

VATICAN COUNCIL I

Its Historical And Doctrinal Significance

The text of Cardinal Parente's address, delivered on December 8th in the presence of the Holy Father.

The august presence of the Vicar of Christ and the importance of the subject would call for a far better speaker than myself.

But I am here out of obedience and I will speak, as a modest, old student of theology can speak, about Vatican Council I, which opened, a century ago, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1869.

It was conceived, willed and carried out, amid many great difficulties, by Pius IX, a Pope at once mild and strong, who traversed, with humble heroism, the "via crucis" of his long pontificate, in a century shaken by severe convulsions in every field of life.

This is not the place, nor would there be time, to give an account of the intricate events of that Council. In any case, they have been recorded in numerous monographs (cfr. Cecconi, *Storia del Concilio ecumenico Vaticano scritta sui documenti originali*, 4 vol. Roma, 1872; T. Grauderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican* (trans.) Brussels, 1907; E. Campana, *Il Concilio Vaticano*, 2 vol., Lugano, 1927; R. Aubert, *Vatican I*, Paris, 1964).

In the brief time at my disposal I am obliged to resort to a synthetic style, which will seem superficial to the more learned, while it may strike others as being obscure. I apologize in both cases in advance, but I do not ask for forgiveness, for it is not my fault. I will speak, therefore, on the plane of history, which should not be confused with chronicle, for history not only records the facts, but seeks their underlying significance in connection with the process of culture and of civilization.

In this sense civil history is not an easy matter, but the history of the Church is far more difficult. For the Church in the world is the eternal in time and the divine in man. It is God who inserts his thought and his love in the human world, thus creating the history of salvation, which is *theandric*, like Jesus Christ, who is its centre and soul.

The Church, the epiphany of Christ, continues his mission down the centuries. This mission is to preach divine truth with divine authority to man, who is endowed with conscience and freedom, the basis of his autonomy, and to whom all heteronomy is naturally repugnant.

Therefore the progress of the Church is slow and marked by continual struggles and sufferings, which recall the words of St. Paul: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1, 24).

The Christian message kindles a tension between the Church and the world. This was stressed by St. John: "He (the Word) came to his own, and his own received him not" . . . "And men loved darkness rather than light" (I, 11 and 3, 19).

The tension, which is initially cosmic, becomes psychological and gives rise, even among Christians, to crises of thought and of conscience, which often lead to heresies.

The great Councils are the milestones in this laborious march of the Church, for the spread and defence of Christ's message and of the Kingdom of God in a hostile and insidious world.

History does not record any human institutions comparable to these great assemblies, real symposiums of peoples, the aim of which is to win over the most diverse and often reluctant mentalities to divine truth.

The main obstacle is not the persecutions of the sword, but the reactions of the spirit. These reactions range from negation to distortion of the truth preached, to which man is called to respond with faith, "*rationabile obsequium*" to God who speaks.

But reason, which should be subordinate to faith, often gets the upper hand and opens up the way to a process of humanization of the divine and of naturalization of the supernatural, or of agnosticism with regard to the transcendental. This obstinate tendency hampers the progress of the Church and threatens her life.

The Council and the Great Crises

This naturalistic tendency reached its peak points in the Gnosticism of the 1st and 2nd centuries, a miscellany of philosophy, theology and mysticism that formed a fascinating blend of science fiction (gnosis); in the Nestorianism of the 5th century, which compromised the divinity of Christ; in the Pelagianism of the same period, which eliminated grace to exalt stoically the natural capacities of man, who becomes the arbiter of his own destiny. To these heresies can be added the Lutheranism of the 16th century, which, though it affirmed the supernatural, reduced it to a subjective experience of the divine, bound to a personal act of faith or trust, as God's word was subject to the free examination of man.

These great crises were answered by the great Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Carthage and Trent.

But the most complex and gravest threat to Christianity and the Church was certainly the naturalism that developed in the modern era, along different channels, from the 15th to the 19th centuries and up to our own times.

It is not possible to understand and evaluate correctly the 1st Vatican Council without at least a summary consideration of the intellectual trends of that historical period, so dense and complicated.

