

## Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism

Few Catholics would disagree with the judgement that the Second Vatican Council has been «the most important event within the Church in the past 400 years»,<sup>1</sup> especially if «Vatican II» is taken to refer not only to the meeting itself, the documents it issued and the reforms it authorized, but also to the impact of all three on the Church in the years since. The title of Louis Bouyer's book, written only three years after the close of the Council, *The Decomposition of Catholicism*,<sup>2</sup> reflects the rapidity and the depth of the changes which the Catholic Church underwent. Five years later, Emile Poulat evoked Bouyer's thesis, while also indicating the range of disagreement over its interpretation:

«The Church, especially the Roman Church has evolved further in the last decade than it did in the previous century. The Church of Pius XII was closer to that of Pius IX than to that of Paul VI. Should one speak of crisis, of change, of agony, of renewal? Opinions differ on both the diagnosis and the result. But if it is not simply the end of Christianity, is there any doubt that it is the end of *one* Christianity — the one that was familiar and predictable to everyone, believer or unbeliever?»<sup>3</sup>

The conflict of interpretations over the extraordinary impact of the Council was focused with particular sharpness when in 1985 Pope John Paul II called an extraordinary meeting of the Synod of Bishops to review, evaluate, and celebrate the achievements of Vat-

<sup>1</sup> J. Hitchcock, *Catholicism and Modernity. Confrontation or Capitulation?*, New York 1979, 75.

<sup>2</sup> L. Bouyer, *The Decomposition of Catholicism*, Chicago 1969.

<sup>3</sup> E. Poulat, *Une Eglise ébranlée. Changement, conflit et continuité de Pie XII à Jean Paul II*, Paris 1980, 41.

ican II. This announcement was met by a variety of reactions which reflect the general types of interpretations and evaluations of the Council's work and impact. At the risk of simplifying, three such types may be noted.

a) The first, «progressive» interpretation draws a dramatic contrast between pre- and post-conciliar Catholicism, almost always to the disadvantage of the pre-conciliar Church. It uses hard words to describe it: triumphalistic, juridical, clerical, paternalistic, irrelevant, patriarchal, neurotic, obsessive-compulsive, etc. On this view the Council represented a long-overdue effort of the Church to open itself to the values of the modern world. The changes it introduced are welcomed as effects of the «new Pentecost» for which good Pope John XXIII had prayed. If there has been some confusion since the Council, this is largely the fault of intransigents, especially in Rome, who were not equal to the charismatic challenge the Council posed and out of timidity, bad faith, or ignorance have consistently opposed its reforms and blunted its prophetic, creative, and renovative force. This view is often represented in the columns and editorials of *The National Catholic Reporter*.<sup>4</sup>

b) The second, «traditionalist» view also works with a sharp contrast between the pre- and post-conciliar Church, this time to the disadvantage of post-conciliar Catholicism. It regards the Council as an unfortunate (and among extreme groups, a heretical) capitulation of the Roman Catholic Church to the liberalism and modernity it had consistently opposed ever since these errors first demonstrated their diabolical character in the French Revolution. Proponents of this view thus tend to concentrate their criticisms on the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom and Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. What they do not hesitate to call a tragic apostasy since the Council, they blame on the Council itself, for it initiated the movements which radicals since have taken farther to the point that they now threaten to destroy the Church. The most famous proponent of this view of the Council is, of course,

<sup>4</sup> Early illustrations of this view are frequent in Fr. du Plessix Gray, *Divine Disobedience. Profiles in Catholic Radicalism*, New York 1970; a more recent example is E. Kennedy, *The Now and Future Church. The Psychology of Being an American Catholic*, Garden City 1985, whose most frequent description of pre-conciliar American Catholicism is «obsessive-compulsive».

Archbishop Lefebvre, but there are those who have not followed him into schism who maintain something like this opinion.<sup>5</sup>

c) Obviously there is a great deal of room between these two views, and most Catholics perhaps are struggling for the middle ground. The most famous of these is Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, whose view may be called «reformist». His famous book of interviews, published in 1985, gave wide circulation to views which Ratzinger had been advancing for some time.<sup>6</sup> In brief, his view is that while the Council met in an atmosphere of great hope and expectation, the twenty years since the Council have been decidedly unfavorable to the Church. A long process of decay has set in, which must be blamed principally on progressives who have capitulated to the views of bourgeois western culture and by their specious appeals to a so-called «spirit» of the Council have betrayed the intentions set down in its «letter». The challenge today is «restoration», a refusal to admit the discontinuity implied in talk about a pre- and post-conciliar Church, and a return to the authentic teaching of the authentic Council, which represents still an indispensable, consistent, and adequate norm for Church life.

Those dissatisfied with all these interpretations might begin to look for foundations for a more adequate view. A starting-point may perhaps be found in one point on which all three views seem to agree: that the everyday Catholicism that had existed right up through the reign of Pius XII had collapsed. The first group largely welcomed its disappearance. Traditionalist and reformist interpreters deplored its loss, disagreeing only on whether the Council itself should be blamed for the disaster. No adequate interpretation of the Council or of its impact is possible without a reasonably objective

<sup>5</sup> See D. Menozzi, *Opposition to the Council (1966-84)*, in *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. G. Albenigo, J.P. Jossua, and J.A. Komonchak, Washington 1987, 325-48. Anyone who thinks that Lefebvre's opposition is based principally on post-conciliar abuses would do well to read his last two books, *Lettre ouverte aux catholiques perplexes*, Paris 1985, and *Il s'ont decouronné. Du libéralisme à l'apostasie. La tragédie conciliaire*, Escurrolles 1987, where Lefebvre says that «without rejecting that Council en bloc, I think that it is the greatest disaster of this century and of all the past centuries, since the Church's foundation» (XIII).

<sup>6</sup> See The Ratzinger Report (San Francisco 1985); for earlier essays, Catholicism after the Council, in *The Furrow* 18 (1967) 3-23; *Zehn Jahre nach Konzilsbeginn. Wo stehen wir?*, in *Dogma und Verkündigung*, München 1977, 433-441; *Principles of Catholic Theology. Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, San Francisco 1987, 367-393.

study of the Catholicism which had so quickly collapsed. Without this it is not possible to understand either the drama of the Council itself or the even more remarkable changes which followed it nor to address the questions why these occurred and whether the Council could be considered responsible for them.

The essay that follows builds upon the work of several European scholars to argue that in the nineteenth and twentieth century the Catholic Church constructed for itself a new sociological form which differed in significant ways from the Catholicism of earlier eras.<sup>7</sup> This modern Roman Catholicism took the form of a counter-society, legitimated by a counter-culture, as a response to and in opposition to the emerging liberal culture and society which advanced with such apparent inexorability throughout those years. The essay concentrates on the century between the Council of Vienna (1815) and the death of Pope Pius X (1914). It does not claim to be exhaustive either in theme or in illustration. It concentrates on the official self-definition of Catholicism fostered especially by the popes of the period. This represented a form of Catholicism that was eventually adopted, although at different times and with varying local features, by all Catholic Churches in the world. By the end of this period, local types of Catholicism were becoming versions of the one, universally normative Roman Catholicism. All of the features described continued to mark the social form of the Church through the reign of Pius XII. It was this Roman Catholicism that collapsed after Vatican II, and, as will be argued, it did so because the Council, both as an event and in several important dimensions, represented a major challenge to its presuppositions, attitudes, and strategies.

<sup>7</sup> See especially F.-X. Kaufmann, *Kirche Begreifen. Analysen und Thesen zur gesellschaftlichen Verfassung des Christentums*, Freiburg 1979; *Zur Soziologie des Katholizismus*, ed. K. Gabriel and F.-X. Kaufmann, Manz 1980; *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil als Moment einer Modernisierung des Katholizismus*, in *Der Beitrag der deutschsprachigen und osteuropäischen Länder zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, ed. K. Wittstadt and W. Verschooten, Leuven 1996, 3-24; *Vatikanum und Modernisierung. Historische, theologische und soziologische Perspektiven*, ed. F.-X. Kaufmann and A. Zingente, Paderborn 1996; and E. Poulat, *Eglise contre Bourgeoisie. Introduction au devenir du catholicisme actuel*, Paris 1977; *Une Église ébranlée. Modernités, horizons, physionomies, débats*, Paris 1982; *Le catholicisme sous observation. Du modernisme à aujourd'hui*, Paris 1983. L'Église, c'est un monde. L'Éclésiologie, Paris 1986. For an often similar argument, see the unjustly neglected book of W. McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism. The Search for Relevance*, New York 1980, which is better as sociological than as theological analysis.

Two assumptions have guided this study and in turn been confirmed by it. First, it is not helpful to refer to pre-Vatican II Catholicism simply as «Tridentine». It is true that the Council of Trent exercised great authority over the construction of Roman Catholicism in the last two centuries, but the latter took on such particular and new characteristics in the face of the challenges of developing modernity that it is permissible to speak of a distinct period in Church history.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, it is permissible and in fact necessary, if also difficult, to distinguish between the Church in its theological definition and the social form in which it is embodied at different times and in different places. The Church constitutes itself within and in some reference, even if a negative one, to the world and time in which it lives. The concrete self-realization of the Church in the 150 years before the Council is the object of this study, and to describe its construction and its collapse is not to describe the origin and the dissolution of the Church itself.<sup>9</sup>

*The Great Conflict*

Throughout the period under discussion, the Catholic Church believed itself to be engaged in a great battle. The political and religious disruptions of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era were interpreted as only the most visible and violent manifestations of an assault upon Catholic truths and values which had been initiated during the Reformation. That event was the first moment in a diabolical lineage that ran on through the Enlightenment

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<sup>8</sup> So Kaufmann defines «Catholicism» as referring to «those social forms of Roman Catholic Christendom which were constructed after Napoleon's liquidation of the feudal ecclesiastical system. In this sense Catholicism is a modern phenomenon ...»; *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil als Moment einer Modernisierung des Katholizismus*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Ratzinger, *Der Christ und die Welt von heute*, in *Dogma und Verkündigung*..., 187: «... Christianity has never existed in a purely world-less state. Because it exists in men, whose behavior is "the world", it never appears concretely except in a relationship to the world. This interweaving with the world may mean that in an apparent clash between faith and world, it is not Christianity that is being defended against the world, but only a particular form of its relationship to the world that is being defended against another form. For example, what may seem to be a conflict between faith and world may really be a conflict between the thirteenth century and the twentieth, because the thirteenth century's polarization of Christian existence is being identified with the faith itself».

and the French Revolution and was now, in the nineteenth century, bearing its latest and bitterest fruits in liberalism, socialism and communism. This was, as one author put it a hundred years ago, a single great rationalistic system that displayed itself first in theology and then, successively and cumulatively, in philosophy, politics and society.<sup>10</sup> This rationalism was the great enemy of the Church and of the faith. Its essence was the repudiation of authority and tradition, the self-proclaimed independence or autonomy believed to be enshrined in Luther's private judgement and in Kant's definition of Enlightenment.

