

CHAPTER III

The Post-Conciliar Church in Light of the New Liturgy

This chapter examines how the *Novus Ordo* liturgy impacted the post-Vatican II church. It first explains how the *Novus Ordo* liturgy tends to cause divisiveness among the faithful and the hierarchy, thereby creating a crisis of authority within the Church. This crisis has been intensified by the disregard for Sacred Tradition. A thorough examination is made on the Church's age-old definition of Sacred Tradition and what is meant by the "unchangeable Tradition of the Church".

This chapter then explains how the crisis of authority was exacerbated by a confused understanding (by members of the hierarchy at the highest levels) of what constitutes "the Magisterium", which then made it possible for a new and erroneous definition of the Church to be foisted onto the faithful. A thorough clarification is made of the Church's dogmatically defined teachings concerning Magisterium and how the Church's infallible Magisterium is properly exercised. Finally, this chapter analyzes how the confused understanding of Magisterium was utilized to accommodate a "new definition" of Tradition (as well as a "new rite of Mass"), which, in turn, promoted the institutionalization of the other doctrinal novelties of Vatican II.

A Crisis of Authority

The *Novus Ordo* tends to destroy the bonds of ecclesiastical governance, because it is contrary to the universal customs and rites of the Church and therefore it constitutes a violation of the Divine Law that is of schismatic nature. This tends to destroy the unity of the

Church: “for above all the unity of the Church is dependent on its relationship with Christ.” (Torquemada) By unlawfully enforcing the *Novus Ordo* on the Church, the pastors of the Church, in the objective order, separate themselves from Christ by disobedience. By disobeying the laws of Christ and by commanding what is against divine law, they separate themselves from the body of the Church, “because this body is itself linked to Christ by obedience.”⁹⁹

The faithful are left with an agonising and often perplexing crisis of conscience: Pope Boniface VIII solemnly defined the dogma of faith that “for every human creature it is entirely necessary for salvation to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.”¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, “The Pope can separate himself from Christ by either disobeying the laws of Christ, or by commanding something that is against the divine or natural law.” (Torquemada) If the pope were to command something that is against the divine law, then it would certainly be sinful for anyone to obey him, since the virtue of obedience is opposed not only by disobedience but is also violated by excessive or indiscreet obedience which is the sin of *servility*.¹⁰¹

It is necessary for salvation to be subject to the pope, but only to the extent that the pope is subject to God, because St. Peter and the apostles teach: “it is necessary to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 6:29) “Anyone”, says St. Thomas, “should be subject of a lower power only in so far as it preserves the order established by a power higher than itself: but if it (the lower power) departs from the order of the higher power, then it is not right for anyone to be subjected to that lower power, for example — if a proconsul ordered something to be done, when the emperor ordered the contrary.”¹⁰² From this it follows, according to Pope Innocent III, “that it is necessary to obey a Pope in all things as long as he does not go against the universal customs of the Church, but should he go against the universal customs of the Church, he need not be followed.”¹⁰³

When the Pope tells us to accept the *Novus Ordo* because “it is necessary to know how to welcome with humility and interior freedom what is innovative; one must break with the habitual attachment to what we used to designate as the unchangeable tradition of the

Church”,¹⁰⁴ our Catholic conscience compels us to answer him in the words of the Apostles Peter and John: “whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge”. (Acts 4:19)

The Pope is the supreme head of the Church on earth, and therefore he possesses the *plenitudo potestatis*. The “fullness of power” is not an absolute power (that belongs to God alone), but only a power higher than any other on earth, and therefore supreme. The authority of the Pope exists within defined limits. The doctrinal authority of the Pope can only be exercised in accord with the principle set forth by the Fourth Council of Constantinople and reaffirmed by the First Vatican Council, namely: *Prima salus est rectæ fidei regulam custodire*. (DS 3066). That is, “Our first salvation is to guard the rule of right faith”. Expressly in conformity with this principle, the same Vatican Council defined the dogma of papal infallibility, “adhering faithfully to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith ...” (DS 3073, Vat. I, *Pastor Æternus*), and explaining that “... the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by His revelation they might disclose new doctrine, but that by His help they might guard sacredly the revelation transmitted through the apostles and the deposit of faith, and might faithfully set it forth.” (DS 3070).

