



# 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)"

December 1994 No. 11

## Max Thurian Is He Truly Catholic?



The six Protestant ministers who collaborated in making up the New Mass (left to right): Drs. George (pictured), Jasper, Shepherd, Kunne, Smith, and Thurian.

Max Thurian: "Catholic priest" (?) and member of the International Theological Commission.

### THE FACTS

We heard that he had become a "Catholic priest" without ever knowing if he was even a Catholic.<sup>1</sup> Then, on September 30, 1992, we learned that he had been named by John Paul II as a member of the International Theological Commission. To set the record straight about Max Thurian, let us speak a little about this brother from the "community" of Taizé.

Created in 1969, the International Theological Commission has the job of advising the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Its members (thirty at the most, known as the "High Council of Thirty") are designated by the pope, upon recommendation by the Cardinal Prefect of the above Congregation, who is also the Commission's president (presently Card. Ratzinger). It was Paul VI's wish that its members represent the various theological trends. Which "theological trend" would Thurian represent in this organization?—the obviously heretical "ecumenical" trend of "double adherence" to two different confessions? Unfortunately, everything leads us to think this.

### "DOUBLE ADHERENCE"

Born in Geneva in 1921, the Protestant minister, Max Thurian, along with Roger Schutz, founded the "community" of Taizé. Both men had been invited as non-Catholic "observers" to the Council. In 1966, along with five other non-Catholic "observers," Thurian also participated in the *Consilium*, which had the responsibility of preparing the liturgical reform of the Catholic Church. The new rite, he declared in a satisfied manner, can be celebrated by Catholics as well as Protestants.<sup>2</sup> Would he have become a "Catholic priest" if he had to celebrate the Tridentine Mass?

The two Protestant "observers" from Taizé were to exert a considerable amount of influence at Vatican II.<sup>3</sup> Roger Schutz described a typical day from that period of time in the following manner:

"Before noontime, while leaving the Council meetings, we would meet up with the bishops we had made appointments with, and bring them to our apartment....There was no lack of conciliar work to discuss. For example, we would closely study the evolution of the texts, write up notes, and give our point of view when asked. Signs of friendship toward us were impressive. One could even say that they expected too much [involvement] from us...."<sup>4</sup>

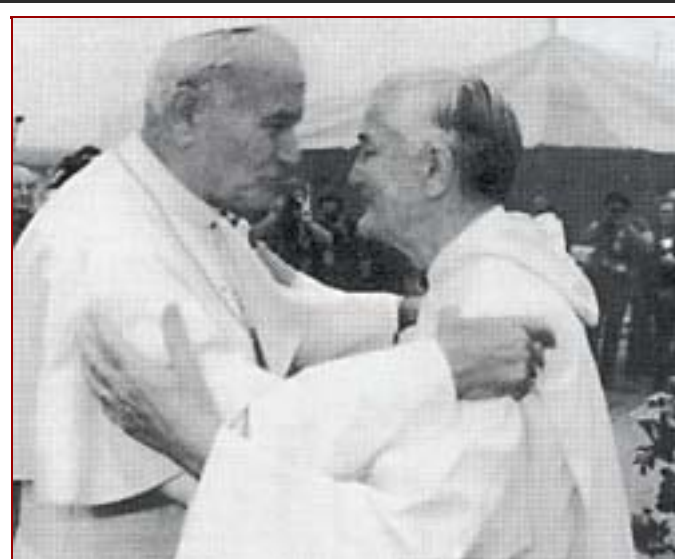
In spite of these signs of friendship, Roger Schutz and Max Thurian remained profoundly attached to their Protestant origins. Their understanding of the "Church" was such that they wanted Catholics and Protestants to be considered as part of the same "Church." On May 25, 1975, at Katowice, Poland, Roger Schutz made the following statement:

What we ask of the bishop of Rome [sic] is that a reconciliation come about *without requiring non-Catholics to repudiate their origins*. Even with truly...catholic communion in view, repudiation goes against love. Besides this, repudiation is alien to the thinking of modern man.<sup>5</sup>