While sociologists today may question whether this process is adequately or accurately interpreted in terms of «secularization», there is no doubt that in the last two centuries, the Catholic Church saw the process by which vast areas of social life achieved a differentiated life of their own, beyond the control of the churches, as a departure from a sacred ideal — «secularization» in the original canonical sense of the term: the «alienation of Church property». Cardinal Manning called it «the desecration of civil society» and feared that its various features represented the great apostasy which must shortly precede the appearance of Antichrist.<sup>11</sup>

From Gregory XVI to Pius XII, a certain ideal of the relationship between Church and society was constantly maintained in official Church statements and interventions. Giuseppe Martina, in his description of the impact of the fall of Rome in 1870, gives a good description of the ideal situation whose loss haunted the Church for so long:

«The taking of Rome did not mean only the annexation of the city to the Kingdom of Italy and the crowning of Cavour's vision of the unity of Italy, nor only the end of the Popes' temporal power; it also meant the disappearance of a political and social structure anchored in models of the *ancien régime*, with its tight connection between civil and religious life. Without a deeper analysis, we recall some of its typical elements: the official recognition of Catholicism as the State-religion, religious unity as the

<sup>10</sup> [G. Calveti], *Congruenze sociali di una definizione dogmatica sull'Immacolato Concepimento della B. V. Maria*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*-III/VIII (February 1852) 377-396, 383.

<sup>11</sup> *The Four Great Evils of the Day*, New York 1896, 89. This work prints a series of lectures delivered during the Paris Commune in 1871 and reflects the arguments and the sense of apocalyptic doom already present in Manning's earlier work, *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, London 1862.

foundation of political unity, the resulting confessional discrimination and religious intolerance, the relevance of the norms of canon law for civil legislation, the traditional ecclesiastical immunities, the Church's monopoly in education and assistance, the broad support of the secular arm, psychological pressures more or less energetically exercised upon the faithful for the fulfillment of their religious duties.<sup>12</sup>

Right down to the Second Vatican Council, such an arrangement was considered the ideal, the «thesis»; at best (or worst) in conditions of the «hypothesis», the Church might have to «tolerate» other arrangements in order to prevent greater evils.<sup>13</sup>

The issue was at once religious and political, at least if the latter term is used in the wide sense to refer to both the meanings and values which ought to inform public life, what Cardinal Manning called «the great constructive laws by which human society is held together».<sup>14</sup> It was seen as a decisive battle, perhaps the final one, in the great warfare between God and Satan. The three great

<sup>12</sup> G. Martina, *La fine del potere temporale nella coscienza religiosa e nella cultura dell'epoca*, in Italia, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 9 (1971) 309-376, 343-344.

<sup>13</sup> In 1895, Leo XIII, while acknowledging the freedom granted to the Catholic Church by the United States Constitution, warned against generalizing its applicability: «... it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America it is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced. The fact that Catholicity with you is in good condition, nay, is even enjoying a prosperous growth, should be attributed to the fecundity with which God has endowed His Church, in virtue of which unless men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates herself; but she would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority» (*Longinqua Ocean*, Jan. 6, 1895, in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, New York 1903, 323-324; ASS 27: 390).

<sup>14</sup> See his defense of the «jurisdiction» of divine revelation and, therefore, of the Church in political questions: «We are told also that religion has nothing to do with politics. I would ask, what are politics but the collective morals of men living together in society? The moral laws which govern man as an individual govern him if he be the member of a community; be it the community of a household or the community of a State. I can find no distinction between morals and politics but this — that politics are morals upon a large scale, and that morals are politics upon a narrow scale. When I am told that morals and politics are to be separated, or that politics and religion are to be separated, I answer: if you cannot separate politics from morals, and cannot separate morals from religion, then it will be very difficult to separate politics from religion. In fact they make one whole, and hence revelation and the Divine law enter into the whole range of political science. I do not mean to say that revelation has to do immediately with questions of excuse or with the penalties for smuggling. I am not speaking of politics in that minute sense, but of the great constructive laws by which human society is held together» (*Inaugural Address, Miscellanies*, II London 1877, 298-299); see also his *Four Great Evils...*, 78-81.

heroes of the Restoration, de Bonald, Lamennais, and de Maistre, bequeathed to subsequent generations an interpretation of the Revolutions Satanic in root and branch. From then on and well into the twentieth century, what Emile Poulat calls a «catastrophic eschatology» recurs in official Catholic references to contemporary society and in many of the Church's efforts to meet its challenges.<sup>15</sup> An excellent example is found in the inaugural Encyclical of Pope Pius X:

«... there is good reason to fear that this great perversity may be as it were a foretaste and perhaps the beginning of the evils reserved for the last days and that the "Son of Perdition" of whom the Apostle speaks (2Th 2,3) may already be in the world. Such, in truth, is the audacity and the wrath employed everywhere in persecuting religion, in combating the dogmas of the faith, in brazen efforts to uproot and destroy all relations between man and the Divinity! While, on the other hand, and this according to the same Apostle is the distinguishing mark of Antichrist, man with infinite temerity put himself in the place of God, raising himself above all that is called God, to such a degree that although he cannot utterly extinguish in himself all knowledge of God, he has despised God's majesty and, as it were, made of the universe a temple wherein he himself is to be adored. "He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God"» (2Th 2,2).<sup>16</sup>

Although the language was religious, the immediate object to which it was applied was social, political and cultural: the secularization of western society. As Camaiani points out,<sup>17</sup> the apocalyptic battle was not being fought now, as it had been at the time of the Reformation, over basic aspects of the faith or of the internal constitution of the Church, but over the role of religion in securing the foundations and unity of society and over the religious responsi-

<sup>15</sup> E. Poulat has often drawn attention to this stream in modern Roman Catholicism, most briefly in *L'Eglise, c'est un monde...*, 254-258. See also the programmatic statement of J. Séguy, *Sur l'apocalypique catholique*, in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 41 (1976) 165-172. For abundant illustrations and excellent observations on the theme during the reign of Pius IX, see P.G. Camaiani, *Il diavolo, Roma e la rivoluzione*, in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 8 (1972) 487-518; *Mouvi e rifllessi religiosi della questione romana*, in *Chiesa e religiosità in Italia dopo l'Unità (1861-1878)*, Il Milano 1973, 65-128; *Casigli di Dio e trionfo della Chiesa. Mentalità e polemiche dei cattolici temporalisti nell'età di Pio IX*, in *Rivista Storica Italiana* 88 (1976) 708-744, and B. Van den Hertem, *La Révolution française. Prélude à la fin des temps*, in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 89 (1994) 29-53.

<sup>16</sup> Pius X, *E supremi*, Oct. 4, 1903 (ASS 36:131-32).

<sup>17</sup> Camaiani, *Castight di Dio e trionfo della Chiesa...*, 710.

ilities of States. Modern Roman Catholicism is often accused of promoting an a-political, privatized notion of religion; but at least in its formative decades, this is an unjust indictment. An *integral* Catholicism was proposed, integral precisely because it refused the liberal insistence that religion has no public or social role to play. Its often remarked «intransigence» was precisely a refusal of the privatization of religion.

### *Christendom as an Ideal*

For a model of its political and cultural project, the Church turned to its own history and found it, not in the state-religion of the *ancien régime*, not in the Counter-Reformation, but in an idealized Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the last two centuries, the official teaching of the Church was dominated by a regret at «Christendom Lost» and by an ideal of «Christendom Regained». The era is marked by a desire for Restoration, and it is medieval Christendom, insofar as it realized the proper relationship between the Church and civil society, whose restoration is desired.

Three examples may be given. Cardinal Manning saw in the Constantinian establishment a realization of biblical prophecies

<sup>18</sup> «The rejection of liberalism was not a return, back beyond the Revolution, to the ancien régime, but rather, back beyond the ancien régime itself, a rediscovery of the authentically Christian Middle Ages. As Msgr. Justin Fevre, one of the heralds of the intransigent tradition, put it ... "Institutionally, France was almost dechristianized by the ancien régime" ... The Revolution hatched under royal absolutism, under the divine right monarchy which it led to the guillotine but whose prerogatives the post-revolutionary governments intended fully to preserve» (Poulat, *L'Eglise, c'est un monde...*, 230-231).

