

A Crucial Question

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L'Osservatore Romano of December 2, 2011, published a study by Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, one of the four experts who represented the Holy See during the recent doctrinal discussions with the Society of St. Pius X (from October 2009 to April 2011). The central question of the magisterial value of the Second Vatican Council is addressed straightforwardly, yet nevertheless insufficiently.

1. Incontestable Principles

In the first part of his study, the Spanish prelate recapitulates the fundamental notions recalled by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*: the fact that an act of the Church's Teaching Authority [magisterium] is not guaranteed by the charism of infallibility proper to solemn definitions does not mean that it can be considered "fallible" in the sense that it conveys "provisional teaching" or even "authorized opinions." In general, that is, when it does not give solemn and infallible definitions, the Church's Teaching Authority is always assisted by God, and this assistance is necessary to assure the indefectible transmission of the deposit of faith. In this sense, the merely ordinary teaching authority also benefits from a certain charism of truth.¹ The infallibility of the Church's Teaching Authority [magisterium] must be understood analogously, that is, as admitting of varying degrees.²

Likewise, then, the assent due to truths proposed by the Teaching Authority [magisterium] may also be understood as admitting of varying degrees. Infallible solemn definitions ordinarily set formally or virtually revealed truths, which require an assent of divine faith. Other non-defined teachings require religious inner assent, which implies, over and above the assent to the truth properly so-called, a certain element of obedience toward the magisterial authority. Finally, acts of the magisterium may contain elements that, being extraneous to a particular teaching, do not command as such any assent.

2. An Inadequate Framing of the Problem

These general reminders would not present any difficulty had Msgr. Ocariz not applied them to the teachings of Vatican II. For according to him, even if the last General Council had no intention of defining any dogma, the charism of truth and the Church's magisterial authority were certainly present there, such that to refuse them to the episcopal corps assembled *cum Petro et sub Petro* in order to teach the universal Church would be to deny a part of the Church's very essence. In this way, the conciliar statements that reiterate truths already proposed by a definitive act of the Church's previous Teaching Authority [magisterium] obviously require an assent of theological faith. The other doctrinal teachings of the Council require religious inner assent.

No doubt we could congratulate ourselves that we are finally seeing a theologian of the Holy See introduce all these nuances and thus deny quite formally, albeit implicitly, all the unilateral presentations which until now have presented the Second Vatican Council in a maximalist perspective, as an absolutely untouchable dogma that is "*even more important than that of Nicaea.*"³ However, as seductive as it may be in the nuances and distinctions

that it offers, such an analysis radically conveys a postulate that is far from being self-evident. Msgr. Ocariz's study thus avoids responding to the crucial question, which is still pending between the Society of St. Pius X and the Holy See. More precisely, the answer to this question seems to go without saying in the view of the Opus Dei prelate, so much so that everything happens as though it had never been necessary to address it. **Or as though the debate never had to take place.**

Yet this debate is more imperative than ever. It is in fact far from self-evident that the last Council could impose its authority, in all matters and for all purposes, in the eyes of Catholics as the exercise of a genuine Magisterium, demanding their assent at the different levels indicated. Indeed, if we recall the traditional definition of the Magisterium, or Teaching Authority (§3-5), we really are obliged to observe that the proceedings of Vatican II hardly comply with it (§6-7). Still less so, given that this wholesale novelty of the twenty-first Ecumenical Council at bottom can only really be accounted for in terms of absolutely unheard-of presuppositions (§8-12).

3. The Purpose of the Magisterium

The unity of the Church and the unity of faith are inseparable, and the role of the Church's magisterium [Teaching Authority] precisely is to safeguard them. The gift [charism] of truth is needed by the Teaching Authority for accomplishing this end, that is to say, as the means required so that the common good of the Church may be preserved, namely, unity in the profession of one and the same faith. This is the reason given in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of Vatican I: "*So, this gift of truth and a never failing faith was divinely conferred upon Peter and his successors in this chair... that with the occasion of schism removed the whole Church might be saved as one.*"⁴ St. Thomas explains in like manner why the pope must receive divine assistance when he teaches dogma; he must be helped precisely in as much as he acts as the head of the Church for the safeguard of the unity of the Church:

The reason of this is that there should be but one faith of the whole Church, according to I Corinthians 1:10: "*That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you*": and this could not be secured unless any question of faith that may arise be decided by him who presides over the whole Church, so that the whole Church may hold firmly to his decision.⁵

It is, then, the final cause of the activity of the Teaching Authority that explains the indefectibility of its faith. The Teaching Authority is assisted by God to the extent that it must assure the unity of faith in the Church. This assistance, therefore, is not absolute but limited: it is concomitant with the transmission of Revelation and nothing else. Christ told the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would assist them in order that they might teach all that He had taught them, no more and no less.⁶

Far from constituting doctrine, the Teaching Authority is defined as such in objective dependence on divine Revelation, whose integral transmission it must assure.⁷ During the debates preceding the adoption of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, the chief representatives of the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum* had proposed a significant amendment.⁸ This change in the wording meant that, if the definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not because of the consent of the Church, the assistance of the Holy Spirit would also not permit that they should ever contradict the common faith of the Church or depart from it. The reason for the amendment was to indicate that the pope does not have the power to define arbitrarily all kinds of truth. During the First Vatican Council, the reporter charged with explaining in the name of the Holy See the exact meaning of the text of *Pastor Aeternus* emphasized this point.⁹ As has been justly

remarked,¹⁰ if from an incorrect outlook one should lose sight of the right ordering which makes the Teaching Authority [magisterium] dependent on objective Tradition, the *Deus revelans* runs the risk of dropping into the background to the advantage of the *custos et magistra*. The way to avoid this risk is to keep in mind the essential definition of the Teaching Authority [magisterium]: a power ordered to its object. And since the unity of a power flows from that of its object, the unity of the Teaching Authority [magisterium] is that of revealed truth.¹¹

4. The Unity of Truth and of Revelation

As Cardinal Franzelin has shown,¹² the unity of revealed truth and of Tradition is first and foremost **the unity of the signification** of different dogmas in the ordered expression of the same truth. The dogmas are distinct from one another, but they compose a unity because they are ordered to one another insofar as they all signify, in a mutually complementary and interdependent fashion, various aspects of one and the same revealed truth. This makes sense because the truth revealed by God presupposes the principle of all truth, which is the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of "non-division" at the level of meaning, the principle of the unity of truth. The unity of dogmatic truth is conveyed by the unity of the meaning of the words that express the truth.

