



si si no no

"But let your speech be, 'Yes, yes,' 'No, no', and whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)"

May 2004 No. 58

The Declarations of the Unsilent Apostate

"Does Cardinal Kasper Believe That Revelation Ended with St. John or Not?"

From November 5-7, 2001, the National Episcopal Commission of Italy held a conference at Rome entitled "The Resumption of Ecumenical Dialogue in Italy after the Jubilee and following on *Novo Millenio Ineunte* and *Charta Ecumenica*." This conference featured the participation of the delegates for ecumenism and dialogue of all dioceses in Italy, numerous bishops, and delegations from the "Orthodox" and Protestant churches.

During this conference Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity, made the following statements:

From the point of view of the philosophy of the 20th century, dialogue marks the end of an individualistic conception of our Western society. Dialogue means: *"I do not exist without the other; the other is not a limitation of me, but rather an enrichment."* Ecumenism lives on the basis of this law, but it must be vigilant that it not become a "slogan" masking the spirit of relativism, indifferentism, or the pluralism without principles that is largely predominant in today's culture. The ecumenical dialogue is different because it does not contradict truth and charity, but rather puts itself at their service, and because, in the last analysis, it has as its measure the Lord Jesus Christ himself, in whom the most intense dialogue took place, the absolutely unique and definitive dialogue between God and man [emphasis added].

The Cardinal then explained that

Christians appeal to the promise of the Spirit that leads to the whole, complete truth. The ecumenical dialogue is a means by which the Spirit of God speaks to the Church and enriches her with profounder perceptions and heretofore un contemplated aspects of the unique truth which is Jesus Christ.¹

The two conceptions expressed by His Eminence in these two passages reinforce one another, as we shall try to demonstrate in these reflections.

Who Is This "Other"?

Cardinal Kasper urges that the "other"-the schismatic, the heretic, and, in general, the non-Catholic-not be seen by Catholics as a "limitation." The Cardinal makes use of terminology of profane origin, characteristic of modern thought. Nor does he hide this. He openly declares that the principle of "dialogue," as adopted by the contemporary Church, corresponds to "the point of view of the philosophy of the 20th century." Here, we are not in the realm of traditional Catholic thinking, but rather in the precise application of the intention fixed by Pope John XXIII for the Second Vatican Council, that is, to accurately study and express doctrine in accordance with the forms and methods of "modern thinking." [See the inaugural oration of the Council *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (Oct. 11, 1962)-*Ed.*]. This intention, received by the Council, maintained and perfected in the magisterium that it put and continues to put into practice, sees in the "other," represented by the world in general, an "enrichment" for the Church. In fact, §40 of the Conciliar constitution *Gaudium et Spes* affirms that, in order to fulfill the mission that is now imputed to the Church "to further humanize the family of man and its history":

...The Church, then, believes it can contribute much to humanizing the family of man and its history though each of its members and its community as a whole.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church gladly values what other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have contributed and are contributing cooperatively to the realization of this aim. Similarly it is convinced that there is a considerable and varied help that it can receive from the world in preparing the ground for the Gospel, both from individuals and from society as a whole, by their talents and activity. The Council will now outline some general principles for the proper fostering of mutual exchange and help in matters which are in some way common to the Church and the world. (GS§40)

The Church of Vatican II expected from the world, and still expects, "considerable and varied help" and therefore, we can say, an "enrichment," not in order to effect the conversion of the world to Christ, but "to humanize the family of man." Whatever this expression was intended to mean, it is clear that it reflects the desire to give to the Church a worldly purpose, entirely secular-in keeping with the values of our time-to enter into a relationship of active and mutual collaboration with the world in order to make the human family "more human." This goal, everyone recognizes, is certainly not that for which the Church was founded by Our Lord, who does not seek to render man "more human" but rather to convert him to Himself and make of him a "son of God."

Worldly Origins of the Principle of Dialogue

We have cited §40 of *Gaudium et Spes* to show that Cardinal Kasper is not merely expressing his personal view. He is applying and deepening the doctrinal and pastoral approach dictated by Vatican II. To be sure, the import of the terminology used by the Cardinal is not evident at first sight. What does he say?

Dialogue means: "I do not exist without the other; the other is not a limitation of me, but rather an enrichment."