<sup>19</sup> For the importance of the theme of Christendom, see R. Manselli, *Il medioevo come «Christianitas»: una scoperta romantica*, in *Concetto, storia, miti e immagini del Medio Evo*, ed. Vittore Branca, Venezia 1973, 51-89; *Civilisation chrétienne. Approche historique d'une idéologie, XVIIIe-XXe siècle*, Paris 1975; G. Miccoli, *Chiesa e società in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento. Il mito della «Cristianità»*, in *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione. Studi sul rapporto chiesa-società nell'età contemporanea*, Casale Monferrato 1985, 23-92; D. Menozzi, *La chiesa e la storia. Una dimensione della cristianità da Leone XIII al Vaticano II*, CrSt 5 (1984) 69-106; Id., *La Chiesa cattolica e la secolarizzazione*, Torino 1993. Interest in the theme is not purely academic but lies at the heart of fervent debates today, especially in Italy, on the Church's task in a secularized society; see *La chrétienté en débat. Histoire, formes et problèmes actuels*, Paris 1984; P. Scoppola, *La «nuova cristianità» perduta*, Roma 1985; Id., *Quarant'anni della nostra storia, in Il regno-documenti* 33 (1988) 371-377; V. Possenti, *Ira secolarizzazione e nuova cristianità*, Bologna 1986; G. Campanini - P. Nepi, *Cristianità e modernità. Religione e società civile nell'epoca della secolarizzazione*, Roma 1992.

about the reign of Christ, particularly as «Christendom or Christian Europe began to arise»:

«The spiritual and civil powers stood side by side — with many jars and contentions indeed, but nevertheless with public laws and mutual relations and duties, acting in co-operation together, so that the natural society of the world, which had taught the unlimited lawfulness of divorce, learned the absolute indissolubility of Christian marriage; the natural society, which held that fathers had power of life and death over their children, was taught that their children were the children of God ... The laws of authority and equality, as taught in the Christian Church under the supreme authority of one Head, were transcribed into the public law of nations. Such was the state of the Christian world when these two societies were in amity together — when every member of the State was a member of the Church; when the laws of the State were in conformity with the laws of the Church; when the laws of Christianity were part of the laws of the land; when men believed that human society had not its perfection in the order of nature only, to the exclusion of religion and of God, but then only when it is founded on the one only truth revealed by God, the one only way of life eternal. Such was Christendom once. Such it is no longer. The amity of the natural and supernatural societies has turned into discord, and their union is dissolved».<sup>20</sup>

Pope Leo XIII began his inaugural Encyclical with a description of the evils of the day and traced their source to the rejection of «the holy and venerable authority of the Church, which in God's name rules mankind, upholding and defending all lawful authority». He then described how the Church was once the source of true civilization, as opposed to «that kind of civilization which conflicts with the doctrines and laws of holy Church» and is «nothing but a worthless imitation and meaningless name». After describing the papacy's contributions to civilized society and the unfortunate effects of its rejection, he recalled the special benefits Italy had received from its union with the papacy and concluded with a promise to strive «that We may be restored to that condition of things in which the designs of God's wisdom had long ago placed the Roman Pontiffs» — a reference to his temporal freedom and independence.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> The Syllabus, in Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects, III London 1873, 92-93.

<sup>21</sup> Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili Dei consilio*, April 21, 1878; ASS 10:585-92. Camarini makes the pertinent remark: «The Roman Question, in the final analysis, was the Italian way of expressing the rending of Europe caused by secularization» (*Motivi e riflessi religiosi...*, 112). For the three levels of Leo's restorationist aims, articulated in *Aeterni Patris*, in *Immortale Dei* and *Libertas*, and in *Rerum novarum*, see Poulat, *L'Eglise, c'est un monde...*, 211-240).

Similarly, when Pius X later condemned Le Sillon, he rejected the idea that Christendom was no longer an ideal:

«No, Venerable Brothers, — we must recall it energetically in this time of social and intellectual anarchy when anyone sets himself up as teacher and legislator — the city can only be founded as God has founded it; society cannot be built up unless the Church lays its foundations and directs the work. No, civilization does not still have to be invented or a new city be built in the clouds. It has existed; it still exists. It is Christian civilization; it is the Catholic city».<sup>22</sup>

The influence of the medieval ideal on Catholic thought, art, architecture, and social theories was to be immense. For generations of American Catholics, it was considered to be summed up in the title of the very popular book by James J. Walsh, *The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries*.<sup>23</sup>

#### «A Counter-revolutionary Mysticism»

The Church's alienation from the emerging society, polity and culture was also a major factor in the promotion and interpretation of many of the devotions which were to mark Catholic life in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is first apparent as one dimension of the extraordinary growth of Marian piety in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> Both old and new titles for the Blessed Virgin, the

<sup>22</sup> Pius X, Letter, August 25, 1910; AAS 2 (1910) 612.

<sup>23</sup> J.J. Walsh, *The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries*, New York 1907. Walsh's book went into a twelfth edition in 1952. For the power of the medieval ideal in twentieth-century American Catholicism, see Ph. Gleason, *American Catholics and the Mythic Middle Ages, in Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present*, Notre Dame 1987, 11-34.

<sup>24</sup> For recent studies of modern Marian devotion, see B. Corrado Pope, *Immaculate and Powerful. The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century*, in *Immaculate and Powerful. The Female in Social Image and Social Reality*, ed. C.W. Atkinson, C.H. Buchanan, and M.R. Miles, Boston 1985, 173-197; N. Perry - L. Echeverria, *Under the Heel of Mary*, New York 1988, and S.L. Zumdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary. Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje*, New York 1992. Louis Perouas has outlined some interesting correlations in two articles: *Maximalisme marial et catholicisme de droite*, in *Cahiers marials* 46 (Jan. 1965) 9-26; and *Minimalisme marial et sens de l'histoire*, *ibid.*, 51 (Jan. 1966) 7-20. For the links between Marian devotion and interpretations of modernity, see G. Quadrio, *La meditazione sociale di Maria SS.ma nel magistero di Pio XII*, in *L'Ausiliatrice della Chiesa e del Papa*, Torino 1950, 91-125; *La mediazione sociale di Maria SS. nel magistero di S. Pio X*, in *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea*, Roma 1954, 361-381; *L'Immacolata e la Chiesa nell'insegnamento di Pio IX*, in *Pio IX*, 17 (1988) 55-78.

founding of many new religious orders in her name, pilgrimages to her shrines, and the many apparitions she bestowed at critical moments in nineteenth-century history, all were often given a counter-revolutionary interpretation and even linked with the apocalyptic readings of the times and expectations of an approaching End.<sup>25</sup> For example, Camaiani explains at least part of the reason behind Pius IX's habit of choosing December 8th for important events in his reign:

«The recurrent choice of that day was not unintentional. The Immaculate was in fact the only creature who had been withdrawn from Satan's lordship. She who had crushed the head of the serpent. Recourse to her protection could be taken for a symbol of a counter-revolutionary mysticism, once the identification between Satan and the Revolution had been established.»<sup>26</sup>

When both Gregory XVI and Pius IX often quoted the line of the ancient Marian hymn: «*Cunctas haereses tu sola interemisti*», they were thinking not only of ancient heresies but also of the modern errors which had brought the Church into such distress. Mary still had the power «to deliver her children from the sad and grief-laden troubles, from the tribulations, the anxiety, the difficulties,

and the punishments of God's anger which afflict the world because of the sins of men. Wishing to restrain and to dispel the violent hurricane of evils which ... are everywhere afflicting the Church, Mary desires to transform our sadness into joy».<sup>27</sup> While preparing to define the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX briefly flirted with the idea of including with it a condemnation of modern errors and saw to the publication of an article to explain how the new dogma would contain in brief and popularly accessible form those doctrines from which modern society, to its ruin, had departed: the doctrines of original sin and the expiatory sacrifice of Christ.<sup>28</sup>

In the sixteen major documents which he issued to further devotion to the Rosary, Leo XIII in turn appealed to the Virgin's historic interventions to save the Church from the Albigenians and then from the Turks at Lepanto, two foes who, it was explained, had reappeared in the persons of liberals and freemasons.<sup>29</sup> In one of these documents, the Pope carefully showed how the Rosary could

<sup>27</sup> Pius IX, *Ubi primum*, the Encyclical in which in 1849 he consulted the worldwide episcopate on the definability of the Immaculate Conception (Carten, I, 292). At the end of his Encyclical, *Mirari vos* (1832), in which he condemned the errors of liberalism with considerable rhetorical violence, Gregory XVI invokes «the most holy Virgin Mary, who alone crushes all heresies, and is Our greatest reliance and the whole reason for Our hope» (Acta Gregorii XVI, I, 174).

<sup>28</sup> See G. Frenaud, *Dom Guéranger et le projet de la Bulle «Quemadmodum Ecclesia» in Virgo Immaculata*. Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani Romae anno MCMLIV Celebrati, II Roma 1956, 337-386; G. Martina, *Osservazioni sulle varie relazioni del «Sillabo», in Chiesa e Stato nell'Ottocento*. Miscellanea in onore di Pietro Pirri, II Padova 1962, 419-524, esp. 425-439; Camatani, *Il diavolo, Roma e la rivoluzione...*, 502-506. The article suggested by the Pope is G. Calvetti, *Congruenze sociali di una definizione dogmatica sull'Immacolato Concepimento della B.V. Maria...*, cited above. Just two weeks before the definition was proclaimed, *La Civiltà Cattolica* published another article, *Il domma e la civiltà*, II/VIII (Nov. 25 1854) 481-504.

<sup>29</sup> Leo XIII himself saw the Albigenians as medieval precursors of modern socialists, materialists and Freemasons (see *Auspicato Concessum*, Sept. 17, 1882 [ASS 15:151]). The description of liberals and Masons as «the new Muslims» or Turks can be found often in *La Civiltà Cattolica*; other examples may be found in L. Bedeschi, *Le origini della Gioventù Cattolica*, Bologna 1959, 77, 182-83, 234. Pius IX had already evoked the memory of Lepanto in connection with another of his favorite devotions to the Virgin, under the title *Auxilium Christianorum*, whose feast had been established by Pius VII on his return to Rome: «As Mary protected one Pius in order to beat down the pride of the Turks; as she protected another Pius in order to beat down a great Emperor's pride, so may she now protect the least Pius and his See, under attack by a thousand varied enemies. And as she was victorious apud Echinadas insulas and again apud Savoniam, so may the day come when she is victorious apud sanctum Petrum» (Discourse on June 17, 1874; in *La Civiltà Cattolica* IX/III [1874] 102).