This is why, in the Constitution *Dei Filius*, the First Vatican Council asserted that *"that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding..."*¹³ The Antimodernist Oath of St. Pius X also affirms: *"I accept sincerely the doctrine of faith transmitted from the apostles through the orthodox fathers, always in the same sense and interpretation, even to us; and so I reject the heretical invention of the evolution of dogmas, passing from one meaning to another, different from that which the Church first had."*¹⁴

5. The Unity of the Teaching Authority [Magisterium]

The object of faith is the ontological truth, that is to say the very reality of the mystery as it is attained by the believer by means of concepts and verbal expressions.¹⁵ The object of revelation is the logical truth, that is to say the conceptual formulation of the mystery the expression of which (or the exterior verbal sign, written or oral) is the dogma. The teaching of the magisterium or of tradition is the communication of this revelation by means of exterior language (written or oral) that expresses the conceptual formulation of the mystery. Revelation and Tradition have as their object to provide the faithful the concepts and verbal expressions by means of which the act of faith will terminate in the reality of the mystery. The deposit of faith is the ensemble of these verbal and conceptual expressions.

This deposit, confided to the safekeeping of the Teaching Authority [magisterium], is immutable in its signification. The Teaching Authority cannot therefore contradict revelation by proposing truths the meaning of which is not willed by God. Nor can it contradict itself by proposing truths the meaning of which would be contrary to that of truths it has itself already set forth. This remains true even if the conceptual or verbal expression of the revealed truth may gain in precision and even if the Teaching Authority can exercise its power to propose more explicit dogmatic formulas. It is this activity of the Teaching Authority that allows us to speak of *"a homogeneous development of dogma."* These dogmatic formulations, moreover, finally become definitive when they express revealed truth in a sufficiently explicit manner. This fact was affirmed by Pius XII in opposition to the false postulates of the new theology.¹⁶ The mission that has as its object to expound the

deposit of faith obeys the same rules as the mission that has as its object to preserve it since it is but a consequence of it.

This is why the Teaching Authority, defined in dependence on its object, is constant or traditional. This consistency exactly corresponds to the very unity of the Teaching Authority, which is derived from its object. The unity of the Teaching Authority is therefore that of a teaching that always presents the same divinely revealed truth, giving it an unchanging meaning even if its expression can become more precise by means of a more explicit verbal and conceptual formulation.

6. The Fact of Vatican II: A New Pastoral Teaching

Pope John XXIII's opening speech (October 11, 1962), his allocution to the Sacred College of Cardinals of December 1962, and Benedict XVI's Christmas speech of December 22, 2005, clearly indicate the intention of the Council and the exact signification of "pastoral magisterium." Vatican II wished to express the faith of the Church according to the research methodology and literary formulations of modern thought, and to redefine the relationship of the faith of the Church with certain essential elements of this thought.

Obviously, the Magisterium of the Church is always pastoral in intention in the sense that at every age of history its pastors prudentially expound the truth to guide souls to eternal salvation. But at the same time, by its nature Church teaching always remains strictly doctrinal and disciplinary in its object. John XXIII's declarations clearly affirm that, unlike previous General Councils, the unique and specific viewpoint by which Vatican II intended to scrutinize doctrinal, disciplinary, and pastoral matters was not doctrinal, but pastoral in a fundamentally new sense of the term. This would explain, by the way, the perplexity of a great number of Council Fathers over a kind of document hitherto unknown. When the Teaching Authority [magisterium] of the Church proposes the object of faith by having recourse to language drawn from the philosophy natural to human reason,¹⁷ philosophy's contribution is the conceptual and verbal tool kit placed in the service of a more perfect expression of revealed truth. The Second Vatican Council intended to study and expound doctrine, not only "*according to the literary formulations*" but also "*following the research methods of modern thought.*" If this intention expressed by John XXIII is taken seriously, it may rightly be said that the intention of the Council was to have recourse to modern thought not only as a tool, but even more so as a veritable formal object, principle, and method for the study and exposition of doctrine. In this context, the word "pastoral" assumes its full import. The explicit intention of Vatican II was to receive from the world the new set of problems of the modern era.

We may take as supplementary proof of this what Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in his book *Principles of Catholic Theology*, originally published in 1982.¹⁸ The epilogue of the book is entitled "On the Status of Church and Theology Today," with subsections including "Church and World: An Inquiry into the Reception of Vatican Council II." There the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated:

Of all the texts of Vatican Council II, the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et spes*) was undoubtedly the most difficult and... also the most successful. In its form and in the direction of its pronouncements, *it is most closely related to* [*sic*; the French translation has the opposite: "*it diverges significantly from*" (*il s'écarte dans un large mesure de la ligne de l'histoire...*)] the history of former councils and, more than any of the other texts, allows us to see the physiognomy of the last council. Since Vatican Council II, it has come, therefore, to be increasingly regarded as the

true legacy in which, after three years of fermentation, the real intention of the Council seems to have been incorporated. The lack of clarity that persists even today about the real meaning of Vatican Council II is closely associated with such diagnoses and, consequently, with this document.... (P. 378)

...We must ask ourselves again what exactly was the new and special character of the "Pastoral Constitution."... A first characteristic seems to me to reside in the concept of "world".... By "world" the Council means the counterpart of the Church. The purpose of the text is to bring the two into a relationship of cooperation, the goal of which is the reconstruction of the "world". **The Church cooperates with the world in order to build up the world**—it is thus that we might characterize the vision that informs the text....By "world", it would seem, the document understands the whole scientific and technical reality of the present and all those who are responsible for it or who are at home in its mentality. (Pp. 379-80)

Little wonder, then, that Cardinal Ratzinger then writes that *"the text [Gaudium et spes] serves as a counter-syllabus and, as such, represents, on the part of the Church, an attempt at an official reconciliation with the new era inaugurated in 1789"* (p. 382); and also, *"Vatican II was right in its desire for a revision of the relations between the Church and the world. There are in fact values, which, even though they originated outside the Church, can find their place—provided they are clarified and corrected—in her perspective."*¹⁹ Based as it is on the method of inquiry characteristic of modern thought, the Council necessarily propounds teachings that make it dependent on the modern world.