With your leave I will try to make a synthesis of them. It will serve as an introduction to what I have to say about the council.

Humanism, which is not sudden explosion, but has its roots in the dark Middle Ages, comes to the fore in the 15th century, mainly in the field of art and literature. Later it developed as a tendency to overestimate nature and man, a reaction against the Christian Middle Ages, accused of having mortified both in order to subordinate them to God (theocentrism).

This humanistic tendency is met with also in religious individualism of Lutheran origin; on the philosophical plane with the theories of Descartes, the father of rationalistic subjectivism and of materialistic empiricism; on the scientific plane with positivism in all its many forms (from Smith to Hume) and finally on the politico-social plane with the theories of Rousseau, the founder of democraticism, which undermines the principle of authority at its very foundation.

All this complex movement contributes to forming, in the second half of the Arcadian 18th century, the fascinating system of *illuminationism* (Aufklärung), which has its fundamental premises: great confidence in reason (abstract in the Cartesian sense) as the arbiter of truth; opposition and contempt for the past; firm faith in progress, entrusted to man's reason and free will; rejection of Christianity as revelation and divine authority, and its reduction to a natural religion.

Illuminism sweeps everything before it. In France it spreads in the form of atheistic encyclopedism, becoming vulgar and scoffing with Voltaire; in England as sceptical deism and as aesthetic or utilitarian moralism; in Italy as politico-economic reformism; in Germany as rationalism worked out by the acute intelligence of Lessing, more concrete than Descartes, and applied by Reimarus to biblical exegesis, which becomes mythical and naturalistic.

But now comes Kant, the second father of modern philosophy, who systematically reconstructs rationalism on the basis of criticism, and morality on the ethico-subjective imperative, without God.

Naturalistic Liberalism

Meanwhile, with the French revolution, the abstract premises of illuminationism enter the living reality of history. We are on the threshold of the 19th century, the new era, in which naturalism finds expression in three channels: Kantian rationalism, positivistic empiricism (initiated by Hobbes and then developed by La Mettrie, Cabanis and Comte) and idealism (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel). These and other intellectual trends, conflicting with one another, have repercussions on the practical plane, making the 19th century a crucial period of contradictions. They all however, have a common denominator: hostility and struggle against Christianity and in particular against the Catholic Church. A secularism, therefore, presented under the appealing label of *liberalism* (not to be confused with modern liberalism), which makes society a field of antagonism between two worlds: the theocratic world of the Middle Ages, which blended, at least officially, the sacred with the profane; and the world of humanism, which is moving towards the absolute autonomy of the human ego. Man breaks with the sacred and passes from agnosticism to the negation of all transcendence.

We are at an advanced stage of what is called today the "secularization" or "desacralization" of man and of the world, reaching the paradoxical affirmation of the "death of God."

Such was the tragic condition of the 19th century, which set the Church, the living incarnation of the sacred and the supernatural, an alternative of life or death.

And it must be recognized that the Church did not have the right men to cope with the attack. Educated Catholics, at that time, were mainly gentlemen of private means. They generally limited their defence of religion to triumphal apologies more speculative than realistic, often without any historical sense.

But the growing pressure of radical liberalism obliged some Catholics to think of the possibility of an adaptation of Christianity to the new atmosphere, without touching the substance of the doctrinal and institutional heritage of the Church. Thus there arose a Catholic liberalism, which, against the rigid champions of the *status quo*, tried to bridge the old and the new, seeking contact with profane culture, from which Christian thought had, unfortunately, been separated for a long time.

This was a risky attempt, as it always is, to find a middle way between two extremes, radical progressivism, which prevailed in Rome and had not a few supporters abroad, called *Ultra-montanists*.

The Catholic liberal movement, which began ironically in the philosophico-theological field, particularly with German semirationalism (Gunther, Hermes, Frohschammer), became bolder and bolder, with undertones of *antivomanism*.

Dollinger of the theological Faculty of Munich in Bavaria was a typical example. An intelligent man and a scholar, he founded the school of the new theology, based on positive, historical studies, despising classical scholastic theology.

This man of great prestige had an unfortunate influence also outside his own country. On the eve of the Council, he drew the support of men such as Montalembert and all those who dislike the absolute power of the Pope and of the Roman Curia (Gallicans, Febronians, Jansenists).