<sup>25</sup> These associations were furthered by the publication for the first time in mid-nineteenth century of St. Grignon de Montfort's book, *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, which included prophecies that the reign of Christ would be introduced by the reign of Mary; see J. Séguy, *Millénarisme et «ordres adventistes»*. Grignon de Montfort et les «Apôtres des Derniers Temps», in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 53 (1982) 23-48, who points out that de Montfort's apocalypticism was not political but nearly exclusively religious. This did not prevent his predictions of a final fierce battle between Satan and Mary being interpreted politically once the French Revolution had prepared souls for apocalyptic interpretations of contemporary events. At the Mariological Congress in Lourdes in 1958, one of the themes was «Ut adventat regnum Christi, adventat regnum Mariae»; see F.M. Banducco, *Il congresso mariologico mariano di Lourdes (10-17 settembre 1958)*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 110/1 (1959) 401. For an example of the persistence of these themes even today, see R. Rebut, *Les messages de la Vierge Marie*. Quand le ciel s'adresse à la terre, Paris 1968, which still reads the messages in the context of the enmity between the Virgin and the Satanic modern revolution. A recent issue of *The Fatima Crusader* (#22, April-May 1987) has a picture of the Sacred Heart on the cover and quotes the words of Jesus to Sister Lucy of Fatima: «Make it known to my ministers, that it has been given to them that they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of my command and that they will follow him into misfortune», that is, if the pope and bishops do not simultaneously consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

<sup>26</sup> Camaiani, *Il diavolo, Roma e la rivoluzione...*, 502-503. For related themes, see J. Séguy, *La Société de Marie dite d'Espagne*. Mariologie, apocalypptique et contre-révolution, in *Revue d'Histoire des Religions* 201 (1984) 37-58.

serve as a social remedy because its joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries would counteract the impatience with simplicity, flight from suffering and neglect of the afterlife in which Leo found «the three influences which appear to Us to have the chief place in effecting this downward movement of society».<sup>30</sup>

A similar social or political interpretation was often given to devotion to the Sacred Heart, which also underwent a spectacular development in the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> During the French Revolution, the Sacred Heart had already assumed a counter-revolutionary symbolic role, especially in France. This association was particularly strengthened after the fateful years of 1870 and 1871, which saw the taking of Rome, the fall of the Second Empire, and the Paris Commune. At this time the movement grew to erect a great Church to the Sacred Heart in Paris, in reparation for France's apostasy, and even to have the Sacred Heart placed on the French national flag.<sup>32</sup> A related movement, to have France officially consecrated to

the Sacred Heart, led *La Civiltà Cattolica* to express the real import of the actions: «A public and official act of France, which recognizes Christ as its King and Lord and consecrates the whole nation to him, would be equivalent to an implicit abjuration of its more than eighty-year-old apostasy from him and to a renewal of that primitive covenant of faith and love of the French with Jesus Christ, contained in the formula: *Vivat Christus! Amat Francos!*»<sup>33</sup> In 1876, Père Ramière, the founder of the Apostleship of Prayer, praised the Oeuvre des Cercles catholiques d'ouvriers, one of the earliest French social action groups, for having placed itself under the Heart of Jesus. Only in this devotion, he argued, could be found the motive for that love among all classes which could overcome the social divisions caused by the indifference and greed of the rich and the envy and ambition of the poor.<sup>34</sup>

The growth of the devotion reached its climax at the end of the century, when Leo XIII acceded to requests which Rome had been receiving for decades and formally dedicated the whole human race to Christ the King, under the symbol of the Sacred Heart. The Pope's argument is worth quoting:

«Such an act of consecration, since it can establish and draw tighter the bonds which naturally connect public affairs with God, gives States a hope of better things. In these latter times especially, the policy followed has resulted in the erection of a sort of wall between the Church and civil society. In the constitution and administration of States, the authority of sacred and divine law is utterly disregarded, with a view to excluding religion from any constant part in public life. This policy almost tends toward removing Christian faith from our midst, and, if that were possible, toward banishing God Himself from the earth. When men's minds are raised to such a height of insolent pride, what wonder is it that the greater part of the human race should have fallen into such disquiet of mind and be buffeted by waves so rough that no one is allowed to be free from anxiety and peril? Once religion is discarded, the surest foundations of public welfare must give way, while God, to inflict on His enemies the punishment they so richly deserve, has left them the prey of their own evil desires, so that they give themselves up to their passions and finally wear themselves out by excess of liberty».

<sup>33</sup> Consacrazione della Francia al Sacro Cuore di Gesu Cristo, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* VIII/X (1873) 641-651, 649.

<sup>34</sup> H. Ramière, *La question sociale et la dévotion au Sacre Coeur de Jésus*, in *L'Association Catholique* 1 (1876) 849-874. See P. Vallin, *Le Père Henri Ramière* (1821-1884), in *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 86 (1985) 24-34; D. Menozzi, *Regalità sociale di Cristo e secolarizzazione. Alle origini della Quas primas*, *CrSt* 16 (1995) 79-113.

<sup>30</sup> Leo XIII, *Laetitiae Sanctae*, Sept. 8, 1893; ASS 26:193-99. Many of Leo's texts on the Rosary and on other types of Catholic devotion link them to contemporary political and social events. They are not, then, as John McManners thinks, «concerned with purely spiritual themes» (*Church and State in France, 1870-1914*, London 1972, 69). Leo thought that the real issues in society and politics were spiritual.

<sup>31</sup> See A. Hamon, *Histoire de la Dévotion au Sacre-Coeur*, 5 vols., Paris 1908-1939, esp. vols. IV and V. As late as 1939, when his last volume appeared, Hamon was still relating the devotion to the warfare against the evils introduced by the French Revolution (132-35, 265-67) and even hoping one day to see the Sacred Heart on the French flag (329). For more critical studies, see G. Angelini, *La devozione al Sacro Cuore. Saggio di riflessione teologico-pratica*, *Teologia* 13 (1988) 45-64; A. Zambarbieri, *Per la storia della devozione al Sacro Cuore in Italia tra '800 e '900*, in *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 41 (1987) 361-432; S. Tramonin, *Movimento cattolico e devozione al Cuore di Cristo*, in *Studia Patavina* 35 (1988) 37-50; F. de Giorgi, *Forme spirituali, forme simboliche, forme politiche. La devozione al S. Cuore*, in *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 48 (1994) 365-459.

<sup>32</sup> On the «mystique collective» which followed upon the disasters of 1870-71, see J. Gadille, *La pensée et l'action politiques des évêques français au début de la IIIe République, 1870-1883*, I Paris 1967, 229-237. On *Sacré-Coeur*, see J. Benoist, *Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmarne. Spiritualité, art et politique*, 2 vols., Paris 1992. Another manifestation was massive pilgrimages of reparation to Paray-le-Monial. Gadille quotes Cardinal Pie: «The crime of the modern world, the crime which draws such cruel chastisements upon us, is not private crime, not domestic crime; it is public crime, social crime, national crimes» (230-231). In 1873, Newman was asked to allow boys from his school to join an English pilgrimage there. He responded: «For myself, ever since I have been a Catholic, I have had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart but I do not see what the Oratory has to do with the question of a French King, Emperor, or Republic, which is the motive of the pilgrimage» (*The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, 26 Oxford 1974, 352).



And, in concluding the Encyclical, the Pope evoked another historic moment for Catholic Christianity:

«When the Church, in the days immediately succeeding her institution, was oppressed beneath the yoke of the Caesars, a young Emperor saw in the heavens a cross, which became at once the happy sign and cause of the glorious victory that soon followed. And now today, behold another blessed and heavenly sign is offered to our sight — the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a cross rising from it and shining forth with dazzling splendor amidst the flames of love. In that Sacred Heart all our hopes should be placed, and from it the salvation of men is to be confidently sought».<sup>35</sup>

The Encyclical develops the theme of Christ's right to rule over all nations as well as individuals, a right which was to be recognized in the last years of the century and in the first decades of the twentieth in the formal consecration of several nations to the Sacred Heart.<sup>36</sup>

This association of Christological devotions with larger social and political developments was continued into the twentieth century. Pope Pius XI devoted his pontificate to «the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ»,<sup>37</sup> included secularism, «the plague which now infests society», among the evils which his institution of the feast of Christ the King was designed to overcome,<sup>38</sup> welcomed the influ-

<sup>35</sup> Leo XIII, *Annum Sacrum*, May 25, 1899; ASS, 31:650-651.  
<sup>36</sup> See E. Bergh, *Le cinquantenaire de la consécration du genre humain au Sacre-Coeur* (11 juin 1899-juin 1949), in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 71 (1949) 606-620.

<sup>37</sup> This is the subtitle of his first Encyclical, *Ubi arcano*, which includes in its description of contemporary evils that «God and the Lord Jesus Christ have been removed from the conduct of public affairs», from marriage, and from education; AAS 14 (1922) 683. Archbishop Lefebvre bemoaned how seldom anyone speaks of the social reign of Christ and expressed his shock that legates of the Holy See twice told him: «The social kingship of Our Lord is no longer possible in our times. The pluralism of religions simply has to be accepted» (*Lettre ouverte aux catholiques perplexes...*, 16, 176).

<sup>38</sup> Pius XI, *Quas primas*; AAS 17 (1925) 605-607. The Pope provided a brief history of this «public revolt from Christ»: «First, Christ's authority to rule over all nations was denied. The Church's right, which follows on that of Christ, to teach the human race, to make laws, to rule over peoples unto their eternal salvation, was denied. Then, by degrees, the religion of Christ was put on a footing with false religions and placed ignominiously in the same category with them. It was next put under civil authority and tolerated more or less at the whim of princes and rulers. Some went further and desired to have a natural religion, mere natural instinct, set up in place of divine religion. There were not wanting States that thought they could dispense with God and make their religion consist in impiety and neglect of God. Bitter, indeed, are the fruits that this revolt of individuals and of nations against Christ has borne so frequently and for such long periods».

ence of Eucharistic Congresses «toward solemnly sanctioning Christ's kingly power over human society»,<sup>39</sup> and urged devotion to the Sacred Heart as an act of reparation also for calamitous events which seem «to anticipate "the beginning of those sorrows" which will be revealed by "the man of sin who is lifted above all that is called God or that is worshipped"». <sup>40</sup> While attempting to place devotion to the Sacred Heart on a solid doctrinal basis, Pope Pius XII related it to the salvation not only of souls but of civil society as well.<sup>41</sup>

### *Catholic Associations*

Besides the development and interpretation of the people's devotional life, there was a second way in which the Church attempted both to meet the challenges of modern society and culture and to immunize Catholics from their threat: the formation of Catholic associations. Associations, of course, were not a new phenomenon in Catholic life, but earlier they had primarily religious purposes. Some new associations had also been formed in the late eighteenth century, particularly in order to combat the spread of Enlightenment ideas. But it was in the nineteenth century particularly that Catholic associations not only multiplied and flourished but began also to take on the social and political goals of opposing the spread of liberalism, of safeguarding Catholic rights, and of supporting Catholic identity and solidarity in an increasingly alien world.