Undoubtedly the modern world may be led to pose in a new way the eternal questions to which the Church will bring answers that still flow from the same principles and the same method. But Vatican II did not examine the new questions raised by modernity in the light of faith, and it even, to the contrary, explicitly refused to examine a good number of questions whose importance was recognized by all Catholics, for instance the question of Communism. The specificity which makes of Vatican II an absolutely unique case is the intention to expound the faith in the light of and after the manner of modern thought. Now, no council can receive its methods of inquiry or of thought or of culture from the modern world as it was *"inaugurated in 1789."*²⁰ The principles and the method of the ecclesiastical magisterium have been sufficiently indicated by Vatican I: *"The doctrine of faith which God revealed has not been handed down as a philosophic invention to the human mind to be perfected, but has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted."*²¹

Consequently, it is false to assert, as does Msgr. Ocariz, a consistency of method by virtue of which the documents of Vatican II would legitimately shed light on those of the magisterium before 1962. On the one hand, in fact, the goal of Vatican II was not to take up and clarify these teachings; and on the other, Vatican II intended to express the faith following the principles and methods of a new school of thought that is opposed to faith,²² not only in any particular one of its contents, but in its very foundation, which is that of criteriological doubt. Such a manner of thinking is not only incompatible with Catholicism; it is directly opposed to the natural metaphysics of the mind, calling in question its capability to know the true. Modern philosophy has in fact inverted the relationship of subject to object, and likewise the relation of man to God. By adopting the investigative methods of modernity, the Council [*la pensée conciliaire*] assumed this inversion as the Declaration on Religious Freedom, for example, makes manifest: the principle and foundation of this declaration is nothing else than the primacy of ontological dignity over moral dignity, that is to say, the primacy of the subject over the object. A similar inversion, with the subjectivist

supposition it implies, is absolutely contrary to the most realistic principle of objectivity presupposed by revelation, tradition, and the magisterium. Modern thought, with its manner of inquiry, cannot serve as the basis of interpretation of a teaching [magisterium] whose objective presuppositions are antithetical.

7. The Fact of Vatican II: New Teachings Contrary to Tradition

On at least four points, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are obviously in **logical contradiction** to the pronouncements of the previous traditional Magisterium, so that it is impossible to interpret them in keeping with the other teachings already contained in the earlier documents of the Church's Magisterium. Vatican II has thus broken the unity of the Magisterium, to the same extent to which it has broken the unity of its object.

These four points are as follows. The doctrine **on religious liberty**, as it is expressed in No. 2 of the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, contradicts the teachings of Gregory XVI in *Mirari Vos* and of Pius IX in *Quanta Cura* as well as those of Pope Leo XIII in *Immortale Dei* and those of Pope Pius XI in *Quas Primas*.²³ The doctrine **on the Church**, as it is expressed in No. 8 of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, contradicts the teachings of Pope Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis*.²⁴ The doctrine **on ecumenism**, as it is expressed in No. 8 of *Lumen Gentium* and No. 3 of the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, contradicts the teachings of Pope Pius IX in propositions 16 and 17 of the *Syllabus*, those of Leo XIII in *Satis Cognitum*, and those of Pope Pius XI in *Mortalium Animos*.²⁵ The doctrine **on collegiality** as it is expressed in No. 22 of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, including No. 3 of the *Nota Praevia* [Explanatory Note], contradicts the teachings of the First Vatican Council on the uniqueness of the subject of supreme power in the Church in the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*.

Moreover, the liturgical reform of 1969 resulted in the concoction of a new *Ordo Missae* that "represents, both as a whole and in its details a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session 22 of the Council of Trent."²⁶ The restoration of the rite of Mass accomplished by St. Pius V resulted in a more explicit expression of the aspects of the Catholic Faith denied by the Protestant heresy. The liturgical reform carried out by Paul VI resulted in the concealment of the same aspects at the very moment of a powerful resurgence of the heresies that had necessitated the clarification of these aspects of the sacred mysteries. The Missal of Paul VI was not issued for the purpose of clarifying that of St. Pius V. Rather, it departed from it in the sense that it obscured and rendered ambiguous what the Missal of St. Pius V had clarified and made explicit. To the objection that Paul VI's liturgical reform intended to make explicit other aspects till then left in obscurity, we answer that a new formulation cannot undermine the clarification previously made; but this is what the new 1969 Missal did, by concealing aspects of the Catholic Faith particularly denied by Protestant heresies.

With the above-named four points as well as in the subsequent liturgical reform, Vatican II set before the eyes of perplexed Catholics clearly unacceptable contradictions. Taken as a whole, the grand reform of Vatican II comes across as a strange amalgam, a subtle mix of partial truths and previously condemned errors.²⁷ Infected as it is by the principles of liberalism and of modernism, its teaching presents grave deficiencies. Assuredly, these deficiencies prevent Vatican II from appearing as a council like the others, representing the authorized expression of objective Tradition. These deficiencies also keep us from saying that the last Council fits into the unity of the Church's unchanging magisterium.

8. A New Set of Problems

In keeping with the December 2005 address of Pope Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia, Msgr. Ocariz posits the principle of a "*unitary interpretation*," according to which the documents of Vatican II and the preceding magisterial documents ought to be reciprocally enlightening. The interpretation of the novelties taught by the Second Vatican Council must therefore reject, as Benedict XVI says, "*the hermeneutic of discontinuity*" in relation to Tradition, whereas it must affirm "the hermeneutic of reform, of renewal in continuity." This is new vocabulary which clearly expresses a new set of problems. The latter inspires the whole observation by Msgr. Ocariz: "*One essential characteristic of the Magisterium*," he writes, "*is its continuity and its homogeneity over time.*"

If we speak about "continuity" or "rupture," this should be understood, **in the traditional sense, to mean a continuity or rupture that is objective**, in other words, related to the object of the Church's preaching. This is tantamount to speaking about the set of revealed truths, as the Magisterium of the Church preserves and presents them, giving them the same significance, without the possibility of a contradiction between present teaching and past teaching. Rupture would consist of attacking the immutable character of objective Tradition and would then be a synonym for logical contradiction between two statements, the respective meanings of which cannot both be true at the same time.

But it is necessary to admit the plain truth and to recognize that the word "continuity" does not have this traditional sense at all in the current discourse of ecclesiastics. **They speak precisely about continuity with regard to a subject that evolves over the course of time.** It is not a question of the continuity of an object, of the dogma or the doctrine that the Church's Magisterium proposes today, giving it the same meaning as before. It is a question of the continuity of the unique subject "Church." Moreover, Benedict XVI speaks not exactly about continuity, but about "renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God." Conversely, he adds immediately afterward, "*The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church.*" That means that the rupture must be situated on that same level: it is **a rupture between two subjects**, meaning that the Church, the one subject [consisting] of the People of God, would no longer be the same before and after the Council.

