

Vatican II and Tradition

Our Reproaches against the Council

Part II

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The break with the past

First of all, it's not a question of conservatism, it's a question of truth. "He who is Catholic, is conservative and up to date (If you want progressive!) at the same time." To the Catholic belongs a conservative spirit, the preserving, and just as well the development of all the richness of what we have to preserve, the richness of Tradition as a whole. In fact, that's the true progress.

We do not deplore that in the Council and in the "post-conciliar era" (the time after the Council with all the liturgical and theological reforms) something new has happened, because 'the father of the house brings new and old from his treasure' (Mt 13: 52). No, we deplore only that this new treasure is wrong. We do not deplore that a train departed, we deplore that it has gone in the wrong direction. We say, the train has to go back again, so that it can then go in the right direction."¹ True progress is a development of what has been received and, hence, includes preservation. Conservatism and progress

are dimensions of the ecclesiastical existence which enclose themselves and cause each other. The Catholic does not look for the truth, like in the Council document "Gaudium et spes" (article 16). Such thinking is a direct attack against the truth (the truth is Jesus Christ Himself), it's incorrect and wrong. In fact, it looks in the already revealed truth for deepening and enlargement. Clearly that fatal mistake of the Council is found in the encyclical "Ut unum sint" (Art. 33) from John Paul II, where it says: "In the understanding of the council that ecumenical dialogue has the character of a common search for the truth."

The traditional self-image of the Church

The Catholic Church and She alone is founded by God. Christ said to Peter "And I say to you: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16.18). Therefore, the Catholic Church taught in all ages that it is exclusively identical with the Church of Jesus Christ, briefly: The Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus

Christ. This equation founds the Catholic claim to absoluteness; there She alone is a means of salvation which is expressed in the dogma: "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus – outside the Church there is no salvation."

From this traditional self-image of the Church follows the true ecumenism which was represented in the Church up to the Second Vatican Council. Pius XI explains in his encyclical *Mortalium animos*: "The union of Christians cannot be fostered otherwise than by promoting the return of the dissident to the one true Church of Christ, which in the past they so unfortunately abandoned."

The Council presents a completely different self-image of the Catholic Church. The Council witnessed a formidable about-turn which Paul VI described as follows: "One can even say that the majority of the bishops betook to the school desk or to the auditorium. And many were surprised at the fact that their position after four years was another..., that they endorsed what they had held for unacceptable [!] or "risqué" before the Council."² By the way, the Second Vatican Council, in contrast to Vatican I and to the Council of Trent, was only a pastoral council, i.e. we don't have a strict obligation to accept any of the new ideas it proposed. Now we will state some central points, which were for the bishops "unacceptable before the Council"³, using the mode of expression of Pope Paul VI.

A new self-image of the Catholic Church: Ecumenism

As everyone knows, the council wanted to change the relation of the Catholic Church to the world and to other religions. However, the traditional self-image of the Church stood in the way of this intention, which is why they departed from it. The focus of the Catholic self-image is the mentioned, continual doctrine of the Church, according to which the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church is one and the same. The council wanted to revise this doctrine, and decided against it in order to be able to realise the ecumenism of the council! Therefore, one did not say any more that the Catholic Church "is" the Church of Christ [latin EST], but that the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church [latin SUBSISTIT IN]. With the turning away from "est" the council carried out a se-

rious break with the traditional doctrine of the Church. This turning away from the traditional self-image of the Catholic Church opened the door to the ecumenism which the council introduced in contradiction to the traditional doctrine. The consequence is a new claim of salvation for all the other confessions and religions; from now on they are ways to salvation; from now on they are true churches. With the awarding of a mediation of salvation to other communities (the Protestants included), the Council abandons the truth about the Catholic Church and teaches that no "church" has the full truth, but only elements of the truth.

A new relationship to non-Christian religions.

The turning away of the Pastoral Council from the traditional self-image of the Church, entailed not only a basic change of the relation of the Church to other Christian communities, but also a basic change of the attitude toward non-Christian religions, which is explained in the Decree "Nostra aetate". The high esteem for non-Christian religions which is expressed in this Pastoral Council document is incompatible with traditional teaching, according to which these religions are aberrations. Therefore, Jesus Christ Himself and the Church have directed a global mission, to save all from sin and error.

The Catholic Church taught that these non-Christian religions have a number of natural truths (to respect older people, to help those who are in misery, to be wise in one's behaviour, prudent in one's actions, etc). Secondly, those religions sometimes have elements of truth, which are remnants of the primitive revelation of God. And finally, sometimes they have taken elements from the Catholic Church (for example Islam, which confesses one, unique God, takes this belief from the Christian religion)⁴. But on the other hand, these non-Christian religions not only do not lead to salvation but, very often, are in themselves obstacles to finding the truth, systems of resistance to the Holy Ghost.

