

THE "BRIEF OUTLINES" OF DOGMATIC CONSTITUTIONS

Prepared by the Preparatory Theological Commission - Summer 1960

This is a translation of a nine-page printed brochure sent by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani to the members of the Preparatory Theological Commission (PTC) in September 1960.¹ Shortly after Pope John XXIII established the preparatory commissions, Ottaviani appointed a subcommission of nine men, seven of them members of the Theological Commission and two consultants to the Central Commission, to assist him in the preparation of his Commission's work.² In early July, 1960, Sebastien Tromp, S.J., secretary of the PTC, prepared short outlines (schemata compendiosa) of texts on the Church, on defending the deposit of faith, and on the moral order. When he learned that the Pope insisted that the Council discuss Scripture, he had hastily to work with S. Garofalo to prepare a fourth text, on the sources of revelation. These outlines were discussed at a meeting of the subcommission on 21 July and were then revised later in the month in the light of that discussion. They were then printed in a brochure and mailed to the members of the PTC in late September 1960.

In a letter to the members of the PTC,³ Ottaviani explained what led the subcommission to compose them:

For almost all the bishops in one way or another want *the nature and character of the Church* to be treated, along with various related problems. Second, it is suggested, indeed considered necessary, that *Sacred Scripture and Tradition* cannot be passed over in silence because of the recent controversies and errors, which are also seriously troubling many bishops. Third, with regard to *dogmatic errors*, from information reported to the Holy See from everyone everywhere, we learn especially that quite fundamental truths are being called into question and that errors are being spread everywhere with serious danger to the purity of the faith. Finally, more than a few bishops lament *false ideologies in the moral field*, both individual and social, and therefore it is hoped that the chief errors of today will be rejected and that a concise exposition of Catholic teaching on social matters will be presented.

In his report to the first plenary session of the PTC, on October 27, 1960, Tromp explained that the governing concern in the elaboration of the four outlines was not to anticipate full theological treatises, but dogmatic Constitutions which would deal with matters of faith and morals in response to the needs of the day. That is why some essential matters are dealt with briefly--no one is questioning them--while other matters, not as essential but disputed today, are dealt with at greater length. A similar criterion would apply in the elaboration of the full Constitutions. The subcommission, he continued, had used as its basic guide the wish of the pope, the proposals of bishops and universities, and the experience of the Roman dicasteries.⁴

At the same meeting, individual reports on the purposes of the four brief outlines were given by Tromp, Ciappi, Hürth, and Garofalo. The outlines were accepted by the full PTC and thus set the agenda for the work of the next year and a half. A comparison of the final texts prepared by the PTC for the Council will show that they closely follow the outlines given below. The material on morality, however,

¹ Sent under the title "Pontificia Commissio Theologica pro Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II," and with protocol number 4/60.

² The seven members of this subcommission of the Preparatory Theological Commission (henceforth: PTC) were: S. Tromp, A. Piolanti, S. Garofalo, L. Ciappi, M.R. Gagnebet, F. Hürth, C. Balic; the two consultants to the Central Preparatory Commission were D. Staffa and P. Philippe. All of them had some relationship with the Holy Office.

³ Ottaviani to Griffiths, 24 September 1960; AANY.

⁴ "Relatio Rev.mi Patris Tromp, S.I., Secretarii, de Quattuor Schematibus."

eventually was divided among four texts: on the moral order, on questions of sexuality, on the social order, and on the international community.

I. BRIEF OUTLINE OF A CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

1. The divine nature and mission of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. The full harmony between its social and juridical and its mystical aspects.
2. The Church as the Communion of Saints: whether those who are not really members of the Church can enjoy the Communion of Saints.
3. The members of the Church and those subject to the Church by right.
4. The necessity of the Church: against false rigorism and indifferentism.
5. The official magisterial authority of the Church:
 - a) Only the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops are the subject of the authoritative magisterium. It is explained in what sense theologians, pastors, preachers, charismatics, the simple faithful exercise a magisterium.
 - b) The object of the authoritative magisterium does not extend merely to matters of faith and morals to be believed by faith.
 - c) Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are authoritatively explained only by the

II. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF A CONSTITUTION ON THE SOURCES OF REVELATION

1. Sacred Scripture was written under divine inspiration. A question is whether the description of Inspiration contained in Leo XIII's Encyclical, *Providentissimus*, should be included in the Constitution. The charism of inspiration affects the sacred writers, but not the "community."