9. A New Conception of the Unity of the Magisterium

Pope Benedict XVI's recent speech [of December 22, 2005] implies a new conception of the unity of the magisterium. The continuity in question is unity in time, that is to say the unity maintained through the change measured by time, which is, firstly, the unity of the subject, not of the object. The subject is the Church, the one People of God, that is to say, the assembly of the baptized. The subject is the reference point which accounts for the unity of Tradition.

The Instruction *Donum Veritatis* of May 24, 1990, upon which Msgr. Ocariz grounds his argumentation, develops in detail this point of view. Under the heading "The Truth: God's Gift to His People," the first chapter of the instruction develops the idea contained in No. 12 of *Lumen Gentium*, according to which the preservation and explanation of the revealed deposit would be the affair of the People of God as a whole prior to any hierarchical distinctions. The baptized would have as their share in this work a prophetic office, more fundamental than the teaching office [the magisterial function] belonging to the Apostles and their successors.²⁸ Cardinal Ratzinger stresses this idea, which in his view is decisive, in his presentation of the Instruction *Donum Veritatis*:

Looking at the articulation [*i.e.*, structure, outline] of the document, one is almost struck by the fact that we have not introduced it by speaking first about the Magisterium but rather about the topic of truth as a gift from God to his people. The truth of faith is not given to isolated individuals [*e.g.*, pope or bishop]; rather through it God wanted to give life to a history and to a people. **The truth is located in the communitarian subject: the People of God, the Church.**²⁹

Likewise, John Paul II said in No. 27 of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis*:

In the Church, the school of the living God, Bishops and the faithful are all fellow disciples, and all need to be taught by the Spirit. Many indeed are the places from which the Spirit imparts his inner teaching: first of all, in the heart of every person, and then in the life of the various particular Churches, where the various needs of individuals and the various ecclesial communities emerge and make themselves heard, not only in languages that are known but also in those that are new and different.³⁰

What is lacking here is the absolutely necessary distinction between the recipients and the depositary-intermediary. The entire People of God (and even more than the People of God, all men without exception) are the recipients, those to whom is destined the truth of salvation. But only some isolated individuals are chosen from among the rest of men to be the titulars of a hierarchical office and the depositaries of this truth, because it is to them alone that it has been confided as a deposit with the charge to preserve it, and they alone are the intermediaries established by God to communicate the saving truth in His name. The Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of June 24, 1973,³¹ upon which Msgr. Ocariz also grounds his argumentation, indeed says that the authority of the Teaching Office [magisterium] is requisite in order to guarantee the social unity of the expression of the faith.³² Unlike what happens in Protestantism or the Modernism of Alfred Loisy, condemned by St. Pius X, the Teaching Authority is considered here a divine institution, and it alone is assisted by God in order to lead the People by indicating the authorized interpretation of the Word of God. But the document does not say that the authoritative teaching office [magisterial function] is required as a depositary and intermediary, the privileged witness having received from God, as individuals, the truth of His revelation with the mandate to preserve and transmit it. The 1990 Instruction *Donum Veritatis* clarifies this point of doctrine in *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, teaching that the truth of faith is a gift of God to all His People, that it is not given to isolated individuals (pope or bishops), but that it resides in the communitarian subject, the People of God.³³

In the Commentary published on June 27, 1994, written to clarify the meaning of the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* published the preceding May 22, Cardinal Ratzinger clearly expressed this new conception of the Teaching Authority [magisterium]:

Scripture cannot become the foundation of a life unless it is confided to a living subject—the very one from which it sprang. Scripture has its origin in the People of God guided by the Holy Spirit, and this People, this subject, has never ceased to exist. The Vatican Council II expressed all this in the following way: “[I]t is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed” (*Dei Verbum*, §9)... According to the vision of Vatican II, Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium [Teaching Authority] should not be considered as three separate realities, but in this vital complex the full meaning of Scripture, read in light of Tradition

and lived in the faith of the Church, is revealed. The task of the Teaching Authority [magisterium] is to confirm this interpretation of Scripture made possible by the hearing of Tradition in faith.³⁴

In this document, the term "Tradition" is distinguished from the magisterium and designates the concrete life of the People of God, that is, the vital context from which the magisterium must draw as from a wellspring.

The catechesis dispensed by Benedict XVI in 2006 also confirms this idea. The Church originates from an experience which the Apostles lived with Christ.³⁵ Prolonged in space and time, this experience led to a communion, which had to avail itself of the service of the apostolic ministry in order to preserve its spatial-temporal cohesion.³⁶ The hierarchical unity in time and in space is a second unity that flows from a more radical unity, that of common experience. It is thus that the living tradition, which is the common experience continued in time, precedes and gives rise to the apostolic tradition, which is the ministry continued in time as a service of communion. The two traditions will always remain synchronized, and the continuity of common experience will never be found without the continuity of the ministry, for in Benedict XVI's view, the Church is not a purely charismatic community. But there is nevertheless in the definition he gives of the Church a logical anteriority of the common experience in relation to the ministry. This anteriority is exactly that which is introduced by the Instruction *Donum Veritatis*: the People of God, depository of the truth in this sense precedes the hierarchical Teaching Authority [magisterium]. Tradition is, then, understood in a new sense as the continuity of an active presence, that of Jesus who lives in His People. It is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and expressed³⁷ thanks to the service of the apostolic ministry: "*This permanent actualization of the active presence of the Lord Jesus in his People, brought about by the Holy Spirit and expressed in the Church through the apostolic ministry and fraternal communion is what, in a theological sense, is meant by the term 'Tradition.'*"³⁸ It is "*the communion of the faithful around their legitimate Pastors down through history, a communion that the Holy Spirit nurtures, assuring the connection between the experience of the apostolic faith, lived in the original community of the disciples, and the actual experience of Christ in his Church.*"³⁹

In this new outlook, it is no longer said that the role of the magisterium is to preserve and transmit in the name of God the deposit of truths revealed by Christ to the Apostles. It is said that its role consists in guaranteeing the cohesion of the communitarian experience of the origins in such a way that the communion of the present day continues the communion of yesterday. The magisterium is then at the service of the subject-Church, its role being to set forth in authorized formulations the preconceptual intuitions of the *sensus fidei*.

