

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT: A BASIC THEORY

The solemn definition of the Blessed Virgin's Assumption into heaven has focused the attention of contemporary theologians on the problem of doctrinal development. Even prior to the proclamation, during the debate whether the Assumption could be defined, voices were raised in demand for a renewed examination of the entire subject of dogmatic progress. All who refuse to rest content with mere formulas and who crave a real solution are confronted with the task of determining how the explicit dogma of today is contained in the implicit faith of yesterday. At this precise point views begin to diverge.

Engrossing though the problem is, no solution acceptable to all theologians has been found. Yet we cannot doubt that there is a solution. Uncertainty in this domain arises, not from a neglect or violation of logic, but from the inherent difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of following the higher logic that governs the development. Our own day has witnessed an event that has complicated the problem and made the quest for a solution more imperative; the definition of the Assumption did not rely either on historical evidence from the first Christian centuries or on theological conclusions. Theories framed along such lines have to be re-examined in the light of the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*.¹

This document has furnished theologians with an incentive to reconsider the entire question of the nature and factors of doctrinal development. Many difficulties surrounding the problem stem from excessively rigid theories forged by some authors; when applied to certain dogmas that have been defined, these theories have to be acknowledged as insufficient. The situation invites us to face the possible necessity of revising previously-held positions.

In undertaking to discuss this problem, I have no intention of rehearsing its history. I naturally assume that members of this Soci-

¹ Cf. M. Flick, S.J., "Il problema dello sviluppo del dogma nella teologia contemporanea," in *Lo sviluppo del dogma secondo la dottrina cattolica* (Rome, 1953), p. 8. This volume contains a series of articles by various authors, previously published in *Gregorianum* 33 (1952) and 34 (1953).

ety are acquainted at least with the broad outlines of the theories that have been attempted; in any case there is no time for a survey.

I. PRELIMINARY NOTIONS

If we ask how the dogma of the Assumption or any newly-defined dogma is contained in the deposit of revelation, we cannot expect a reply until we come to an understanding of the term "deposit of revelation."

Revelation is God's word, to which man is bound to yield the submission of faith because of the authority of God who reveals. Faith and revelation imply an affirmation, a proposition with its subject, its predicate, and a nexus asserted between both. According to traditional Catholic teaching, revelation is not God Himself or the God-man, Jesus Christ. It is the speech of God who attests a truth, *locutio Dei attestans*. Every attestation made to men in words is an expressed judgment in which the subject represents a definite thing, and the predicate affirms an aspect or quality of that thing. Hence revelation is made to us through words perceived by the senses or directly formed by God in the mind of a prophet. Such revelation has no other content than what is expressed by concepts and judgments. The thing revealed is not the same as the concepts and judgments, but is represented by them, and is revealed so far as it is thus represented.²

The truths of revelation were formulated by God Himself in human language. By assenting to them the believer is joined to God and adheres to Him. Of course faith does not stop with formulas but reaches the things themselves. Yet revelation is not directly a person or a thing but is a truth uttered in human language by God, a body of truths expressed in our ideas and our words.

In the technical and current sense, a dogma is a truth revealed by God and proposed as such to our belief by the magisterium of the Church. The question of dogmatic development concerns mainly the original revelation considered in its sources; theologians under-

² Cf. C. Boyer, S.J., "Relazione tra il progresso filosofico, teologico, dogmatico," in *Lo sviluppo del dogma secondo la dottrina cattolica*, p. 220 f.; G. Filograssi, S.J., "Tradizione divino-apostolica e magistero della chiesa," *ibid.*, p. 139 f.

take to study its leisurely elaboration in the course of centuries and the expression of it in precise formulas by the teaching Church. This is progress from the initial revelation toward dogma. However, there is also progress from one dogma that was defined earlier to another that is defined later; for example, from the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception toward that of her bodily Assumption.³

To fix the exact notion of development, we must distinguish, first, the object of the dogma, that is, the revealed reality to which faith is attached and which is unchangeable; secondly, the human concept of the dogma by which we grasp this reality; and thirdly, the dogmatic formula which expresses this concept and this reality. All theologians agree that doctrinal development does not stop with the mere dogmatic formulation, but extends to the concept itself, that is, the understanding of the revealed reality.⁴

