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

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The Errors of Vatican II

PART V:

Throughout Parts 1-4 of this continuing series, we have been discussing the "mentality" of the

Second Vatican Council, both generally and in particular. In Part 5 we will concentrate on the doctrinal errors of Vatican II regarding *1)* the false representations of non-Christian religions; and *2)* errors concerning politics, political community, and relations between Church and State.

9) The False Representation of Non-Christian Religions

Falsely attributing to non-Christian religions that, like us, they believe in God the Creator.

Gaudium et Spes §36 states: "... [A]ll believers of whatever religion have always heard His revealing voice in the discourse of creatures."¹ To attribute this to non-Christian religions is false. Citing just the two examples of Hinduism and Buddhism, both completely ignore the idea of a God who created from nothing and who reveals Himself in His creatures, since both are convinced that reality proceeds through emanation of an impersonal, cosmic, eternal force which is identically replicated in all things, from which force all comes and to which all returns, becoming a part of it, dissolving into it.

► Likewise, inconceivably awarding the marks of truth and holiness to all the non-Christian religions, whereas they do not contain revealed truth, but are the fruit of the human spirit and so, neither redeem nor save anyone.

Nostra Aetate §2 states:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy (*vera et sancta*) in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.

It is necessary to note the contradiction in the above, noting too its decidedly Deist tone. That is, if these religions "differ... in many particulars" from the Catholic Church's teaching, how can they "often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men"? This means that, for the Council, the truth "which enlightens all men" perhaps comes through rules and teachings that differ "in many particulars" from the Church's teaching! (How could an authentic ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church have been inspired to articulate such an idea?)

► The baseless assertion, always denied by Tradition and Holy Scripture (*e.g.*, Ps. 95:5: "For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils"; and I Cor. 10:20), that pagan religions, past and present, would have in some way been included in the plan of salvation.

In fact, §18 of *Ad Gentes*, on missionary activity, states:

Working to plant the Church, and thoroughly enriched with the treasures of mysticism adorning the Church's religious tradition, religious communities should strive to give expression to these treasures and to hand them on in a manner harmonious with the nature and the genius of each nation. Let them reflect attentively on how Christian religious life may be able to assimilate the ascetic and contemplative traditions whose seeds were sometimes already planted by God in ancient cultures prior to the preaching of the gospel.

Here, "ancient cultures" whose gods were "devils," and whose sacrifices were offered "to devils and not to God" (I Cor. 10:20), are unjustly re-evaluated by the Council, which wants to recognize in them a salvific presence of "*semina Verbi*" of the "seeds of revealed Truth." But that violates a truth always held to belong to the deposit of Faith. In *Lumen Gentium* §17 and in *Ad Gentes* §11, the same idea is applied to all contemporary non-Christian peoples, including pagans: missionaries must discover the "hidden seeds of the Word" in the people whose evangelization has been entrusted to them.

► The false representation of Hinduism, because *Nostra Aetate* §2 states:

Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an unspent fruitfulness of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek release from the anguish of our human condition through ascetical practices or deep meditation or a loving, trusting flight toward God.

This is a false representation because it leads the Catholic to see Hindu mythology and philosophy as valid, as if they might effectively "search for" the "divine mystery," and as if Hindu asceticism and meditation bring about something similar to Christian asceticism. On the contrary, we know that the mix of mythology, magic, and speculation that characterizes Indian spirituality from the Veda era (16th to 10th centuries B.C.) was responsible for a totally monist and pantheistic conception of the divinity and the world, because by conceiving of God as a cosmic, impersonal force, it does not admit the idea of creation, and, consequently, it does not distinguish between sensible reality and supernatural reality. Nor does it distinguish between material and spiritual reality, nor between the whole and specific elements. Because of this, all individual existence dissolves into the amorphous cosmic One, from which all emanates and to which all eternally returns. Thus, the individual "I" is, *per se*, purely appearance. The Council characterizes this thought as "penetrating," yet it lacks the idea of the individual soul (which was well recognized by the Greeks) and what we call free will and free choice.