The reality of the *sensus fidei* cannot be denied. It amounts to a unanimous and infallible consensus of belief. But it is a question precisely of the consensus of the learning Church. This flows from the infallibility of the teaching Church, which is its proper cause. The Church being one and holy in its faith, the belief of the faithful is indefectibly and solidly docile in time and in space to the teaching of the magisterial hierarchy. Undoubtedly one may speak broadly of a certain subject of Tradition in the passive sense and which corresponds to all the faithful taken as a whole, but this subject is such as a simple witness of the teaching of the magisterium, and the consensus of the Church in its beliefs possesses at most the value of a sign that makes known the infallibility of the teaching that has proposed for belief the truth unanimously believed. In this sense, the profession of indefectible faith of the learning Church represents a theological place, for it is the learning Church alone that manifests many truths proposed infallibly by the oral preaching of the ordinary and universal magisterium. But this sort of criterion remains the simple sign of the infallibility of the teaching, and not its cause. To make of it a cause is to commit the error of understanding

its particular domain as the power of magisterium, which was condemned by Vatican Council I: [the error of holding] *"that the same primacy was not immediately and directly bestowed upon the blessed Peter himself, but upon the Church, and through this Church upon him as the minister of the Church herself."*⁴⁰ This would also imply that a proposition of the Teaching Authority would not be infallible except insofar as it would be accepted (even antecedently) by the People, which would formally contradict the statement made by the same Vatican Council I: *"...and so such definitions of the Roman Pontiff from himself, but not from the consensus of the Church, are unalterable."*⁴¹

10. A New Conception of the Unity of Truth

In the traditional outlook, in which the point of reference is the object, the unity of the magisterium is that of revealed truth since the magisterium is defined as the organ of objective Tradition. On that account, the act of the magisterium is not defined essentially as a present act by opposition to a past act. For if the teaching authority is exercised, it is not insofar as it is present or current, but insofar as it always expresses the same signification of the same truth with increasing precision. This expression of truth, with the accompanying explanation *in eodem sensu*, is of itself timeless. In this sense, the living magisterium cannot be reduced to the present magisterium as distinguished from the past magisterium which would be a non-living or posthumous magisterium. If the present magisterium is living, the past magisterium also was. Time has no direct and immediate incidence on the object or on the act of the magisterium that expresses it. To support his critique of the teachings of Vatican II, Archbishop Lefebvre always invoked very precisely, not *"the past magisterium"* but *"the magisterium of all time"* [*de toujours*]*—*in other words, the consistent magisterium. Time concerns only the subject that exercises the power of the magisterium, and it is in this sense that we can distinguish between a remote rule (the past magisterium) and a recent rule (the present magisterium) of faith.

In the new outlook implied by the December 22, 2005 discourse and elucidated in the documents we have cited, the point of reference is no longer the object. The unity of the magisterium is that of *"the one subject-Church which... increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God."* The magisterium is defined as the organ of a common experience lived in time by the People of God. Continuity then is posited in the subject-Church, which remains the same independently of the object. It is not the subject that adapts to the object; rather, the object is said to be continuous because its subject remains the same. The renewal in continuity of which Benedict XVI speaks consists in establishing *"the connection between the experience of the apostolic faith, lived in the original community of the disciples, and the actual experience of Christ in his Church."*⁴² In point of fact, this renewal does not consist in expounding the same doctrine in a more explicit manner. It consists in changing doctrine, with the principles it implies, under the pretext that these principles (which they say are only "durable") must find their application in a contingent matter. It is in this sense that Vatican II intended to establish *"a new relation between the faith of the Church and certain essential elements of modern thought,"* in order that the doctrine of the faith might be *"presented in a way that responds to the demands of our epoch" and "following the methods of inquiry and literary formulations of modern thought."* Since it is the same subject-Church that adopts a different position *vis-à-vis* the world brought forth by modernity, the renewal would represent continuity and not a rupture.

As the Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* logically teaches,⁴³ if the Magisterium proposes to the People of God doctrinal formulations as so many different forms apt to translate an experience lived through the vicissitudes of time, *"it does not follow that every one of these formulas has always been or will always be so to the same extent."* Such relativism is

contrary to the teachings given by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*, but it chimes with the new idea of the magisterium expounded in *Donum Veritatis*. Moreover, the future Benedict XVI himself has justified this relativist conception:

[The document] states—perhaps for the first time with such clarity—that there are magisterial decisions which cannot be and are not intended to be the final word on the matter as such, but are a substantial anchorage in the problem and are first and foremost an expression of pastoral prudence, a sort of provisional disposition.... In this regard, one can refer to the statements of the Popes during the last century on religious freedom as well as the anti-modernistic decisions at the beginning of this [20th] century, especially the decisions of the Biblical Commission of that time. As a warning cry against hasty and superficial adaptations, they remain fully justified.... But the details of the determinations of their contents were later superseded, once they had carried out their pastoral duty at a particular moment.⁴⁴

This relativism occurs in the Christmas Speech of December 22, 2005, which reasons as if every decision, from the very fact of its belonging to history, can only concern contingent matters and express a truth only relative to circumstances:

In this process of innovation in continuity we must learn to understand more practically than before that the Church's decisions on contingent matters—for example, certain practical forms of liberalism or a free interpretation of the Bible—should necessarily be contingent themselves, precisely because they refer to a specific reality that is changeable in itself.

This relativism in the pope's thinking did not begin yesterday. While still working as a theologian, Joseph Ratzinger explained himself quite clearly on this point: "*Not only must one say,*" he wrote in 1972, "*that the history of dogma, in the domain of Catholic theology, is fundamentally possible, but also that any dogma that is not elaborated in the context of the history of dogmas is inconceivable.*"⁴⁵ This is why "*the formation of the concept of Tradition in post-Tridentine Catholicism constitutes the greatest obstacle to an historical understanding of the Christian reality*" (*ibid.*, p. 65). In effect, the post-Tridentine concept of Tradition presupposes that revelation closed at the death of the last of the Apostles and that since then its meaning has remained substantially immutable. Now, "*the axiom of the end of revelation with the death of the last Apostle,*" explained Joseph Ratzinger,

was and is, within Catholic theology, one of the principle obstacles to a positive and historical understanding of Christianity: the axiom thus formulated does not belong to the original fundamental ideas of the Christian conscience.... By affirming that revelation was closed with the death of the last Apostle, revelation is objectively conceived as a body of doctrines communicated by God to mankind. This communication came to an end one day, and the boundaries of this body of revealed doctrine were thus fixed at the same time. Everything that came afterward would be either a consequence or a corruption of this doctrine.... [Now,] not only does this conception stand in the way of a full understanding of the historical development of Christianity, but at the same time it stands in contradiction with the Biblical record. (*Ibid.*, p. 64)

All of this is perfectly coherent if one maintains that Tradition is "*the communion of the faithful around their legitimate Pastors down through history, a communion that the Holy Spirit nurtures, assuring the connection between the experience of the apostolic faith, lived*

*in the original community of the disciples, and the actual experience of Christ in his Church*⁴⁶; or else: "Tradition, therefore, is the history of the Spirit who acts in the Church's history through the mediation of the Apostles and their successors, in faithful continuity with the experience of the, origins"⁴⁷; or if one postulates that "Tradition is not the transmission of things or words, a collection of dead things. Tradition is the living river that links us to the origins, the living river in which the origins are ever present, the great river that leads us to the gates of eternity"⁴⁸; or if one decides that "[the Apostolic Tradition]... is not a collection of things or words, like a box of dead things. Tradition is the river of new life that flows from the origins, from Christ down to us, and makes us participate in God's history with humanity."⁴⁹

But if the waters of this great river which bathes the faith of the Church never stay the same, we shall have a hard time indeed following Msgr. Ocariz in the search for a "unitarian interpretation" that satisfies the demands of the principle of non-contradiction.