The term "deposit" is scriptural: "O Timothee, depositum custodi" (1 Tim. 6:20); "Bonum depositum custodi per Spiritum Sanctum qui habitat in nobis" (2 Tim. 1:14). "Deposit" may signify the realities that surpass the expressions we can formulate about them, such as God, Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit, redemption, the Mass, the Church, grace, the sacraments, and the like. "Deposit" can also refer to the sense of these realities, our intellectual grasp of them by means of judgments and propositions. St. Thomas explains that the act of faith terminates in revealed realities or things, but so far as they are attained by revealed enunciations, without which these realities would be unknown to us or even non-existent (*Summa theol.* 2-2, q. 1, a. 2). The deposit of revelation comprises the entire mystery of salvation, with all the divinely guaranteed truths which open up its meaning to us. From a first divine light clarifying the facts, institutions, and rites of the mystery of salvation, subsequent evolution disengages and brings out other and more explicit divine communications about these facts, institutions, and rites. Thus, because the rite of baptism was viewed by the early Church with a clarity corresponding to the

³ Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* of Nov. 1, 1950, AAS 42 (1950) 754: "Arctissime enim haec duo privilegia inter se conectuntur."

⁴ Cf. C. Dillenschneider, C.S.S.R., *Le sens de la foi et le progrès dogmatique du mystère marial* (Rome, 1954), p. 5.

divine significance with which it was initially charged, it was administered even to infants and was never repeated. From these two usages we can conclude, by way of an authentic development, to the presence of original sin in infants and to the existence of an indelible character imprinted in the soul by the sacrament.⁵

This sacred deposit is a living thing. It is living in the Church, which is aided by the Holy Spirit to keep it pure from all alloy, to become more and more aware of it, and to propose it according to the dimensions it takes progressively by bringing into the open truths that were at first implicit in it.

The development is not tied down to the sole powers of reason, but takes place under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* insists that the Spirit of Truth infallibly guides the Church toward a more perfect knowledge of revealed truths: "eam [Ecclesiam] ad revelatarum perficiendam veritatum cognitionem infallibiliter dirigit."⁶ Divine enlightenment is needed because the order of faith surpasses the order of natural knowledge both by the elevation of its mysteries and by the manner of its development. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Hence it employs human words and rational concepts to attain revealed truths; but it attains them in a way that transcends the power of mere concepts and is capable of a development proportionate to the high range of its mysteries. Therefore we should expect development to proceed by an unfolding of the implications inherent in the concepts; but we should also expect to be in need of supernatural reinforcement in our endeavor to perceive the implications.⁷

To preserve publicly the deposit of revelation throughout the centuries, God chose to endow His Church with an infallible teaching authority; a deposit infallibly revealed deserves to be infallibly interpreted. The Holy Spirit, who revealed in the apostles, ever afterward assists in the Church, that the Church may remember the truth in entirety, penetrate it deeply, and teach it alone.

⁵ C. Journet, *Esquisse du développement du dogme marial* (Paris, 1954), p. 14 f.

⁶ *AAS* 42 (1950) 769.

⁷ E. Dhanis, S.J., "Révélation explicite et implicite," *Gregorianum* 34 (1953) 229.

II. *Consensus Ecclesiae* AND JUDGMENT OF THE MAGISTERIUM

Tradition is a source of revelation on the same title as Sacred Scripture. It may even be clearer and more complete than Scripture. Yet from one point of view Scripture has an incontestable advantage: Scripture is inspired. Therefore the question, whether what it tells us is the word of God and hence whether it is revealed to us, does not arise. Tradition, however, does not have consigned to it writings that are inspired, and so the question, whether what it transmits to us is revealed, is always in order; but the answer is not always easy to give.

Our main means of knowing whether the truths conveyed to us by tradition are revealed is the constant consensus of the living Church, particularly of its living magisterium. Pius XII recalls this fact in *Munificentissimus Deus*. The greater part of the document is given over to the task of recording the agreement of the Church on the doctrine of the Assumption; such agreement imparts assurance that this truth is included in the deposit of revelation. The basic theme governing all other considerations and shedding light on them is the consensus of the ordinary magisterium, although great importance is attributed to the belief of the faithful, who were found to be in remarkable accord on this subject.

