmus required of the Christian—and therefore of the church—was a new mind-set and the appropriation of values that would be expressed in new patterns of behavior. These “reforms” rode on the wave of a “new” mode of discourse that was, as he saw it, the truly “ancient and venerable” mode, the mode of the Bible and the Fathers.

The Reformation and Its Catholic Aftermath

By the first few decades of the 16th century, reform was the emotionally charged cry of the day. Its most explosive instantiation was, of course, the Protestant Reformation, an immensely complex movement that, for reasons of space, I must reduce to Luther. In him the close relationship between conversion and reform could not have been clearer. Luther’s discovery of “the gospel”—justification by faith alone—was for him a dramatically reorienting insight, a eureka experience, a conversion that led him to a sharp and irreversible break with his past. “Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.”³² He soon became convinced that he saw things differently from his contemporaries, who lived in blindness and bondage.

31. For manifestations of a “rhetorical theology” in Italian humanists of the period, see Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Renaissance Thought*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970); and John W. O’Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450–1521* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1979).

32. Martin Luther, “Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings” (1545), in *Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1986), 34:337.

Luther’s great and frightening insight, therefore, was that in the church the most vital and essential function, the preaching of the Good News, had for long ages been suppressed by the papacy in favor of a save-yourself-by-your-own-efforts Pelagianism. If the humanists saw a “dark age” of literature between themselves and the good past, Luther saw an even more dreadfully dark age of the suppression of the gospel. He took up the challenge to set things right once again.

He published his “Ninety-Five Theses” in 1517. Three years later, in 1520, he published his “Appeal to the German Nobility,” a call to lay magnates to intervene and take church reform into their own hands. While the “Appeal” contained radical principles, it consisted for the most part in a vigorously worded compilation of widely held late-medieval grievances about how the church functioned on a practical level. Prominent in it were the standard complaints about papal financial exactions and the extravagant lifestyle of the papal court. Decades later prelates at the Council of Trent railed against many of the same problems.

Luther’s insight into justification soon led him to a drastic restructuring of ministry, piety, and church order, based on his fundamental principle of the exclusive prerogatives of Scripture in all things Christian. He rejected five of the seven traditional sacraments, utterly repudiated the papacy as having any role in church order, and rejected the idea of ecclesiastical hierarchy as Catholics understood it. The ultimate result was a new paradigm, derived, Luther believed, from the authentic message of the word of God through a process of *ressourcement*. Luther’s reform consisted not in making adjustments, however drastic, to a system in place but rather in replacing that system with another.

Along with these radical changes he demanded yet another—a change in mode of discourse. In his famous debate with Erasmus on justification, Luther insisted that the only Christian mode of discourse was the prophetic mode of assertion. In that mode the supreme value is “the cause,” which does not admit either Scholastic qualifications and distinctions or the humanist mode of middle ground. This was an issue-under-the-issues that contemporaries were incapable of naming but that colored everything Luther said.³³ As a response to the doctrinal and reform issues raised by Luther and, to a lesser extent, by other Protestant reformers, Pope Paul III was finally able in 1545 to convoke the Council of Trent.

33. See John W. O’Malley, *Four Cultures of the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2004), esp. 1–75.

The council met intermittently in three distinct periods over 18 years, finally concluding on December 4, 1563. As its very length suggests, it was an extremely difficult enterprise, threatened by war, plague, internal conflicts, and political machinations of the first order. It lurched from major crisis to major crisis.

After the council, controversy over how it was to be interpreted and implemented emerged almost immediately. It contributed to distortions of what the council legislated and intended that entered into Catholic historiography as what “Trent decided.” Not until quite recently, especially with the work of Hubert Jedin, has the distinction between what actually happened at the council and what often erroneously got attributed to it become clear, at least to specialists.³⁴

The council’s internal difficulties stemmed in large measure from a conflict of priorities that surfaced even before the council opened. Although Pope Paul III convoked the council, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had for 20 years been the indefatigable, most persistent, and often frustrated voice insisting on its necessity. These two men formed an uneasy partnership that finally allowed the council to happen, but they disagreed about the council’s agenda.

Paul III envisaged the council as principally a response to the doctrinal issues raised by “the Lutherans,” a generic term that for long included other reformers such as Zwingli, Karlstadt, and, eventually, Calvin. Like all popes of the era, Paul III feared allowing the council to deal with reform, lest it touch the sensitive and explosive issue of the practices of the papal court. Reform, surely, was needed, but it was to be handled directly by himself, not by the council.