11. The Knot of the Dilemma

In the logic of Vatican II and of the 2005 Christmas speech, the object as such is relative to the subject. In the logic of Vatican I, and of all the traditional teaching of the Church, the subject as such is relative to the object. **These two logics are irreconcilable.**

The Magisterium, in whatever era it may be, must remain the organ of the deposit of faith. It becomes perverted to the extent in which it alters that deposit. It is false to say that divinely revealed principles that have been made explicit by the previous Magisterium are not necessarily binding, on the pretence that the subject-Church experiences them differently through the contingency of history, or that the People of God finds itself being led to establish a new relation between its faith and the modern world. Some principles that are applied in contingent matters (for instance those that form the basis of the whole social doctrine of the Church) are not contingent. No doubt, the substantial immutability of revealed truth is not absolute, because the conceptual and verbal expression of that truth can acquire greater precision. **But this progress does not involve any calling into question of the meaning of the truth, which only becomes more explicit in its formulation.** The principles are still necessary principles, whatever the different concrete forms they may assume when they are applied. This distinction between principles and concrete forms proves to be artificial with regard to the social doctrine of the Church; when Benedict XVI resorts to it in his 2005 Christmas address in order to legitimize the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, he does so in vain.

To return to Vatican II: the fundamental question is to determine the first principle that must serve as the ultimate rule for the activity of the Magisterium. Is it **the objective data of divine revelation** as it is expressed in its definitive substance through the teaching authority of Christ and the Apostles, to which the ecclesiastical Magisterium is only the successor? Is it **the communitarian experience of the People of God**, the trustee (and not just the recipient) of the gift of the Truth as the bearer of the meaning of the faith? In the first case, the ecclesiastical Magisterium is the organ of Tradition, and it depends on the divine-apostolic teaching authority as its objective rule; the question then is whether the objective teachings of the Second Vatican Council are those of a constant Magisterium and an immutable Tradition. In the second case, the ecclesiastical Magisterium is the amalgamating spokesman of the communal awareness of the People of God, charged with establishing the spatial-temporal cohesion of the expression of the *sensus fidei*; Vatican II is then for the subject-Church the means of expressing in conceptual language its *sensus fidei*, experienced and updated with respect to the contingencies of the modern era.

12. Hermeneutic and Reinterpretation

In Msgr. Ocariz's view, the teachings of Vatican II are novelties "*in the sense that they make explicit some new aspects which were not yet formulated by the Magisterium but which, on the doctrinal level, do not contradict the preceding magisterial documents.*" An accurate exegesis of the documents of the Council would therefore apparently presuppose the principle of non-contradiction. But appearances are deceiving, since **non-contradiction no longer has the same meaning at all** as it did until now.

The Magisterium of the Church has always understood this principle to mean an absence of logical contradiction between two objective statements. Logical contradiction is an opposition that is found between two propositions, one of which affirms and the other denies the same thing predicated of the same subject. The principle of non-contradiction demands that if this opposition occurs, the two propositions cannot be true at the same time. This principle is a law of the intellect and only expresses the unity of its object. Since faith defines itself as intellectual adherence to the truth proposed by God, it verifies this principle. The objective unity of the faith also corresponds to an absence of contradiction in its dogmatic statements.

The hermeneutic of Benedict XVI now understands this principle **in a sense that is no longer objective but subjective**, no longer intellectualistic but voluntaristic. "*The absence of contradiction*" is a synonym for continuity at the level of the subject. Contradiction is a synonym for rupture, at the same level. The principle of continuity does not demand first and foremost the **unity of the truth**. It demands first and foremost **the unity of the subject** that develops and grows over the course of time. It is the unity of the People of God as it lives in the present moment, in the world of *this* time, to quote the suggestive title of the Pastoral Constitution [on the Church in **the Modern World**], *Gaudium et Spes*. This unity is expressed solely through the authorized word of the present Magisterium, precisely insofar as it is present. Msgr. Ocariz underscores this:

An authentic interpretation of the conciliar documents can be made only by the Church's Magisterium itself. That is why the theological work of interpreting passages in the conciliar documents that raise questions or seem to present difficulties must above all take into account the meaning in which the successive interventions of the Magisterium have understood these passages.

Let us make no mistake about it: this Magisterium which must serve as a rule of interpretation is the new Magisterium of *this* time, the one that resulted from Vatican II. It is not the Magisterium of all time. As it has been rightly remarked, Vatican II must be understood in the light of Vatican II, reinterpreting in its own logic of subjective, living continuity all the teachings of the constant Magisterium.

Until now the Magisterium of the Church has never compromised itself by begging the question in this way. It has always wanted to be faithful to its mission of preserving the deposit [of faith]. Its principal justification has always been to refer to the testimonies of the **objective Tradition** which is unanimous and constant. Its expression has always been that of the unity of the truth.

13. The Magisterium and Vatican II

The same word "magisterium" is used both to designate the person who exercises the power of the magisterium [the teaching office or authority], (the pope or the bishops), and

the act of the magisterium (an infallible definition or a simply authentic teaching). The person is the subject of a power or of a function which is by definition ordered to its object. For example, every man is endowed with a reasoning mind [speculative intelligence] ordered by nature to grasp first principles.⁵⁰ This function either absolutely is or is not. On the other hand, the exercise of the magisterium is the employment of a function: even if most of the time this usage is correct, it always remains possible that the titular of a function may exercise the act defectively, which amounts to failing to accomplish the act, since a defective act is defined as a privation. For example, intellectual error or falsehood is defined as the privation of the relationship that should exist between the mind and reality.

