

## THE TROUBLE WITH *DIGNITATIS HUMANAЕ*— III. THE DEVASTATION IN ITS TRAIN

“The fact that an individual may in good faith think that his false religion is true gives no more right to propagate it than the sincerity of the alien anarchist entitles him to advocate his abominable political theories... or the perverted ethical notions of the dealer in obscene literature confer upon him the right to corrupt the morals of a community.”

Monsignor John A. Ryan<sup>1</sup>

### The Problem of Subjectivism

One of the deficiencies in reasoning in the modern world is the insouciance with which the thinker will pass from the real to the mental order, or vice versa, quite unconscious of the fact that in doing so he is breaching the rules of logic. Another mark of this lack of rigour is the thinker’s unwillingness to define his terms. Blandly he will arrive at conclusions which the premises, properly defined, could not possibly justify. Both failures derive from the intellectual evil of the age, subjectivism.<sup>2</sup>

Truth is the identity between what is asserted and what is, i.e., reality. For the subjectivist, however, truth is the identity between what is asserted and what he thinks is real. The realist<sup>3</sup> begins with the facts and follows where they lead: thus Aristotle; thus St Thomas Aquinas. The subjectivist begins with an idea, something he thinks to be true, then plumbs the facts to find some that will support it: thus Karl Marx<sup>4</sup>; thus Charles Darwin; thus Félicité de Lamennais. The realist arrives at the truth; the subjectivist arrives where he started—surrounded by his own illusions. Subjectivism has two evil effects: it overlooks real distinctions; it discovers distinctions which do not really exist.

These evils of are manifest in *Dignitatis Humanae*. The Council Fathers did not, as we have demonstrated in the first paper in this series, begin their consideration of the subjects of liberty and religion by analysing those realities and teasing out from them the truth of their interchange. They began with an idea, then endeavoured to justify it. They refused to define their terms. They asserted as a reality something (freedom from coercion) which has no existence distinct from natural freedom<sup>5</sup>. They failed to acknowledge the impossibility of a natural freedom unfettered by a corresponding moral freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, 1940, pp. 317-8; quoted in Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Minnesota, 1992, p. 51. John A. Ryan Ph.D, STD (1869-1945), was Professor of Political Science and of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America from 1916 until 1939.

<sup>2</sup> On the nature and causes of this intellectual evil see the author’s paper, “The Loss of Metaphysics” at <http://www.superflumina.org/metaphysics.html>

<sup>3</sup> Or, more properly, “the objectivist”.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Paul Johnson’s study “Karl Marx: Howling Gigantic Curses”, in his *Intellectuals*, London (George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited), 1988.

<sup>5</sup> It is simply natural freedom under a different conception.

These evils are manifest, too, in the comments of the *peritus* chiefly responsible for the Declaration's radically defective content, American Jesuit John Courtney Murray. With unconscious irony he writes<sup>6</sup>—

“It was, of course, the most controversial document of the whole Council, largely because it raised... the issue of the development of doctrine... The course of the development between the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) still remains to be explained by theologians. But the Council formally sanctioned the validity of the development itself...”

Only one who confuses what exists in mind with what exists in the real could regard the *contradiction* of some principle as a *development* of that principle.

### **The Evolution of *Dignitatis Humanae***

Father Murray summarises the stormy course of the Council Fathers' statement:

“The first text had appeared as Chapter V of the Decree on Ecumenism. The second text had appeared as a Declaration, but in an appendix to the Decree on Ecumenism.

With the third text the Declaration assumed independent status...”<sup>7</sup>

In his book *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, English layman Michael Davies gives a more comprehensive account of the Declaration's progress from the rejection of the original (and orthodox) text of the Preparatory Commission through to its promulgation in heterodox form more than three years later.<sup>8</sup>

### **Objective and Subjective Moral Responsibility**

God alone is the Judge of the human heart. Those who regard the actions of men may form a view as to their conformity, or lack of it, with right reason, or with the rule of morals. But they cannot judge the internal dispositions of the agents. In this paper and its predecessors we have expressed certain views about the conduct of the Popes, of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, and of their *periti*. These views relate, and relate only, to the objective state of the actions of the persons involved, and their consequences. They are not to be taken as a judgement on the state of the souls of those acting. One might, for instance, counter our criticism of certain views of Pope John XXIII by pointing out that he has been raised to the altars of the Church. But sanctity does not guarantee freedom from error. If it were otherwise every saint would qualify as a Doctor of the Church, but there are only thirty three Church Doctors.