The Holy Roman emperor had for centuries been recognized as the Protector of the Church, a role emperors took seriously. Charles V’s agenda for the council, which he felt was his prerogative to promote, was almost diametrically opposed to the pope’s. A practical man, he was convinced that the real problem was reform. Just as the unreformed condition of the church had, in his analysis, caused the Lutheran crisis, a reform of

34. See John W. O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2013). The standard and indispensable history of the council is Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 4 vols. in 5 (Freiburg im/Br.: Herder, 1949–1975). Only the first two volumes have been translated into English: *A History of the Council of Trent*, 2 vols., trans. Ernest Graf (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957, 1961). See also Giuseppe Alberigo, “Du concile de Trente au tridentinisme,” *Irenikon* 54 (1981): 192–210.

the church was the first, most urgent, and absolutely indispensable step in resolving it.

During the first months of the council, the prelates at Trent, under pressure from both sides, wrestled with this conflict of priorities. They eventually adopted the sensible solution of treating both issues, and to do so in parallel tracts. For every doctrinal decree, the council would simultaneously issue a decree on reform, *de reformatione*. Through thick and thin this binary agenda prevailed to the very end of the council. Although Trent showed a decided preference for *reformatio* as the designation for what it was about, it employed other traditional terms—such as *restituere*, *revocare*, and *innovare*—to express the same idea.

The council never explicitly stated the parameters of its reform, but it in practice understood it to focus primarily, almost exclusively, on reform of three *offices* in the church—the papacy, the episcopate, and the pastorate, that is, pastors of parishes. It was never able to address reform of the papacy except in the most tangential way. The council therefore did not undertake a comprehensive review of Catholicism. For instance, it said not a word about the most impressive undertaking of the era, the evangelization of the newly discovered lands.

As the council evolved, its reform decrees took shape as radically pastoral. Its aim was to persuade or, more often, force the incumbents in church offices to act as shepherds of their flocks by attending to the basic and traditional duties the offices entailed. The council wanted bishops and pastors of parishes to do their jobs, as those jobs were traditionally understood and spelled out in canon law. Trent thus engaged in a specifically focused *ressourcement*.

Trent’s doctrinal decrees had perhaps an even more precise focus than did the reform decrees. They dealt essentially with two issues: first, justification (with original sin as a kind of essential prelude), and, second, the sacraments. For anyone familiar with medieval Scholastic theology, Trent’s decrees on the sacraments hold few surprises. One of their features, however, is of extreme importance for the future of the idea of reform.

Luther postulated a complete rupture in the handing on of the gospel, with the result that the teaching of the “papal church” criminally departed from the message of Christ and the Apostles.³⁵ In reaction to Luther’s (and then other Reformers’) accusation, Catholic apologists rushed to insist

35. See John M. Headley, *Luther’s View of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1963).

upon the church's unbroken continuity with the faith and practice of the apostolic era. Trent imparted further force to this insistence and again and again stated that its enactments faithfully reflected what had been determined "from the beginning."

No previous council had ever so often and so explicitly declared the continuity of its teachings with the authentic Christian past. When Trent affirmed, regarding the sacrament of penance, that the Catholic practice of secret confession to a priest had been observed since "the beginning," it was only making explicit a principle that underlay almost all its doctrinal pronouncements.

The council thus gave force and validation to a characteristically Catholic historiographical tradition just emerging at the time. That tradition was of course heir to the substantialism that for long had marked historical thinking, but Trent developed it and made it into a hermeneutical principle. In its insistence on continuity, Trent helped develop the tradition and fostered the Catholic mind-set of reluctance to admit change in the course of church history. By the early 17th century, Catholic reluctance to see or admit change had become deeply rooted and pervasive. It persisted in different degrees and different forms up to the present.

That historiographical tradition, of course, holds important implications for the idea of reform, which is about change. It was a major factor in the gradual development of Catholic aversion to the idea that the church could or should be reformed and an aversion even to the very word "reform." This was the aversion dramatized so well by Roncalli's question in the early 1950s, "Reform of the church—is such a thing possible?"

A not unrelated factor was Protestants' appropriation of "reform" and their claim to it as properly their own. Calvinist communities almost from their beginning referred to themselves as "reformed churches" (*églises réformées*), and Lutherans by the last quarter of the 16th century were following a similar path. Catholic rulers and reformers in Germany continued for some time to assert a claim on the word by calling the sometimes forcible restoration of Catholicism in areas gone Lutheran "the reform of religion" (*die Reformation der religion*). The Protestant purchase on reform and reformation, however, was destined ultimately to triumph. *Reformatio*, which had played such a vital role in Catholic life up to that point and had inspired the Council of Trent to try to resolve glaring abuses in church practice, suffered banishment as foreign to Catholicism and subversive of it. Catholics surrendered the word to Protestants.

Only in 1946 when Hubert Jedin, the great historian of the Council of Trent, mounted a persuasive argument for the legitimacy of Catholic

“reform” as a category to describe aspects of the 15th and 16th centuries, did *reform* begin to sneak back, in a limited and highly qualified sense, into Catholic vocabulary.³⁶ Congar’s *Vraie et fausse réforme* appeared four years later.