The new Catholic associations were at first grass-roots movements, almost always originating from below and often in response to threats to Catholic beliefs, values or liberties represented by advancing liberalism and/or anti-clericalism. They were eventually to be brought under episcopal and papal control, to be used as a new

<sup>39</sup> *Quas primas*, *ibid.*, 606-607. For the links between secularism, reparation, eucharistic piety, and the social reign of Christ in the rise and spread of these international congresses, see M. de Hedonville, *Monseigneur de Segur. Sa vie, son action, 1820-1881*, Paris 1957, 594-647, and R. Aubert, *Eucharistic Congresses from Leo XIII to Paul VI*, in *The Church and Mankind*, Glen Rock 1965, 155-167.

<sup>40</sup> Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*; AAS 20 (1928) 175.

<sup>41</sup> Pius XII, *Haurietus aquas*; AAS 48 (1956) 350-355, where the Pope quotes Leo XIII's reference to the Sacred Heart as the new *labarum*. On 15 August 1949, on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Peter Camillus, L. Janssens, Father General of the Jesuits, issued a strikingly pessimistic, almost desolate, description of the satanically directed modern apostasy, from which only the Sacred Heart could rescue us; see *Acta Romana Societatis Jesu* 11 (1949) 678-683.

weapon now that the Church could no longer count on the support of the State to defend and to further its aims.<sup>42</sup> Although originally most of the organizers of such associations still held to the ideal of the State's recognition and support of the Church, they also had little hesitation in using the liberal principles of freedom of the press and of association to appeal directly to the Catholic faithful in order to press Catholic claims. The reigning symbolic context was still that of a warfare: as the medieval orders of knights had once come to the rescue when «the barbaric hordes of the Muslims threatened to invade all of Catholic Europe», so now Catholic associations would have to come to the defense of the Church against the revolution, «the new Islam, destructive of all religion and of all civilization».<sup>43</sup> These Catholic associations undertook a very wide range of activities. Besides more strictly devotional and ecclesiastical groups, there were also associations for charitable activities, for professional activities and groups, for the promotion of the sciences and the arts, for political goals, and for social and recreational purposes. Such associations were often the initiators of Catholic social action in the late nineteenth century, their intransigent attitude towards political liberalism perhaps facilitating their often very critical attitude towards economic liberalism.<sup>44</sup> They were, of course, almost always equally critical of socialism and communism, and it is not rare to find the need for international cooperation among Catholic associations played off against the International.

The associations also had the purpose of promoting social contacts among Catholics, in the hope that they could thus be kept from infection by liberal ideas and sentiments. An early interpreter of such Catholic associations put it well:

«A person moves in an atmosphere that is in short impregnated [with liberal ideas]. Can he live very long there without being infected or touched in some way, without his faith being damaged, without his ability openly to speak and to act as a strong Catholic being at all reduced? Well, then, to prevent it, he needs another atmosphere, one in which the light of Catholic truths shines in all its purity, where examples of strong Catholic intentions and generous Catholic resolutions flourish. With such aids the shadow of any prejudice which may perhaps have insinuated itself into his mind can be dissipated; or if his spirit is perhaps become weak or disheartened at seeing the reigning revolutionary self-confidence, he can derive new strength so that he is not overcome by it. Do you know where he will find such assistance? In the bosom of a legally constituted and well organized Catholic association, which, arrayed for battle in defence of Catholicism, counts among the things proper to it the pure Catholic truth and generous activity according to its dictates».<sup>45</sup>

In this way Catholic associations, which were to continue to be an extremely important feature of Roman Catholicism right down to our own day, served the formation and the reproduction of the distinct Catholic sub-culture.

### Centralization

As the military language often used in describing the Catholic associations illustrates, the Church considered itself to be engaged in battle, and in a battle nothing is more important than clarity of command and unity of response. Since the challenge represented by liberalism had spread across national boundaries and since, as was widely believed, it was supported by international sects and movements, such as the Freemasons and the Socialist International, an effective Catholic defence would have to be mounted also on an international level; and for this only the papacy could be an adequate means. One of the distinctive characteristics of the history of Catholicism in the nineteenth century was the increased centralization of Catholic life upon Rome and the figure of the pope.

The national churches had revealed their powerlessness during

<sup>42</sup> This was how an Italian commentator explained the worldwide flourishing of Catholic associations in 1874: «The separation of the Church from the State deprived the Church of temporal supports, of social means of activity, of any government's defence. The people, remaining faithful to her despite the Governments' opposition, have taken it upon themselves to support her, to provide her with means, to protect her and to defend her. And associations, with this noble purpose, have taken the new form required by new needs and by new times» (C. Piccinillo, *Il primo Congresso Cattolico in Italia*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* IX/III [1874] 5-36, at 7). See also Poulat, *L'Eglise, c'est un monde...*, 241-279.

<sup>43</sup> IV. Steccanella, *La necessità delle associazioni cattoliche*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* VIII/II (1871) 5-21, 6, and *Id.*, *Lo spirito delle associazioni cattoliche*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* VIII/II (1871) 293-305, 425-439, at 293.

<sup>44</sup> The development of social Catholicism out of doctrinally and politically intransigent Catholic circles has been much stressed in recent work; see, for example, J.-M. Mayeur, *Catholicisme intransigent, catholicisme social, démocratie chrétienne*, in *Catholicisme social et démocratie chrétienne. Principes romains, expériences françaises*, Paris 1986, 17-38; P. Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe. From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*, New York 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Steccanella, *La necessità delle associazioni cattoliche...*, 13.

the Revolution and under Napoleon. During this period, the role of the pope gained a new respect, quite different from the widespread Gallicanism and Josephism of the last half of the eighteenth century. The Concordat with Napoleon, with its absolutely novel rights of appointment to bishoprics by the Pope, became a model for series of concordats with those countries still willing to acknowledge the rights of the Church. This newly accentuated Roman role was developed more and more throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the face of increasingly centralized and increasingly secularized States. Problems of Church and State tended more and more to be objects of negotiation between Rome and national governments; and under Leo XIII especially, Rome was to claim a greater authority to dictate the political activities of Catholics.<sup>46</sup>

Within the Church itself, intermediate ecclesiastical bodies, such as national synods, were greatly reduced in significance. Roman liturgical, canonical and devotional customs and practices became the model for all other churches to imitate. Papal nuncios intervened more frequently in the affairs of national churches, and the Roman Curia claimed more and more authority to resolve local disputes, leaving bishops with ever less autonomy and threatening to reduce them to the role of vicars of the pope. Under Pius X, the work began to reduce the chaotic variety of traditional canon law which was now to be systematized in a new, universally obligatory Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Rome and enshrining in its canons the centralized and bureaucratized organization of the one great Church.<sup>47</sup> An extraordinary devotion to the person of the pope developed, aided particularly by the figures of the two «martyr-popes».

<sup>46</sup> As early as the condemnation of Lamennais, Rome refused the argument that the political judgements and activities of Catholics were exempt from papal supervision and direction. The question arose again when Leo XIII urged French Catholics to rally to the Republic. «In a sense, the "liberal" Leo XIII was extending the field of operation of the authoritarian tradition of Pius IX. "Ultramontanism exerting itself in favour of the Republic", said Le Temps in July 1891, "is no less dangerous than ultramontanism directed against it"» (McManners, *Church and State in France*..., 72); see also Poulat, *L'Eglise, c'est un monde*..., 243-247.

<sup>47</sup> For the background of the codification of Church law, see F. Elsener, *Der Codex Iuris Canonici im Rahmen der europäischen Kodifikationsgeschichte*, in A. Müller et al., *Vom Kirchenrecht zur Kirchenordnung?*, Einsiedeln 1968, 27-53; H. LeGrand, *Grâce et institution dans l'Eglise. Les fondements théologiques du droit canonique*, in *L'Eglise. Institution et Foi*, Brussels 1979, 139-172, esp. 142-155; and R. Metz, *Pouvoir, centralisation et droit. La codification du droit de l'Eglise catholique au début du XXe siècle*, in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 51 (1981) 49-64.