Such a misguided sympathy of Vatican II toward the other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism) leads necessarily not only to a religious indifferentism, but also will destroy the supernatural order. There is no longer any concern for faith and sanctifying grace, but this is

replaced by campaigns against racism, by manifestations for peace in the world, taking care of the environment and milieu, developing technology, social progress, etc.⁵ "Apostleship does not mean to make Muslims or Buddhists into Christians, but to make them better Muslims and better Buddhists" was a slogan of a popular German theologian. Concerning the other religions, the council used words which are on the very limits of Catholic thinking. If you take the Bible, one thing is clear: the rejection of pagan religions. But the Council finds a lot of warm words for pagan religions; in the sense that these religions can do a lot for conserving peace on earth and other strictly secular problems. This was misunderstood as an acceptance of other religions even in religious aspects, in such a way that all religions are valuable even for salvation, that they are just different ways, maybe not as powerful as Catholicism is, but also valuable in God's plan. And here the Church did a lot to support this misunderstanding, which is a clear attack on the basis of Christianity and the first commandment. In 1986, Pope John Paul II invited leaders of nearly all non-Christian religions to Assisi, an Italian town, for common prayer for peace. He gave them Catholic cha-

pels for their religious ceremonies. So there was a statue of Buddha, for instance, on a Catholic altar, on the tabernacle, and the cross was taken away. One must understand this as an acceptance of Buddhism as another way to God. But if anything goes; why remain Catholic? People lost their Catholic minds. They lost their trust in the promise of salvation, which Christ has given to the Christians and only to the Christians in John 14, 6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me."

The change of direction of the Council in this area led greatly to the breakdown of the apostolate and was replaced by inter-religious dialogue. Such behaviour is very far from the apostolic order of Christ: "Go ye unto all nations and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised, will be saved: he who does not believe, will be condemned." (Mk 16: 15-16)

A new relationship to the world

The Council's declaration on religious liberty: *Dignitatis humanae*

"One Lord, one faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through-



out all, and in us all.”⁶ The Catholic doctrine up to the Second Vatican Council, on the question of religious liberty, says that there is only one God, one Redeemer and one Church. This God, this Redeemer and this Church must be recognized by every creature, each and every individual, and also by social bodies: families, schools, states.⁷ They have to recognize Our Lord, basing their constitutions, their laws, and their lives on Him. This means that all countries, especially those with a majority of Catholic citizens, should officially recognize Our Lord, and His Church, as the only true religion, and put limits to the public manifestations of other religions.

With “*Dignitatis humanae*” we have an inversion of values. The Truth, who is a person, Jesus Christ, has no longer the right to reign in parliaments, governments and constitutions, in courts and schools. He has to be silent; He is put on the same level with other religions, opinions and errors. The pastoral Council asked and demanded that no religion should be hindered from spreading its errors, that every religion is to be treated with equality before the law. “This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom.” (No. 2) So, religious freedom would be a natural right. “This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in religious matters no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs.” (No. 2) We agree, because nobody can be forced to embrace the faith. Faith is an interior act. What is new, follows: “Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly.” (No. 2)

Consequence

The consequence is an unlimited freedom even of choice in moral matters (abortion, euthanasia, etc.) With the Council’s religious liberty, anyone can have the right to act against the law of God, or, if you want, the unlimited freedom of conscience is more important than God’s will or law. The old doctrine taught: a State can only tolerate evil. Our Lord said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.” (Jn 14: 6) “I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth (Jn 18: 37). And Pilate answered: “What is truth?”

(Jn 18: 38). The Council teaches: “You have the right to choose between Barabbas and Jesus.” And the modern governments have chosen Barabbas.

The problem with a true religious liberty

Liberties are only for individuals, not the state. Freedom is given to the single human being. Only those who have freedom have this human dignity. The state has no human dignity. The state is committed to save and protect this dignity of each citizen, on the one hand. But it is also committed to the eternal order of things, on the other hand. A state can’t love, the state is not free. It’s the single person who is free, the state is committed to truth and justice. And God is true. That sounds very academic, doesn’t it? Maybe it was so in the 1960s. But it is not any longer. In Switzerland, my home country, the people have decided in a plebiscite to forbid the construction of minarets, which are the towers of mosques from which the muezzin calls for the Muslim prayer. In France, president Sarkozy plans to abolish the burka, what is a sack under which extreme Muslims hide their wives and daughters, not because they’re ugly, but to discriminate them. All over Europe the courts are tackled with the problems of the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women in public buildings, of Muslim parents who are not willing to allow their children to go swimming in school, and so on. The western countries are confronted with the aggressive claims of other religions, especially Islam. These states have found that religious liberty in the sense of Vatican II is not possible, there must be limits.