Add to this the doctrine of reincarnation, a particularly perverse idea. Reincarnation was explicitly condemned in the schema of the Dogmatic Constitution *De Depositio Fidei* *Pure Custodiendo*, which was elaborated during the preparatory phrase of the Council. But John XXIII and the progressives saw to it that it was run around during the Council because of its refined "ecumenical" character. There is also the fact that so-called Hindu "asceticism" is nothing more than a form of Epicureanism for Brahmins, an egotistical and paucity of search for a superior spiritual attitude toward all desire, even good, and toward all responsibility, an indifference justified by the idea that all suffering makes up for the faults committed in one's former life, *etc.* One would really like to know how anyone could want to lead Catholics into such a conception of the world?

► The false representation of Buddhism, an autonomous variant partially purified of Hinduism. In fact, in *Nostra Aetate* §2, one reads:

Buddhism in its multiple forms acknowledges the radical insufficiency of this shifting world. It teaches a path by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, can either reach a state of absolute freedom or attain supreme enlightenment by their own efforts or by higher assistance.

This is a portrait of Buddhism *a la* de Lubac, one revised and corrected so that ignorant Catholics can think well of it. Such Catholics do not know that "the radical insufficiency of this shifting world" is enshrined by Buddhists in a variable "metaphysics of nonbeing," according to which the existence of the world and the self are illusory and appearance only. Therefore, Buddhists do not just say that the self and the world are decaying and transient, but still truly real, as for the Christian. For the Buddhist, everything "is being made and is decaying" simultaneously. Life is a continual flux filled with universal pain and grief. In order to banish this sadness, it is necessary to persuade oneself that all is vain. It is also necessary to free oneself from all desire and to entrust oneself to undergo an intellectual intuition, a gnosis similar to the Hindus' (going so far as to permit "sexual magic" in Tantric Buddhism). This gnosis must make us arrive at complete indifference to everything, which is termed, Nirvana, meaning "disappearance," "extinction": a final condition of absolute privation, in which there is nothing but nonexistence, the void, in which the self is totally extinguished in order to be anonymously dissolved into the All and the One. This is the "state of absolute freedom" or "supreme enlightenment" that Vatican II dared to offer to the attention and respect of Catholics.

► In *Lumen Gentium* §16, the statement:

But the plan of salvation (*propositum salutis*) also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place (*in primis*) among these there are the Moslems, who, professing to hold the Faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind (*qui fidelem Abrahae se tenere profitemes, nobiscum Deum adorant unicum, etc. i.*).

This statement falsely attributes adoration of our God to the Moslems, and includes them, *per se*, in the plan of salvation. This statement is contrary to dogma because those who do not worship the true God are not included in the plan of salvation. And the Moslems do not adore the true God because, although they attribute to God (Allah = "God"), the creation of the "world" and "man" from nothing, and accord traditional attributes of omnipotence and omniscience to Him, and although they recognize him as Judge of human beings at the end of time, Allah is not thought of as God the Father, who in His goodness created man "in his image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 32:6, etc.). Further, Moslems do not believe in the Holy Trinity, and their abhorrence of it repeats the Jews' error. Consequently, they deny grace, our Lord's Divinity, Incarnation, Redemption, His death on the Cross, and His Resurrection. They deny all of our dogmas and refuse to read the Old and New Testaments. Because they obviously contain no mention of Mohammed, the Moslems consider the Old and New Testaments to be falsified texts.

Too, Moslems deny free will (defended only by a few minority Moslem exegetes who are viewed as heretics), while professing an absolute determinism which admits of there being no place in the world for true relationships between cause and effect, so that, out of time, all of our actions, good or bad, have already been "created" by Allah's inscrutable decree (Koran 54: 52-53).

Lumen Gentium §16's recognition of Islam is repeated in an even more detailed and gravely erroneous way in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*'s §3:

Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker in men (*qui unicum Deum adorant etc., homines altitum*). They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees (*cuius occultis etiam decretis toto animo se submittere student*), just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself.

This goes so far as to state that the God in whom the Moslems believe "has spoken to men"! Therefore, by this does the Council demonstrate that it views as authentic the "revelation" transmitted by Mohammed in the Koran? If so, isn't this implicit apostasy from the Christian faith, given that the "revelation" in the Koran specifically contradicts all of Christianity's basic truths?