Then, in Rome, during a conference held at the Studies Center of St. Louis of France on March 11, 1976, Max Thurian stated the following: "For a Protestant, belonging to the visible Church is in the order of faith [this is true], even if certain institutional aspects are excluded from it. In this sense, if a Protestant has the conviction that the Catholic Church, following the Second Vatican Council, rediscovered conformity with the apostolic Church, he can then consider himself to be a member of that Church *without, however, renouncing his adherence to another ecclesial community*."<sup>6</sup> In other words, "double membership," as if God has revealed opposing truths. From this arises the question of whether Max Thurian converted to the Catholic Faith before being ordained a "Catholic priest" in Naples. Had he truly converted, or was he merely convinced that it was the Catholic Church that had converted after having "rediscovered" conformity with the apostolic Church? Who knows? The community of Taizé, when asked whether Thurian had repudiated his Protestantism, responded: "No, certainly not. No abjuration of the Protestant religion took place."<sup>7a</sup>

Although Catholic authorities have been pressured to respond to this very serious and legitimate question, it has been impossible to obtain a single word from them about this matter. Moreover, the ordination performed by Card. Ursi in Naples was kept secret until May 11, 1988.

Taizé is at the same time a small village in Burgundy, and a Protestant monastic community, which began there in 1940. From the 1960's it has been highly regarded in Catholic circles. In launching this idea of double identity - the same person can be Catholic and Protestant together - its Prior, Roger Schutz (shown at right embracing the Holy Father), inaugurated a new form of ecumenism. However Taizé really teaches a Protestant doctrine and, notable, an erroneous notion of the unity of the Church.



"Unity: does it not consist in loving our brothers, still separated from us, whom we desire to have living with us in the same house?...Unity today in the churches exists as we renounce all our divisive ways, only holding to the fundamental faith which saves and joins us." (Max Thurian as quoted in *La Croix*, January 26, 1984)

### A RESPONSE

Without knowing whether he is a Catholic or a Protestant, we will look for an answer in his last book, *L'identité du Prêtre (Identity of the Priest)*. Msgr. Bruno Forte, the Neapolitan "theologian" of the Italian Bishops Conference, presents this book to us, sounding its praises in terms that arouse our suspicions. He writes that:

...(T)he oft-repeated differences [in this book] between the Catholic position and that of the Reform are not to be seen as polemical in nature, but rather as being the *echo of two souls* working deeply within the conscience of this significant testimony of our times, arriving at the choice of "fulness." This fulness *does not deny the value of what evangelical spirituality and theology have given to the author*, but rather includes it within the very conscience of "catholicity," whose roots are to be found in Scripture and the great traditions of the Christian faith. To have "Apostolic" intentions does not mean having "polemical" intentions: Brother Max demonstrates throughout this book such a great love for his *Mother Church* [the sect he is from—*Ed.*], *that nothing of what he has received* [in his Protestant sect], *starting from baptism, can be considered as lost* [Not even heresy and schism?—*Ed.*].

In fact, this is what Thurian says about the so-called "Reform" in his book: "The division [sic] that came about over eucharistic considerations in the 16th century *does not make sense*. Some [the Catholics] wanted, in particular, to underscore the aspect of sacrifice, supplication, intercession and propitiation. Others [the Protestants] wanted to stress, exclusively the aspect of communion, praise, and thanksgiving....Both sides forgot that it is impossible to separate these elements, which are indissolubly linked in the eucharistic prayer." Thurian apparently forgets that the Reform was not simply a "division...over eucharistic considerations," (as if it were merely an argument over a disputed question between two Catholic theological schools of thought), but that it was, rather, a violent, heretical assault by the Reformers on the sacrificial aspect of the Mass. He also forgets that at the time of the Reform, there was not only an inevitable clash between Catholics and "Protestants," but that the Church solemnly and infallibly intervened through the Council of Trent, defending and reaffirming the Catholic Faith against the heresies of the "Reformers." To say that Catholics, like the Protestants, were mistaken in separating the indissoluble elements of the eucharistic prayer, (besides being an historical untruth), is the same as saying that in the 16th century, the Catholic Church (which, for Thurian, is not infallible) had deviated, as much as the Protestant sects, from "conformity with the apostolic Church." It is supposedly this conformity that allows Thurian to consider himself to be a member of the Catholic Church, without having to abjure his Protestantism.<sup>7</sup> This is exactly what Thurian said (and has never repudiated) in Rome during a meeting on March 11, 1976. This is also the very same pretension held by ecumenists, a pretension that Pius XI condemned in the following manner:

While you may hear many non-Catholics loudly preaching brotherly communion in Jesus Christ, yet none will you find to whom it ever occurs with devout submission to obey the Vicar of Jesus Christ in his capacity of teacher or ruler [and in fact, one searches in vain in Thurian's book for references to the papal magisterium...with the exception of the writings of John Paul II!] Meanwhile they assert their readiness to treat with the Church of Rome, but on equal terms, as equals with an equal. But even if they could so treat, there seems little doubt that they would do so only on condition that no pact into which they might enter should compel them to retract those opinions which still keep them outside the fold of Christ. (Pius XI—*Mortalium Animos*, Angelus Press Edition. Price \$3.75 postpaid)

### A "PROPHETIC GESTURE"

Finally, what conclusions are we to draw concerning Thurian and his teachings? Are we supposed to think that "the Catholic" is not the Catholic Church, but that it is rather the ecumenical Super-Church which is silently, though actively being built up before our eyes, in which the one true Church of Christ is merely a "Christian tradition" amongst others?<sup>8</sup> Are we to understand that the ordination (without abjuration of heresy) of a Protestant is one of those "prophetic gestures" so loved by modernists?

As far back as 1975, Fr. Toinet of the Ecumenical Institute of Paris wrote to Max Thurian:

You would have us understand that the doctrine of Vatican II...is favorable to a call to the kind of "reconciliation" that would not require Protestants to totally abandon their Church. But this would mean leaving the definition of the words "reconciliation," "require," "abandon," and "Church" in the greatest confusion. It would also suggest interpretations whose dogmatic consequences would be endless, *interpretations that would go against every Catholic tradition*....On the day that the Church founded by Peter should officially adopt the underlying thesis of "double adherence," She would simply cease to exist, having admitted the equality of Her doctrines with the various reformed doctrines, thereby rejecting the very idea of orthodoxy; at that point the [schismatic] Eastern Church *could justifiably consider Her to be heretical*.<sup>9</sup>

### Canisius

*Courrier de Rome*, October 1994

N.B. Recently, Max Thurian has been appointed as an adviser for the Congregation for the Clergy (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, February 20, 1994).

### FOOTNOTES

1. *Présent* from May 19, 1988: "Max Thurian, prêtre catholique...et toujours pasteur Protestant" ("Max Thurian, Catholic Priest,...and still Protestant Minister"); *Si Si NO NO*, June 15, 1988, p.8; September 30, 1988, p.2; January 15, 1989, p.8. The ordination in Naples by Card. Ursi on May 3, 1987, was only made known on May 11, 1988.

2. *si si no no* a. X. n°16. "The Indult?"

3. Rousselot, "L'influence de Taizé" in *Palestra del Clero*, October 1, 1986, pp.1194-1207; see also F. Spadafora, *Fuori della Chiesa non c'è salvezza*, Krinon, ed., 1988, pp.91-99.

4. J.L. Gonzales-Balado, *Le défi de Taizé*, Editions du Seuil, 1977, p.13.

5. *Ibid.*, p.60.

6. *La Documentation catholique*, April 18, 1976, p.370.

7a. *Présent* from May 19, 1988: "Max Thurian, prêtre catholique...et toujours pasteur Protestant" ("Max Thurian, Catholic Priest,...and still Protestant Minister"); *Si Si NO NO*, June 15, 1988, p.8; September 30, 1988, p.2; January 15, 1989, p.8. The ordination in Naples by Card. Ursi on May 3, 1987, was only made known on May 11, 1988.

7. On the subject of Protestants adhering to the Catholic Church without renouncing their Protestantism, see *Courrier de Rome*, n°90 (290) of March 1988: "Taizé: use apostasie sous couvert de bons sentiments"

8. *Courrier de Rome* n°147 (337) of June 1993: "Urs von Balthasar, le père de l'apostasie oecuménique," p.3.

9. *Nova et Vetera* (periodical), Geneva, July 1975, cit. by Fr. Spadafora in *Fuori della Chiesa non c'è salvezza*, Krinon, ed., 1988, Caltanissetta, p.99.

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