

PRINCIPLES & DISTINCTIONS - FR GREGORY HESSE

*This material is abstracted from an audiotape which bears the title Vatican II versus the Syllabus of Errors.*¹

The Roman Rite of Mass canonised by Pius V

[C]anon 13 of the 7th session of the Council of Trent... this canon—this is very important—this canon outlaws any future writing up of a new liturgy. [U]nfortunately, most of the time [it is] translated in a wrong way, even with *Tan Books*. I can only recommend *Tan Books* to you but sometimes, of course, everybody makes mistakes... sometimes things are not translated in the correct way, and that can cause a lot of confusion. Now canon 13 of the 7th session of the Council of Trent in English runs—

“If anyone says that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church customarily used in the solemn administration of the sacraments may be condemned or be omitted at pleasure by the ministers, without sin, or be able to be changed by every pastor of the churches, into other new rites: let him be anathema.”

The translation is wrong! It doesn't say “changed by *every* pastor”... in Latin it says—

Si quis dixerit, receptos et approbates Ecclesiae Catholicae ritus, in solemnī sacramentorum administratione adhiberi consuetos, aut contemni, aut sine peccato a ministris pro libito omitti, aut in novos alios per quemcumque ecclesiarum pastorem mutari posse: anathema sit—
per quemcumque – ‘by whomsoever [pastor]’ – that gives a totally different significance to this canon...

...

As a matter of fact the Council [of Trent] is talking about people who do not esteem the approved and habitual rights of the Church because it says “[that the rites] customarily used in the solemn administration of the sacraments may be condemned...” and the Council says [of these people that they are] to be held outside the Church; that whoever says you can leave out things... words, sentences, meanings, gestures, in these rites at pleasure by the ministers ought be considered outside the Church.

...

Now ‘whomsoever’ includes the popes! The Pope is a pastor of the Church; he's Bishop of Rome, Archbishop of the province of Latium, Primate of Italy, Patriarch of the West, Vicar of Christ and Servant of the servants of God. *The Pope cannot write up new rites*, that's what the Council of Trent said!

This is what Innocent III [was referring to] when he said: “If a future pope was to change around all the sacraments and everything you do not follow him”. And at the Council of Florence Pope Eugene IV had as his personal theologian a certain Cardinal Torquemada... [who] wrote a book which is called *Summa Ecclesiae* and in this book... he says: “If a pope was to try to change all the rites and the sacraments he [would] put himself outside the Church”.

¹ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZOZDi33DzY> Fr Gregory Hesse S.T.D., S.J.D., died in January, 2006.

Pope Eugene read that book and he gave the title *Defender of the Faith* to Cardinal Torquemada...

Distinctions

Before I start to explain to you the problems with Vatican II I want to make some very important distinctions... In recent discussions, even with famous writers, learned men, very learned men, there seems to be great difficulty in applying the distinction between *objective* and *subjective*, even by people who are able to explain the distinction to me academically. [They] still have a problem applying it. So let me make a few distinctions starting with [this one]. Now... *objective* means something concerning the object, the thing; *subjective* means something that concerns the person. So when I pronounce an objective judgement I judge facts and things, or actions. When I pronounce a subjective judgement I judge a person—and I do not want to do that, by the way...

Objectively means concerning the thing, what it is and how it is. *Subjectively* means what it means to me: how I understand it. When at the Council of Florence Pope Eugene IV in 1441 said “No one who is not subject to the Roman Pontiff, even if he was to shed his blood for Christ cannot be saved” he was pronouncing an *objective* judgement. The Pope did not say that all Protestants are in hell. The Pope said objectively speaking they have no chance to be saved. *Subjectively* what the Lord will do with them we do not know. *De internis Ecclesia non iudicat*: the Church does not judge internal things. *De mortuis Ecclesia non iudicat*: the Church does not judge the dead...