Moreover, it also represents the Moslems' way of believing precisely as they themselves understand it, as if to approve it. In fact, it employs the usage, "submission to God," which is the meaning of the term "Islam" (submission), and whose substantive adjective is *muslim* (Muslim = submission [to God]). In its entirety, this passage seems to reflect the Koran's own 4:124: "And who has a better religion than he who submits himself *entirely* to Allah, doing good and following the belief of Abraham, like a pure monotheist (*hanif*)?" Finally, the allusion to obedience to the decrees of Allah "even if they are hidden" has a strong Islamic aura because it reminds us that in the Koran, Allah is defined as "the visible and the hidden" (57:3), visible in his works and hidden in his decrees. Therefore it seems that the Council wanted to have its "esteem" understood, rather than shrink from according such esteem to the Koran and Islam because of the ambiguous, troubling, impenetrable quality of the entity spoken of in the Koran.

Vatican II praise of the Moslems' profession of the "faith" of Abraham, as if it constitutes a quality linking them to us, obscures the truth, since we know that the Abraham of Islam's faith, who is infused with a legendary and apocryphal quality, does not correspond to the real Abraham, who is evidently the Abraham of the Bible. This, because the Koran attributes a "pure monotheism" or anti-Trinitarianism, anterior to Judaism and Christian monotheism, to Abraham. Thus, as an Arab prophet and a descendant of Abraham thanks to Israel, Mohammed would have been sent in order to restore this pure monotheism by liberating it from the so-called Jewish and Christian falsifications!

► *Nostra Aetate* §3 also takes into serious consideration the veneration that the Moslems accord Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary: "Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion."

But it is well known that the Koran's "Christology" is founded on an altered and deformed Jesus of the apocryphal gospels and of all sorts of Gnostic heresies that proliferated in Arabia in Mohammed's time. The Koran's Jesus (Isa) was born of a virgin through a divine intervention (of the angel Gabriel), a prophet particularly appreciated by Allah, a simple mortal whom Allah permitted to work numerous miracles, a prophet who thus preached the same monotheism as that attributed to Abraham (57:26-27), whose recited formula is: "There is no God but God, one, lord" (38:65). This is why, for the Moslems, Jesus was a servant of God (19:31), submissive to Allah, that is, a Moslem, a Mussulman, to the point that, like Abraham, he announced the coming of Mohammed (51:6)! Therefore, when the Moslems venerate Jesus as a prophet, they mean that he is a "prophet of Islam," a lie that any Catholic, provided that he still has the Faith, obviously cannot accept.²

As for the Moslem veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that they "sometimes call on her with devotion," from a practical standpoint, it must be said that this "devotion" is meaningless and based on superstition. Such as it is, this "devotion" to Mary is such only in terms of her being the mother of a "prophet of Islam," and not because she is the Mother of God. Therefore, it is offensive to Catholic ears.

Moreover, it is necessary to repeat that the Koran's "Mariology" is also entirely corrupted because its origins are in apocryphal and heretical sources. The existences of St. Joseph and the Holy Ghost are completely ignored. And Mary is called "sister of Aaron," "sister of Moses," and "daughter of Imram" (Hebr. Amram), who was their father (Num. 26:59), thus confusing her with the prophetess Mary (Ex. 15: 21) who lived circa 12 centuries before Christ! And as if this weren't enough, she is introduced into the Christian Trinity, so detested, and which is denied with such aggressiveness, because, according to the Koran, it is made up of God (the Father), Mary (Mother) and Jesus (the Son): "Jesus never said: take me and my mother as two divinities, before God"! (5:116).

► Finally, *Nostra Aetate* §3 seems to praise the Moslems and to present them as an example to Catholics because "they await the day of judgment when God will give each man his due after raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life and give worship to God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting." The article concludes:

Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.

Historical facts are also overturned here, since the bloody, long, and cruel battles, faith against faith, that we have had to launch over the course of the centuries to repulse Islam's assault, are adroitly reduced to the size of simple "quarrels and hostilities." Passed over in silence are the abysmal differences that exist between Catholic and Moslem eschatology (the absence of a Beatific Vision, the luxury of paradise, the eternity of infernal punishments reserved only for infidels), as well as the abysmal differences between our and their conception of "moral life" and of "veneration": Islam is a religion which not only allows unacceptable moral structures, such as polygamy, with all of its corollaries, but also alleges to guarantee salvation simply by carrying out legalistic practices of worship; therefore, it is an *exterior and legalist* religion, even more so than Pharisaism, expressly condemned by our Lord (cf. Mt. 6:5).