Catholic liberalism, fairly moderate in France, under the sign of devotion to the Pope, and openly professed by its founders (Lacordaire, Lamennais, Montalembert), degenerated unhappily owing to the influence of Dollinger. The latter was responsible for the deviation of an elect soul such as that of Montalembert, who dimmed the luminous picture of his life as a son of the Church with his strange hostility towards the Council, due to Dollinger's anti-infallibility obsession.

These and other similar painful events explain the attitude of Pope Gregory XVI and Pope Pius IX, who ended up by condemning both radical liberalism and moderate liberalism. Pius IX, more open than his predecessor, was compelled by the facts to adopt a stiffer attitude in order to defend completely the doctrine of the faith and the authority of the Church.

After a series of Encyclicals, in which he had checked individual liberal attempts, in 1864 he promulgated the famous *Syllabus*, accompanied by the Bull "Quanta cura," the tone of which was strong.

This Document, prepared in ten years of consultations, was in the past and still is today a matter of discussion among theologians, who do not agree about its doctrinal evaluation. It certainly cannot be maintained that all the 80 propositions of the *Syllabus* are equally guaranteed by papal infallibility (some at least are out of date, such as the one on temporal power and the others on religious freedom); but their substantial content, which is the condemnation of naturalistic liberalism in conflict with the doctrine of the faith, is unquestionably still valid.

The *Syllabus* at once became the target of a violent reaction on the part of political and philosophical liberalism. It widened still further the deviation between conservative and liberal-minded Catholics.

In the designs of Providence the *Syllabus*, was a kind of preliminary skirmish in preparation for the battle of the Council, which was to take up again the fundamental issues of that Document.

Discouraging though this probe was, Pius IX went ahead resolutely with his preparations for the Council.

He made the first announcement at the secret Consistory on June 26th, 1867, in the presence of over 500 Bishops who had gathered in Rome for the centenary celebration of the Martyrdom of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.

Towards Vatican I

On June 29th of the following year, the Pope issued the Bull "Aeterni Patris" with which he convened the 20th Ecumenical Council for December 8th, 1869, in the Vatican Basilica. Contrary to the ancient custom, Catholic Heads of State were not invited in the Bull. This was a significant gesture. Pius IX wished to show that, to protect the Church in the exercise of her mission, he did not trust in governments, even if they were Catholic governments, nor in the apostolic majesties, who brought to mind the ancient inauspicious Caesaropapalism and the recent (even more grotesque) Hapsburg Josephism, adopted also by Napoleon. The Church must defend herself not only from her declared enemies, but also from her interested protectors, safeguarding her rights without begging for privileges and, above all, by trusting in her divine resources.

In a separate Letter the Pope invited the Patriarchs of the Oriental schismatic Church to attend, as their predecessors had already done at the Councils of Lyons and of Florence. To the Protestants he addressed words of exhortation to return to the one and only fold.

In the Bull of convocation the Pope established the aim of the Council on the basis of the needs of the historical moment. He described the complex crisis as follows: "Everyone knows in what a horrible storm the Church is now tossed and by how many and what evils civil society itself is afflicted. Fierce enemies of God and of men are combating and oppressing the Catholic Church, her wholesome doctrine and the venerable authority of this Apostolic See. All holy things are despised . . . At this Ecumenical Council it will be necessary to consider and establish with the greatest diligence what concerns . . . the greater glory of God, the inviolability of the faith, the holiness of worship, the eternal salvation of the peoples, the discipline of both clergies . . . respect for the laws of the Church."

The news of the convocation of the Council deeply impressed the civil world. There was a lively reaction in non-Christian environments, in the governments even of Catholic nations (Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and Austria); coldness, if not open hostility, among the Protestants, and in the separated Eastern Churches.

Even among Catholics, unfortunately, there emerged, alongside the enthusiasm of the mass, attitudes of mistrust, disagreement and even dis-

approval, due particularly to the rumour that the infallibility of the Pope would probably be defined. The most moderate merely maintained that the Council was not opportune.