The Long 19th Century

The Enlightenment threw history’s goal into the future and gave 19th-century historiography its orientation toward progress.³⁷ The golden age now loomed in the future. This radical reorientation of thinking, which was previously retrospective, occurred, of course, gradually and was due to a number of factors. Since the beginning of the scientific revolution, progress in science and technology seemed undeniable. The *philosophes* saw humankind as emerging from the darkness of religion to enter into an era illumined by the clear light of reason. Hegel saw history culminating in the German *Reich*, and “Whig” historians in England saw it as leading inevitably to the triumph of the British Empire and the Anglican Church. Most tellingly, Darwin argued for the evolution of the species.³⁸

On a less grandiose scale, professional historians, with critical skills newly honed by the revival of historical studies especially under the inspiration of Leopold von Ranke and his like, began to earn new respect and attention. They grew ever more aware of the distance in mentality, mores, and fundamental cultural assumptions that separated present from past and almost universally saw the present as improvement on what had gone before.

Ten years before Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* appeared, John Henry Newman published his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he used different analogies to show how church teachings had evolved while remaining fundamentally true to their origins. The book, still the classic on the subject, is ironic in that the idea behind the book helped lead Newman into a church that on the official and unofficial levels denied that such an evolution took place.

36. See John W. O’Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2000), 16–45.

37. See chapter 2, “The Long Nineteenth Century,” in John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2008), 53–92.

38. See, e.g., Frank E. Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1962); and John Edward Sullivan, *Prophets of the West: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1970), esp. 21–87, 245–90.

Newman had as a young man immersed himself in the study of the patristic era, and in 1833 published *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. His research and wide reading alerted him to the difference between patristic positions on doctrinal matters and the 19th-century teaching of both Roman Catholicism and Liberal Protestantism. Instead of seeing the current discrepancy as by definition a sign of decline from the purity of the past, he interpreted aspects of it as healthy and inevitable growth, as a providential fulfillment of impulses present at the beginning. From the acorn comes the oak.

Newman was certainly not an admirer of the culture of his times. Nonetheless, his theory of development was in essence a ratification of what had evolved into the present. It affirmed the validity of the status quo as it had “developed.” He thus, for a restricted area and almost despite himself, gave his approval to aspects of the times in which he lived. “Development” recognizes the reality of historical change, but it inhibits *reformatio*.

Catholic officialdom, especially the papacy, did not share the positive view of the historical process that prevailed in the 19th century. Especially since the French Revolution and its Europe-wide repercussions, it felt beleaguered and the victim of vicious and lawless forces. The Revolution’s call for liberty, equality, and fraternity sounded like a call for anarchy. In Italy the *Risorgimento*, with its aim of making Rome the new capital of a united Italy, exacerbated the papacy’s fears and resentments.

For Catholics, led by the papacy, the “modern world,” with all its works and pomps, was not the result of an upward trajectory of progress but of a dangerous and precipitous decline in the other direction that originated in the Reformation and that with ever greater strength and force hurtled the church downward, propelled by the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the *Risorgimento*, and the corrosive results of modern science and historical methods. Official response came with measures like “The Syllabus of Errors” of Pius IX, in 1864.

A few years later Pius convoked Vatican I. *Reformatio* appears in the council’s decrees not a single time. What does appear is *irreformabiles*, used by the council to describe papal decisions *ex cathedra*. Vatican I was, for reasons that by now should be clear, intellectually and emotionally fortified against admitting the possibility of reform, a striking contrast with Trent, the council that immediately preceded it.

Despite the impact of the draconian measures against Modernism launched by Pius X in 1907, Catholic scholars began with ever-greater intensity to apply historical methods to sacred subjects. As they did so, they found it impossible not to acknowledge significant changes in teaching and

practice over the course of the centuries. By and large their efforts turned into exercises in *ressourcement*, that is, into the hope of using what they discovered in the past to correct and improve the present.

With Pius XII’s encyclicals *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) on modern biblical methods and *Mediator Dei* (1947) on the sacred liturgy, such *ressourcement* won qualified official approval. By the eve of Vatican II, therefore, *ressourcement*, though not named as such, was ready for use in the council. Reform, partially under the quasi-pseudonym of *ressourcement*, got silently reintroduced into Catholic life.

Historians of dogma faced a more daunting problem in the discrepancy between past and present. How were they to explain it while holding to the principle that the church’s teaching was in fundamental and unbroken continuity with the teaching of the Apostles. Newman’s theory of development provided the solution. Yes, church teaching changed, but in the process of change it was as true to itself as in its beginning—or even truer. By the eve of Vatican II development as a way to explain change had, in widely diverging degrees, won almost universal acceptance in Catholic circles. It was a reassuring theory.