### **The Consequences of *Dignitatis Humanae* for the Church and the World**

Catholics are given great powers through their baptism, confirmation and, (for the clergy) holy orders. If they misuse those powers the harm that results is proportionately great. The men responsible for the greatest crisis in western civilisation, Martin Luther and Henry Tudor (Henry VIII), were both Catholics.

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<sup>6</sup> In his introduction to *Dignitatis Humanae* in the Walter M. Abbott edition of the *Documents of Vatican II*, London, 1966, pp. 672-4.

<sup>7</sup> *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M Abbott S J, General Editor; London, 1966, p. 672.

<sup>8</sup> *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 106 et seq.

Error works harm and the greater the error the greater the harm; but also, the greater the dignity of the body that has made the error, the greater the harm, for the body lends its authority to the error made. There are three reasons, therefore, why the evils worked in the Church and in the world as a result of the errors in *Dignitatis Humanae* are proportionately great. We list here the chief of those evils. There are, doubtless, others equally pernicious.

## 1. The Promotion of Atheism

In his encyclical *Immortale Dei* (November 1<sup>st</sup> 1885), *On the Christian Constitution of States*, Pope Leo XIII taught this—

“To hold... that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God.”<sup>9</sup>

He confirmed this teaching in *Libertas praestantissimum*:

“Civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. Justice therefore forbids, as reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges...”<sup>10</sup>

In all the history of mankind there has been no shift in psyche to compare with the abandonment of belief in God which followed the close of the Second Vatican Council. It was the denial implicit in *Dignitatis Humanae* that Catholicism is the one true religion on earth, the one religion to which men are bound to give their allegiance, which led such numbers to embrace atheism. Thus the very thrust of the document was self defeating. The Council Fathers’ failure to adhere to Catholic principle, the infallible teaching of their Church, betrayed them. Their adoption of de Lamennais’ errors brought with it for many in their flocks a replication of de Lamennais’ end—*atheism*. The effects have been devastating.

“Every sin consists formally in aversion from God... Hence the more a sin severs man from God, the graver it is. Now man is more than ever separated from God by unbelief, because he has not even true knowledge of God: and by false knowledge of God, man does not approach Him, but is severed from Him... Therefore it is clear that the sin of unbelief is greater than any sin that occurs in the perversion of morals.”<sup>11</sup>

## 2. The Abandonment of the Church’s Rightful Position as regards the State

No politician on earth opens his mouth to speak of religion today but he must first deny the entitlement of the Church to involve itself in the affairs of the State. The mantra repeated without exception is “separation of Church from State”. This is not

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<sup>9</sup> *Immortale Dei* (1.11.1885), n. 32

<sup>10</sup> *Libertas Praestantissimum* (20.6.1888), n. 21

<sup>11</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 10, a. 3

Catholic teaching but, as has been shown, Masonic doctrine given free scope by the conduct of the Council Fathers in *Dignitatis Humanae*. As Leo XIII remarked:

“This kind of liberty [i.e., religious liberty], if considered in relation to the State, clearly implies that there is no reason why the State should offer any homage to God, or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith. But to justify this it must be taken as true that the State has no duties towards God, or that such duties, if they exist, can be abandoned with impunity, both of which assertions are manifestly false. For it cannot be doubted but that by the will of God men are united in civil society, whether its component parts be considered, or its form—which implies authority—or the object of its existence, or the abundance of the vast services which it renders to man...

“Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty... because the marks of truth are, as it were, engraved upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect if they would provide—as they should—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community. For public authority exists for the welfare of those whom it governs; and, although its proximate end is to lead men to the prosperity found in this life, yet in so doing, it ought not to diminish, but rather to increase, man’s capability of attaining to the supreme good in which his everlasting happiness consists, which never can be attained if religion be disregarded.”<sup>12</sup>

Driven by the ethos in *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Popes and bishops of the Church have abandoned her rightful claim to establishment in nation states. They have taken active steps in those countries where the Church has enjoyed her proper position to destroy the *status quo* by eviscerating the relevant concordats or treaties.<sup>13</sup> What is the result? Countries formerly convincingly Catholic have permitted the entry of Protestant sects and pagan religions with detrimental effects to the common, and individual, good of all their citizens. Countries determinedly Catholic have fallen under the sway of ideology. The Church formerly had concordats with Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The reader will recall the contempt with which Pope John Paul II was treated by the ruling juntas in these countries on his visit in March, 1983. Why should anyone be surprised? The Church’s leaders having abandoned her claim to precedence in the world, why wonder when secular leaders, their heads filled with ideology, choose to do the same with the Pope?<sup>14</sup>

Typical of the effects of *Dignitatis Humanae* are those reported by English layman, Michael Davies, in that most Catholic of countries, Malta:

“[B]efore Vatican II, Jehovah’s Witnesses were not allowed to proselytise. Now Maltese who have apostasized in such countries as Australia and the U.S.A. are

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<sup>12</sup> *Libertas Praestantissimum*, n. 21

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Michael Davies in *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 250-1, on the initiative of the Holy See in seeking the suppression of the Christian constitution of Columbia, and the admission by the Apostolic Nuncio to Switzerland in March 1976 that the same had occurred in respect of the Christian constitution of the Swiss Catholic canton, the Valais.

<sup>14</sup> In a sense Pope John Paul II brought the obloquy on himself with his support of *Dignitatis Humanae*.

coming back in large numbers and systematically visiting every home on the island, persuading thousands of Catholics to join this pernicious sect.”<sup>15</sup>

### 3. The Concession that Error has Rights<sup>16</sup>

The Catholic Church exists to lead men to God. She is the force for good in a world of evil. She possesses all truth. Yet in the last forty years an independent observer would be hard pressed to accept this. Popes and bishops seem to be afflicted by a sort of terror at defending the truth. Since the death of Pius XII, for example, the world has been increasingly afflicted by ideologies such as Secular Humanism, Feminism, and Darwinianism and by the other ideological fruit of subjectivism encapsulated under the heading “political correctness”. Yet where is the encyclical that has addressed any of them? or addressed the philosophical defect (subjectivism) which has given rise to them?

People in their millions wander bemusedly among the bookshops and websites of the world seeking the truth. The Church possesses the truth *in respect of each one of these issues*. Why do the Popes and bishops not provide them with it? Because of the evils that flow from the concession that error has rights. The first of these is the mentality that people should not be disturbed in their error; the second, a loss of confidence in those possessed of the truth that they do, in fact, possess it.

The best of physicians deals not with the symptoms of disease, but with the disease itself—not with the effects, but with the cause. Recent Popes have addressed the effects, but ignored the causes. Thus Pope John Paul could promulgate *Veritatis Splendor* (6.8.1993) on the Church’s moral teaching, and *Evangelium Vitae*, (25.3.1995) on abortion and contraception, but never in an encyclical addressed the evil that disposes men to abandon moral principle—*atheism*. Why not? Because the Catholic position against atheism has been compromised. Once more, if we would understand the truth, we must turn to Leo XIII—

“[W]hen once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man’s individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority. But, from what has been said, it is clear that all this is in contradiction to reason. To refuse any bond of union between man and civil society on the one hand, and God the Creator and... supreme Law-giver on the other, is plainly repugnant to the nature, not only of man, but of all created things; for, of necessity, all effects must in some proper way be connected with their cause; and it belongs to the perfection of every nature to contain itself within that sphere and

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<sup>15</sup> *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., pp. 51-2.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Davies rightly rejects John Courtney Murray’s contention that the phrase ‘error has no rights’ is meaningless: “The formula is just a convenient way of stating that persons holding erroneous beliefs do not possess a natural right to propagate them.” Cf. *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 52.

grade which the order of nature has assigned to it, namely, that the lower should be subject and obedient to the higher.

“Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honour and dishonour differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and, a code of morality being provided which can have little or no power to restrain or quieten the unruly propensities of man, a way is naturally opened to universal corruption...<sup>17</sup>

The concession that error has rights manifests itself in the attitude of bishops and clergy towards the teaching, liturgy and administration of the Catholic Church. No longer confident that they are possessed of the truth, bishops, priests and theologians decline to proclaim it. They will not confront the lying media or the multitude of false proponents of materialism. They remain silent when they should speak; they decline invitations to debate contentious issues or to stand up publicly for the truth. One is more likely to find the Church defended by the Catholic laity than the Catholic clergy in the modern world.

#### 4. The Loss of the Sense of Evil in Human Religions

The loss by the world of the influence proper to Catholicism has brought in its train a loss of the sense of the evil present in all merely human religions. Only the orthodox Catholic possessed of the truth understands, for example, how Mohammedanism inverts and mocks the religion established by Almighty God. He is a God of love; He created us in love. That the Muslims’ “Allah”, in contrast, is regarded as a ruthless tyrant demanding obedience may be seen from the violence that characterises proselytism in that religion and towards any “believer” who should defect from it. Almighty God creates each man free to accept His revelation or reject it: with its resort to fear and intimidation, Mohammedanism effectively denies human freedom. Almighty God created man in his own image and likeness—*male and female He created them*—establishing man and woman in a proportional equality: for the Muslim, however, a woman is virtually a slave. Almighty God moves a man to martyrdom in imitation of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who gave up His life for all mankind: the Muslim allows that a man may be a “martyr” by slaughtering his fellow man in the name of “Allah”.

Notwithstanding their rejection of Christianity, peoples in formerly (i.e., nominally) Christian countries still retain Christian values. But because they have lost the reason for holding these values, *they have lost the perception that accompanies them*. They welcome Muslims into their countries in the naïve belief that these people will observe their values as something universally to be respected. They do not understand that Christian values are anathema to the Muslim and that he will only ever give them lip service. Catholics fought for centuries—for ten centuries in the case of Spain and Portugal—to rid their countries of the evil of Mohammedanism. It has returned to penetrate every one of them in just forty years,

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<sup>17</sup> *Libertas praestantissimum*, nn. 15, 16

the years since *Dignitatis Humanae*. Christ died for all men, even for Muslims. Why has there been nothing from Christ's Vicar insisting that no one can hope to enter heaven who slaughters his fellow man, even if he claims to be doing it for God?

#### 5. The Indulgence of Ideologies

A further characteristic of the indulgence of error is the tacit, sometimes explicit, acceptance by members of the Church hierarchy of the various ideologies that, pretending to be works of intellect, trouble the world.

The worst of these, Communism, is in decline. There were members of the Vatican Curia notorious for their sympathy with Communist ideology.<sup>18</sup> The collapse of the Russian Communist state resulted from the felicitous interaction of a man made disaster (the explosion of the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl) with the personal charisma of Pope John Paul II. But the late Pope might have achieved much more, and achieved it more quickly, had he condemned publicly the evil which grounds both Communism and Western materialism. Had he done so, moreover, the reaction of the subjugated peoples to the overthrow of the Communist tyranny might have been better focussed. Instead, they turned to that other atheistic pathway, the materialism promoted by Western culture. The equation is a simple one—atheism = materialism : materialism = atheism.

Pope John Paul II publicly endorsed the follies of Feminist ideology, only excepting—and that illogically, as Feminists were quick to point out—its inevitable consequences, contraception and abortion. He has left the members of Christ's Church with a legacy of infatuation over Feminism's foolish ideas.

Darwinian ideology, with its implicit atheism, is allowed free reign among the Catholic faithful and hardly a word is uttered, whether by Pope or bishops, to demonstrate its folly. Indeed, they seem incapable of seeing through its defects. We repeat what we have said before on this website: the Church has the truth in respect of this issue within her philosophical and theological teachings. All that is needed to demonstrate the folly of Darwinianism is to plumb those teachings.