Similarly, the disciplinary authority of the Roman Pontiff is not absolute: He may not suppress the “received and approved rites of the Catholic Church” or abolish the “ecclesiastical traditions” (Tridentine Profession of Faith); but he may only, as Pope St. Gelasius teaches, “balance the various decrees of canons, and limit the ordinances of his predecessors, insomuch as to relax something of their rigor, and modify them, after mature examination, according as the necessity of the times requires for the new wants of the Church.”¹⁰⁵

We must inquire to determine exactly what the official Magisterium of the Church understands *Tradition* to be, and then examining that definition, determine whether it is indeed unchangeable (as Archbishop Lefebvre professed) or if we no longer need to

designate it as unchangeable and break with it (as Pope Montini believed).

Sacred Tradition

Tradition as it is ordinarily understood is defined in the *Concise Catholic Dictionary* as, “The handing down by word of mouth from generation to generation doctrine or truths of the faith which were not written; the testimony of early nonscriptural writings and customs by which are known the various practices, the truths of faith, the moral teaching of Christianity, and the facts of the life and times of Christ; teaching of the Church transmitted orally which has been proclaimed to be correct and free from error in being handed down, a source of revelation or of faith.”¹⁰⁶

The Church has infallibly taught what it means by tradition. **The Council of Trent** declared:

... the purity itself of the Gospel is preserved in the Church, which, promised before through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded “to be preached” by His apostles “to every creature” as the source of every saving truth and of instruction in morals [Matt. 28:19 ff., Mark 16:15], and [the Synod] clearly perceiving that this truth and instruction are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, have come down even to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand, [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox fathers, receives and holds in veneration with an equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since one God is the author of both, and also the traditions themselves, those that appertain both to faith and to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ’s own word of mouth, or by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.¹⁰⁷

The **First Vatican Council** “renewing the same decree” reaffirmed the teaching of Trent:

Furthermore, this supernatural revelation, according to the faith of the universal Church, as declared by the holy synod of Trent, is contained “in the written books and in the unwritten traditions which have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself; or, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit have been handed down by the apostles themselves, and have thus come to us”.¹⁰⁸

Tradition is therefore both written and oral, as St. Paul teaches, “Stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle.” Tradition, in the narrower sense of the term, is understood “the unwritten traditions”, “received by the apostles from the Mouth of Christ”, “or from the apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit”. (Trent) Together the written and unwritten tradition form one “divine deposit” (Vatican I), and thus form what St. Athanasius called the “actual original tradition, teaching and faith of the Catholic Church, which the Lord bestowed, the apostles proclaimed and the Fathers safeguarded.”¹⁰⁹

Sacred Tradition is of its very nature *unchangeable*:

For the doctrine of the faith which God has revealed ... has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted. Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be a recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding.

Therefore ... let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding (St. Vincent of Lérins).¹¹⁰

“There exists,” explains Pope Pius XII, “a patrimony of the

Church, which since its origin, is preserved intact, remaining unchanged in the course of the centuries ... It is principally made up of the Catholic Faith.”¹¹¹ The same pontiff taught, “The Church never changes, not in her dogma, nor her strength: She is ineffaceable, indestructible, invincible. She is immutable, unalterable, according to the charter of her foundation, sealed with the Blood of the Son of God.”¹¹² The proposition of Paul VI, namely, that “one must break with the habitual attachment to what we used to designate as the unchangeable tradition of the Church” is clearly contrary to the official teaching of the Church’s infallible *Magisterium*, and is therefore heretical.* The First Vatican Council solemnly declared, that “*If anyone shall have said that it is possible that to the dogmas declared by the Church a meaning must sometimes be attributed according to the progress of science, different from that which the Church has understood and understands: let him be anathema.*”¹¹³

Pope Gregory XVI set forth the Church’s teaching to all the bishops of the Catholic world, declaring:

This you will do perfectly if you watch over yourselves and your doctrine, as your office makes it your duty, repeating incessantly to yourselves that every novelty attempts to undermine the Universal Church and that, according to the *warning of the holy Pope Agatho*, “*nothing that has been regularly defined can bear diminution, or change, or addition, and repels every alteration of sense, or even of words.*”¹¹⁴

The idea that we must break with what we once considered to be the unchangeable tradition of the Church is founded on the notion of *aggiornamento*, which denotes ‘updating’ and ‘renewal’. On the topic of *aggiornamento*, Pope John Paul II has explained:

The expression popularised by our venerable predeces-

* This does not necessarily imply that Paul VI was a formal heretic. A formal heretic is a person who is guilty of the sin of Heresy, which is “the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and Catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same” (can. 751). To be a formal heretic one must obstinately deny what he knows to be the defined teaching of the Magisterium.

sor John XXIII, viz *aggiornamento*, is always present to us to express the *leitmotif* of our programme. John XXIII, and after him, Paul VI, received from the Holy Ghost the charism of transforming the Church, thanks to which, as all know, she manifests herself the same and at the same time differently. This diversity does not mean a detachment from her proper nature, rather, a more profound penetration of this nature. It is a revelation of this figure of the Church, which was hidden in the past. It was necessary that across ‘the signs of the times’, acknowledged by the Council, it became manifest and visible, that it became a principle of life and action for the times in which we live and for those that will come ... The Pope who left us last year, the day of the Feast of the Transfiguration, received from the Holy Ghost the charism of his time. In fact, *if the transformation of the Church is to serve her renewal, it is necessary that he who undertakes it possesses a particularly strong consciousness of the identity of the Church.*¹¹⁵

First of all, the mere fact that someone would undertake the transformation of the Church in order to bring about her renewal already betrays a fundamental lack of understanding about the identity of the Church. This notion has been condemned by Pope Gregory XVI, who declared in *Mirari vos*, “Since to make use of the words of the Fathers of the Council of Trent, it is certain that the Church was instituted by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and that the Holy Ghost by His daily assistance, will never fail to teach her all Truth, *it is the height of absurdity and outrage towards her to claim that restoration and regeneration have become necessary for her to assure her existence and her progress.*”¹¹⁶

An Erroneous Definition of the Church

The lack of a strong consciousness of the identity of the Church is manifested in the notion of the Church expressed in the present pontiff’s Code of Canon Law: “This Church, constituted and organised as a society in this world, *subsists in the Catholic Church*, governed by the successor of St. Peter.”¹¹⁷ To describe the Church as merely

subsisting *in* the Catholic Church implies that the Church of Christ is not to be simply identified *as* the Catholic Church, and consequently it may also be found elsewhere.* Such a notion of the Church destroys her essential unity, since the Church of God, being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, is simply and essentially the Catholic Church, outside of which it is impossible to be saved, and therefore the Church cannot subsist anywhere outside of the Catholic Church.

In the Profession of Faith it is set forth: “By the heart we believe and by the mouth we confess the one Church, not of heretics but the Holy Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic (Church) outside of which we believe that no one is saved.”¹¹⁸ The Ecumenical Council of Florence professed:

The sacrosanct Roman Church, founded by the voice of our Lord and Saviour, ... firmly believes, professes, and preaches that “no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not just pagans, but also Jews or heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the ‘everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels’ [Matt. 25:41], unless before the end of life they are joined to the Church. For union with the body of the Church is of such importance that the sacraments of the Church are helpful to salvation only for those remaining in it; and fasts, almsgiving, other works of piety, and the exercise of Christian warfare bear eternal rewards for them alone. And no one can be saved, no matter how much alms he has given, even if he sheds his blood for the name of Christ, unless he remains in the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.”¹¹⁹

Notwithstanding the most solemn dogmatic pronouncements of the Church’s *Extraordinary Magisterium*, Karol Wojtyla plainly

*Here the CIC and *Lumen Gentium* accommodate the Anglican heresy that, “it is a mistake to refer, as many people do, to the various branches of the Church as ‘religions’. If a church is a Christian church, it is part of the Christian religion. There is one Christian religion but there are many ways of expressing it, the ways of the various branches or ‘communions’ or denominations of the Christian church.” — Charles W. F. Smith, *Discovering the Episcopal Church*, Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati, 1989.

states, and does not hesitate to profess, that “The churches and separated communities, although we once believed that they suffered from deficiencies, are not totally deprived of importance and value in the mystery of salvation. *The Spirit of Christ does not refuse to use them as means of salvation*, through the strength deriving from the fullness of grace and truth which has been conferred on the Catholic Church.”¹²⁰ If this proposition is understood according to the proper signification of its terms, then either the Church is not considered as constituted of the unique essential holiness that establishes it as the sole ark of salvation, and consequently one also could be saved in some other church or sect; or else the Church would be deprived of its essential unity, being considered to be united by some essential bond of communion with the other religions, and therefore distinguished from them not by essence but by degree.¹²¹ *The proposition is heretical* because it professes salvation that is only conceivable in a context of either Pelagianism or a pluralistic *gnosis*, and therefore it is founded on a false notion of the Church that destroys the concept of the Church as the one, unique holy people, consecrated to the divine Spouse, and therefore sanctified and set apart from the world of false gods and false religions.