In the wake of the two World Wars the “modern world” was not nearly as cocky as before about its attainments and its future and, so it seemed, not so inimical to Catholicism. Moreover, the Western democracies had, in defiance of earlier assessments of their military and moral impotence, rallied to defeat the seemingly unstoppable Nazi onslaughts. They professed liberty, equality, and fraternity, not as a club to beat down monarchies but as a necessity in political life to ensure justice and safeguard human rights. When in 1944, just as World War II drew to a close, Pope Pius XII in his Christmas message commended democracy as a political form especially compatible with human dignity, he took a significant step toward reconciliation of the church with “the modern world” and thus laid the groundwork for the more profound implications of the *aggiornamento* that Pope John XXIII set as a goal of Vatican II.

By the time Vatican II got under way in the fall of 1962, therefore, three terms were in circulation among Catholics to deal with the problem of change: *aggiornamento*, development, and *ressourcement*. Although they overlapped in meaning, they more directly pointed to three ways change might take place in the church. In the atmosphere of reluctance to admit change that still strongly prevailed among many of the prelates at the council, they operated as euphemisms or soft synonyms for it. *Reform*, though by no means a word uttered in respectable ecclesiastical company, had begun its struggle for rehabilitation.

Aggiornamento, Development, and Ressourcement at Vatican II*The Problem of Change*

As in previous councils, the documents of Vatican II evince a strong sense of continuity with the past and a determination to remain true to it. They reassert the church's continuity in faith, spiritual gift, and evangelical tradition from the time of the Apostles to the present, a continuity that in part stretches back even to Israel and that will continue to the end of time. The council underscored the undeviating nature of the church's tradition and its identification with it by its repeated, almost obsessive affirmation of its continuity with previous councils, especially Trent and Vatican I.

Nonetheless, Vatican II showed an awareness of change that in its pervasiveness and implications was new for a council and, at least on an official level, new for Catholicism as such. Unless the council stuck its head in the sand, it really had no choice. The problems for the church that the historically conscious culture of the modern world generated were too many and too deep to be avoided.

The council betrayed its awareness of the issue in the opening sentence of the first document it approved, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*. That sentence is replete with change words, including "change" itself, *mutatio*:

It is the intention of this holy council to *improve* the standard of daily Christian living among Catholics; to *adapt* those structures that are subject to *change* so as better to meet the needs of *our time*; . . . it will, therefore, and with quite special reason, see the taking of steps towards the *renewal* and *growth* of the liturgy as something that it can and should do.³⁹

It is certainly possible to quibble about the English equivalents here used for the Latin originals, but the Latin words, no matter how translated, have to do with change—*augere*, *accommodare*, *mutationes*, *nostra aetas*, *instaurare*, and, not so clearly, *fovere*.

As Massimo Faggioli has shown, *Sacrosanctum concilium* was not only a landmark document on the liturgy. It was also, and perhaps more importantly, an ecclesiological statement that contained in germ the ori-

39. "Sacrosanctum concilium, cum sibi proponat vitam christianam inter fideles in dies *augere*; eas institutiones quae *mutationibus* obnoxiae sunt, ad *nostrae aetatis* necessitates melius *accommodare*; . . . suum esse arbitratu peculiari ratione etiam *instaurandam* atque *fovendam* liturgiam curare" (Tanner, *Decrees*, 2:820, emphases added).

entations that guided the council in its subsequent course.⁴⁰ Among those orientations was the recognition of change and the need to take account of it—under the three headings of *aggiornamento*, development, and *ressourcement*.⁴¹

“Adapting to meet the needs of our time,” almost the first words of the council’s first document, is the definition of *aggiornamento*. In his opening allocution to the council on October 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII provided the basis for the “updating” that became a leitmotif in the council, to the point that Vatican II became known as the council of *aggiornamento*. Several comments are in order.

First, important though *aggiornamento* is for understanding Vatican II, it is not the only or the most significant way the council wrestled with the question of “change for the better.” Second, though the term was new, the idea that change might be needed in view of new circumstances had been operative earlier in the church and even in councils, as indicated when Lateran IV approved change when it seemed “necessary or opportune.”

Third, although previous councils invoked the equivalent of *aggiornamento* for changes they undertook, they did so rarely and by way of exception. In Vatican II, however, *aggiornamento* explicitly and implicitly affects virtually every document the council issued. The pervasiveness of the idea betrays a new mind-set in which accommodation to circumstances assumes a much more dominant role in how the church is to go about its mission. What is peculiar to Vatican II is the scope given to updating and the admission of it as a broad principle rather than as a rare exception.

Finally, the “adaptations” and “accommodations” the council enjoins are not presented as remedies for abuses in the system, nor are penalties enjoined for noncompliance with them. In effect “adapting” and “accommodating” displace the traditional “correcting” and “remedying,” expressions virtually absent in Vatican II. *Aggiornamento* thus redefines reform in a way peculiar to Vatican II. The adaptations and accommodations are not measures taken against evils that have crept into the church from the outside. They are, rather, a form of *rapprochement* between church and the existing order in the world. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that this feature of the council’s appropriation of *aggiornamento* is of a piece with a larger pattern in Vatican II of which the Pastoral Constitution on

40. See Massimo Faggioli, “*Sacrosanctum concilium* and the Meaning of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 437–52.