What does that mean? The usage of the term "other" recalls Hegel, and is connected with the problem of *overcoming* the limits placed by finite reality on thought. But Hegel is here only a distant echo. In any case, the phrase here signifies that it is necessary to overcome the idea that something *other-than-me* limits me by the very fact of existing. I perceive in the *diversity* of the "other" something hostile-at least potentially an enemy-and therefore a limit. Undoubtedly, in the world infected by the consequences of original sin, there is always the war of all against all, whether between individuals or between nations. The corruption of the world can only be conquered by its progressive conversion to Christ, with the increasing success of the missionary work of the Church. Today, on the contrary, the pastors of the Church are saying that the world-"the other"-enriches me already as it is. On this account I should open myself to it and its values, because something can always come to me as a "gift" from it. The Catholic should solicit this "gift" from the Jew, the Muslim, the Buddhist, the animist, the Calvinist, *etc.* How so? Through dialogue. By means of dialogue I put myself into relation with "the other" through a higher goal from the moment that the conversion of souls is no longer contemplated, but is substituted for by a worldly finality that is acceptable to everyone: progress, peace, universal brotherhood.

The principle of dialogue taught by today's churchmen is in reality *inapplicable* to revealed truth and to the authentic mission of the Catholic Church. It is in fact nonsensical, and it even appears as a perversion of the intellect to affirm that the "other"-the heretic and the schismatic-constitutes, as such, an "enrichment" for the Catholic and the Church, and that on this basis it is necessary to conduct a dialogue with *him, just as he is*, with his values, hostile to the True Faith, in order to construct together with him a world leading to universal brotherhood. This is the way of the "utopian paths" traced by Martin Buber, not that prescribed for the Church by Our Lord and maintained constantly over the centuries by the Magisterium. The only "enrichment" that the heretic, the schismatic, and the non-Catholic in general can bring to the Church is that of entering her bosom after repudiating error and having been converted, thanks to the missionary work of the Church.

We have mentioned Martin Buber. In fact, we believe that Cardinal Kasper's reference to the "philosophy of the 20th century" can be read in relation to the thought of the German-Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (d. 1965), the celebrated exponent of a philosophy of "dialogical principle" between the "I" and the "thou," consciously in the tradition of "utopian socialism." Buber's philosophy appears to be the last heir of what could be described as a German Jewish school of thought founded by Moses Mendelssohn, a contemporary of Immanuel Kant.

These references to intellectual history seem necessary in order to call attention to what seems to be a fundamental point: the *philosophical* origins of this idea of dialogue, which has been imposed on the Church with well-known devastating consequences.

This "dialogue" presupposes a "philosophy of dialogue," but certainly not that of Plato, who conceived of dialogue as a means of arriving at a rational understanding of universal truths: the true conception of the State, of virtue, of the soul, the good, the beautiful, the true. The modern principle of dialogue seems rather to send us back to an abstract conception of reality typical of humanitarian socialism, pacifistic and Utopian, which considers man to be good by nature, not believing and at the same time capable of deistically encountering all religions. This conception has nothing in common with the correct, Catholic vision of man and the world, and actually is destructive of the Catholic approach.

When Cardinal Kasper says that the dialogue undertaken "marks the end of an individualistic conception of our Western society" he places the Church within the philosophic tradition just alluded to, and does so as if this identification were something obvious. He attributes to the Church something that is in fact profoundly foreign and alien to her: the philosophy of "dialogue" of "I" and "thou" as conceived of by Utopian humanitarians, together with all of its mythology of "being-in-relatedness," of the "existing in reciprocal relation" which is dialogue itself, deemed capable of leading humanity to its final goal of unity in the brotherhood of the whole human race.