This unusual agreement among Catholic bishops and the faithful, who express their minds that the bodily Assumption of God's Mother into heaven is definable as a dogma of faith, exhibits the concordant teaching of the ordinary magisterium of the Church and the unanimous faith of the Christian populace, as sustained and directed by this same doctrinal authority. By itself, therefore, and in a manner that is altogether certain and free from all error, it makes clear that Mary's privilege is a truth revealed by God and contained in the divine deposit which Christ delivered to His Spouse to be guarded faithfully and proclaimed infallibly. . . . Accordingly, the universal consent of the ordinary teaching authority of the Church furnishes a certain and solid argument to demonstrate that the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven . . . is a truth revealed by God.⁸

⁸ AAS 42 (1950) 765 f.

The consent of the Church regarding the revealed character of a truth may appear more plainly than the manner in which the truth is included in the deposit. The Church advances in time according to the good pleasure of the Holy Spirit, without always being able to select the paths of its own progress. If He wills to summon His faithful to a common belief before manifesting to them how the truth has been revealed, we have but to follow His leadership.

Catholic schools generally teach that the magisterium of the Church is the proximate norm and rule of faith. The encyclical *Humani generis* has made this teaching its own, now for the first time inserted into so important a document issued directly by the Supreme Pontiff.⁹ "In matters of faith and morals, this sacred magisterium must be the proximate and universal norm of truth for every theologian, since to it Christ Our Lord has entrusted the whole deposit of faith—Sacred Scripture and divine tradition—to be preserved, guarded, and interpreted."¹⁰

Authentic interpretation of the deposit, like the deposit itself, has been confided by Christ, not to individuals among the faithful nor to historians nor even to theologians, but to the official teaching authority of the Church. The formula adopted in the encyclical is precise, perhaps as in no previous papal document. "This deposit of faith the divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, nor even to theologians, but only to the magisterium of the Church."¹¹ When the question comes up, whether it is found there explicitly or implicitly, the definitive judgment pertains solely to the Church.

Therefore the main and indispensable organ of dogmatic tradition is the living magisterium of the Church. Apart from it no authentic tradition is possible, for it alone is the authorized guardian and interpreter of tradition. Nevertheless, the conclusion does not follow that the magisterium is simply the same thing as tradition. The authoritative proclamation of the revealed message pertains to

⁹ G. Filograssi, S.J., "Tradizione divino-apostolica e magistero della chiesa," *Lo sviluppo del dogma secondo la dottrina cattolica*, p. 147.

¹⁰ *AAS* 42 (1950) 567.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

the magisterium alone and requires the obedience of the whole believing Church. However, not only the official witnesses and protectors of the deposit, but also, in dependence on and under the leadership of the magisterium, theologians, mystics, preachers, and the faithful generally collaborate in the transmission of revealed doctrine.¹²

When Pius XII sought the views of the bishops concerning belief in the Assumption in 1946, he interrogated them not only about their own faith, but also about that of the people confided to their pastoral care. "We earnestly request you to indicate to us the devotion which the clergy and people committed to your charge, in accord with each one's faith and piety, have toward the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary."¹³ In the Consistorial Allocution of October 30, 1950, he explains his mind clearly: "We sent letters to all the bishops, asking them to communicate to us not only their own views on the matter, but also to inform Us about the views of the clergy and people entrusted to their charge." And because the voices of the pastors and the Christian populace professed the same faith "with a remarkable and practically unanimous accord,"¹⁴ the Holy Father was convinced that he did not have to delay in pronouncing the solemn definition.

If the Pope thought that the magisterium was simply identified with dogmatic tradition, inquiry about the belief of the lay faithful would have been superfluous. To testify to tradition, consequently, is to testify to the present and living faith of the entire Church of Christ, teachers and taught.

III. SCRUTINY OF THE DEPOSIT

Such consensus is based on some sort of perception that a truth of faith is contained in the deposit of revelation. *How* is it perceived?

A. *The Way of Analytical Reasoning*

To be believed with divine faith, a truth must be revealed in itself, not merely deduced from revelation. If a syllogism is really

¹² See Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, pp. 113 ff.