All of this is freedom of the will in order to invite us into collaboration that is impossible for the simple reason that the meaning the Moslems give to the words "social justice," "peace," "freedom," *etc.*, is merely that which can be drawn from the Koran or from the words and deeds of Mohammed, a meaning established over the course of the centuries by "orthodox" interpretation *an Islamic meaning totally different from our own*. For example, Moslems do not understand peace in the way that the currently reigning Pope understands it. They do not believe that Moslems can live under infidels. This is why they divide the world into two parts, one where Islam rules (*the house of Islam*) and the rest of the world, necessarily an enemy unless it converts and submits (*house of war*), the rest of the world with whom the Islamic community believes itself to be perpetually at war. Therefore, for them, peace is not an end in itself that allows them to coexist with different nations and religions; it is *only a means*, imposed by circumstances which oblige them to make truces with infidels. But the truce must have a limited duration; it must never exceed ten years; and every time they have the means, then the war must be resumed. For the Moslem, this is a juridical, religious, and moral obligation. It is in force until the final, inevitable battle that results in the installation of a world Islamic State.

NOTE

The Council seems to justify its statement that "the Moslems adore with us the one true God, *etc.*" by the quote contained in a note of personal gratitude sent by St. Gregory VII, Pope from 1073 to 1085, to Anazir, Emir of Mauritania. The Emir had been well disposed to oblige certain of the Pope's requests and had also been generous concerning some Christian whom he had taken prisoner. In this letter, the Pope stated that this act of "goodness" was "inspired by God," who commanded us to love our neighbor, and specifically asks "from us and you... that we believe in and confess the same God, although by different modes (*licet diverso modo*), that we praise and venerate each day the Creator of the ages and master of this world" (PL, 148, 451 A). How can such a statement be explained? The answer: by that era's ignorance regarding the religion founded by Mohammed.

At the time of St. Gregory VII, the Koran had not yet been translated into Latin. This is why basic aspects of its "credo" were not understood. It was known that the Moslems, those fierce enemies of Christianity, who suddenly emerged from the Arabian desert in 633 with a conquering violence, would sometimes demonstrate a certain respect for Jesus, but only as a prophet, and for the Virgin Mary; that they believed in one God, in the inspired nature of Sacred Scripture, in the judgment and in a future life.

Consequently, they could have been taken for a heretical Christian sect ("the Mohammedan sect"), an equivocation that was held for a long time since, at the beginning of the 14th century, Dante placed Mohammed in hell among heretics and schismatics (Hell, XVIII, V. 31 ff.).

It is in this context that the praise privately addressed to the Emir by Gregory VII ought to be seen: praise for someone held to be a heretic who, on this occasion, had behaved charitably, as if the true God, in whom he thought he believed, had touched his heart. Thus, in effect, one can speak of a heretic who believes in the same God as ours, but in a different way. Nevertheless, St. Gregory VII's praise of the Emir did not prevent him from defending, in a perfectly coherent way, the idea of an expedition launched from all of the Christian countries against the Moslems, in order to help Eastern Christianity when it was threatened with extinction. This idea was carried out shortly after his death with the first crusade, preached by Urban II.

The first Latin translation of the Koran did not take place until 1143, fifty-eight years after the death of St. Gregory VII, by the Englishman Robert de Chester for the Abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, who added a strong refutation of the Islamic creed. Actually, this translation was a summary of the Koran, and remained the only translation for many centuries, until the critical and complete version was done by Fr. Marracci in 1698. In the first half of the 15th century, the Cardinal of Cusa set the stage for this first translation by writing his famous *Cratich Alcorani*, a critical study of the Koran. This preceded by a few years the Bull issued in October 1458 by Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini) for the purpose of launching a crusade (which was never carried out) against the Turks who surged into the Balkans after having seized Constantinople. In this Bull, the Pope referred to the Moslems as disciples of the "false prophet Mohammed," a definition that he reasserted on September 12, 1459, in a remarkable speech in the Mantua Cathedral, where the Diet charged with approving the crusade was convoked. In this speech, he referred again to Mohammed as an impostor, he also said that if the Sultan Mehmed were not stopped, after subjugating all of the Western princes, he would then "destroy the Gospel of Christ and impose the law of his false prophet on the entire world."³ Therefore, this speech rectified the former perception and constituted the Pontifical teaching's clear and strong condemnation of Islam and its prophet. Once and for all, it eliminated the equivocation which had defined Islam as a Christian "heresy."