There has to be a distinction between material and formal. *Material* means something is there: it exists... *Formal* means it is declared as such. When I say that the present Pope is a heretic it raises eyebrows and harsh criticism. I say that the present Pope [i.e., John Paul II] is a *material* heretic. That means there is heresy to be found in his writings, and I will prove it to you... I do not say that *he* is a heretic in the sense that he wants to say heresy, that he commits the sin of heresy. I would not dare to pronounce this judgement. Nobody can judge the Pope anyway! And nobody can judge other people’s intentions and other people’s consciences. We can only judge what we see. I see there... heresy printed; it is *there*. *Material* heresy; the matter of heresy is there. I do not say it is formal heresy. [Let me] show you the difference.

The present Pope [John Paul II] always says, “In accordance with tradition I say to you...” and then he says something wrong. He doesn’t mean to say heresy because he says “in accordance with tradition”. If he was to say “Contrary to what the Council of Trent taught you I say...” From that moment he ceases to be Pope, most probably, because that would be objective, formal, heresy - not material heresy.

There’s another distinction [*validity and liceity*]. It is unbelievable what people say after I [have] held a speech or gave a sermon. I once said, “the new Mass of Paul VI celebrated in Latin according to the book most probably is validly celebrated”. Somebody walked out of the session and said “Fr Hesse says the new Mass is alright!” I didn’t say it’s alright; I said

it's valid under certain circumstances. *Valid* means... it takes place; it is there. It is not *licit* for liceity [refers to whether] it is allowed or not allowed. Under certain circumstances the new rites of the sacraments may take place as well. That doesn't mean they are allowed... [For instance] the Catholic Church always recognises that the Russian Orthodox Church has all seven sacraments as valid but not licit because they are heretics and schismatics. They are heretics because they say the Pope is not infallible... and they are heretics because they say the Pope does not have the Primacy. But they celebrate validly...

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Now... the distinction between *act* and *potency*... The entire philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas is based on the distinction between act and potency. A thing, anything that is, can *be* in two ways, actually or potentially. Something already might be what it should be, and is, and it might be something else in the future. Vatican II and the present popes do not use this distinction because they are based on a different philosophy and that causes a lot of confusion. When the present Pope says "All people are saved" is he right? Yes. He is right... all people are saved *in potency*; potentially they are saved - possibly. Christ died on the Cross in order to enable mankind to be saved. That doesn't mean that everybody *will be* saved. And actually not all people will be saved. Our Lady showed the children that Hell is packed with people when she appeared to them in Fatima...

When I speak English... I have to submit to the rules of speaking English. When I speak I have to submit to the rules of speaking. I do not think that you would appreciate it... if I was to tell you "I am Pope". *I am* Pope—potentially! So is every male present: *potentially*. Though the possibility is zilch. You will say "Okay". But if I was to say to you "I am Pope" you would say "this guy's nuts". Christ did not in fact save everybody because there's enough who say "No".

So I try to submit to the rules of language. And I request the Pope to do the same...

The Theological Errors

There is a difference between *heresy*, *schism*, *error* and *disobedience*. *Schism* means I separate myself from the Church, not denying anything of the faith but denying the Church's authority. If I tell you that you shouldn't listen to the Pope when he says something wrong, I am telling you what Pope Innocent III said. I'm just telling you what Pope Pius IX said. If I was to tell you, "you should not regard this Pope anyway" then I would be leading you into schism... We may reject a particular command of the present Pope but that does not amount to denying his authority. We do not deny that he is Pope...

...

Heresy means we deny [something] about a defined doctrine of the Church. If you say Our Lady was not immaculately conceived, you are a heretic. If you say 'I'm really not sure if this really happened,' you are a heretic, materially so, because you might not have misunderstood something. [You are so] formally, if you say, 'I don't care what the Church says, it's not true'. You might be in error.... [I]f you know the doctrine of the Church and you deny about it, you

might have a mistaken idea about what the Church says; you might be erroneous. Sometimes this present Pope is in error; sometimes he's in heresy – *materially*...