Pius VII whose weakness frustrated the mighty Napoleon, and Pius IX, «the prisoner of the Vatican». The fates of these popes symbolized the persecution and suffering of the whole Church, so that the Ultramontane view that the pope personified the Church had a more than internal ecclesial significance.<sup>48</sup> In all these ways, Catholicism was becoming, in senses largely unknown in previous centuries, *Roman Catholicism*. As Roger Aubert puts it, «At the accession of Leo XIII the Holy See, meaning the pope assisted by the Roman Congregations, had become the true nerve centre of the Catholic Church in a way that it had not been even in the medieval heyday of papal power».<sup>49</sup>

### *The Control of Catholic Intellectual Life*

An integral part of the Church's response to contemporary challenges was its effort to take direction of Catholic thought. The Church did not emerge from the theologically mediocre eighteenth century and from the politically disastrous experiences of the Revolution with great intellectual resources. Catholic philosophy and theology for most of the first half of the nineteenth century were for the most part uncritical and eclectic. And a Church which believed that the century's social apostasy could be traced back to the repudiation of authority by Luther and by the Enlightenment offered as the only adequate response an un-

<sup>48</sup> «These developments must be placed in a larger context which gives them their true meaning and weight: that of the new cultural world which emerged from the revolutions and was perceived by many as a threat. The dislocation of ecclesial structures, the Church's loss of its institutional impact upon society, the questioning of traditional certainties and values by the affirmation of the authority of reason expressed in the many forms of a "liberalism" adopted by a "bourgeois" world which now could impose its values and its frames of reference, the rise of socialism soon after — all this made Catholics hope for someone who could again symbolize and guarantee their identity and unity and ground their certainties. The pope would be this, "the only corner-stone of a counter-revolutionary society, venerated in place of the king who was no more, adulated by masses in search of a leader"» (J. Hoffmann, *Théologie et Magistère. Un «modèle» issu de Vaucan I, in Les théologiens et l'Eglise*, Paris 1980, 77-101, 83). The last lines are quoted from Cl. Langlois, *Pouvoir et autorité dans l'Eglise d'hier: le cas du XIXe siècle*, in G. Defois et al., *Le Pouvoir dans l'Eglise*, Paris 1973, 103. Langlois also has very illuminating comments in «L'infaillibilité, une idée neuve au XIXe», in *Eglise infaillible ou intemporelle?*, Paris 1973, 64-78. A very important work is H.J. Pottmeyer, *Unfehlbarkeit und Souveränität. Die päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit im System der ultramontanen Ekklesiologie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz 1975.

<sup>49</sup> *The Church in a Secularized Society*, New York 1978, 67.

paralleled insistence on the principle of authority not only in society but also in theology and in philosophy.<sup>50</sup>

As the century moved on, it saw an unprecedented increase in the claims of Rome over the intellectual life of the Church. Under Gregory XVI and Pius IX, every significant attempt at an independent encounter between faith and reason, between religion and modern society came under suspicion if not outright condemnation: think of the names of Lamennais, Bonnetty, Gunther, Hermes, Newman, Frohschammer, Dollinger.<sup>51</sup> In most of these cases, the issues either were epistemological or concerned the relation between faith and reason, the two areas on which the larger social and cultural issues were considered to depend. In his famous «Munich Brief» (1863), Pius IX asserted that it was the role of ecclesiastical authority not only to oversee but also to direct theological developments.

Finally, Leo XIII, who had been one of the first to suggest the need for a Syllabus of Errors and who would soon add Rosmini's name to the list of the condemned, was to show a more positive and fundamental way to meet the intellectual challenge. If modern philosophy since Descartes was, as one writer put it, «the pathology of human reason»,<sup>52</sup> there could be no accommodation to it, as many of the figures mentioned above had mistakenly thought. The Pope's main concern was «the troubles that vex public and private life», but these he traced to the fact that «false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses».<sup>53</sup> The only

solution lay in a return to the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Here, in the greatest mind of the Middle Ages, that never again equalled realization of Christendom, were to be found the intellectual principles which alone could overcome the fatal disjunctions of reason from faith and of society from religion. In a common dependence on Thomist foundations Catholic thinkers would be able to transcend the division into schools which prevented them from making common cause against the enemy. The warfare was on the level of ideas, and the Thomist synthesis would provide Catholics with their most powerful weapons.<sup>54</sup>

The linkage between basic philosophical positions and the social and political crisis of the day was already in the mind of the early proponents of a restoration of Thomism. «It is impossible», wrote one of them, «that anyone who studies St. Thomas could ever become a revolutionary».<sup>55</sup> Another, Luigi Taparelli, argued that metaphysical and moral questions were by no means matters of indifference; sooner or later they would produce their effects in the world of practice. Aristotle's metaphysics of matter and form applied universally, including the relationship not only between body and soul, but also between people and ruler in society and between State and Church in a properly ordered society. Deny this doctrine, and one not only dissolves the human person but also sets people and sovereign and State and Church against one another.<sup>56</sup> Such statements indicate the degree to which the papal restoration of the authority of St. Thomas, not only in theology but also in philosophy, reflected and embodied the general interpretation of and response to the social and political issues at stake in the nineteenth century.

<sup>50</sup> See Y. Congar, *L'ecclésiologie, de la Révolution française au Concile du Vatican, sous le signe de l'affirmation de l'autorité*, in M. Nédoncelle et al., *L'ecclésiologie au XIXe siècle*, Paris 1960, 77-114; and the works by Hoffmann, Langlois and Pottmeyer ..., cited above.

<sup>51</sup> For a sharp critique of Rome's distrustful attitude toward pioneering Catholic thinkers in the last two centuries («Their corpses bestrew Denzinger for more than a century»), see H.U. von Balhasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, San Francisco 1986, 258-266.

<sup>52</sup> «The history of modern philosophies is nothing more than the history of the intellectual aberrations of man abandoned to the caprices of his own pride; as such, this history could be called the pathology of human reason» (Giovanni Cornoldi, whom Leo XIII appointed head of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, quoted by Ci. Besse, *Deux centres du mouvement thomiste. Rome et Louvain*, in *Revue du Clergé Français* 29 [1902] 238-254, 356-371, 473-500, at 366). On Cornoldi, see L. Malusa, *Neotomismo e intrinsecismo cattolico. Il contributo di Giovanni Maria Cornoldi per la rinascita del tomismo*, Milano 1986.

<sup>53</sup> Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*; ASS 12:98; see also his *Libertas*, June 20, 1888; ASS 20:600: «What naturalists or rationalists aim at in philosophy, that the supporters of

liberalism, carrying out the principles laid down by naturalism, are attempting in the domain of morality and politics».

<sup>54</sup> See P. Thibault, *Savoir et Pouvoir. Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIXe siècle*, Québec 1972; G. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century. The Quest for a Unitary Method*, New York 1977; J. Hennessy, *Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival. A Political and Philosophical Event*, in *The Journal of Religion* 58 Suppl. (1978) S185-S197; Poulat, *L'Eglise, c'est un monde...*, 211-240.

<sup>55</sup> The remark was made by Vincenzo Buzzetti and is quoted by S. Fontana, *La polemica sul senso comune e la nascita del Neotomismo*, in his *La controrivoluzione cattolica in Italia (1820-1830)*, Brescia 1968, 125-209, at 169. This article is useful both for its analysis of the political implications of Lamennais' theory of «common sense» and for its argument that in its early stages «Thomism represents, in that period, the Italian version of the traditionalist philosophy» (161).

<sup>56</sup> See Miccoli, *Chiesa e Stato in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento...*, 214. For very similar remarks of G. Ventura, another disciple of Lamennais who turned to Thomism, see Fontana, *La controrivoluzione cattolica...*, 183-184.

Finally, it was also Leo XIII who introduced the series of doctrinal Encyclicals through which the Popes from then on would not only supervise but direct the intellectual life of Catholics. Papal Encyclicals became longer and more frequent and began to offer not only responses to particular problems but also extensive and binding declarations of official Roman Catholic views on whole sets of intellectual, social, political and cultural problems. Catholics gradually assumed the habit of looking to the Popes for regular and authoritative guidance in the construction of their mental world, and the following decades were to see the increasing subordination to Roman authority of all other instances of teaching in the Church, whether episcopal or theological.<sup>57</sup>

#### Vatican I

For the whole development of modern Roman Catholicism, the First Vatican Council had a crucial importance. It produced only two documents, but they were central to the whole drama of the century. In its Constitution on Divine Faith, the Council cleared a middle path between the extremes of rationalism and of fideism or traditionalism, thus addressing the fundamental question of the relationship between faith and reason. And in its Constitution on the Church, it offered, in the sovereignty and infallibility of the Pope, the providentially ordained means by which the Church would be kept in battle trim and be sure it would never hear an uncertain trumpet.<sup>58</sup> The definitions of the papal prerogatives were a culmi-

<sup>57</sup> «More and more the impression is that the whole magisterium of the Church is concentrated in its head and is only expressed through him» (Y. Congar, *Du bon usage de «Denzinger», in Situation et tâches présentes de la théologie*, Paris 1967, 126). On the «Roman model» of the relation between magisterium and theology, besides the articles by Hoffmann and Langlois cited above, see M. Seckler, *Die Theologie als kirchliche Wissenschaft nach Pius XII. und Paul VI.*, in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 149 (1969) 209-234; J. Prévotat, *Pie XI et l'enseignement supérieur ecclésiastique*, in *Les théologiens et l'Eglise...*, 103-112; J.-M. Mayeur, *Magistère et théologiens sous Pie XII*, *ibid.*, 113-119; and H.J. Pottmeyer, *Der wissenschaftliche Charakter der Theologie nach dem I. Vatikanum*, in *Catholica* 24 (1970) 194-204.

<sup>58</sup> In his Apostolic Letter on Americanism, Leo XIII spoke of the definition of papal infallibility as a mark of «the wisdom and providence of God, who, when He wished by that most solemn decision to affirm the authority and teaching office of the Apostolic See, desired it especially in order the more effectively to guard the minds of Catholics from the dangers of the present times. The license which is commonly founded with liberty; the passion for saying and reviling everything; the habit of thinking and of expressing anything in print, have cast such deep shadows on men's minds, that there is now greater use and need for this office of teaching than ever

nating moment in the Church's self-constitution as a distinct and autonomous «counter-society», and, as Joseph Hoffmann points out, the Church borrowed more than it may have thought from those against whom it sought to defend itself:

«We are thus led to evoke the vision of the Church within which the idea of infallibility developed. Even more than the mentality and the behavior of a «city under seige», with all the insistence this implies on the values of authority and obedience, alone capable of guaranteeing the Church's internal unity and external freedom, it is the concepts and categories enlisted in the work which are of interest here. For to the degree that the Church entered into conflict with the State, it defined itself, as the State had, as a «*societas perfecta*». This perfection included precisely a sovereignty understood in terms of political philosophy: a sovereign is one who has power *ad intra* and independence *ad extra* and can impose them by means of the right and power he enjoys. It was to this sovereignty that the State sought to subject the Church; but it is a quite similar sovereignty which the Church claimed for itself, against the State. Now it is in terms of sovereignty also that authority *in* the Church and particularly infallibility will be conceived. The pontifical magisterium will be understood as one of the aspects of the pope's power of jurisdiction, which is itself understood as a sovereign power. In other words, infallibility tends to be presented as a necessary component of the pope's sovereign power: absolute, solitary, unconditional and not subject to appeal — like all sovereign power».<sup>59</sup>

#### The Roman Catholic Sub-culture

I have briefly described several nineteenth-century developments which contributed greatly to the construction of modern Roman Catholicism: the rise and spread of new devotions, the flourishing of Catholic associations, the centralization of Catholic life on Rome, and the assumption of control over Catholic thought. Features of each of these development had immediately religious or internal ecclesial relevance, but the desired social form of the Church is fully explicable only against the background of the Church's opposition to the liberal and secular society and culture that were being constructed in the course of the century. Roman Catholicism was deliberately constructed as an alternative to the

before, so that people will not be drawn away from conscience and duty» (*Testem benevolentiae*, Jan. 22, 1899; ASS 31:475.