41. For further elaboration on these terms and their implications, see O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, esp. 36–43, 298–302.

the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, is the most impressive monument.

John Courtney Murray famously commented that “development of doctrine” was *the* issue-under-the-issues at Vatican II. The idea explicitly appears at crucial moments in the council’s documents, as in the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, *Dei verbum*, where we are told that apostolic tradition “makes progress in the church.” There is a “growth in understanding,” as the centuries advance and as the church moves further toward “the fullness of God’s truth.”⁴² The idea also appears explicitly in the opening paragraphs of the Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis humanae*: the council “intends to develop [*evolvere*]” the teaching of recent popes on the subject.⁴³

Murray was correct in his assessment about the centrality of the issue of doctrinal development, but he could have gone further. Development burst the limits of “development of doctrine.” It was a mind-set that pervaded the thinking of the council on a much wider scope than doctrine, a fact revealed by how often the council has recourse to words that expressed it. The Latin equivalents of “evolution” and “development” (*evolutio* and *evolvo*), for instance, occur 42 times in the conciliar documents. The Latin equivalents of “progress” and “advance” (*progredior*, *progressio*, and *progressus*) occur 120 times.

Not only are these among the most characteristic words employed by the council; they are virtually absent from the vocabulary of previous councils. True, although the council applies them to aspects of church teaching and practice, it also often, especially in *Gaudium et spes*, applies them to aspects of secular society. This distinction, however, only strengthens the point that “development,” a new form of *mutatio in melius* in the church, is a ubiquitous feature of Vatican Council II.

In contrast to development, *ressourcement* in the sense of return to the past to correct the present does not have in the council documents an obvious Latin equivalent that occurs with any frequency. The obvious candidate would be *reformatio*, but, as mentioned, it is, except in one important instance, altogether absent. “Renewal” (*renovatio*) does much

42. “Haec quae est ab apostolis traditio sub assistentia Spiritus sancti in ecclesia proficit; crescit enim tam rerum quam verborum traditorum perceptio. . . . Ecclesia scilicet, volventibus saeculis, ad plenitudinem divinae veritatis iugiter tendit” (Tanner, *Decrees*, 2:974).

43. “Summorum pontificum doctrinam . . . evolvere intendit” (Tanner, *Decrees*, 2:1002).

better, but it is a softer word. It seems to imply warming up or refurbishing something that has lost its luster rather than retrieving something lost in order to repair or replace a piece outmoded or gone wrong. Euphemism though it is, it still points to the fundamental fact that Vatican II is unintelligible without taking *ressourcement* into account.

Despite the fact that *Sacrosanctum concilium* opens by invoking *aggiornamento*, *ressourcement* is the idea much more responsible for its provisions. Yes, the council wanted to adapt the liturgy to make it more meaningful in the religious life of contemporaries, but it did so by making use of a century of *ressourcement*, a century of scholars searching ancient and medieval sources to discover how and why things got to be the way they were.

When the council insisted that the fundamental principle of liturgical reform was the participation of the whole assembly in the sacred action, it did so on the basis of a principle derived from ancient liturgical practice, not as a sop to hyperactive moderns. Restoring the dignity of the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, was similarly derived. And so forth. The application of such principles to the present, the *aggiornamento*, was a consequence, not the starting point.

Other examples of *ressourcement* abound. The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, begins with hope for the restoration of Christian unity that prevailed before the Great Eastern Schism and the Reformation. In the contested passages of *Dei verbum* over the Scripture/tradition relationship, the majority voices wanted to recapture modes of thinking about it that predated the 16th-century controversies and their theological aftermath.

In *Dignitatis humanae*, the council in effect retrieved and refashioned the age-old teachings on the free character of the act of faith and on the primacy of conscience in moral decision making as arguments to displace a tradition of church-state relations that had its remote origins with Constantine; got refashioned in the 16th century with the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*; refashioned again in the arrangements the Holy See negotiated with governments after the defeat of Napoleon; then rationalized in theological textbooks in the thesis-hypothesis model; and, on the very eve of Vatican II, not only officially professed but also instantiated in the Vatican's concordats with Franco in Spain and with other governments. Despite the "*evolvere*" of the text of *Dignitatis humanae*, this was system replacement.