¹³ Epist. encycl. *Deiparae Virginis* of May 1, 1946, AAS (1950) 783.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 775.

deductive and presents in its conclusion a concept that is in no way contained in a revealed premise, the conclusion cannot be said to be revealed. If, however, analysis of a revealed truth issues in the discovery of an essential property included in it, the syllogism is not simply deductive, and the concept that is found to be contained formally, even though not explicitly, in the revealed truth is not simply new.¹⁵

In other words, a syllogism that is employed to ascertain what a revealed truth actually involves, serves the purpose of explaining. Its function is to lay open what is found to be formally implicit in the revealed concept. If an explicative (as distinguished from a truly deductive) syllogism leads to the discovery that one truth is contained in another, the newly-apprehended truth is properly to be regarded as implicitly revealed, and the conclusion is to be believed solely on God's authority. But it is believed with divine faith because it is formally, though implicitly included in the revealed deposit, rather than because it is concluded from what is revealed.

Conclusions of this kind are implicitly revealed whether they enter into the extension of the subject or into the comprehension of the predicate of the revealed proposition. Into the extension of an idea enter all the individuals to whom or to which the idea applies. Into its comprehension enter all the notes that proximately or remotely pertain to its definition. In an affirmative judgment, all that enters into the comprehension of its predicate is affirmed of all the individuals that enter into the extension of its subject.

Consequently, when God expresses His revelation in a judgment, both the subject and the predicate are revealed. The comprehension of the predicate is as much revealed as the extension of the subject. God reveals of each individual entering into the extension of the subject all that enters into the comprehension of the predicate. In the same way as we analyze the extension of the subject to see which individuals are embraced in it, we can analyze the comprehension of the predicate to detect what is contained in

¹⁵ Cf. M. F. Jiménez, "Un paso más hacia la solución del problema de la evolución del dogma: Existe el llamado virtual revelado?" *Revista española de teología* 16 (1956) 325.

it. As long as our reasoning proceeds by way of analysis, not synthesis, we do not emerge outside the revealed concept or judgment.¹⁶ God reveals, not mere words, but realities represented by concepts and expressed in judgments, and is therefore responsible for all that the concepts and judgments formally state, whether explicitly or implicitly. When the analysis of the subject and predicate of the revealed proposition reaches its term, nothing is found to be new except that a truth which was previously present implicitly has been brought out explicitly and is now clearly perceived.

In the course of the history of dogmas many truths have been uncovered solely in consequence of such reasoning and are today held as dogmas of faith. Therefore they were revealed formally, though only implicitly; that is, they were formally implicit in other truths that were explicitly revealed. An example or two will illustrate this position.¹⁷

The Council of Trent, for instance, in its teaching on the sacrament of penance, defines that the obligation to confess all mortal sins committed after baptism, even occult or internal sins, and also circumstances that change species, is imposed by divine law. Where can we find all this in the sources of revelation? Our thoughts turn immediately to Christ's words, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). But do these words state anything about the necessity of confession? Or that the confession must be integral? Or that it is restricted to post-baptismal sins?

Trent itself furnishes replies to these questions. "It is clear that priests could not pronounce judgment without understanding the case . . . if the penitents declared their sins only in a general way instead of specifically and particularly. From this the conclusion is gathered that penitents must recount in confession all their mortal sins."¹⁸ The Council reasons from a revealed truth, the judicial nature of this sacrament. Analysis of the nature of a judicial process brings out the necessity of interrogation to secure an integral mani-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

¹⁷ Jiménez gives a number of interesting cases in his article.

¹⁸ *DB* 899.

festation, the imposition of a suitable penance, and the restriction of this act of jurisdiction to those who have been made subjects of the Church by baptism. On the basis of such reasoning, the Council defined all these details as pertaining to the sacrament as instituted by Christ.

Another good example is the dogma of papal infallibility. The Vatican Council defines that the infallible teaching authority of the Pope is a truth revealed by God. Yet, where do we find in revelation the express statement that the Pope is infallible by himself, as the defined doctrine insists, and not by the consent of the Church?

The Council tells us where it finds this truth. "This Holy See has always maintained that the apostolic primacy which the Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, Prince of the apostles, holds over the whole Church, includes also the supreme power of teaching."¹⁹ The supreme power of teaching is discovered in the very primacy. Because he holds the primacy, the Roman Pontiff is the unshakable foundation of the Church. Analysis of this revealed truth manifests the personal infallibility. One truth formally involves the other, just as the fact of being a perfect man involves possession of a human will, or of being full of grace involves exemption from original sin. Although the idea of unshakable foundation does not explicitly state personal infallibility, analysis of its content uncovers the second prerogative. Denial of the Pope's infallibility cannot coexist with the affirmation that he is the unshakable foundation in doctrine.