We admit without challenge that Vatican II represented the magisterium of the Church in the sense in which the power of the bishops who were gathered during this council *cum Petro et sub Petro* was and still is the power to teach the universal Church. But we object that the intention of this Council was to meet the demands of a self-styled pastoral magisterium, the new intention of which is clearly foreign to the ends of the divinely instituted magisterium. It contradicted on at least the four points named above objective fundamental ideas of the constant magisterium clearly defined. It thus appears that this magisterium was marked by a grave deficiency in its very act. The Angelic Doctor said: "*When anyone endowed with an art produces bad workmanship, this is not the work of that art; in fact it is contrary to the art.*"⁵¹ Similarly, due allowance being made, when a council produces bad teaching, it is not the work of the magisterium; in fact, it is contrary to the magisterium, that is to say, against Tradition.

That is why nobody could be content today with the so-called "*spaces for theological freedom*" at the very heart of the contradiction introduced by Vatican II. The profound desire of any Catholic who is faithful to his baptismal promises is to adhere with complete filial submission to the teachings of the perennial Teaching Authority [magisterium]. The same piety demands also, with increasing urgency, a remedy for the serious deficiencies that have paralyzed the exercise of this Teaching Authority [magisterium] since the last Council. To this end the Society of St. Pius X still desires, now more than ever, an authentic reform, meaning that **it is up to the Church to remain true to herself**, to remain what she is in the unity of her faith, and thus to preserve her original form, in fidelity to the mission that she received from Christ. *Intus reformari.*⁵²

¹ Msgr. Ocariz is referring to the Vatican II Constitution *Dei Verbum* (§8), but St. Pius X makes the same point in the Antimodernist Oath (the *Motu Proprio Sacrorum Antistitum* of September 1, 1910, DS 3549).

² On this point, see Charles Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, 2nd ed. (1955), I, 426-35. In addition to an absolute assistance, which is the root of infallibility strictly speaking, proper to solemn definitions, there is also a prudential assistance, which is the root of infallibility broadly speaking, proper to the everyday ordinary preaching of the magisterium.

³ Letter of Paul VI to Archbishop Lefebvre of June 29, 1975, published in *Itinéraires: La condamnation sauvage de Mgr Lefebvre*, special issue, December 1976, p. 67.

⁴ DS 3071.

⁵ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 1, Art. 10.

⁶ Mt. 28:20; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 16:13. Cf. Cardinal John-Baptist Franzelin, *La Tradition*, Thesis 5, 60-66 (Courrier de Rome, 2008, pp. 67-70; and Thesis 22, 456-79, pp. 325-36).

⁷ *Fideliter custodienda et infallibiliter declaranda* (DS 3020), or *Sancte custodiendum et fideliter exponendum* (DS 3070).

⁸ Cf. *Acta Synodalia*, t. 2, pars I, p. 652. It would have been necessary to add to the text speaking of infallibility the phrase in boldface: "*Definitiones Romani Pontificis quae propter Spiritus sancti assistentiam **nunquam extra vel contra fidem communem Ecclesiae proferuntur ex sese tamen et non ex consensu Ecclesiae irreformabiles esse.***"

⁹ "*In effect, the pope is infallible if and only if, fulfilling his function as doctor of all Christians and representing the whole Church, he judges and defines what all must believe or reject. Under the circumstances he would no more be able to separate himself from the Church than would the foundation detach itself from the edifice it must support...*"

This is evident if we consider the end for which God has granted the pope infallibility, which is to keep truth in the Church" (Msgr. Gasser, Mansi, t. 52, col. 1213C).

¹⁰ Cf. the book by Jean-François Chiron, *L'Infaillibilité et son objet: L'autorité du magistère de l'Église s'étend-elle aux vérités non-révéleées?* (Cerf, 1999), p. 501-503.

¹¹ From the very fact that it must expound revealed truth which is its primary object, the magisterium also expounds other truths in a logically necessary connection with the first end of the Church, which is to preserve and to explain the revealed deposit. The connection is so close that the negation of these truths and these facts would proximately imperil revelation. This domain corresponds to the secondary object of the magisterium and it covers the truths virtually revealed. Among these are, for example, all the Church's doctrine concerning the natural law, doctrinal judgments about writings, the canonization of saints (in which the twofold fact of their glorification and their heroic virtue is asserted), the approbation of religious orders (in which their rule of life is affirmed to be apt to lead to perfection).

¹² Franzelin, *La Tradition*, Thesis 6, 67-76, pp. 71-76.

¹³ DS 3020.

¹⁴ "The Oath Against the Errors of Modernism," DS 3541.

¹⁵ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 1, Art. 2, corpus and ad 2.

¹⁶ "Hence to neglect, or to reject, or to devalue so many and such great resources which have been conceived, expressed and perfected so often by the age-old work of men endowed with no common talent and holiness, working under the vigilant supervision of the holy magisterium and with the light and leadership of the Holy Ghost in order to state the truths of the faith ever more accurately, to do this so that these things may be replaced by conjectural notions and by some formless and unstable tenets of a new philosophy, tenets which, like the flowers of the field, are in existence today and die tomorrow; this is supreme imprudence and something that would make dogma itself a reed shaken by the wind" (Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, August 12, 1950, §17).

¹⁷ Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, §29: "For this philosophy, acknowledged and accepted by the Church, safeguards the genuine validity of human knowledge, the unshakable metaphysical principles of sufficient reason, causality, and finality, and finally the mind's ability to attain certain and unchangeable truth."

¹⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, tr. Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. [German, 1982] (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987).

¹⁹ *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), p. 36.

²⁰ Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, p. 382.

²¹ Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, Ch. 4, DS 3020.

²² The Teaching Authority [magisterium] before Vatican II condemned the intention to incorporate modern philosophy into theology, insofar as this philosophy is imbued with rationalism, skepticism, or relativism. See, for example, Pius IX's Brief *Eximiam Tuam* to the Archbishop of Cologne dated June 15, 1857 (DS 2829) condemning the philosophy of Gunther.

²³ The earlier magisterium (Pius IX) condemns the proposition asserting that "that is the best condition of civil society, in which no duty is recognized, as attached to the civil power, of restraining by enacted penalties, offenders against the Catholic religion, except so far as public peace may require" (*Quanta Cura*, §3). *Dignitatis Humanae* declares that "the human person has a right to religious freedom," and that "this freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits" (§2).

²⁴ Pius XII affirms the real identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church; *Lumen Gentium* 8 affirms the non-separation of two distinct realities which are the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church.