Karol Wojtyła’s belief that “the new conception of a ‘People of God’ which has revised the old truth about the possibility of redemption outside the *visible* Church”¹²² is rooted in an incomplete and contradictory notion of Magisterium. The Pope is perfectly correct in maintaining the doctrine of salvation outside the *visible* Church, as has been infallibly taught by the Church’s extraordinary and ordinary Magisterium.¹²³ *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* teaches on the topic of those who die suddenly without Baptism: “should any unforeseen accident make it impossible for adults to be washed in the salutary waters, their intention and determination to receive Baptism and their repentance for past sins, will avail them to grace and righteousness.”¹²⁴ The heresy is the “new conception of a ‘People of God’” which is co-extensive with the entire human race in such a manner that all men are saved.¹²⁵ “All men, from the beginning of the world until its end, have been redeemed and justified by Christ

and His cross,” [*Segno di Contradizione*], so that Christ’s Mystical Body is not exclusively identified with the Catholic Church.¹²⁶ Contrary to Pope John Paul II’s heterodoxy, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* teaches: “there are but three classes of persons excluded from the Church’s pale: infidels, heretics and schismatics, and excommunicated persons. Infidels are outside the Church because they never belonged to, and never knew the Church, and were never made partakers of any of her sacraments. Heretics and schismatics are excluded from the Church, because they have separated from her and belong to her only as deserters belong to the army from which they have deserted. ... Finally, excommunicated persons are not members of the Church, because they have been cut off by her sentence from the number of her children and belong not to her communion until they repent.”

Pope John Paul II teaches, according to the “new conception of a ‘People of God’,” as Father Dörmann observes, that:

... each human being has reached in Christ ‘the dignity of both the grace of divine adoption and the inner truth of humanity.’ (*Redemptor Hominis* 11,4) With equal clarity the Encyclical says elsewhere (RH 13,3) that each human being, from the first moment of his existence, ‘keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself,’ and further, that ‘with each one Christ has united Himself forever.’ ... ‘each man, *in virtue of his very human nature*, is called upon to partake of the fruits of the Redemption wrought by Christ, and even to share in Christ’s own life.’ (*Euntes in Mundum*, OR, dt., Mar. 25, 1988, p. 7, I, 2)

It is this unorthodox understanding of the nature of the Church, that places the entire human race within the Church, which constitutes John Paul II’s “present-day consciousness of the Church” (RH).¹²⁷ The Pope erroneously professed this heterodox post-conciliar Ecclesiology to be the doctrine of the Magisterium of the Church. In his own thinking, Pope John Paul II has extended the notion of Magisterium beyond its properly defined boundaries. Msgr. Wojtyla explained, “Now the magisterium means the teaching

based on authority ... This is essential in dealing with questions of faith and morals. In one sense, acts of a doctrinal character accomplished by the Magisterium have a pastoral significance, and on the other, *the pastoral acts, by their profound integration in faith and morals have a doctrinal significance.*” Msgr. Wojtyla is simply saying that the doctrinal underpinnings of essentially pastoral acts are expressions of the supreme doctrinal Magisterium of the Church!

Msgr. Wojtyla continues, “All this finds extraordinary confirmation in Vatican Council II.”¹²⁸ What is it, we may ask, that finds such extraordinary confirmation in Vatican Council II? “... that in the history of the Church, each Council has indeed been pastoral ... ***Each is also an action of the supreme magisterium of the Church.***”¹²⁹ The doctrine set forth in this proposition is incorrectly and badly stated insofar as it violates one of the most basic Catholic teachings on the nature of the Magisterium: it pertains to the very definition of the infallible Magisterium that in exercising it the Church authoritatively proposes only determined or defined doctrines to be believed with divine and Catholic faith. A council is an action of the supreme magisterium of the Church only when it teaches authoritatively in matters of faith or morals.