- Magisterium of the Church.
6. The disciplinary authority of the Church:
 - a) The problem of obedience.
 - b) The right to free criticism.
 - c) Public opinion in the Church.
 7. The Sacrament of the Episcopate. The relationship of Bishops to the Supreme Pontiff. In what sense Bishops have been established to rule the Church of God.
 8. The relationship of Bishops to the priesthood.
 9. The place of lay people in the Church and their responsibility: the notion of the People of God; Catholic Action and the Apostolate of the laity. Good and bad laicism.
 10. The right and duty of the Church to preach the Gospel to all peoples everywhere.
 11. The Church and the return of those separated:
 - a) The relationship of the Church to separated individuals; to separated communities; to the "World Council of Churches."
 - b) Ecumenism, "openness," eirenicism.
 12. Church and State.
 13. Christian tolerance.

2. Sacred Scripture is not the only source of the Revelation which is contained in *the Deposit of Faith*. For besides the divine Tradition by which Sacred Scripture is explained, there is also the Divine Tradition of truths which are not contained in Sacred Scripture.

3. In virtue of its origin, Sacred Scripture enjoys absolute *inerrancy*: the question of human authorship--whether, that is, such or such a book was written by such or such an author--of itself does not touch divine inspiration. But even on the critical matter of authorship the Church's

historical tradition is to be kept in mind. Particularly with regard to the writings of the prophets and of the authors of the New Testament, the question of human authorship is not distinct from the dogmatic question.

4. "Literary genres" are found in Sacred Scripture, and as employed by the Holy Spirit, they are perfectly compatible with inerrancy; they are the reason why the literal sense of Sacred Scripture is subject to different interpretations.

5. The literary genre is to be determined not on one's own nor by the genius of a private interpreter, but from the character of a book or part of a book, from a well-argued demonstration of the customs of the time when the book was written, and from ecclesiastical tradition. Where doubt remains, only the Church's Magisterium can settle the matter.

6. Before all else, Sacred Scripture teaches the divine economy in the history of salvation, a goal which does not in the least touch the historicity of the sacred books; the rather free way in which the sacred writers narrate or arrange facts or words does not affect their historicity.

7. The facts in the Gospels are not narrated in the fashion of some mythical or symbolic clothing of religious truths, but express historical truth. Such a mythical or symbolic explanation, especially of the miracles and the facts of the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, destroys the innerancy and historicity of Sacred Scripture and therefore contradicts Catholic faith.

8. The authors of the Gospels were faithful to the truth when, under divine inspiration, they

wrote down the facts and the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and this fidelity was not lessened by any influence on the composition of the Gospels by the preaching of the Apostles or by the faith of the primitive Church.

9. Sacred Scripture was not given by God immediately to individual believers, but to the Church.

10. Although the reading of Sacred Scripture is to be most highly recommended, still it is not suitable to every individual both because of the obscurity of some parts and because the religion and morality of the Old Testament were raised to a loftier perfection by Christ the Lord.

11. A theology which relies only on the documents of Sacred Scripture while neglecting Sacred Tradition and the Church's Magisterium threatens the Church of God with the danger of Protestantism; an explanation of the books that is merely philological or literary or critical exposes her to the danger of rationalism.

12. In dealing with questions which arise from recent discoveries in science or in history, Catholic interpreters are not to rely solely on human ("scholarly") criteria, but should follow the mind of the Church in maintaining the inspiration and utter inerrancy of Sacred Scripture and should always be ready faithfully to keep the norms of the Magisterium of the Church.

13. The Latin translation of Sacred Scripture known as the "Vulgate," which has been approved in the Church over the course of so many centuries, is, as the Church has understood and now understands it, immune from all error on matters of faith and morals.

III. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF A CONSTITUTION ON DEFENDING THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH

Defending the *Deposit* of faith is a task, that is, a divine right and duty, not only of the Roman Pontiff but also of individual Bishops for the sake of their flocks. It is guarded by fidelity

to Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and by defending it against errors and novelties (see 1 Tim 6:20) by dogmatic, moral, and liturgical progress, without "archeologism" (see the Encyclical *Humani Generis*; the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*; the Address of Pius XII, 31 May 1954).

I. General Questions:

1. *The notion of objective truth.* The objective, ontological, transcendental validity of human knowledge in the natural order and analogically in the supernatural order. One must therefore reject: idealism, phenomenism, immanentism, pragmatism, existentialism, dogmatic relativism (see Encyclicals *Humani Generis*, *Pascendi*; the Decree *Lamentabili*).

2. *The existence of a truly personal God and the effectiveness of demonstrations.* There is a certain and true demonstration, by the mere light of reason, from created, visible realities. The perennial validity of the five ways of St. Thomas; they are corroborated, especially the arguments from motion and from the order of the universe, by a deeper knowledge of the macrocosm and of the microcosm (see Pius XII, Speech to the Academy of Sciences, 10 November 1951).

3. *Cosmic evolution.* The perennial and fundamental validity of the teaching of the Lateran and Vatican Councils on the creation from nothing of all things by God. The merely hypothetical validity of universal evolution, especially if it is applied to the body of the first man. The absolute denial of evolution with respect to the soul of man and to the very Mystery of the Incarnation (the theory of redemptive evolution).

4. *Monogenism.* This is to be retained as certain because it alone preserves the doctrine of faith concerning original sin by the one Adam (Enc. *Humani Generis*).

5. *The true concept of revelation.* It implies the manifestation not only of a personal God but also of the supernatural and natural truths of religion. The gratuity and essentially supernatural character of revelation. The analogical validity of natural knowledge of divine things.

6. *The certainty of the fact of revelation.* The fact of revelation is apodictically demonstrated from most certain signs (miracles, prophecies). The rational credibility, from these signs, of the fact of revelation is supremely adapted to the intelligence of all men and is therefore to be preferred to the method of immanence (see Vatican Council, D 1790; the motu proprio

Sacrorum Antistitum, D 2145; Enc. *Humani Generis*).

7. *The notion of faith.* "We are bound to give the revealing God by faith the full submission of intellect and will" (Vatican Council, D 1790). "*Crederet Deo, Deum, in Deum*" (St. Augustine, St. Thomas). Neither intellectualism nor voluntarism.

8. *The distinction and the harmony between the natural and the supernatural orders.* Grace does not remove, but heals, raises, perfects. The natural order now included in the supernatural order. The one ultimate end of man: supernatural. This elevation neither ontologically necessary, nor infallible, nor suitable according to nature; but at once perfectly gratuitous and supremely suitable (Enc. *Humani Generis*).

9. *No revelation of new truths after the close of the Deposit of Faith.* A certain doctrine of faith. The deposit closed objectively, but open to interpretation and explanation, that is, to dogmatic development. The supererogatory rule of private revelations.

II. Particular Questions

1. *Original Sin.* The historical, personal sin of the first parents, not a collective or social sin, although transmitted to all, who sinned in Adam.

2. *The notion of the satisfaction rendered by Christ for us.* Vicarious satisfaction; of infinite value; out of love and obedience through the sacrifice of the Cross; a work at once of justice and of mercy.

3. *The real and not symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist.* It is not sufficient to admit the so-called real and essential relation of the species to Christ seated at the right hand of the Father (Pius XII, Speech to the Pastoral Liturgical Congress, 22 September 1956).

4. The sacrificial character of Holy Mass. Its constitutive essence in the "immolation" carried out, in the name of Christ, by presbyters alone (Enc. *Mediator Dei*).

5. *The Blessed Virgin Mary.* Not superficial (marginal), but at the heart of Christianity; as the Mother of the Incarnate Word, Partner of Christ

the Savior, most Holy Mother of all the members of Christ, universal Mediatrix. Virgin

before, during and after childbirth.

V. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF A CONSTITUTION ON THE MORAL ORDER, INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL

1. Foundation:

1. Existence of an objective and absolute moral order.

2. *God* as the author and end, guardian and judge of the moral order.

3. The moral order embraces the natural law and the supernatural law.

4. The natural law perfected, sanctified, and raised by Christ.

5. The moral order is not a matter of one's choice, but internally binds one's mind and externally one's life, and this by the will of God and of Christ the Lord.

6. Opposed errors: moral nihilism and agnosticism, today's moral autonomism according to which the moral order is created by man, moral existentialism, moral immanentism, naturalism, materialism.

7. By divine right the Magisterium of the Church is the authoritative interpreter of the whole moral order, including the natural law.

2. The Individual Moral Order

1. In the moral order, the individual person is not finally autonomous, but subject to the law of God and of Christ.

2. Situation ethics and the objective, absolute moral order, divinely binding individual persons and communities.

3. Freedom of conscience and the moral order objectively binding the conscience to God and to Christ.

4. Love as the criterion of morality: the correctness and the danger of the principle.

5. The objective moral order as the obligatory norm of sexual life in both the unmarried and the married; chastity and

modesty. Libertinism, nudism, hedonism.

6. The effective subject of the moral order: the dignity of the human person: true and false humanism.

7. Deliberate violation of the moral order: sin. Sinning because of ignorance, malice, weakness. The genuine notion of sin and its various corruptions. There is no true freedom or responsibility which contradicts the truth of reason and revealed truth.

3. The Social Order

1. The social order, as included within the moral order, is subject to the principles of both moral orders.

2. Association is a right and postulate of nature. The association of persons, taken up by God and Christ in the supernatural order, is governed by the norms of the supernatural order.

3. The moral norm which applies among persons gathered in societies is peace or the tranquillity of order, not class warfare.

4. That peace cannot exist without authority and without legitimate obedience to authority within the limits of its competence [this may mean "obedience to legitimate authority"]. Thus for God's and conscience's sake legitimate authority is to be obeyed.

5. The family as of natural origin, by nature prior to other societies. A constitutional law has been given to it by God which in its substance is immutable, as both the light of reason and faith teach.

6. Marriage the only legitimate source of the family. Its nature, purposes, essential properties established by God and removed from the decision of men. Catholic doctrine about marriage and its dignity in both orders is presented in the documents of Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII, where also are found principles about the purpose, use and abuse of marriage, about the Ogino-Knaus theory and birth control; about the intrinsic

corruption of the generative act by onanism; about artificial fertilization. The problem of the need to limit children today because of "geographic [sic: demographic?] indications."

7. Supports of the right moral order of society: private property, the right to work and to its fruit; subsidiary assistance to individuals and communities by the State; the principle of subsidiarity.

8. The political community and its nature, origin, functions according to the teaching of Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII, against the errors of materialism, socialism, communism, liberalism, capitalism. Maritain's doctrine and laicism.

9. The moral and Christian order for international relationships, the principle of union and collaboration, against the false adage of opposition and disjunction because of diversities of race, blood, culture, etc. The absolute obligation peacefully to settle international conflicts by all licit means: the right to prevent or to repel an unjust aggressor by all licit means. The question of total war and modern means of destruction.

10. The clergy and social realities.

11. The laity and social realities.

4. A Concise Exposition of the Social Doctrine Desired by the Supreme Pontiff Might Include the Following:

1. The social order is an objective moral order.

2. Man was created by God as a social being.

3. The natural and supernatural equality of men.

4. Order and the authority willed by God.

5. The origin of societies: which is natural priority.

6. Society for the sake of men.

7. The common good prevails over the private good.

8. Just distribution of temporal goods and social economy.

9. Peaceful collaboration of classes, states, offices, professions, organizations. The principle of subsidiarity.

10. The cooperation of labor and capital for the common good.

11. The coordination and subordination of societies.

12. The need for a supreme international authority.

13. All licit means must be used to prevent war; all licit means can be used to prevent or to repel unjust aggression.

14. The Magisterium of the Church a guiding star.