²⁵ The earlier magisterium declares that outside the Catholic Church there is nothing in the schismatic and heretical sects *per se* that avails for salvation, and that Divine Providence does not make use of these sects as means of salvation; Vatican II asserts the exact opposite.

²⁶ Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci, Letter of the Cardinals to His Holiness Pope Paul VI, September 25, 1969, *The Ottaviani Intervention: Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass*, tr. Fr. Anthony Cekada (TAN Books & Publishers), p. 27.

²⁷ "Without rejecting this Council wholesale, I think that it is the greatest disaster of this century and of all the past centuries since the founding of the Church."—Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him* (Angelus Press, 1988), p. xv. It is not a matter of quantity or percentages. Modernism is an error unique in its kind in the sense that it amalgamates materially true statements with statements that are most often incomplete, ambiguous, or contradictory, yet rarely openly false. The result of this amalgam is a body of statements riddled with inconsistencies but which keeps the appearance of truth in each of its points taken separately, the sound passages serving to vouch for underlying erroneous principles.

²⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian [English version online at www.vatican.va].

²⁹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, July 2, 1990, page 5.

³⁰ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis*, October 16, 2003, §28.

³¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church Against Certain Errors of the Present Day [English version: http://www.saint-mike.org/library/curia/congregations/faith/mysterium_ecclesiae.html].

³² No. 2 states, in effect: "The Holy Spirit enlightens and assists the People of God inasmuch as it is the Body of Christ united in a hierarchical communion," adding that if the People of God is attached to the faith, this happens not only thanks to its instinct of the faith, which is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of Truth, but also "All this it does under the lead of a sacred teaching authority...." Endowed with the authority of Christ, the pastors have the power to teach, and their "office is not reduced merely to ratifying the assent already expressed by the [faithful]; indeed, in the interpretation and explanation of the written or transmitted Word of God, the Magisterium can anticipate or demand their assent."

³³ Cf. Cardinal Ratzinger's presentation of the Instruction *Donum Veritatis*:

The document treats the problem of the ecclesial mission of the theologian not by starting as usual from the Magisterium-theology dualism, but rather by starting within the context of this triangular relationship: [1] People of God as bearer of the sense of faith [*sensus fidei*] and the place common to all in the ensemble of faith, [2] Magisterium and [3] theology. The development of dogma in the last 150 years is the clearest demonstration of this complex triangular relationship: the dogmas of 1854, 1870 and 1950 were possible because the sense of faith had rediscovered them; magisterium and theology were led by it and slowly sought to attain it. (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, July 2, 1990, p. 5).

³⁴ *Documentation Catholique*, July 3, 1994, p. 613.

³⁵ "This is how the Apostles' adventure began, as an encounter of people who are open to one another. For the disciples, it was the beginning of a direct acquaintance with the Teacher, seeing where he was staying and starting to get to know him. Indeed, they were not to proclaim an idea, but to witness to a person. Before being sent out to preach, they had to "be" with Jesus (cf. Mk 3:14), establishing a personal relationship with him. On this basis, evangelization was to be no more than the proclamation of what they felt and an invitation to enter into the mystery of communion with Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1-3)."—Benedict XVI, "The Apostles, Witnesses and Messengers of Christ," General Audience, March 22, 2006, www.vatican.va [English version: www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/b16ChrstChrch2.htm].

³⁶ "Through her apostolic ministry the Church, a community gathered by the Son of God who came in the flesh, will live on through the passing times, building up and nourishing the communion in Christ and in the Holy Spirit to which all are called and in which they can experience the salvation given by the Father. The Twelve... took pains, in fact, to prepare successors, so that the mission entrusted to them would be continued after their death. The Church, organically structured under the guidance of her legitimate Pastors, has thus continued down the ages to live in the world as a mystery of communion in which, to a certain extent, the Trinitarian Communion itself is mirrored."—Benedict XVI, "The Gift of Communion," General Audience, March 29, 2006 [www.vatican.va].

³⁷ *Mysterium Ecclesiae* (quoting in passing the condemnation of Proposition 6 in *Lamentabili*) affirms in this sense that the role of the magisterium is not limited to sanctioning the consensus already expressed by the simple faithful. But there is a difference between saying that the ecclesiastical magisterium transmits and imposes the truth to be held by the faithful of which it is the depositary as successor of the apostolic magisterium, and saying that the ecclesiastical magisterium imposes the adequate expression of a truth of which the People is the depositary because its sense of the faith keeps it in its preconceptual state. The second assertion does not escape the condemnation of *Lamentabili*. Condemned proposition No. 6 expressly states: "In defining truths the learning Church and the teaching Church so collaborate that there is nothing left for the teaching Church but to sanction the common opinions of the learning Church" (DS 2006).

³⁸ Benedict XVI, "Communion in Time: Tradition," Allocution of April 26, 2006, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, No. 18, May 2, 2006, p. 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Vatican Council I, Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch. 1, DS 3054.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Ch. 4, DS 3074.

⁴² Benedict XVI, "Communion in Time: Tradition," General Audience, April 26, 2006 [English version online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20060426_en.html].

⁴³ "Even though the truths which the Church intends to teach through her dogmatic formulas are distinct from the changeable conceptions of a given epoch and can be expressed without them, nevertheless it can sometimes happen that these truths may be enunciated by the Sacred Magisterium in terms that bear traces of such conceptions. In view of the above, it must be stated that the dogmatic formulas of the Church's Magisterium were from the beginning suitable for communicating revealed truth, and that as they are they remain forever suitable for communicating this truth to those who interpret them correctly. It does not however follow that every one of these formulas has always been or will always be so to the same extent" (§5). [English version: http://www.saint-mike.org/library/curia/congregations/faith/mysterium_ecclesiae.html].

⁴⁴ Cardinal Ratzinger, presentation of the Instruction *Donum Veritatis* in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, July 2, 1990, p. 5.

⁴⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Theology and History: Notes on the Historical Dynamism of the Faith* [German] (1972), p. 108, quoted by Joaquim E. M. Terra, *Itinerario teologico di Benedetto XVI* (Rome, 2007), p. 66.

⁴⁶ Benedict XVI, "Communion in Time: Tradition."

⁴⁷ Benedict XVI, "The Apostolic Tradition of the Church," General Audience, May 3, 2006 [English version: www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/b16ChrstChrch6.htm].

⁴⁸ Benedict XVI, "Communion in Time: Tradition."

⁴⁹ Benedict XVI, "The Apostolic Tradition of the Church."

⁵⁰ *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 51, Art. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Q. 57, Art. 3, *ad* 1.

⁵² [To be reformed inwardly.]