The Magisterium

By Magisterium, is meant, “The authority of the Church, by divine appointment, to teach the truths of religious belief; the commission of the Church to teach; the teaching office of the Church; the teaching and interpreting of the doctrines of faith carried on by the Church through the Pope and bishops and those commissioned by them. It may be *ordinary* when a doctrine is proclaimed throughout the Church as a part of divine revelation; or *extraordinary* when a general council defines a doctrine ratified by the Pope or when the Pope speaks as the official teacher of the Church (*ex cathedra*) proclaiming or defining a matter of faith or morals.”¹³⁰ There is *infallible magisterium* only when the Church proclaims or *defines* doctrine in its extraordinary or universal and ordinary magisterium.

A precise and official formulation on *Magisterium* is to be found in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. Canon 749 declares:

- 1. “The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful ... he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such.”
- 2. “The college of bishops also possesses infallible teaching authority when the bishops exercise their teaching office gathered together in an ecumenical council when, as teachers and judges of faith and morals, they declare that for the universal Church a doctrine of faith or morals must be definitively held; they also exercise it scattered throughout the world but united in a bond of communion among themselves and with the Successor of Peter when together with that same Roman Pontiff in their capacity as authentic teachers of faith and morals they agree on an opinion to be held as definitive.”

It is to be noted that in both extraordinary and ordinary *Magisterium*, the doctrine must either be proclaimed with a “*definitive act*” (extraordinary) or it is agreed that it is “*to be held as definitive.*” The teaching of both the extraordinary and the universal and ordinary *Magisterium* are *defined* doctrines. Any doctrine that is not defined *does not pertain to the infallible Magisterium of the Church.* Francisco Marin-Sola O.P. explains:

The Church’s doctrinal authority or magisterium has for its proper and specific purpose the *conservation* and *exposition* of the revealed deposit. To *determine* or to fix infallibly the true meaning of the divine deposit is called a *definition* of faith by the Church ...

These two ways of exercising the magisterium on the content and the meaning of the revealed deposit are of equal dogmatic value, and both are true definitions of faith. Between them there exists only an accidental difference, to wit, that the magisterium exercised by the Ecumenical Council or by the Pope speaking *ex cathedra* is done with a greater solemnity and show of formulae and is easily discernible by all; on the other hand, the

ordinary magisterium is exercised through the universal teaching of the Church without any special display or set formulae, and at times it is not so easy to determine its scope and signification.¹³¹

What is taught by the infallible Magisterium of the Church is to be believed “*with divine and Catholic Faith*”:

Further, by divine and Catholic faith, all those things must be believed which are contained in the written word of God and in tradition, and those which are proposed by the Church, either in a solemn pronouncement or in her ordinary and universal teaching power, to be believed as divinely revealed.¹³²

The doctrinal novelties of the Second Vatican Council are not an expression of the magisterium of the Catholic Church, but are rather the heretical expression of the non-defined and sometimes merely implied counter-magisterium of the Conciliar Church, and the embodiment of its so-called “living tradition”. The concept of an ‘implied magisterium’ such as that set forth by Karol Wojtyla is not only incomplete and contradictory, but is contrary to the defined teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, and is, therefore, clearly and without doubt heretical. Such a concept is broad enough to include within its parameters a multitude of modern theories and notions of doubtful orthodoxy either expressed in non-magisterial manner, touched upon in passing, or implied in some pastoral directive of the Second Vatican Council.

An implied magisterium, as has been conceived and elaborated by Karol Wojtyla, is not only capable of error but is particularly susceptible in that regard. “Vatican II,” Archbishop Lefebvre explains, “was a pastoral council; John XXIII said so, Paul VI repeated it. During the course of the sittings we several times wanted to define a concept; but we were told: ‘We are not here to define dogma and philosophy; we are here for pastoral purposes.’ *What is liberty? What is human dignity? What is collegiality?* We are reduced to analysing the statements indefinitely in order to know what they mean, and we only come up with approximations because the terms are am-

biguous. And this was not through negligence or by chance. Fr. Schillebeeckx admitted it: *'We have used ambiguous terms during the Council and we know how we shall interpret them afterwards.'* These people knew what they were doing."¹³³

A 'magisterium' thus conceived accommodates the notion of a *'living character of Tradition'* which includes within its broad parameters a *"charism of transforming the Church"* which, on the pretext of *"a more profound penetration of this nature (of the Church)"* reveals a *"figure of the Church, which was hidden in the past"*. A Church thus renewed according to an *aggiornamento* condemned by Pope Gregory XVI in *Mirari vos*, professes the heresy that we "must break with the habitual attachment to what we used to designate as the unchangeable tradition of the Church". The Conciliar Church has broken with the habitual attachment to its previous traditions by instituting a "New Rite of Mass" and by proclaiming the condemned doctrines of Ecumenism and Religious Liberty as an expression of its "living tradition".