The lightning-rod issue at the council was episcopal collegiality. No other section of any other document was more contested or received more minute scrutiny than chapter 3 of *Lumen gentium*. Even after the council

overwhelmingly approved that chapter, the issue did not die but returned at the last moment in the famous *Nota praevia* attached to the decree by “a higher authority.” The fierce and unrelenting opposition to collegiality from a small but powerful minority at the council, which surely provided the impetus for the *Nota*, indicates that something important was at stake, something more than an updating or a development.⁴⁴

Proponents of collegiality saw it as a recovery of the predominantly collegial character of the church that had gradually but effectively been sidelined almost to the point of banishment by the way papal primacy had been interpreted and functioned especially in recent centuries. Yet, though the church had never officially defined collegiality as part of its constitution, for centuries it had taken collegiality for granted as its normal mode of operation. Collegiality surfaced at Vatican II as a result of the engagement of historians and theologians in *ressourcement*. Although its proponents presented collegiality at the council as simply an enhancement of the current mode in which the Holy See functioned, its opponents saw it as something much more threatening, a real *re-forming*, a paradigm replacement.

I have up to this point stressed the differences evinced by these three modes of “change for the better” operative at Vatican II: *aggiornamento*, development, and *ressourcement*. I now need to stress that in practice they were often not so distinct from one another. A given measure might from one perspective seem like *aggiornamento* and from another like development. Life is never as simple as theory. Even so, these three categories derive from the council’s reality as a historical happening. They capture differences that we smooth over at our peril.

In particular, development and *ressourcement* are far from being synonyms. Development indicates a process of growth and efflorescence that has resulted in the status quo. It suggests, even, that the process might well continue to give us more of the same. It is thus profoundly confirmatory of the status quo and, as a theory, a formidable defense against *ressourcement* interpreted as reform. Development delivers the message “all’s well” or “more of the same,” which is precisely what reform denies.

Ressourcement, though it certainly can result in findings confirmatory of the present, most characteristically looks to the sources to see how the status quo needs to be modified, corrected, or replaced. It challenges the status quo, and it has in the history of the church sometimes challenged it radically. It might, moreover, call a halt to certain developments, as happened at Vatican II with the strong movement to define more prerogatives of the Virgin Mary.

44. On the *Nota praevia*, see O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 244–45.

Mariology was a booming industry before the council, fueled by the apparitions at Lourdes, La Salette, Fatima, and elsewhere, but from a doctrinal viewpoint fueled especially by the definition in 1854 of the Immaculate Conception and in 1950 by the definition of the Assumption. Many bishops and theologians promoted and expected a further definition at Vatican II, such as, perhaps, Mary as *coredemptrix*.

But as the result of the heated debate over whether the council would issue a separate document on her, development in the form of a further definition went no further. *Ressourcement* was much responsible for this halt. Scholars argued for the patristic tradition of Mary as the model member of the church and not as someone enthroned above it.

In assessing the impact *ressourcement* had upon the council, however, we must avoid the big, but altogether common, hermeneutical mistake of resting content with examining the documents individually, one by one, and failing to take the crucial further step of examining them as a single corpus. Commentaries on the documents of the council commonly analyze them as discreet units, without reckoning in any consistent fashion with how they relate to and build upon one another.

The most authoritative of the early studies on the council is the multi-authored, five-volume commentary edited by Herbert Vorgrimler and written by theologians who took part in the council, including the young Joseph Ratzinger.⁴⁵ The most recent publication of similar scope is another five-volume commentary edited by Peter Hünemann and Bernd Jochen Hilberath.⁴⁶

Commentaries like these are basic and absolutely indispensable, but they pave the way for the further, absolutely essential step of considering the documents as constituting a single corpus and thus of showing how each document is in some measure an expression of larger orientations and part of an integral and coherent whole. Unlike the determinations of previous councils, those of Vatican II are not a grab bag of ordinances without intrinsic relationship to one another. They implicitly but deliberately cross-reference and play off one another—in the vocabulary they employ, in the great themes to which they recur, in the core values they inculcate, and in certain basic issues that cut across them.

Once the documents are thus examined, they are striking in that they express themselves in a style different from the legislative, judicial, and

45. ET, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 5 vols. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967–1969).

46. *Herder theologischer Kommentar zum zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, 5 vols. (Freiburg i/Br: Herder, 2004–2006).

often punitive style employed by previous councils. That style, a consistent and characteristic feature of the council, is the result of a deliberate, even if somewhat haphazard, attempt to recover what the Council Fathers believed was the style of “Scripture and the Fathers.” It is, therefore, a *ressourcement*.

It is, moreover, a *ressourcement* or reform that is a system replacement or paradigm replacement, not merely an adjustment or correction of the status quo. The Roman Synod of 1960, the purported “dress rehearsal” for Vatican II, issued 773 canons. Canons, prescriptive ordinances that often carried penalties for failure to comply, were not the only, but certainly the most characteristic, literary form of councils from Nicaea (325) forward. Vatican II issued not a single canon.