But perhaps the most insidious of the silences of the Vatican since the death of Pius XII is that regarding Freemasonry. And who should wonder, given the success of Masonic ideas in *Dignitatis Humanae*? The 'party line' propagated by Masons today is that the old antipathies between the Church and Freemasonry are a thing of the past. One hears Catholic priests and prelates saying the same thing. It is false: Freemasonry is of the Devil who does not sleep. In 1890 Leo XIII warned his Italian people of the influence of the followers of Freemasonry in these terms:

“Possessed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they burn like him with a deadly and implacable hatred of Jesus Christ and of His work; and they endeavour by every means to overthrow and fetter it. This war is at present waged more than elsewhere in Italy, in which the Catholic religion has taken deeper root; and above all

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<sup>18</sup> Such as Cardinals Casaroli and Silvestrini whose apparent Masonic affiliations disposed them to indulge the parallel errors found in Communism. Casaroli oversaw the betrayal of Cardinal Mindzenty, the Metropolitan of Hungary.

in Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and the See of the Universal Pastor and Teacher of the Church.”<sup>19</sup>

In the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (canon 1374) the penalty of excommunication for adherence by a Catholic to any Masonic organisation present in the 1917 *Code* (canon 2335) was removed. Notwithstanding the directive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Quaesitum est* (26.11.1983), that “the Church’s negative judgement in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged”, and Cardinal Ratzinger’s reiteration of this thereafter, the evil of membership by Catholics of this Satanic organisation continues. The issue of the presence of Masons in the Vatican has been bruited for 50 years. Augustin Cardinal Bea, head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity during the Second Vatican Council, and responsible for introducing the critical schema that resulted eventually in *Dignitatis Humanae*, is said to have been a Mason. The Secretaries of State spanning the period 1969 to 1990, Cardinals Villot and Casaroli, are said to have been Masons. Others, such as Cardinal Bugnini, are notorious for the damage they worked within the Church.

Leo XIII exposed the evils of Freemasonry in a number of encyclicals.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most significant remark he made for the purposes of identifying the influence of the cult on the actions of its members was this —

“[N]o matter how great may be men’s cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. *A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit.* [Matt. 7: 18] Now, the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savour.”<sup>21</sup>

Given the bitter fruit that have resulted from *Dignitatis Humanae* one may ponder the extent of the influence of Freemasonry among the Council’s bishops.

## 6. The Modification of the Church’s Teaching on Salvation

God’s will is salvific towards all men. But they cannot be saved through persisting in ignorance in their own “religion”, only through conversion to the faith founded by Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church requires their conversion, for Christ is the only way a man may get to heaven. The effect of the false teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae*, however, is to deny this need; to allow that those in error should be allowed to continue in their error. This falsity is reflected in Pope John Paul II’s first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*. Any objective reader would be hard pressed to interpret that document in any way other than allowing that baptism in the Catholic Church is no longer essential to salvation. The same error appears in some of his later encyclicals.

Members of the Jewish faith take umbrage over the prayers that require their conversion, and with reason. For they have been led, for some forty years now, to

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<sup>19</sup> Encyclical on Freemasonry in Italy, *Dall’alto dell’apostolico seggio*, 15.10.1890.

<sup>20</sup> Summarised by the author, with appropriate references, in three articles on the superflumina website: “Leo XIII and Freemasonry” at <http://www.superflumina.org/freemasonry.html>; “Freemasonry, the Church’s Law up to Vatican II and Beyond”, at <http://www.superflumina.org/freemasonry.html>; and “Freemasons in the Church” at [http://www.superflumina.org/3\\_Masonsinchurch.html](http://www.superflumina.org/3_Masonsinchurch.html).

<sup>21</sup> *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), n. 10.

believe that the Church has abandoned her insistence that they be converted from Judaism. But it is not the Church which has misled them: it is the Church's erring ministers.

Pope John Paul II's initiative in inviting pagan religious leaders to Assisi for a world day of prayer for peace in October, 1986 raised great concerns not only among the faithful but among his cardinals and bishops. George Weigel wrote:

"[C]urial officials and some bishops around the world wondered whether John Paul was not veering dangerously close to the heresy of syncretism with one of the most innovative initiatives of his pontificate—a World Day of Prayer for Peace, involving non-Catholic and non-Christian religious leaders from all over the globe..."<sup>22</sup>

But his conduct was consistent with the errors taught in *Dignitatis Humanae*. If *the human person has a right to religious freedom*, it follows that it is no longer essential to salvation that a man believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised. If membership of any "religion" (or, indeed, of none) suffices for salvation, why should not the Pope gather together the heads of the various religions, each praying to what he conceived to be God?