The Catholic Faith utterly opposes and rejects a notion thus conceived of a *"living character of Tradition"* which deviates from that understanding of the sacred dogmas that must be perpetually retained and recedes from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding. John Paul II has substituted fundamentally novel concepts of magisterium and tradition for the dogmatically defined concepts of Magisterium and Tradition. When the Pope accuses Mgr. Lefebvre of professing a "contradictory ... notion of Tradition which opposes the universal Magisterium of the Church", he inadvertently condemns a Catholic doctrinal tradition of nearly two millennia.¹³⁴

The concept of a 'living tradition' that allows for the alteration of Church doctrine, or the introduction of novel teachings has been condemned by Pope St. Pius X. Here is what St. Pius X condemns:

Evolution of Dogma. Proposition 13. Dogma is not only able, but ought to evolve and to be changed. This is strongly affirmed by the Modernists, and clearly flows from their principles. For among the chief points of their

teaching is the following, which they deduce from the principle of *vital immanence*, namely, that *religious formulas*, if they are to be really *religious*, and not merely intellectual speculations, ought to be *living* and to live the life of *the religious sense* ... What is necessary is that the *religious sense* — with some modification when needful, should vitally assimilate them.¹³⁵

Thus, the concept of “the living character of tradition”, which Pope John Paul II invoked to justify the doctrinal deviations of Vatican II, has its origin in the condemned heresy of the Modernists. None of the Fathers speak of this “*living tradition*”, but simply profess adherence to tradition — “παράδοσις ἐστὶ, μηδὲν πλεον ζῆται.” (“Is it Tradition, ask no more.”)¹³⁶

It was with the full and clear understanding of what constitutes a pronouncement of the *Infallible Magisterium* that Mgr. Lefebvre remarked, “... they think the Council was inspired by the Holy Ghost. Not necessarily. A non-dogmatic, pastoral council is not a recipe for infallibility. When, at the end of the sessions, we asked Cardinal Felici,¹³⁷ ‘Can you not give us what the theologians call the theological note of the Council?’ He replied, ‘We have to distinguish according to the schemas and the chapters those which have already been the subject of dogmatic definitions in the past; *as for the declarations which have a novel character, we have to make reservations.*’”¹³⁸

It is an error to think that we must uncritically accept every doctrinal opinion that has been expressed in the Council’s documents* — and it is gravely erroneous to affirm that all of the doctrinal statements of the Council, no matter how vague or remotely implied, were an exercise of the Church’s supreme or infallible Magisterium.¹³⁹

The previous ecumenical councils imposed their teachings on the universal Church under pain of *anathema*, whereas *the Second Vatican Council deliberately refused to impose its teachings or condemn*

*The problem of when it is permissible and sometimes necessary to dissent from non-infallible magisterial pronouncements will be dealt with further on in this work.

anyone. Fr. Peter Scott correctly points out that the Council refused to “impose doctrine in the name of the Faith, and to oblige under the pain of sin by the means of contrary anathemas as previous councils had done.”¹⁴⁰ In his opening discourse to the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI declared: “***The Council, instead of inflicting condemnations on anyone at all, will only have thoughts of goodness and peace.***”

The Council not only refused to condemn any doctrine, but it actually taught doctrines condemned by previous popes. Archbishop Lefebvre has pointed this out in his book, *They Have Uncrowned Him*. In *Quanta Cura* Pope Pius IX formally condemned the propositions that “Liberty of Conscience and forms of worship is a right proper to every man. ... Which must be proclaimed and guaranteed in every correctly established society.” *Dignitatis Humanæ* blasphemously proclaims this error: “The Council ... declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person *as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself*. This right of the human person to religious freedom *must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right*”.¹⁴¹