Contemporary Ecumenism Has No Part in the True Church

The heterodox dialogue described above constitutes, by Cardinal Rasper's admission, the vital principle of the ecumenism professed by the post-Vatican II Catholic Church. But how can this be reconciled with the traditional teaching of the Church? Is it enough to say, as the Cardinal does, that it ought not to devolve into "relativism, indifferentism, or a pluralism without principles"? Clearly not. To say what the dialogue *ought not to be* does not transform its intrinsic nature, aptly described as an overcoming "of an individualistic conception of our Western society" in keeping with the Utopian humanitarian socialism alluded to above. The significance of such dialogue for the Church as a whole is shown by the fact that it is precisely this dialogue that has opened the door to the "relativism" and "indifferentism" deprecated by the Cardinal but now widely diffused amongst Catholics, whose own pastors have made them prey to the false doctrines of all sects and religions imaginable. Since he cannot maintain that the philosophy of dialogue is in itself coherent with the teaching of the Church and thus with revelation, the Cardinal is constrained by the logic of his own argument *to change the concept* of Revelation, insinuating that it *remains open*. This is how Cardinal Rasper can conclude that the "unique truth which is Jesus Christ"—revealed Truth—contains "heretofore un contemplated aspects."

This Dialogue Is Justified by Heresy

Let us examine the second excerpt (printed above) of Cardinal Kasper to show its connection with the letter and spirit of Vatican II.

Cardinal Kasper wants to reinforce the relationship between the "Spirit of God" and (revealed) truth as understood by Christians. He says that Christians "appeal to the promise of the Spirit that leads to the whole, complete truth." It is worth lingering over this apparently descriptive phrase that seems to evoke traditional doctrine. In fact, it does not.

To begin with, the use of the term "Christians" is these days ambiguous, because one could infer that the [Holy] Spirit continues to "lead" also heretical and schismatic Christians as such. This inference would be close to heresy, as anyone can see, because it implicitly denies the dogma that there is no salvation outside the Church. Furthermore, the cited phrase does not make clear that the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit is kept in a *deposit* of the Faith, firmly kept stable and maintained by the Catholic Church. The expression relative to "the promise of the Spirit that leads to the whole, complete truth" recalls the conciliar constitution on divine revelation, *Dei Verbum*, in particular §8 on "Holy Tradition." This is one of the most controversial articles of this constitution, which introduced the ambiguous concept of "living tradition."

The Tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51). It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her.

The sayings of the Holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of the Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and prayer. By means of the same Tradition the full canon of the sacred books in known to the Church and the holy Scriptures themselves are more thoroughly understood and constantly actualized by the Church. Thus God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the spouse of His beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church-and through her in the world-leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness (cf. Col. 3, 16).²

It should be noted that in Col. 3:16, St. Paul limits himself to exhorting the faithful to observe the word of Christ, as he has taught it to them, maintaining it intact in their own conscience and bringing it to fruition in their relations with one another: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another...."³ The text of *DV*§8 is deceptive to the extent that it suggests that the manner in which it proposes that the Holy Spirit leads believers "to the whole, complete truth" is founded on the scriptural passage *DV*§8 is, however, of a piece with the other novel teachings of Vatican II. As is clear, the expression used by Cardinal Kasper is substantially the same as in *ZF*§8. But why speak of the "whole truth" or the "whole complete" truth? Why was it not sufficient to speak of the "truth"? *Why the adjective?* The explanation may be found in an earlier passage of the same §8 of *Dei Verbum*:

Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her.

The "plenitude of truth" is evidently the same thing as the "whole, complete truth" towards which the Holy Spirit leads. The "Spirit of God" leads to the "whole, complete truth" *which the Church however does not yet possess*; otherwise it would not have need of being led nor of tending there incessantly. But this is to say that the Church does not yet fully possess Revelation which is not a true, perfect deposit of Faith! That towards which I tend without pause is obviously not something that I already possess, or else I possess it only in part; otherwise I would not aim at it. I *can* aim for that which I do not have, *not* at that which I already have because I have received it in a definitive manner from Christ and the Apostles. The "always advancing" which is substituted for the possession of the deposit of Faith presents itself necessarily in centra-distinction to the concept of the deposit of Faith itself and carries with it an implicit negation of the dogma according to which Revelation definitively concluded with the death of St. John, the last Apostle.⁴ Is not a denial of this doctrine, unambiguous albeit implicit, redolent of heresy?