<sup>59</sup> *Théologie et magistère...*, 84; Pottmeyer's book, *Unfehlbarkeit und Souveranität*, develops the same thesis in great detail.

world of secular liberalism. Even more, opposition to the world that had emancipated itself from the Church was a constitutive part of the official self-definition of modern Roman Catholicism.

The result of these and other developments was the construction of a Catholic sub-society, marked by a distinctive worldview and social organization.<sup>60</sup> The Church had long since lost its monopoly as the ultimate inspirer and guarantor of western meanings and values. In the course of the nineteenth century, it further lost the political and social supports to its own activity which the State had once provided. Unwilling to abandon the right to an overarching and final interpretation and legitimation of cultural meanings which it had enjoyed under the regime of Christendom, unable to share the basic philosophy on which first liberalism and then its competitors, socialism and communism, were built, and largely either unwilling or unable to winnow the wheat from the chaff in the modern developments, the Church constructed another world of meaning and value, a distinct social body within the larger society, a culture distinct from that which directed the ruling and planning classes. Roman Catholicism, in its worldview and in its organization, was this third body, no longer the common culture, despite its continuing totalizing claims, but rather a sub-culture forced to compete in a marketplace of meaning and value not only with other religious bodies, but with secular systems which throughout the century were gaining more and more political power and more and more control over the minds of men.

I have spoken of this Roman Catholicism as a «sub-culture», distinct in worldview and organization from most of the larger societies in which it lived. This social form has sometimes been referred to as «ghetto-Catholicism», and its governing attitude as a «siege-mentality». The terms are perhaps not fully appropriate, especially because they do not sufficiently suggest the aggressive dimensions of this form of Catholicism, at least from Leo XIII on.<sup>61</sup>

Catholics did not have to wait for the Second Vatican Council in order to hear appeals that they leave the sacristy and engage the modern world in the variety of its challenges and problems. The Roman Catholicism described here offered a positive alternative to the developing liberal society and culture, engaged in some very acute criticism of modern society, and sought both to win converts to itself and to rechristianize society. Those who speak of a «ghetto» and of a «state of siege» usually mean the terms pejoratively and assume that the Church should have made earlier the sort of accommodation to the modern world which the Second Vatican Council represented. And while this assumption may be defensible, such slogans over-simplify a complex reality and can substitute for the careful historical and sociological analysis that is so needed.

This Roman Catholicism was in its essential features sooner or later realized in almost all the major areas of the world. It showed itself in Germany even before but especially after the *Kulturkampf*, in France especially after the fall of the Second Empire and the Separation of 1905, in Italy after the Reunification, in Holland and Switzerland, in England, Australia, and the United States, especially after the Americanist controversy; and, of course, it was the model imported as Catholicism into the mission areas of Asia and Africa. There were, no doubt, significant differences in the way in which it was realized in various regions and countries, differences in large part due to the economic, social, political and cultural varieties of situations the Church confronted. While historians and sociologists will rightly concentrate on these particular differentiating characteristics, it is important to keep in mind that a single interpretation of the challenge of modernity was everywhere considered to be applicable and normative by a Roman authority whose increasing control over local Church life was itself a major element in the Catholic response to the modern challenge.

At the turn of this century, an English critic made an unfriendly comparison between the papacy and the Celestial Empire of China, both of them marked, he said, by a «self-contained immobility», proud of their distinctiveness, and «refusing to acknowledge an inferiority which seems to Englishmen obvious».<sup>62</sup> This malicious and

<sup>60</sup> For the idea of a sub-society, see U. Alternatt, *Katholische Subgesellschaft. Thesen zum Konzept der «katholischen Subgesellschaft» am Beispiel des Schweizer Katholizismus*, in *Zur Soziologie des Katholizismus...*, 147-148; see also in the same volume Karl Gabriel's fine essay, *Die neuzeitliche Gesellschaftsentwicklung und der Katholizismus als Sozialform der Christenumsgegeschichte* (201-225).

<sup>61</sup> Poulat is correct, I believe, in locating the difference between Pius IX and Leo XIII, not in their attitudes towards the modern world, but in their strategies for winning it back to Christ; see *L'Église, c'est un monde...*, 241-258.

<sup>62</sup> For the summary of Jessopp's argument, first published in *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1895, see the response of W. Ward, *The Rigidity of Rome, in Problems and Persons*, London 1903, 66-98, esp. 66-70. Ward conceded a certain amount of Jessopp's critique, but argued that the modern Catholic Church's rigidity and exclusiveness came «not from choice in time of peace, but from necessity in time of war» (70).

condescending comparison illustrates what Emile Poulat regards as the key to the interpretation of modern Roman Catholicism: the cultural clash between the ancient religious tradition which had once informed western culture and an emerging modern culture which, convinced of its superiority and certain of its future, defined itself at least by its independence of religious control and legitimation, if not by an active opposition to them.<sup>63</sup> «Modern civilization», Cardinal Manning put it flatly, «is civilisation without Christianity».<sup>64</sup> For a sense of the issue, Poulat suggests a comparison with the impact on traditional cultures and societies, say in Africa or Asia, of the spread of democracy and technology. The suggestion is intriguing, not least because it stops one short and requires one to think, especially if one is not convinced that the dissolution of traditional cultures before the rationalizations of modern western society is in all respects a good thing. Such a jolt to one's modern cultural assumptions can serve a useful heuristic function in both interpreting and evaluating the cultural conflict that has defined the modern history of Catholicism.

Poulat is not himself much interested in grand sociological theory. F.X. Kaufmann, a Swiss sociologist, and a group of his students and colleagues are more venturesome.<sup>65</sup> They use the theories of Max Weber and Niklas Luhmann to argue that at the very same time that the Catholic Church was defining itself in anti-modern terms, its own response to the challenge it faced reflected and embodied essential features of the modernization of western society. They draw a parallel between the institutional differentiation of the political realm into the modern bureaucratically organized State, of the economic realm into capitalism, and of the realm of the intimate into the bourgeois family, on the one hand, and, on the other, what they call *die Verkirchlichung des Christentums*.<sup>66</sup> Within the context

He went on to argue at some length that the «siege-mentality» (a term which Ward may have coined) was appropriate in the face of the attacks the Church had received since the Reformation, but that, now that many Catholic principles and values were widely shared, one could look forward to the relaxation of the Church's quasi-military discipline.

<sup>63</sup> This is the central argument of Poulat's *Eglise contre Bourgeoisie*; for briefer statements see his *Le catholicisme sous observation*, ..., 28-29, 30-32.

<sup>64</sup> On Progress, in *Miscellanies*, I London 1877, 313.

<sup>65</sup> See the works cited above in footnote 5. For a sharp theological criticism of the Church's effort to construct «its own little Sonderwelt», see J. Raizinger, *Was heisst Erneuerung der Kirche*, in *Das neue Volk Gottes*, ..., 267-281, esp. 274-277.

<sup>66</sup> «For the Christian tradition the thesis of social differentiation implies the concentration of Christianity in the Church, as it meant at the same time the concentration of

of the parallel, this untranslatable phrase refers to the elimination of religion from the key public spheres, the reduction of religion to the sphere of the Church, and the development of the Church as a distinct, bureaucratically organized institution for meeting the now socially differentiated religious needs of its members. In the case of the Catholic Church, they see this last development as essentially a nineteenth-century phenomenon, whose central elements were a bureaucratizing of ecclesiastical office, a sacralizing of authority, and the creation of a carefully bounded social milieu for the everyday life of Catholics. In Kaufmann's words, this *Verkirchlichung* was «the structurally quite parallel response to the developments that had led to modern society».<sup>67</sup>

The paradox is, of course, that all this was happening even while the various reform-movements which arose within the Church were either being repudiated by Church leaders or could succeed only by being brought under official control. Such reform-movements had been undertaken as early as the mid-18th century, in part as a response to and in part as an element of what we call the Enlightenment.<sup>68</sup> Towards the end of that century, a series of calls for reform, which bear a remarkable similarity to those undertaken by the Church since the Second Vatican Council, were fatally compromised by association with Jansenism and with the enlightened despotism known as Josephinism.<sup>69</sup> Gregory XVI set the tone when

governance in the state, of the economy in capitalism, and of the family in intimacy» (K. Gabriel, *Die neuzeitliche Gesellschaftsentwicklung und der Katholizismus als Sozialform der Christentums-geschichte*, in *Zur Soziologie des Katholizismus*..., 205).

<sup>67</sup> Kaufmann, *Kirche begreifen*..., 68.

<sup>68</sup> See O. Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, Oxford 1981; L.-J. Rogier, *L'Aufklärung catholique*, in *Nouvelle Histoire de l'Eglise*. 4: *Siècle des Lumières, Révolutions, Restaurations*, Paris 1966, 137-161; B. Piongeron, *Recherches sur l'Aufklärung catholique en Europe occidentale. 1770-1830*, in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 16 (1969) 555-605; L. Swidler, *Aufklärung Catholicism 1780-1850. Liturgical and Other Reforms in the Catholic Aufklärung*, Missoula 1978; *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus*, ed. E. Kovacs, München 1979; *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. W.J. Callahan and D. Higgs, New York 1979; K. Ottmar F. Von Aretun, *Cattolicesimo riformatore, illuminismo cattolico, e assolutismo illuminato*, in *Il Sinodo di Pistoia del 1786. Atti del Convegno internazionale per il secondo centenario, Pistoia-Prato, 25-27 settembre 1986*, ed. C. Lamioni, Roma 1991, 1-9.