Dollinger set going a whole campaign against infallibility in Germany and outside. In France, Montalembert was particularly violent and tenacious. He was supported by Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans, who was later to lead the anti-infallibility group in the Council.

Owing to this threatening agitation, quite a number of Cardinals, especially those in the Curia, expressed doubts, fears and reserves.

But all this failed to discourage Pius IX, an old man of 77. He remained fearless and firm in his resolution, trusting, as always, more in God than in men.

December 8th, 1869

The Council opened on December 8th, 1869, with the participation of about 700 Fathers from all over the Catholic world. No preceding Council had been so universal and ecumenical as Vatican I.

The Pope well aware of the solemnity of the event, delivered a warm, noble address, dominated by the thought of testifying together to the Word of God and to Christ, the way, the truth and life of mankind wandering along the paths of error and evil.

The external disagreement of Catholics, laymen and Bishops, was reflected to some extent among the Council Fathers. Of this external disagreement it is sufficient to recall the lively controversies between Montalembert and Veuillot, between the latter and Dupanloup, between Dollinger and Hergenrother and others. The main point of discord was infallibility, also because of misunderstandings about its nature and extension.

Therefore the Council was divided into two groups right from the beginning. The majority group (about four-fifths) was conservative in spirit, faithful to the Pope and to the Holy See. It was led by men such as the great English convent, Archbishop Manning, Mons. De-champs, Archbishop of Malines, author of the book "L'infallibilita e il Concilio," which had a wide circulation in various languages; Mons. Pie,

Bishop of Poitiers; and the Germans Martin, Fessler, Senestey, Ledochowski.

The minority group was led by fiery Dupanloup, followed by Cardinal Rauscher (Vienna) and Cardinal Schwarzenberg (Prague) and by Mons. Hefele (Rottenbourg), the famous historian of the Councils.

Of course, the reasons for divisions and groups were not completely univocal. There was a qualitative and quantitative gradation, from the maximum to the minimum, or both sides. In the French opposition group the Gallican mentality was predominant. This is seen particularly in Mons. Maret, of the University of Paris, who accused the Ultramontanists of wanting to transform the structure of the Church, passing from the moderate monarchy willed by the exaggerated "papalists."

The personnel of the Curia maintained a moderately conservative attitude, without taking sides with anyone. This is recognized even by most critical historians.

The Dogmatic Constitutions

From December 8th, 1869 to July 4 public Sessions were held, to discuss and decide about the copious material condensed into 2 schemata by 5 Deputations of 34 Bishops each, headed by a Cardinal.

The first schema had been drawn up by Professor Franzelin of the Gregorian University, under the title: *De doctrina catholica contra multiplicas errores ex rationalismo derivatos*. After a long discussion, during which 35 Fathers spoke, the schema was rejected on the grounds that it was obscure and too scholastic. It was decided that it should be rewritten and a small Commission was made responsible for doing so. The Commission entrusted the task to Mons Martin, who, in his turn, had recourse to the work of Klentgen, another capable Jesuit theologian.

The new text consisted of an introduction and 4 chapters: 1. regarding God the Creator of all things; 2. regarding divine revelation; 3. regarding faith; 4. on the relations between faith and reason. There followed 18 canons with the traditional "anathema sit."

This schema, after a few amendments, became the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic faith (Dei Filius)*. It was solemnly approved unanimously at the 3rd public Session, on April 24th, 1870.

The Constitution confirms the traditional doctrine on God who is One and Three, on the free creation from nothingness, on Providence operating in the world. It reaffirms the supernatural value of revelation as the Word of God contained in the Bible and in Tradition.

It defends the rationality and the supernaturality of faith, as reasonable adherence to God and to his Word, under the impulse of grace.

Finally it defines the superiority of revelation and of faith over reason and its powers, declaring, however, that there can be no conflict between the truth of faith and truth of reason since God is the source of both.

Thus there is the condemnation of materialism and pantheism of every kind; of rationalism and semirationalism, but also of the fideistic traditionalism of Lamennais, Beautain and Bonnetty and of Kantian agnosticism, which limit, for different reasons the capacity of human reason.

The Constitution *Dei Filius* defines that reason by itself can reach certain Knowledge of the Creator through creatures.