#### 7. The Submission of the Church to the United Nations Organisation

Some two months before the Council Fathers promulgated *Dignitatis Humanae*, Pope Paul VI addressed the United Nations General Assembly on the twentieth anniversary of its foundation. In the course of doing so he said this—

"What you set forth here are the rights and fundamental duties of man; his dignity; his liberty, and above all his religious liberty. We feel that you are the interpreters of what is most exalted in human wisdom; we would almost say, its sacred character."<sup>23</sup>

The Pope did not wait for the document's formal promulgation to assert the licitness of "religious liberty". The draft, in its fourth redaction, had passed with 1,997 bishops in favour and 224 against it just thirteen days prior at the conclusion of a debate described by the Italian *peritus*, Msgr Pietro Pavan, as "perhaps the most violent ever to have taken place in the *aula*."<sup>24</sup> If the Council Fathers would not, the Pope had certainly made up *his* mind on the subject.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains these provisions—

*Article 2.* Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...

...

*Article 18* Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or

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<sup>22</sup> *Witness to Hope, The Biography of Pope John Paul II, 1920-2005*, HarperCollins, London, revised edition, 2005, p. 511,

<sup>23</sup> "Ce que vous proclamez ici, ce sont les droits et les devoirs fondamentaux de l'homme, sa dignité, sa liberté, et avant tout la liberté religieuse. Nous sentons que vous êtes les interprètes de ce qu'il y a de plus haut dans la sagesse humaine, Nous dirions presque: son caractère sacré."

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, op. cit., p. 153. Doubtless, "violent" was a euphemism for "characterised by gross failures in charity".

in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

The reader will note the reflection of their content in the Council Fathers' Declaration. The attitude of deference to the standards of this mere worldly institution which had characterised the dealings of the Church's leaders since the beginning of the reign of John XXIII was formally confirmed in *Dignitatis Humanae*.

In 1979, the new pontiff, Pope John Paul II, addressed the UN General Assembly in these terms (*inter alia*):

"[The relationship of representation] is what provides the reason for all political activity... for in the final analysis this activity comes from man, is exercised by man and is for man. And if political activity is cut off from this fundamental relationship and finality... it loses much of its reason to exist... I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to excuse me for speaking of questions that are certainly self-evident for you. But it does not seem pointless to speak of them, since the most frequent pitfall for human activities is the possibility of losing sight, while performing them, of the clearest truths, the most elementary principles." [nn. 6, 7]

Those familiar with the Church's constant teaching until John XXIII ascended the papal throne will appreciate the irony of these words. For in his very endorsement of such a facile political theory, Pope John Paul II *had* lost sight of "the clearest truths, the most elementary principles." So far so that he never thought to speak of them to the secular body he was addressing. In this he emulated the predecessors whose names he had adopted.

For on that association of nation states called the United Nations there falls no less a duty than that which falls on each of the states that comprise it, to give due deference to the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. And on the Pope, *especially since he chose to descend into the arena of their deliberations*, there fell the clear duty to warn them of their obligations.

"[S]ince God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is utterly ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to [His laws] or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who in their government of the State take no account of these laws abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end, and from what nature itself prescribes... [And] assuredly, of all the duties which man has to fulfil, that, without doubt, is the chief and the holiest which commands him to worship God with devotion and piety. This follows of necessity from the truth that we are ever in the power of God, are ever guided by His will and providence, and, having come forth from Him, must return to Him. Added to which, no true virtue can exist without religion, for moral virtue is concerned with those things which lead to God as man's supreme and ultimate good; and therefore religion, which (as St. Thomas says) 'performs those actions which are directly and immediately ordained for the divine honour,' rules and tempers all virtues. And if it be asked which of the many conflicting religions it is necessary to adopt, reason and the natural law unhesitatingly tell us to practice that one which God enjoins, and which men can easily recognize by certain exterior notes, whereby Divine Providence

has willed that it should be distinguished, because, in a matter of such moment, the most terrible loss would be the consequence of error...<sup>25</sup>

The addresses of Paul VI and of John Paul II are replete with references to peace. Yet neither bothered to offer their hearers an analysis of that reality, *the tranquillity of order*, or to show how peace is impossible which is rooted in the fundamental disorder which follows on a denial of the deference due to Almighty God, the fount and source of all order. They had, each of them, the riches of the Church's thought on the subject extending over almost 2,000 years at their behest, yet hardly one word did they utter that could have led their hearers to see or to appreciate the truth.