Two system replacements result from this seemingly innocuous style shift. In the first place, Vatican II replaced with an altogether different system the legislative/judicial system of councils operative since at least the local synods of the third century but authoritatively codified with Nicaea. It thereby redefined what a council is and is supposed to do. In a gentle and unobtrusive way, Vatican II effected a major replacement of one system with another.

The style shift, in the second place, conveyed a values shift that was also a system shift or paradigm shift. It called for new attitudes on the part of the church and of all Catholics. The values it conveyed were anything but new in Christianity and to that extent were in continuity with tradition, but they were a break with the official mode in place up to that point. In its vocabulary the style promoted a change in mind-set and in the *modus operandi* of the church, as from commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from fault finding to a search for common ground.⁴⁷ The profound and far-reaching implications of such a shift in how the church conducts itself, in how it “does business,” and how it relates to real, live human beings should be obvious.

The Hermeneutic of Reform

When Pope Benedict XVI proposed a hermeneutic of reform for interpreting Vatican II, he stepped away from the sharp dichotomy of rupture/continuity that he had earlier insisted upon. Historians, surely, must welcome the new category. They know that the sharp dichotomy of rupture/

47. For an elaboration of the implications of this shift in style, see O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 43–52, 305–11.

continuity is never verified in historical events, which are always a mix of the old and the new. An event as radical as the French Revolution did not destroy the deep bond that continued to define what it meant to be French.

Continuities in history are always deeper and more long-lasting than any rupture, no matter how drastic that rupture might be, which is true even of paradigm replacement. This simple truth obtains a fortiori for the church, whose reason for being is to pass on a message received long ago. However, to press continuity to the exclusion of any discontinuity is in effect to say that nothing happened. As applied to Vatican II, it reduces the council to a non-event.

In his allocution the pope explicitly recognizes that reform, a self-aware effort to effect change, partakes of both realities: “It is precisely in this blending, at different levels, of continuity and discontinuity that the nature of true reform consists.”⁴⁸ Reform is, according to him, a process that within continuity produces something new.⁴⁹ The council, while faithful to the tradition, did not receive it as inert but as somehow dynamic.⁵⁰ These are important statements, and they seem to be a change in the position the pope held before his election.

Scholars immediately went to work analyzing the allocution. How did this “hermeneutic of reform” relate to the “hermeneutic of continuity” that it replaced in the template the pope as Cardinal Ratzinger had insisted upon, beginning with the famous *Ratzinger Report* published in 1985?⁵¹ Not surprisingly, scholars have found strong affinities between the new and the old.

48. AAS, allocution 49: “È proprio in questo insieme di continuità e discontinuità a livelli diversi che consiste la natura della vera riforma” (my translation, as in every instance below).

49. Ibid.: “In questo processo di novità nella continuità.”

50. Ibid. 47: “come in un Concilio dinamica e fedeltà debbano diventare una cosa sola.”

51. *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985). See, e.g., Joseph A. Komanchak, “Benedict XVI and the Interpretation of Vatican II,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 28 (2007): 323–37; Lieven Boeve, “La vraie réception de Vatican II n’a pas encore commencé: Joseph Ratzinger, révélation, et autorité de Vatican II,” in *L’autorité et les autorités: L’herméneutique théologique de Vatican II*, ed. Gilles Routhier and Guy Jobin (Paris: Cerf, 2010), 13–50; Karim Schelkens, “La réception de ‘Dei Verbum’ entre théologie et histoire,” *ibid.*, 51–68; Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist, 2012), esp. 50–53, 68–75, 106–13, 133–38; and Gilles Routhier, “The Hermeneutic of Reform as a Task for Theology,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77 (2012): 219–43.

Present in the allocution, for instance, is the same rejection of a “hermeneutic of rupture” as an instrument of interpretation for Vatican II that the pope had long insisted upon. As in the *Ratzinger Report*, the pope asserts, “The church is, as much before as after the council, the same church.”⁵² As that assertion stands, he would find little disagreement except from members of the Society of Saint Pius X who reject the council as heretical and an illegitimate break with tradition. Gilles Routhier has argued, in fact, that here and elsewhere the pope’s hermeneutical proposals must be understood against his desire to effect an accommodation with that group.⁵³

In any case, the assertion of no-before-and-after in itself weights the argument against change. The pontiff’s definition of “principles” as immune to contingency, even though applicable to contingent circumstances, weights it in the same way.⁵⁴ When Benedict goes on to warn that we should not be deceived by “apparent discontinuities,” he seems to take away with one hand what he gives with the other.

But he provides examples to clarify his meaning in these regards. Decisions of the church regarding something as contingent as 19th-century Liberalism, for instance, must themselves be regarded as contingent and therefore subject to change to meet changing circumstances. The “recent crimes of the Nazi regime” made it necessary to “define in a new way the relationship between the church and the faith of Israel.” Although Benedict does not adduce the word *aggiornamento*, these examples of reconciliation with something outside the church fit the term’s standard definition.