Thus, in the century of rationalism, the Church defends the value of reason, as at Trent she had defended, against Luther, human freedom, even under the influence of efficacious grace.

The 2nd schema met with great difficulties. Prepared as *Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia Christi*, it consisted of 15 chapters and 21 Canons concerning the Church and her properties (1-9), her power (10-11), temporal power and the relations of the Church with civil society (12-15). The Primacy of the Roman Pontiff was discussed in c. 11, but without any mention of infallibility.

The schema was distributed to the Fathers on January 31 under the seal of secrecy; but shortly afterwards the German press managed to get possession of it and made it public.

There was at once a violent reaction in political environments and circles. Among the Council Fathers, too, the schema was the object of criticism and discordant judgments, particularly chapter 11, a long chapter in which the powers of the Pope were discussed, leaving the function of the Bishops in the background.

Chapter I is worthy of note. It based the whole Ecclesiology on the doctrine of the Mystical Body, in accordance with patristic thought in the first centuries, and only afterwards mentioned the juridical aspect based on the concept of society. This is a presage of the position that Vatican II would assume.

In spite of this and other merits, the schema failed to win the support of the majority.

Meanwhile 450 Fathers, against 131, asked that clause on the infallibility of the Pope should be added to chap. 11 of the schema. The proposal was like an atomic bomb, giving rise to strong protests from the Council. The request of the 450 Bishops was taken to the Pope, who, in spite of the remonstrances of the minority, approved it and had it distributed for discussion on March 6th.

The Doctrine of Primacy

Reactions continued inside the Council and outside, creating an uneasiness that seemed insuperable.

To end the delay, the Deputation for the faith, presided over by Card. Bilio, decided on April 27th that chap. 11 of the schema should be amplified to deal with the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff in 3 chapters, plus the one already formulated on infallibility.

These chapters were given the title "Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia" I (De Romano Pontifice) and it was decided that it should have precedence in the debate on the rest of the schema "De Ecclesia," which had been rewritten and reduced to 10 chapters and 16 Canons by Klentgen.

The debate was opened and occupied 14 General Congregations (from May 14th to June 3rd).

In vain did the restless minority undertake a campaign of obstructionism, making lengthy addresses.

On July 18th, the 4th and last public Session approved the Constitution on the Roman Pontiff as follows: 535 Fathers present; votes in favour, 533, two *non placet*; 55 Fathers absent, abstaining, according to their own declaration.

The latter, however, after the interruption of the Council on account of the political events, accepted the definition, with a praiseworthy sentiment of discipline, and imposed it on their own dioceses. Mons. Dupanloup, its great opponent, set the example.

Divine Providence, which always watches over the Church and guides her history, had evidently intervened in order that, on the eve of the capture of Rome and the consequent humiliations for the Pope the doctrine of *Papal Primacy* should be established, raising the Successor of Peter above all the grandeur and all the misery of this world.

The Constitution on the Primacy (*Pastor aeternus*), recalling the texts of Holy Scripture and the voices of the living tradition of the Church, defines in lapidary style the fundamental theme of Ecclesiology in four chapters:

I. Divine institutions of the Primacy of Peter, constituted by Christ the visible Head of the whole Church with authority and full jurisdiction over all her members;

II. Christ Himself established that Peter should have perpetual Successors in the Primacy over the whole Church; and Peter's Successors are the Roman Pontiffs;

III. The authority of the Roman Pontiff is full and supreme and is extended and exercised directly over the whole Church, over the Bishops and all the faithful, not as regards faith and morals, but also on the plane of discipline. This authority does not harm the authority of the Bishops but on the contrary strengthens and safeguards it;

IV. It is a truth revealed by God that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when he defines, as Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, a doctrine regarding faith or morals, to be observed by the whole Church, thanks to the divine assistance promised to him in the person of Peter, he enjoys that infallibility that the Divine Redeemer willed to give his Church. Therefore these definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irrevocable in themselves, without the consent of the Church.

The Primacy of the Pope could not have been defined with more forcefulness.

