



# 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)"

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## In Memoriam Franz Cardinal Koenig

On March 13, 2004, Franz Cardinal Koenig died, aged 98 years. His death was marked by the reverent eulogies of the "democratic" press of the whole world for his many ecumenical undertakings. He was one of the most prominent exponents of "dialogue" with the modern world.

A polyglot, a man of broad culture, considered a "specialist" in the history of religions,<sup>1</sup> he stood out amongst the cardinals of the so-called "Rhine Alliance" at the Second Vatican Council. He was part of that highly active and lethal progressivist triad of German speakers: Frings (Cologne), Doepfner (Munich), Koenig (Vienna). At the time of the Council he was the head of the Secretariat for dialogue with the non-believers. He was also a player of primary importance-and a fairly autonomous one-in the so-called Vatican Ostpolitik of unhappy memory, initiated by Pope John XXIII. In keeping with the perspective of the "opening" marked by the Council, he did nothing to effectively counter the introduction of legal abortion into Austria. This law was passed, if we well remember, under the auspices of Koenig's personal friend the Chancellor of Austria, socialist Bruno Kreisky. Not only did he do nothing about this, but he even distanced himself from Vatican directives on this subject. According to some in the Curia, he was also one of the chief electors of the current pontiff.

### Koenig at the Second Vatican Council

We also would like to commemorate this prince of the Church by recalling his role in the Council. Here are some salient moments:

**1)** At a meeting of the Central Preparatory Commission of the Council, Koenig did not hesitate to declare his hope that the texts of the schemata of the constitution would conform to the "New Theology," already censured on several occasions and in different ways by Pope Pius XII, in particular in his encyclical *Humani Generis*. Koenig said:

Our hope is that the preparatory work of the Council may correspond to contemporary theological thinking [*i.e.*, the "New Theology-Ed.]] in the Roman Church. It is desirable to teach, in the preparatory work, in a wise and prudent manner, the multiformity and all the dynamism of this thought, without overlooking spiritual experiences, even those which take place outside the Roman Church.<sup>2</sup>

And so it happened, thanks to the procedural intervention of the progressivist faction in the conciliar commissions. The hypocrisy of the expression "in a wise and prudent manner" is striking; these adjectives reappear many times in conciliar documents, generally serving a similar function of obfuscation.

**2)** Koenig was amongst the most redoubtable enemies of the schema *De Fontibus Revelationis*, which exposed the traditional doctrine of the two founts of Revelation-Sacred Scripture and Tradition. In the November, 1961, meeting of the Central Preparatory Commission he was amongst those who attacked this schema most harshly, although he voted for it with a *placet iuxta modum*.<sup>3</sup> In later discussion in the aula in November, 1962-the discussion that concluded with impasse leading to the rejection of the schema-he was amongst those who voted against it with a "categorical dissent."<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to recall that Cardinal Koenig was habitually coached by the Jesuit Karl Rahner, a theologian redolent of heresy, whose great protector he was at the Council:

From the end of 1961 Cardinal Koenig had recourse to Fr. Rahner, choosing him to examine the texts that the Central Preparatory Commission, of which he was a member, was approving for presentation to the Council. On January 4, 1962, the Jesuit theologian sent the Cardinal of Vienna a first series of critical observations and proposals. The exchange continued throughout all the first semester of this year, with the result that, not only did Koenig ask Rahner to be his own theological advisor, but that of the whole Austrian and German episcopacy. Rahner habitually expressed very severe perspectives on the schemata, putting Koenig on guard. No sooner had it been decided to present *De Fontibus* to the Council than Rahner prepared a "*Disquisitio brevis de Schemate De Fontibus Revelationis*" It is difficult to tell how widely this was diffused. Rahner spoke of four hundred copies. By contrast with the future alternative schema [which is very similar to the actual constitution adopted, *Dei Verbum-Ed.*], in this document Rahner was concerned with presenting theology in a manner accessible to the bishops....<sup>5</sup>

Rahner became the advisor to Koenig and Doepfner.<sup>6</sup> But how did Cardinal Koenig manage to outflank the Holy Office's efforts to prevent the unfortunate Jesuit from exerting influence on the Council? Let us consult the diary of Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P.:

**Septembers, 1962:** Fr. K. Rahner was supposed to submit all his writings to the Holy Office. He declared that in this case he would renounce making any publication of his work since he did not want to fight with the Holy Office [he had in fact decided to publish these works all the same, but under pseudonyms -*Ed.*]. The Cardinal of Vienna (Koenig) is bringing him as his theologian to the Council, different bishops have written directly to the Pope to complain about the measure taken against him....

**October 12, 1962:** It's Fr. de Lubac... He gives information about recent interventions of the Holy Office. Conclusion of the Rahner affair: after the categorical intervention of German prelates, the Holy Office has reversed course: in order not to lose face, it has not retracted its decision but has delegated its power of imprimatur to Cardinals Koenig and Doepfner, the defenders of Fr. Rahner.<sup>7</sup>

Also in October, 1962, Pope John XXIII personally named Rahner a theological *peritus* [expert], definitively tying the hands of the Holy Office.