► In *Nostra Aetate* §4, the propositions:

True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn. 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures.

Necessary to note here is the attempt to limit the responsibility for Decide to a small group of quasi private individuals, whereas the Sanhedrin, the supreme religious authority, represented all of Judaism. Therefore, in the rejection of the Messiah and Son of God, it had collective responsibility for the Jewish religion and the Jewish people, and this irrefutably is stated in Holy Scripture: "And from then on, Pilate was looking for a way to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you release this man, thou are no friend of Caesar; for everyone who makes himself king sets himself against Caesar'" (Jn. 19:12); and "And all of the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and our children'" (Mt. 27:25).

Also striking is the statement that "the Jews should not be repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures." This lacks the necessary distinction between individuals and the Jewish religion. If the subject is the Jews, the statement is true, and is exemplified by the great number of converts from Judaism in all eras. But if the subject is Judaism as a religion, the assertion is both *erroneous* and *illogical*: erroneous, because it contradicts the evangelical texts and the Church's constant faith from her origins. (Cf. Mt. 21:43: "Therefore I say to you, that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people yielding its fruits.") And it is illogical, because if God did not reject the Jewish religion or the Jewish people in the religious sense (which in Jesus' time was one and the same thing), then the Old Testament has to be viewed as being still valid, and contiguous and concurrent with the New Testament. This, then, would sanction the unjustified awaiting of the Messiah, a hope still entertained by today's Jews! All of this is a totally lying representation of Judaism and its relationship to Christianity.

► The unacceptable statement, contrary to the eternal doctrine of the Church as well as to all Catholic exegesis, that the books of the Old Testament clarify and explain the New, whereas it has always been taught that the opposite is true, *without reciprocity*, and, therefore, that the New Testament *sheds light upon and explains* the Old Testament. *Dei Verbum* §16 states:

God, the inspirer and author of both testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. For, though Christ established the New Covenant in His blood (cf. Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25), still the books of the Old Testament with all their parts, caught up in the proclamation of the gospel, acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament [a true affirmation up to this point. -Ed.] and in turn shed light on it and explain it [a false affirmation, contradicting the preceding one].

The inversion of Catholics' mission regarding the members of other religions.

Rather than exhort the faithful to a renewed energy for converting the greatest number of unbelievers possible by wresting them out of the shadows they are in, in *Nostra Aetate* §2, the Council exhorts her sons:

Prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.

In other words, it is saying that [the Church's sons] should conduct themselves in such a way that the Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, and Jews, *etc.*, remain Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, and Jews, *etc.*, and that [the Church's sons] should even "promote" the social and cultural values of their respective religions, all hostile to revealed truth. This exhortation expresses a general principle set forth by the Council to the "Church" which was to be born of its reforms and which defines itself as "the Conciliar Church" (cf. Cardinal Benelli), a principle which tells "the people of God"-priests and laity-the attitude that they are to take concerning the "separated brethren" and all non-Christians. This and other pastoral exhortations (for example in *Lumen Gentium* §17; *Gaudium et Spes* §28; *Unitatis Redintegratio* §4) constitute *overt treason against the order given by the Risen Christ Jesus*, the Apostles: "Go then, teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19), an order which, *mutatis mutandis*, is valid for all believers, insofar as they are able, because every believer, as *miles Christi*, must bear witness to the faith according to the works of corporal and spiritual mercy.

How can anyone be surprised that the application of this deadly exhortation has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Catholics having already become Buddhists or Moslems, whereas the conversions of Buddhists or Moslems to Catholicism are practically nonexistent? How can anyone deny that *this exhortation is one of the factual proofs* that the post-conciliar crisis has its roots in the false doctrines which suffused the Council's texts?

10) Errors Concerning Politics, Political Community, and Relations Between Church and State

► A non-Catholic idea of "political life" that seems to conform to the secular principle of humanity. *Gaudium et Spes* §73 states:

No better way exists for attaining a truly human political life than by fostering an inner sense of justice, benevolence, and service for the common good, and by strengthening basic beliefs about the true nature of the political community, and about the proper exercise and limits of public authority.