The hopes expressed in their addresses, flavoured as they were with the tang of *Americanism* (that the majority will always arrive at moral truth), have been betrayed. The United Nations General Assembly has proved to be just the broken reed any objective observer could have forecast, promoting contraception, abortion and a multitude of other evils. The naïve hopes expressed by John XXIII about mankind in his Opening Speech to the Council Fathers have proved just as illusory. And all this flows from the fact that the principles upon which the Popes and bishops relied were not Catholic.

#### 8. The Compromise of the Church's Theology

*Dignitatis Humanae* is an attempt to reduce Catholic theology to conformity with Masonic ideology. Its mentality is reflected in Pope John Paul's first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*. He exalts man at the expense of his Creator and Redeemer. The success of the venture served as a precedent for the endorsement of other ideologies.

In various places but particularly in his Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Pope John Paul essayed the reduction of the Church's theology to conformity with Feminist ideology. His radical teaching, grounded in a tortured exegesis of the early chapters of *Genesis* and the teaching of St Paul in *Ephesians* Chapter 5, was first expounded in Wednesday audiences in the early years of his pontificate. It was collected later in the *corpus* known as the "Theology of the Body", whose title, a contradiction in terms, is as bemusing as its content.

The Pope and bishops countenance, if they do not completely accept, that the Church's theology must somehow conform itself with another ideology, Darwinian evolutionary theory, which even if accredited by modern science is grounded in nothing more than one man's idea about reality. But modern science accepts Darwinian ideology not because it is an inevitable conclusion of scientific research, but because science has, since before the time of Newton, committed itself to a materialist view of reality. Were it to abandon that foolish philosophy in favour of the Church's metaphysics, there would be no need to rely upon Darwin's facile explanations for the natural world.

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<sup>25</sup> Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (20.6.1888), nn. 18, 20.

## **A Note on the Duty of Obedience to the Pope**

There will, doubtless, be Catholics who will feel scandalised at the content of this and the previous papers in this series. We should make one thing clear. Just as, for a just reason, a Catholic may criticise the bishops of the Church, so may he criticise the Pope. There is adequate scriptural support for that truth. The Pope is infallible from time to time but he is not indefectible, for he is, like the rest of us, human. Yet each Catholic owes him a duty of obedience as the Vicar of Christ on earth. The Pope is, as the (first) Vatican Council taught, the immediate superior of every Catholic.<sup>26</sup> Should, then, the Pope direct the writer to remove this or any previous papers from the internet he will do so in conformity with the duty he has to obey him in all things lawful. The writer says that what he has written is the truth, and hopes that he has done so under an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Be that as it may, Almighty God will see to it that His truth will prevail. He does not need disobedience to the lawful commands of His Vicar to achieve His ends.

## **The Resolution of the Conflict**

We have mentioned in a previous paper the need for the Church to address the defects in *Dignitatis Humanae* and, as incidental thereto, to define precisely in what circumstances a General Council is infallible. It is unlikely that the Catholic world in general will accept that *Dignitatis Humanae* is a document enshrining error until a reforming Pope, or a General Council under his direction, addresses the issue of its contradiction of the Church's teaching explicitly and definitively, invoking as necessary the Church's plenary power in condemning it. Hasten the day!

Magna est veritas et praevalebit!<sup>27</sup>

Michael Baker

19<sup>th</sup> March 2009—*Solemnity of St Joseph*

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<sup>26</sup> "We teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the disposition of the Lord, holds the sovereignty of ordinary power over all others, and that this power of jurisdiction on the part of the Roman Pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is immediate; and with respect to this the pastors and the faithful of whatever rite and dignity, both as separate individuals and together, are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in things which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church spread over the whole world; so that the Church of Christ, protected not only by the Roman Pontiff, but by the unity of communion as well as of the profession of the same faith, is one flock under the one highest shepherd. This is the doctrine of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate and keep his faith and salvation." DS 3060

<sup>27</sup> "The truth is great and it will prevail." From the apocryphal *III Esdras* 4: 41