The final phrase "without the consent of the Church," which was disputed by the minority up to the last moment, put an end to the claim of Gallicanism, which wished to condition the exercise of the authority and magisterium of the Pope with the participation of the ecclesial community, Bishops and faithful.

The Constitution, on the contrary, presents the Pope *personally* endowed with the prerogative of supreme power and of infallibility of Magisterium.

This, however, should not be understood in the sense that the Pope is separated from, as it were, and extrinsic to the Mystical Body, which is the Church, of which the Pope is the inseparable head.

Interesting proposals had been prepared on this subject, particularly by an Italian, Mons. Zinelli, Bishop of Treviso. But the interruption of the Council prevented the continuation of the discussion on the prepared schema. Thus the question of the Episcopate, its nature and function in connection with the Vicar of Christ, with whom by divine institution, the Episcopate is so closely united as to form with him the "communio hierarchiae," was not dealt with.

Thus ended the 20th Ecumenical Council of the Church, which remains a solemn historical and doctrinal monument, in spite of its interruption.

The merit for this Council goes to Pope Pius IX, who insisted on it at all costs and brought it to a successful conclusion, without violating its free development, more by trust in God and in his Immaculate Mother, the Star of his pontificate, than by human devices; by the fascination of his intelligent simplicity, and by his innermost sufferings, concealed behind a smile.

He was fully aware of the drama of his age and managed to dominate it, refusing to submit to it.

The vicissitudes of his life, his actions, often disconcerting, had a deep root, which is overlooked by those historians who judge him severely.

The Personality of Pius IX

Pius IX had a deep humanity, which he manifested with incomparable charity towards everyone, even his enemies, and with a serene sense of humor as regards worldly events. But he was above all a man of faith, which lived in contact with God in point of fact reduced everything to the superior reasons of Divine Providence.

A man of faith, who remained calm amid all the storms of his difficult course, even in face of the collapse of the temporal power, He rightly protected in the name of history and of law, but personally he did not regret it.

With him and thanks to the Church, burdened with the century-old weight of customs and a condition that were all too temporal, resumes again her religious appearance and her evangelical path, which is in the world, but not of the world, and knows no other sword but the Word of God.

It would at last be time to dispel the shadows with which the enemies of the faith and of the Church have concealed the angelic face of this great Pope. Thus the glory of his Servant of God will shine forth for all to see. Like Christ, he was a sign of contradiction and an indomitable witness to truth, justice and love.

At his death he left to his successors a Church no longer in mourning for the loss of temporal power, now anachronistic, but strengthened in faith and confirmed in authority with the definition of that spiritual Primacy which will consolidate the unity of the Church, raising it to its own sphere of superhuman doctrine and fruitful social and missionary apostolate.

It is not easy to find in the millenary history of the Church a period richer in light and spiritual vitality than the one that followed Vatican I, from the pontificate of Leo XIII to our own times.

That Council is the goal of 19 centuries of the Church's difficult progress in the world, and closes an era characterized by a hard, authoritarian and markedly dogmatic style. This style was justified also by the historical climate, which was marked at the beginning by the immaturity of the peoples to be catechized, then gradually by the development of

reason and of conscience, promoted by the Church herself, but which later degenerated into humanism that rejected the supernatural.

A forceful style, which is projected a little beyond Vatican I, as far as St. Pius X and Pius XI. It begins to relax with Pius XII, who, in his very rich Magisterium, opened the window on the world and on its culture, re-establishing the lost contact with Faith and with Theology, and stressing its positive aspects, when occasion arose. The tone of the Encyclical *Humani generis* is obviously not the same as the Encyclical *Pascendi*. This open attitude was adopted and widened by Vatican II, the Council of *aggiornamento*, ecumenism, dialogue, collegiality and the pastoral spirit. It tempers the exigencies of truth with those of charity, the cold patterns of law with the warm light of faith and of dogma, and it makes authority a service of humility and love in full harmony with the Gospel.

The Two Vatican Councils Complete Each Other

A reversal of the situation? No.

The two Councils, with an interval of a century between them, are not opposed to each other, but complete and integrate each other, like all the great Councils, which are not a series of monoliths, but living fibres of a fabric of thought and of love, the woof of the history of salvation.