Disobedience has nothing to do with schism, heresy or error. When Archbishop Lefebvre denied the Pope's command not to consecrate bishops he was, at first glance, disobedient. I have explained [elsewhere] why he was not disobedient. He was disobedient to a wrong, and unjust, and dangerous command coming from the Pope. He was not disobedient to tradition and to the will of Christ. But in no case, and from no viewpoint, is it justified to say he is in schism. Schism means to deny the authority of the Pope, not to disobey a command... These distinctions must be clear in your mind otherwise you will not understand what I am about to say.

The Theological Positions

Then I have to explain what [are] called in theology the *loci theologiae*, the theological places; the theological positions. Something might be heretical, something might be erroneous. But there are finer distinctions than [those].

A Catholic truth can be *de fide divina*, that is, where the Council of Trent, or the Council of Florence or the first Vatican Council declared a dogma. It might be *de fide Catholica*, that is, where the Church has always believed it... *De fide definita* means the Church has always believed it but... a pope [has] made a definition. When in 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception he did not tell us anything new; he just [defined] what it is exactly to mean.

Then you might have a theological judgement which is called *de fidei proxima* which means 'closest to the faith'. That means that it is not a dogma but the Church has always believed it and it could be a dogma anytime like, for example, the Co-Redemptrix, the fact that Our Lady had the first role in helping with Redemption. That will have to be defined eventually for the simple reason that many people are confused about what it means. Did Our Lady redeem us? No! Our Lord did, and only Our Lord. Then why may she be given the title of Co-Redemptrix? What does it exactly mean? Well, I'm not the Pope and I won't define it, but a pope should in the future. But it is *fide sententia* which means that you may not deny it without fear of punishment from God.

Then there is *sententia certa* which means it is not of the faith but we are very sure about it. And then there is *sententia communis* which means we might not be sure about it but everybody says so - not in the sense of democracy but in the sense of historical accord; in the sense that most of the saints agreed on it; most of the theologians in history agreed on it, and most of popes agreed on it... Then you have the *sententia probabilis* - it is probable, that means. We don't know exactly; but probably [it's the case] – like what happens if a person is not in the state of grace and dies. The Church has always said that if he makes a perfect act of contrition he may be saved. But it's not a dogma... It's most probable he will be saved... We

have not understood tradition and sacred scripture enough to be sure about it... And then there [are] the [*censura doctrinalis*]...

The Doctrinal Censures

I think we [must] decide for calling Vatican II an heretical council because... they said there... many things [which are] true quotations [from Catholic teaching]. [But] then there are many quotations... which are definitely not heresy, just strange, ambiguous, funny; weird! If... something is [*propositio*] *heresi proxima*, close to heresy, it is not actually denying... a dogma but it's coming pretty close to it. If something is erroneous, it is not denying dogma it is just making a mistake about it. If something is *errori proxima* [close to error] it is not wrong in itself, just by circumstances.

If something is [*propositio*] *temeraria* it [involves] something rather daring... In the first document of Vatican II [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*] you will find a lot of things the Church considers daring... What does it mean: 'It's daring to say so'? ... [For instance with] the saying of the Leonine prayers after Mass... [It's not heresy to say we don't need them; it's not erroneous.] But if I was to say we don't need the Leonine prayers I would be saying something daring because how dare I say it? How dare you say it? At the same time it is [*propositio*] *male sonans* because... it never sounds good if you criticise tradition. And it is [*propositio*] *piarum aurium offensiva*, offensive to pious ears. If someone tells me 'I don't give a damn about the Leonine prayers', I am offended because I hold them dear to my heart: they are more needed than ever before... And it is scandalous, too, when done in public.

Now I [tell] you in certain circumstances that John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul and John Paul II were wrong; and even sometimes even Pius XII was wrong. How dare I say it! Well, when I say it I explain it to you. I do not say that's a fact and you had better believe it. That would be daring and offensive. And that [i.e., being daring and offensive] is another theological censure of the Church...