**3)** Historians note that the influence of Rahner was also evident in the interventions of Cardinal Koenig against the schema of the constitution *De Ecclesia* developed under the control of the Doctrinal Commission presided over by Cardinal Ottaviani:

Cardinal Koenig asked for a briefer schema which would speak not only of the rights of the Church but also of its mission of bringing the benefits of the Gospel to everyone in sincere involvement with non-Christian peoples; nor could be omitted in the consideration of the Church its eschatological and charismatic dimensions, which were determined by it relationship with the institution. It was further necessary to insert as the fundamental image of the Church that of the people of God, and appropriate to clarify not only the necessity of the Church for the salvation of individuals, but for the human race and the world as such, also the non-believing world....Thus were re-adopted as it were the central aspects of Rahner's criticism (of the schema).<sup>8</sup>

**4)** Koenig was among those who *opposed* an *ad hoc* conciliar constitution on the Blessed Virgin, maintaining that the schema *De Beata* should be inserted in the constitution *De Ecclesia*, as in fact was later done under the form of a chapter of *De Ecclesia*.<sup>9</sup>

**5)** He tenaciously upheld the new heretical conception of collegiality which, notwithstanding correctives, succeeded in penetrating the constitution *De Ecclesia*, better known as *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>10</sup>

**6)** In regard to atheism, he presented the following views in the Council: that many atheists are atheists because they lack a correct understanding of God; that the soul of man is naturally Christian for which reason it is sufficient for the Church in remedying evil to promote social justice and struggle against religious ignorance; the Council should condemn any form of persecution because freedom of conscience should remain an inalienable right of every person.<sup>11</sup>

**7)** He was among those who defended the formula of "saving truth" inserted in §11 of Chap.III of *Dei Verbum* titled "Sacred Scripture: Its Divine Inspiration and Its Interpretation." This highly ambiguous formula took on an openly heretical sense since it seemed to reduce the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture to the truth concerning salvation alone.<sup>12</sup>

### Dialogue According to Cardinal Koenig

Let us conclude our recollections by restating the concept of "dialogue" as proposed by Cardinal Koenig:

Dialogue places the interlocutors on a level of equality. In this pursuit the Catholic is not considered as he who possesses all the truth but as he who, possessing the faith, seeks this truth with others, believers and non-believers.<sup>13</sup>

From this less than clear passage it is apparent that to have faith in Christ our Lord and to possess the truth were for Cardinal Koenig two separate things. The implication is that our Faith does not consist in assenting to truth that is absolutely certain because revealed by God. In fact the revealed truth that we possess was placed by Koenig on the same level of the truth that can be found in a dialogical quest, and thus on the same level as any human truth, for the expression of which the participation of everyone, non-believers included, is desired. The reciprocal equivalence of the parties to the dialogue carries with itself *ipso facto* a subordination of the truth of Faith to a truth which is put into play in the pursuit of an understanding with heretics and unbelievers. Holy things are thrown to the dogs.

Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you (Mt. 7:6).

This deviant conception of "dialogue" is what rules today in politically correct teaching. There is perfect continuity between a Cardinal Koenig and a Walter Cardinal Kasper, the current President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. From the moment that any proselytism is radically eliminated, the very possibility of placing the conversion of the other-who is now seen as an equal as partner in a dialogue from which a common truth must emerge-manifestly represents an open betrayal of the mission entrusted to the Catholic Church by our Lord, and maintained by her over centuries:

Therefore go and make all peoples my disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19,20).

Or Lord taught us what we should call Cardinal Koenig and "pastors" of his stripe:

Amen, amen I say to you: He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (Jn. 10:1-3).

Lord have pity on us, save us from the wolves disguised as sheep who want to tear our souls apart. Send us priests; send us holy priests; send us many holy priests!

### Canonics

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<sup>1</sup> At least by the progressive theologian Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu in his *Notes quotidiennes au Concile: Journal de Vatican II 1962-1963* (Paris, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> *Documentation Catholique*, 58 (April 1, 1961), pp.445-47, cited in Giuseppe Alberigo, *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II* (Bologna, 1995), I, 324, note 476.

<sup>3</sup> *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II*, I, p.327. "*Placet iuxta modum*" that is, expressing approval but with reservations.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*.

<sup>5</sup> *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II*, II, pp.90-91.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.98.

<sup>7</sup> Chenu, *op. cit.*, pp. 60,70. The cardinals in question had mobilized their respective episcopal conferences and "outstanding" laymen. But the scandalous "recovery" of Rahner would not have taken place without the acquiescence of Pope John XXIII who, in the name of a pretended reconciliation, had already inserted exponents of the "New Theology" (censured in different ways by his predecessors) among the consultants of the Preparatory Theological Commission, which worked from October 27, 1960, to March 10, 1962 (cf. Philippe Levillain, *La mécanique politique de Vatican II* [Paris, 1975], p.77).

<sup>8</sup> *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II*, II, 1 ff., 359, with note 88.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, III, pp.112-13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, pp.98-99.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, V, pp. 165,168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, V, p.322. The formula was then modified on the intervention of Pope Paul VI under the pressure of defenders of Church Tradition, but a certain ambiguity has remained even in the new text reads:

...[W]e must acknowledge that the books of Scripture, firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures.

<sup>13</sup> ICI, n.322, p.20 from October 15, 1968, cited by Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum*, (Italian edition, Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1986), p.312, n.8.