Obviously, the text is not concerned with "political life" marked by Christian values, but "political life" marked by human values, that is, by values that are generally characterized by "an inner sense of justice, service for the common good." In fact, in this scheme, it is not a question of intellect and all by adhering to principles of "justice" and "charity" and to "service" founded on revealed Truth, principles that are objectively set forth by God and taught by the Church throughout the centuries, and *necessitate* our adherence to them. Rather it is a matter of values merely heeding to an "inner sense" (*interiorem...sensum*) which the subject can have regarding these values, so that they are consequently based on the subject, on his opinions: a *subjectivist idea of "political life"*, of praxis in general, or of orthopraxis (right conduct). Totally foreign to Catholicism, and even morally contrary to it, this is the typical of modern thinking.

► The definition of "the true nature of political community" which must contribute to the installation of a "truly human political life" (*GS* §73, *etc.*) is situated within the same perspective marked by secularism and immanentism, and is not Catholic. In fact, it does not define what a "political community" is *per se*, but only states that it exists "as a function of the common good." *Gaudium et Spes* §74 sets forth the relationship between the two:

Individuals, families, and various groups which compose the civic community are aware of their own insufficiency in the matter of establishing a fully human condition of life. They see the need for that wider community in which each would daily contribute his energies toward the ever better attainment of the common good. It is for this reason that they set up the political community in its manifold expressions.

Is this an idea of the common good that harmonizes with the traditional teaching of the Church? No, because this conception identifies the common good with "conditions of social life" that allows individual and collective "accomplishment" that demonstrate no connection to the supernatural. This then is a doctrinal error because the Church has always insisted on the fact that, although enjoying a certain autonomy, the pursuit of the temporal common good must, nevertheless, always work toward the pursuit of the "highest good" which, for everyone, is salvation and the Beatific Vision. In *Immortale Dei*, Leo XIII, in wrote:

[W]hile favoring public prosperity, civil society...must provide for the good of the citizens not only by opposing every obstacle, but by assuring all of the possible means for the pursuit and acquisition of this supreme and immutable good to which they aspire. The first of these means consists in according respect for the holy and inviolable observance of religion whose just acts unite man to God.⁴

The "accomplishment" spoken of by the Council, on the contrary, concerns human values and not Christian ones. Too, the existence of authority presiding over the realization of the common good is justified, but with one reservation: it must not exercise its function "in a mechanical [?] or despotic fashion, but by acting above all as a moral force which appeals to each one's freedom and sense of responsibility" (*GS* §74). This means that there is a reservation in favor of democracy, expressed in the emphasis placed on "liberty" and "the sense of responsibility" understood as the presiding authority's determinate values in the exercise of its function.

It is only after this clarification that the conciliar text recalls Rom. 13:1-5, which establishes the divine origin of all constituted authority. But the text invokes this passage by deforming and reversing it, since it states: "It is therefore obvious that the political community and public authority are based on human nature and hence belong to an order of things divinely foreordained" (*GS* §74). The distortion, and even the inversion, are found in the statement that the "political community" and authority have their basis in "human nature" and thus (*ideoque*) "belong to an order of things divinely foreordained [*praeordinatum*]." This amounts to placing man before God, and views him as the being the "basis" in the "human nature" of the political community of the democratic type (because it is founded on "liberty" and a "sense of responsibility"). This, then, is a substantive contradiction of his "belonging" to the order fixed by God. But in this, there is nothing of the Apostle of the Gentile's idea that the Holy Ghost teaches us that all "*potestas*" comes from God, on which all government takes its form, and which has its "foundation" in human nature, and in human nature corrupted by original sin, and so always needing the sword of civil power to restrain it.

► The obscure explanation that:

It also follows that political authority, whether in the community as such or in institutions representing the state, must always be exercised within the limits of morality and on behalf of the dynamically conceived common good, according to a juridical order enjoying legal status. When such is the case citizens are conscience-bound to obey (*GS* §74).

This is an *obscure* statement because it does not say which "morality" this concerns. Also, it is impossible to understand what "the dynamically conceived common good" means. This dynamism is the quality so much desired as the backdrop of the myth of progress, growth and expansion of human activity in the universe, in sum, the values of the age, but not Catholic values.

► A type of ideal individual that the so called "political community" ought "to form." This is not at all Catholic, since, as *Gaudium et Spes* explains in article 74:

The practical ways in which the political community structures itself and regulates public authority can vary according to the particular character of a people and its historical development. But these methods should always serve to mold men who are civilized, peace-loving, and well disposed toward all-to the advantage of the whole human family.