Vatican II inherited from Vatican I the task of continuing an important discussion on the hierarchy of the Church. And the discussion was continued and concluded on the authority of the bishops. This authority was declared to be of divine origin, but subordinate to that of the Successor of Peter, the Head of the Church and of the Episcopal Body (*sub Petro Capite*). The dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* confirms the whole doctrine of the Primacy defined by Vatican I and adds the doctrine of Collegiality, which completes the picture of the Hierarchy, in accordance with the thought of Christ. Alongside Peter, the foundation and key-bearer of the Kingdom of God, which is the Church, Christ wished to have the circle of the other Apostles, invested with the sacred authority of loosing and binding, preaching the Gospel, feeding and sanctifying souls, collaborating with Peter-the-Head to win the world to Christ. Like infallibility in Vatican I, Collegiality in

Vatican II led to numerous and sharp controversies, based on misunderstandings on both sides.

Collegiality, understood correctly, leaves the primacy of the Roman Pontiff intact, and stresses its unitarian strength by inserting it in the structure of the Mystical Body, not only by the geometrical ways of law, but also and even more by a vital and supernatural impulse. It is said in the Constitution that Collegiality has no meaning or value without the Pope, who is its inseparable Head and conditions it without being conditioned by it.

Nevertheless Primacy and Collegiality are not the same thing, but two distinct aspects of a complex reality which is not exempt from internal tensions, like the tensions between Papacy and Episcopate, between faith and reason, between grace and freedom, between authority and obedience.

During the last Synod Collegiality was discussed at length. With all due respect for all the members, the most interesting and effective speech was that of Mons. Philips, perhaps the most outstanding among the martyrs of the Council. He said that Primacy and Collegiality constitute an inner tension (a sign of life!) which, together with the others, is not overcome with intricate theological or juridical discussions, but by virtue of the Holy Spirit, Divine Love, the soul of the Church.

This is a great thought, rooted in the Gospel and decisive for the fate of the Church. It is the love that St. Paul hailed as the motive and essential strength of Christianity (I Cor. 13) and proposed as the means of overcoming the law ("Plenitudo legis dilectio") and to realize truth in the world ("Veritatem facientes in caritate").

This deep motive animates Vatican II to an astonishing extent. While Vatican I, like classical theology, is more objective, more transcendent and therefore more detached from the world, which it condemns, Vatican II is more subjective, more psychological, more in touch with human reality, in which it inserts itself willingly, to dialogue with the prodigal son. All the acts of the Council are inspired by the same motive of love: collegiality for internal communion, ecumenism to attract the distant, the Decree on the Missions for the conquest of those who do not know, the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* to re-establish contact with the world which has lost the sense of God.

Paul VI's Mission:

It is therefore permissible to affirm that Vatican II, more attentive to the signs of the times, has introduced, by divine inspiration, in the presentation of the Christian message, a style more suited to human conscience, now adult and jealous of its autonomy.

In any case, *Christus heri et hodie*. Between past, present and future there are no breaks or stops or reverses, but there is the development of a seed given and destined by God to grow slowly, but tenaciously, to the maturity of the last day. "The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed..." But one thing is certain: both styles, each in its historical moment, are subject to risk and are always hall-marked with suffering. Truth and life are born and bloom in pain!

Every Pope, the Vicar of a crucified God, is the Cross-bearer of the Church. Pius IX suffered before, during and after Vatican I.

John XXIII, who opened Vatican II in joy, had at once the privilege of offering his life in sacrifice to ensure its success.

His Successor, who received the mandate of concluding the Council and carrying out its demands, has been engaged for six years in hard, complex and delicate work, laboriously guiding Peter's boat amidst the waves and rocks of a new sea, with the faith of an Apostle and the courage of a Martyr!

The grief of the Pope, more than of a mother, is the fruit of love and the source of new life.

Blessed Father, close to your crucified heart, we cherish the certainty that the stormy waves will subside, and that, in the light of the last Council, the Church will become *agape* once more. With her renewed life she will show the immense human family that not subtle discussions, not congresses, not diplomatic manoeuvres, not armaments and war, but only burning love of Christ on earth will be able to save civilization and give the world peace.