In the 1960s those questions were not of interest. But now we have to ask ourselves who we are. “Who we are” is, by the way, a book of Samuel Huntington, who best described the rise of religion at the end of the cold war in the “Clash of Civilizations”. When the book came into debate in the 90s, most western politicians and intellectuals, who had learned that God is dead, and hence, were focused on secular questions such as social discrepancies, tried to ignore Huntington’s analysis. After 9/11 things have changed. Religion is a reality, and it influences public life. The Western world has seen a fundamental cultural change since the 1960s. This was caused in large part by the collapse of the biggest religious institution in the west, the Catholic Church. Be-

cause the majority of people here were Catholic, and the majority of Catholics had lost their faith, our politics and our societies have lost orientation. Now we are faced with the question, how to answer the claims Islam is making. So we must ask ourselves who we are. Are we just consumers? What are our principles? I'm sure, no one who tries to answer this question can do it without considering Christianity. So after some decades of godlessness we will see the return of Jesus Christ. To prepare for this it is important to understand how the Catholic Church could have come into such a crisis.

There is no way to the Father but by Jesus Christ. That is not really clear to today's Catholics, be they clergy or laymen. So we have a lack in basic Catholic consciousness. But people who don't know what is Catholic, can't act in a Catholic way. They can't vote for Catholic positions as they don't know what is the Catholic position and so on. "The faith is evaporating", said Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, and he is right. In the short period after Vatican II, the faith has evaporated in nearly every aspect. And thus, Catholic positions in politics, like on abortion, gay-marriage, the value of a family, sex education in school, and so on, have gone away. So I ask you for two things: First, to take religion into consideration when analysing politics and the history of the last decades. Religion influences people a lot, and people make politics. My thesis is: the developments of the last 40 years and today's politics are only to be understood when taking the collapse of Catholicism into consideration.

Secondly, to research the influence Vatican II has had on this development. My thesis from the beginning was: Vatican II is not the only, but the main cause for the collapse of the Church. Don't stop with this thesis. Go further and investigate how Vatican II caused the collapse, in which ways. I gave you some ideas. To understand such a religious crisis is important in a time when religion obviously is back in business. And as in the West it will be the Christian religion which will dominate – otherwise the West wouldn't be the West any longer – it is necessary to research the developments within Christianity.

At last, I want to speak to you as a priest: God will come back. The renaissance of both religion and its institution, the Church, can be taken as

a certitude. Maybe today it is still a bit avant-garde to promote a Catholic standpoint, but shouldn't young academics and universities always be avant-garde? The time is right for this, as the Church is in a deep crisis, unfortunately. So, as you know in the financial market, they say: buy when the price is low. The Catholic Church is surely a blue chip, and now, at the end of the period of Vatican II, the price is low, but expectations and potentials are high.

Just a word of what I expect in the upcoming years: The Pope will make clear that Vatican II has never propagated a break and a rupture with the doctrine of all Christian centuries. He will reject the wrong interpretation⁸ which has made Vatican II to be the basis of a new religion. He will defeat the spirit of the 1960s, at least 30 years too late; but what are 30 years for the Church? Catholicism will become popular at first among the educated people, who are searching for the sense of life. The ordinary people are fallen into brutal hedonism; unfortunately, you can't build a society on alcohol, sex, and consumption. Ernest Hello (1828 – 1885), a French writer and philosopher said: "The only true problem is that we aren't saints." The importance of religion will increase, and it won't be the religion of Vatican II, but the Religion of all time.

- 1 Pfarrrer Hans Milch, zitiert in: "Das Konzil muss auf den Prüfstand." Der Standpunkt der actio spes unica zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil.**
- 2 J. Guitton: "Dialogue with Paul VI", Wien 1967, S. 215.**
- 3 A "pastoral" council in which no dogma was defined and no errors solemnly condemned, which make the council and infallible one, like all previous Ecumenical councils of the Church.**
- 4 Conference by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, 16.**
- 5 Ibid.**
- 6 Eph 4: 5-6.**
- 7 Cf. Conference by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, 23.**
- 8 He promotes the so-called "hermeneutic of continuity", Address to the Curia on December 22nd, 2005.**