Let us compare this portrait with that of the perfect Freemason as it appears in one of the Order's many Constitutions:

The Mason is a peaceful subject of the civil powers, where he resides and works, and he ought never to become involved in plots or conspiracies against the public peace or the good of the nation, nor disobey his superior. (Grand Loge des Sept Provinces Unies des Pays-Bas, S'Gravenhage, 1761, in an appendix of G. Fay's, *La Franc-maçonnerie et la révolution intellectuelle du XVIII siècle*, whose article 43 invites Christians to conduct themselves as "citizens of the world," cf. §17.5.)

► A definition of love of country that flows more with the meaning of humanitarianism and

Masonic fraternity than the traditional Catholic meaning:

Citizens should develop a generous and loyal devotion to their country, but without any narrowing of mind. In other words, they must always look simultaneously to the welfare of the whole human family, which is tied together by the manifold bonds linking races, peoples, and nations. (*GS* §75).

Catholic tradition has never seen in "the human family" any value superior to that which is inherent in Christian societies and nations, which, on the contrary, must be defended-sometimes militarily-against the assault of a world hostile to Christ (for example in the case of Islamic expansion into Europe).

► An ideal type of politician (one who exercises the "most honorable art of politics") which has nothing Catholic about it, since he is just the democratic political stereotype of both the past and present:

Let those who are suited for it, or can become so, prepare themselves for the difficult but most honorable art of politics. Let them work to exercise this art without thought of personal convenience and without benefit of fortune. Prudently and honorably let them fight against injustice and oppression, the arbitrary rule of one man or one party, and lack of tolerance. Let them devote themselves to the welfare of all sincerely and fairly, indeed with charity and political courage. (*Gaudium et Spes* §75)

This is a cloying and rhetorical portrait, generic and banal. It is completely devoid of the fundamental qualities proper to any Catholic statesman, as the spirit of an ecumenical Council ought to define him: engagement on behalf of the defense and affirmation of the Catholic religion and of the morality the Catholic religion teaches.

The idea that the independence of the "political community" is such that it excludes all, even indirect, subordination with regard to the Church. According to *GS* §76:

In their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and self-governing. Yet, by a different title, each serves the personal and social vocation of the same human beings. This voice can be more effectively rendered for the good of all, if each works better for wholesome mutual cooperation, depending on the circumstances of time and place. For man is not restricted to the temporal sphere. While living in history he fully maintains his eternal vocation.

If it is just to state, in a general way, that "in their proper spheres, the Church and the political community are mutually independent and self-governing," for, from the point of view of organization, they have independent structures (cf. *Immortale Dei*, Denzinger 1866), on the other hand, it is false to state that, all that they have in common is the fact that they "serve" a generic "personal and social vocation of the same human beings," which should lead them to seek "wholesome mutual cooperation, depending on the circumstances of time and place"-in other words according to a simple criterion of opportunity.

This doctrine contradicts all previous teaching, which has affirmed the *primacy* of the Church, in as much as it is a *justicia perfecta*, over civil society or the so-called "political community," and therefore her *potestas indirecta* (indirect power) over it. This primacy, as regards the end, is justified because of the necessary subordination of the temporal common good, towards which the "political community" tends, to the supreme good towards which the Church aims. But the end which Vatican II attributes to the Church is an earthly one. Therefore, of itself, this end is not any different from that of the "political community" as it appears in *GS* §76, where, quoting *Lumen Gentium* §13, it is repeated that the Church does "foster and take to herself, insofar as they are good, the ability, resources, and customs of each people. Taking them to herself, she purifies, strengthens, and ennobles them."

The "healthy collaboration" of the "political community" with the Catholic Church cannot be the "mercy of circumstances, nor can it be a function of so-called "human" values. On the contrary, it is necessary to reaffirm that this "collaboration" is a *duty* for the States because they have the obligation to defend the one true, revealed Religion and to achieve the social Kingship of Christ by imprinting Catholic values on the common good. This is also noted by the false doctrine of the independence and separation of the "political community" and Church was already condemned by Pius IX in proposition 53 of the *Syllabus*, as well as by St. Pius X in the Encyclical *Pascendi*, against modernism.

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