<sup>69</sup> Both elements were most dramatically illustrated in the Synod of Pistoia of 1786, the memory of which was frequently invoked very unfavorably by popes from Gregory XVI to Pius X. See Ch.A. Bolton, *Church Reform in 18th Century Italy (The Synod of Pistoia, 1786)*, The Hague 1969, and *Il Sinodo di Pistoia del 1786*, cited in the previous note.

his condemnation of Lamennais included a repudiation of the «obviously absurd and injurious» idea that «a certain "restoration and regeneration" of the Church is needed for her safety and growth, as if she could be considered subject to defect or obscuration or other misfortune». <sup>70</sup> From then on, suggestions of the Church's need to reform, change or evolve were to be met with the strongest suspicion. In the Syllabus of Errors, Pius IX condemned the proposition that «the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and accommodate himself to progress, liberalism and recent civilization». <sup>71</sup> Pius X, in *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*, condemned the idea that the Church's structures and dogmas could develop. <sup>72</sup> Forty years later, soon after Pius XII published *Humani generis* (1950), his variant on the Syllabus and *Pascendi*, Yves Congar would be required to withdraw

<sup>70</sup> Gregory XVI, *Mirari vos* (Carlen, I, 237). One of the propositions of the Synod of Pistoia condemned in 1794 by Pius VI was that «in recent centuries there has spread a general obscuration of the most important truths of religion, those that are the foundation of the faith and moral teaching of Jesus Christ» (DS 2603); on the subject, see P. Stella, *L'oscuramento delle verità nella Chiesa dal Sinodo di Pistoia alla bolla «Auctorem fidei»* (1786-1794), in *Saesianum* 43 (1981) 731-756; M. Caffiero, *La verità crocifissa. Dal sinodo di Pistoia al millenarismo giansenistico nell'età rivoluzionaria*, in *Il Sinodo di Pistoia del 1786...*, 313-325.

<sup>71</sup> Prop. 80 (DS 2980). The particular circumstances of the document from which this unfortunately lapidary statement was taken (*Allocution, Iamudum cernimus*, 18 March 1861, referring to recent events in Italy) do not prevent one from interpreting it as directed not only against the three realities mentioned but also against «liberal Catholics» whose accommodations the Pope vigorously condemned more than once. On 28 June 1871, addressing French pilgrims, he exclaimed: «Atheism in laws, indifference in religion, and those pernicious maxims they call Catholic-Liberal — these, these are the real causes of the ruin of States; these are what has brought France to such great ruin. Believe me, this evil is a more fearful evil than the Revolution itself, than the Commune itself! I have always condemned Catholic-Liberalism, and, if necessary, I would condemn it another forty times!» (*Discorsi del Sommo Pontefice Pio IX pronunziati in Vaticano ai fedeli di Roma e dell'orbe dal principio della sua prigionia fino al presente*, ed. P. de Francis, Roma 1872, 138-139).

<sup>72</sup> For example, see three of the many propositions condemned in «*Lamentabili*»: #22: «The dogmas which the Church presents as revealed are not truths fallen from heaven, but rather an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has acquired for itself by laborious efforts» (DS 3422); #53: «The organic constitution of the Church is not immutable; rather the Christian society is as much subject to perpetual evolution as human society» (DS 3453); #54: «Dogmas, sacraments, hierarchy, both as notions and as realities, are nothing but the interpretations and evolutions of Christian understanding, which have developed and perfected with external increments the tiny seed latent in the Gospel» (DS 3454). The repudiation of almost any form of «evolutionism» is one of the chief themes of «*Pascendi*».

from circulation a book in which he tried to distinguish «True and False Reform in the Church». <sup>73</sup>

But under this official rejection of reform, the Catholic Church was changing dramatically and not least of all under popes commonly considered «intransigent», Pius IX, Pius X and even Leo XIII. If it obviously had many and even essential features in common with the Catholicism of earlier centuries, modern Roman Catholicism differed in many ways from the Catholicism of the *ancien régime*, from that of the Counter-Reformation, and from that of the vaulted age of medieval Christendom. Historians and sociologists, of course, will tell us that it could not be otherwise; but it is only recently that Church historians and theologians have undertaken to describe, analyze and evaluate the process by which modern Roman Catholicism was constructed.

I have been arguing that this distinctive sociological form of the Church was produced precisely as a response to the challenges and threats represented by the extension into western political, social and cultural life of the Enlightenment principles of autonomy and differentiation. The paradox is that at the very moment in which the Church was repudiating the effects of the Enlightenment on society and culture, it was making use of important features of it in the articulation of its own life. Roman Catholicism presented itself as the antithesis of emancipation from tradition and authority; but it innovated in many areas of Church life, devotion, structure, and thought, and the authority which it exercised represents a classic illustration of that self-conscious, rationalized, and bureaucratized mode of thought in which Max Weber saw the distinctive mark of modernity. This anti-modern Roman Catholicism was very modern indeed. <sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> For the fate of Congar's book, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, Paris 1950, see E. Fouilloux, *Recherche théologique et Magistère romain en 1952. Une «affaire» parmi d'autres*, in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 71 (1983) 269-286. John W. O'Malley has argued that it was the Church's failure to develop a theory of historical development and of Church reform that in part explains the dramatic impact of Vatican II's aggiornamento; see *Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's Aggiornamento*, in *Theological Studies* 32 (1971) 577-601, and *Developments, Reform, and Two Great Reformations. Towards a Historical Assessment of Vatican II*, in *Theological Studies* 44 (1983) 373-406.

<sup>74</sup> Kaufmann supplies a useful summary: «To put it briefly, one might characterize the ultramontane Catholicism that developed in the nineteenth century as organizationally modern and culturally traditional. It was organizationally modern in its ability to produce a monocratic structure of authority, in the establishment of organized religious structures on diocesan and parochial levels, in the increasing professionalization of the



This essay represents an effort to illustrate some aspects of the Roman Catholicism which was being constructed in the midst of the cultural conflict which Poulat has described and by the means which Kaufmann *et al.* have analyzed. The features emphasized represent instances in which something new developed as the sociological form which the ancient Catholic Church assumed in the modern era. This modern Roman Catholicism is not the same social phenomenon encountered under the *ancien régime*, nor during the Counter-Reformation, nor (despite its appeal to this ideal) in the centuries of «Christendom». Jean Delumeau has argued that Catholicism became something different once the Reformation had destroyed the religious unity of Europe.<sup>75</sup> In the same way, one can argue that it became again something new once religion, Catholic or Protestant, was denied its integrating and regulative role in society. What the Church becomes in any age is never determined solely by the principles that constitute its distinctive life, but always by an interpretation and realization of them which actively engage the challenges of the larger society and culture.

It is this modern Catholicism which was seriously challenged at the Second Vatican Council. Briefly stated, the hypothesis is that in three respects the Council called into question the logic of modern Roman Catholicism. It produced a much more positive assessment of modernity in its intellectual, social and political aspects. It called for an *aggiornamento* and reform of Church worship, devotion and practice, which in effect called into question the procedures by which the Church had always, at least within anyone's memory, reproduced itself. And it encouraged local Catholic churches to engage in an active effort to achieve culturally distinct and relevant realizations of Catholicism in their several areas. The first of these, as the traditionalists have rightly urged, compromised a long-stand-

clergy, in its use of the principle of free association to form associations and political parties. It was culturally traditional in its decisive rejection of all that is "modern", in its concern for religious customs and its demand that the clergy paternalistically lead the laity, and especially in its emphasis on tradition to legitimate the Church's activity. The Catholic Church in the nineteenth century saw itself as since ancient times essentially unchangeable; in its holiness it participated in the eternity of God» (Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil als Moment einer Modernisierung des Katholizismus..., 12).

<sup>75</sup> See Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire. A New View of the Counter-Reformation, Philadelphia 1977.

ing suspicion of modernity.<sup>76</sup> The second weakened the taken-for-granted character, that is, the authority, of everyday Catholic practices. And the third challenged the normative character of European and especially Roman ways of understanding and realizing Catholicism. The cumulative effect of these three decisions proved devastating to the everyday world of modern Roman Catholicism.

The Council itself took those three steps. And they proved to be far more significant than the bishops of the Council appear to have expected. No historical actor should ever presume he knows all the consequences of his actions. Neither the popes nor the bishops of the Second Vatican Council were any better equipped to anticipate the impact of their words and deeds. If, as almost all interpreters agree, however they may evaluate it, a certain Catholicism dissolved after Vatican II, it is of some importance to try to understand what that Catholicism was, how and why it became what it was, before any serious attempt can be made to say whether its dissolution was a good thing or bad. This essay is a contribution to that effort at understanding.

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<sup>76</sup> Joseph Ratzinger's description of Gaudium et spes as «a revision of the Syllabus of Pius IX, a kind of countersyllabus» (Principles of Catholic Theology..., 381) is cited by Archbishop Lefebvre as evidence for his view that Vatican II departed from orthodox tradition; see *His l'ont decouronné...*, 184n.

**Summary:** This essay offers a description of the construction of the social form of «Roman Catholicism» that prevailed in the decades before the Second Vatican Council and then was so rapidly transformed after it. To deal with the new situation created by the «apostasy» of the modern and liberal world from Christ ad his Church and to arm itself with institutions and weapons adequate to the apocalyptic battle that threatened, the Church gave political interpretations to its dogmas and devotions, mobilized its people into hundreds of committed associations, and centralized the lines of authority under a supreme and infallible pope. Through these developments was formed a distinct subsociety with a distinct subculture to legitimate and inspire it, modern Roman Catholicism. A hypothesis is offered that the main motives and structures of this social form were undercut, however unintentionally, by decisions made at Vatican II.