From all of this it appears that the Church, or, better said, the "People of God" (since the Church is understood, since Vatican II, above all as the "people of God"), and those who make it up, are guided by the "Spirit" to the whole, complete truth or, to put it otherwise, are introduced to its "fullness" which however they do not yet possess! They do not yet possess the truth (of Revelation) in all its fullness! And this because the "Spirit" has not yet given the whole truth, but rather "introduces" and constantly "leads" towards it. The truth of Faith that we possess is therefore something that "tends towards" and therefore *evolves towards the fullness* of the truth itself under the guidance of the "Spirit of God." Here reappears the specter of the so-called *evolutionary* conception of truth, typical of modern thinking, which is applied to the dogmas of Faith in order to adapt them to modern concepts and mentalities. This evolutionary conception was condemned as heretical by Vatican I (Sess. IV, Can. 3) and again in Propositions 58-65 of *Lamentabili* (July 3, 1907).

Revealed truth is thus understood as a truth in a process of becoming in which, under the "guidance" of the "Spirit," new "*uncontemplated*" aspects" can emerge. The reason for the use of the adjective becomes clear, as does the reason why the language of the Council, of the contemporary magisterium, and of Cardinal Kasper insists on the fact that the "Spirit" initiates and leads to the full, whole, and complete truth. This "fullness" is not that of the deposit of the Faith, sealed by the last apostle and constituted once and for all. It is rather something that does not yet exist; it is the goal of our constant striving. We ought to understand that Christianity is this constant tending towards fullness, necessarily indeterminate, the content of which will have to emerge progressively in the successive "enrichments" that the "other" brings to the dialogue. And these "enrichments" constitute the "new aspects" that the "Spirit" makes to *emerge from* "the unique truth which is Jesus Christ." The tending towards "fullness," towards the "whole, complete truth," and the emergence of new aspects of Revelation reciprocally imply one another, and constitute a unity which the Catholic must now take into account. This is precisely the new self-understanding that the Council brought about in the Catholic Church, and it is on this account that the followers of Vatican II consider the Council a "new Pentecost."

Naturally these "heretofore un contemplated aspects" recapitulate the fundamental principle of dialogue from "the point of view of the philosophy of the 20th century," or in other words, the regurgitation of doctrines already many times condemned by the Church, beginning with socialism.

The denial of dogma implicit in the evolutionary conception of revealed truth, with its ambiguous concept of "living tradition" put forward by *Dei Verbum* §8, seems to be even clearer in the words of Cardinal Kasper. To say that "the Spirit of God speaks to the Church and enriches her with profounder perceptions and heretofore un contemplated aspects of the unique truth that is Christ Jesus" is not different than saying that Revelation continues. The "Spirit of God" "enriches" with novelty, with aspects of the Truth "heretofore not contemplated." This is imported from the philosophy of the 20th century, the implacable foe of all transcendence and of the Catholic Church in particular. Its most enlightened manifestation would be an "ecumenical dialogue" that excludes *a priori* the conversion of souls! Behold, the "Other" in the sense of our Adversary, the Devil, charged with "enriching" her with its profound truths, inoculated within the Church under the label of the "Spirit of God" so as to unexpectedly teach the false and already condemned doctrines of the age. Do the first principles of logic and of the Faith still have any sense for Cardinal Kasper? Is the teaching of Cardinal Kasper merely suspect of heresy or heretical purely and simply? We address this question to the competent authority.

Translated exclusively for Angelus Press from *SiSiNoNo*, Jan. 31, 2004. Edited by Fr. Kenneth Novak.

1. *Il Rosario e la Nuova Pompei*, Jan. 2002, pp.17-18.

2. On *Dei Verbum* see Fr. Emanuel-Marie, O.P., "*Dei Verbum et les notions conciliaires de Revelation et de tradition vivant*," in (AAVV) *La religion de Vatican II: Etudes theologiques*, Premier symposium de Paris, 4-6 Octobre, 2002. Supplement to *Set de la Terre*, No. 43, 2003, pp.39-80.

3. Douay-Rheims trans.

4. No. 21 of the decree of the Holy Office *Lamentabili* of July 3,1907 condemns the modernist proposition "*Revelatio, obiectum fidei catholicae constituens, non fuit cum Apostolis completa*," ordaining that all should consider this proposition "*reprobata acproscripta*" (*Denziger-Schönmetzer* 3421). The index of *DS* places the dogmatic foundation of this condemnation in the Council of Trent (*DS* 1501) and Vatican I (*DS* 3071). Obviously the "end" and "completion" of Revelation with the death of the last Apostle is a constant teaching of the Church, a doctrine that can be considered guaranteed by the infallibility of the ordinary Magisterium.