However, although the development of dogma can take place by way of logical analysis or conclusion, such theories cannot satisfactorily explain all the dogmatic progress that has occurred, especially in the domain of Mariology.

When the Church defines a truth, it does not canonize human logic. It defines because, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, it discerns the truth by a higher methodology than is possible for our human inferences.

Passage from the implicit to the explicit cannot always be effected by procedures of pure logic. Thus theologians have never

¹⁹ *DB* 1832.

succeeded in demonstrating by sheer logic that the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are formally or even virtually implicit in the deposit of revelation. Yet these truths have been defined. Theologians of today, attentive to these two dogmas, have recognized the necessity of recourse to another way than that of human logic to account for the definability of certain truths.

Therefore the whole task is not finished when we have analyzed the inspired text. The process of human reasoning is unquestionably valuable, for if God has spoken to men He has wished them to use their own powers for understanding His message. But He may have said more than the human letter is capable of conveying, for this human letter is unable by itself to carry the entire vast mystery which God has willed to make known. The basis of doctrinal development is not alone what God has said outright, but also what He has intended to communicate to us by the human language He has employed.²⁰

The supernatural economy is a matter of God's free choice. Therefore an insistent desire to deduce from the simple principle of Mary's divine maternity all sorts of privileges which do not clash with her condition as a creature hardly makes for good theology, because it overlooks God's sovereign liberty in the bestowal of His bounty. Every supernatural gift depends on God's free donation. A first gift does not necessarily demand a second, even if the second one seems to us to be perfectly in line with the first. The second is not inevitably connected with the first unless the first cannot exist without the second. No logical or dialectical method is capable of demonstrating with certitude that the divine maternity strictly demands the privileges of the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption, which nevertheless are defined dogmas.

Therefore other ways of detecting in the deposit of revelation the presence of implicitly revealed truths have been attempted. To supply for the inadequacies of logical procedures, recourse is made to the Christian sense as a means which God has made available to His Church for bringing out explicitly His profound designs in the supernatural order.

²⁰ C. Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, p. 39 f.

B. *The Way of the Christian Sense*

The way of the Christian sense is highly important; it is also difficult and requires delicacy in treatment. It goes by various names, such as sense of the faith, sense of the faithful, and social consciousness of the Church. It has nothing in common with the religious sentiment of the Modernists, for "sense" as it is used in the term "Christian sense" connotes intellectual perception and supposes an intelligible object. Further, it has nothing to do with the *facultas appetendi et affectandi* reprobated in *Humani generis*.²¹ Without implying a critical, systematic, scientifically elaborated knowledge, it is the voice or testimony of the consciousness of truth possessed. It involves perception, intellectual appreciation, a power of discrimination. It supposes a supernatural illumination proceeding from faith, grace, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a supernatural insight enabling the believer to discern, in fellowship with the Church, the implications of the revelation proposed to him by the magisterium.²²

The Christian's supernatural power of comprehension is stressed by Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis Christi*:

Our Savior endows His Church with power in order that the faithful may understand divine things more clearly and desire them more eagerly. From Him comes into the body of the Church all the light that supernaturally illuminates those who believe. . . . Christ infuses the light of faith into believers. He divinely enriches the pastors and teachers, and especially His Vicar on earth, with the supernatural gifts of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, that they may faithfully preserve the treasury of faith, valiantly defend it, and with reverence and care explain it.²³

In the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, the Christian sense that is common to pastors and the faithful is highly extolled. The decisive argument on which the Holy Father bases

²¹ AAS 42 (1950) 574.

²² A good discussion of the Christian sense and its functions in doctrinal development is presented by C. Balić, O.F.M., "Il senso cristiano e il progresso del dogma," *Lo sviluppo del dogma secondo la dottrina cattolica*, pp. 106-34.