Regarding the council’s affirmation of religious liberty in *Dignitatis humanae*, Benedict says, “The Council, recognizing and making its own a principle of the modern state, once again recovered [in that regard] the most profound patrimony of the church.”⁵⁵ He therefore sees the affirmation

52. AAS, allocution 51: “La Chiesa è, tanto prima quanto dopo il Concilio, la stessa Chiesa, una, santa.”

53. See Routhier, “Hermeneutic of Reform.” On January 31, 2012, Father Jean-Michel Gleize of the Society of Saint Pius X published on the Internet “A Crucial Question.” It was a reply to an article dealing with the magisterial authority of Vatican II that appeared in *L’Osservatore Romano*, December 2, 2011, by Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, one of four experts representing the Holy See in conversation with the Society. In “A Crucial Question,” Father Gleize comments extensively on the allocution of December 22, 2005, and thereby lends indirect support to Routhier’s position. See http://www.sspix.org/theological_commission/a_crucial_question_gleize_1-31-2012.pdf.

54. See AAS, allocution 49–50.

55. Ibid. 50: “Il Concilio Vaticano II, riconoscendo e facendo suo con il Decreto sulla libertà religiosa un principio essenziale dello Stato moderno, ha ripreso nuovamente il patrimonio più profondo della Chiesa.”

as, on the one hand, an instance of returning to the sources ("the patrimony")—hence, *ressourcement*—and, on the other hand, an adaptation to a contemporary contingency—hence, *aggiornamento*. His is a fair analysis of precisely what the council did in this instance, which is a telling example of how in a particular circumstance more than one model of change may be operative.

At the very beginning of the section of the allocution related to hermeneutics, Benedict equates reform with development. In fact, for him development seems to be the model that best encapsulates what "true reform" is all about: "[The proper lens for understanding the council] is the 'hermeneutic of reform,' of renewal within the continuity of the one subject, the church, which [continuity] the Lord has granted her. The church is a subject that grows in time and develops, remaining, however, always the same, the unique subject of the People of God in journey."⁵⁶ This statement provides the occasion for Benedict to insist that there is no disjunction between the church before and after the council.

His Holiness thus blurs the distinction among the three categories of *aggiornamento*, development, and reform (or *ressourcement*). He cannot be too much faulted for such blurring. It is still common among interpreters of the council and does not lack, as we have seen, a basis in historical reality itself. Nonetheless, the distinction among the three is crucial for a fruitful exploration of the implications of a "hermeneutic of reform" as applied to Vatican II. Especially crucial is the distinction between reform and development.

Of course, the allocution of December 22, 2005, was just that, an allocution. It was not, nor was it intended to be, a theological treatise. It was not intended, we must assume, to provide a fully elaborated "theology of the hermeneutics of reform." Such an elaboration is, rather, the task the allocution opened up for theologians.

In that regard it is important to stress the pope's clear recognition of the fact of change, expressed in terms we can break down into the three categories. The function even of development is, we must remember, to explain why and how things today are different from the way they were yesterday. To use the lens of reform as the primary hermeneutical instrument to interpret the council imbues Vatican II with a dynamic character. It puts change at the very center of the interpretative enterprise, and it

56. Ibid. 46: "C'è l'ermeneutica della riforma, del rinnovamento nella continuità dell'unico soggetto-Chiesa, che il Signore ci ha donato; è un soggetto che cresce nel tempo e si sviluppa, rimanendo però sempre lo stesso, unico soggetto del Popolo di Dio in cammino."

throws a glaring spotlight on the crucially important, yet often forgotten, assertion in the Decree on Ecumenism that Christ summons the church to ongoing reformation.

Because the word *reform* is not, except for one instance, explicitly present in the documents, a “hermeneutic of reform” might seem like an unwarranted imposition upon them from outside. I have shown, however, how the problem of change “as improvement” is a basic orientation of the council that runs through its debates and enactments as an issue-under-the-issues. Reform is thus based on the documents but in its pervasiveness transcends them taken individually. The council, we might now say, was animated by a *spirit of reform*.

Finally, no matter what else is to be said about the allocution, the description of reform Pope Benedict provides would be difficult to improve upon: “It is precisely in this blending, at different levels, of continuity and discontinuity that the nature of true reform consists.” This is a description in accord with *ressourcement* as its proponents at the council understood it, and it is, as far as it goes, in accord with how reform has been understood in the West in the past millennium.

Theologians and historians now have license to address the council with a category that formerly was virtually off limits. In so doing they can assess in each instance and “at different levels” the degree present, respectively, of continuity and discontinuity. They will thereby be able to judge and then to tell us just how wide and deep (or how narrow and superficial) the reform of Vatican II was. In what areas and to what extent, we will perhaps then know, was Vatican II engaged in paradigm replacement and/or where and to what extent in paradigm adjustment.