²³ AAS 35 (1943) 215 f.

his stand is the general conviction shared by the Church teaching and taught. The faithful, "enlightened by divine grace and full of reverence toward her who is the Mother of God and our dear Mother, have recognized with daily increasing clarity the marvelous order and harmony of the privileges which God has providentially bestowed on the Redeemer's loving associate."²⁴ Not only have the faithful rejected the idea that Mary's virginal body could have fallen prey to corruption, but they even came to perceive her bodily glorification in heaven. For the truth of the Assumption is "deeply rooted in the minds of Christ's faithful."²⁵

The genesis of such conviction is not hard to explain. Every day the Christian people repeat the Angel's salutation, "full of grace," and Elizabeth's exclamation, "blessed art thou among women." They often have before their minds Mary's own words, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me" and "all generations shall call me blessed." In their contemplation of the close bond uniting Mother and Son they readily, by a sort of spontaneous intuition, apprehend her various great perfections. Further nourished by liturgical festivals and the preaching of their pastors, their Christian sense flowers into a knowledge of truths obscurely or implicitly contained in the deposit of revelation.

Other ages witnessed the same phenomenon for other truths. About the year 1332 John XXII mentioned in a sermon his personal view that the souls of the just would not see the essence of God until after the general resurrection and the last judgment. His discourse troubled many of his auditors; when the same doctrine was preached at the University of Paris, "a great murmuring arose among the students." The question was warmly discussed in various places and sees; finally the University of Paris along with the King petitioned the Pope to define "the truth in the sense in which it had always been held by the piety of the Christian people."²⁶ Thus in a question to which neither Scripture nor the early Fathers give a favorable testimony that is clear and explicit, the Christian sense turned out to be a witness of tradition.

²⁴ *AAS* 42 (1950) 758.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 769.

²⁶ X. Le Bachelet, "Benoît XII," *DTC* II. 1, col. 665 ff.

That the Christian sense may be an effective factor in promoting the development of dogma, certain conditions must be fulfilled.²⁷ In the first place, the Christian sense must maintain contact with truths that have been explicitly revealed. There is no such thing as an autonomous Christian sense. For the simple believer as well as for the learned theologian, the source of all doctrinal evolution is the deposit of revelation proposed by the magisterium.

Secondly, the value of the Christian sense in doctrinal development is restricted to truths that directly touch or interest the mass of the faithful. No help is to be expected from popular belief in subtle questions which are the province of erudite and scientific men. But the Christian people, enlightened by faith, are able to see the connection between Mary's divine maternity and the Immaculate Conception. The faithful possess a similar insight with regard to the Blessed Virgin's Assumption or her intercessory mediation in heaven. Truths like these do not surmount the level of popular belief.

Thirdly and most important, the Christian sense must be universal. The Christian sense of an individual believer is of itself lacking in dogmatic value, for individuals are not sheltered from error or prejudice. The situation changes when this sense is universal, when it is on the point of becoming unanimous among the clergy and the faithful. Then it has an indisputable value as a criterium of revealed truth. For the infallibility of the entire Church governed by the magisterium and guided by the Holy Spirit is implicated when the Christian sense is truly universal. This infallibility is on a plane different, indeed, from that of the magisterium; for it is an infallibility, not of official teaching and authoritative judgment, but of living and active testimony.²⁸ Even prior to the authoritative judgment of the teaching Church, therefore, the universal Christian sense is a real factor in doctrinal progress.

That a causality of supreme importance is exercised by the Holy Spirit, not only in the definition of dogmas but in the slow elaboration of them down the ages, is an acknowledged fact that does not have to be stressed. This Spirit of the seven gifts who dwells in

²⁷ See Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, pp. 327-41.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

us is the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of Truth, who has a special mission to make known to the world the full message of Christ and His plans for our salvation. This special task is indicated in the words: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatever I shall have said to you" (John 14:26). "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth . . . and the things that are to come, He shall show you" (John 16:13). Up to the death of the last apostle, the Spirit could enrich the deposit by revealing new truths; after that moment He guides the Church toward a more comprehensive understanding by illuminating the mind, to dissipate the clouds still hiding the revealed mysteries.

In addition to the limitations of the Christian sense set by conditions like those outlined above, proper precautions in controlling it must be taken by the official teaching authority.²⁹ Faithful to its charge, the magisterium keeps the deposit intact, "adding nothing, subtracting nothing,"³⁰ always vigilant to see that the process of bringing out truths that were originally implicit is in conformity and continuity with revelation. Thus all doctrinal development remains under the management of the teaching Church. The Holy Spirit, whose infallible assistance is promised to the universal magisterium, will never permit a defection. Exercise of this control is well exemplified in the delicate case of the "priesthood of the Blessed Virgin."

A further duty incumbent on the magisterium is that of investigating the sense of the Faith. The Christian sense is by no means a norm for the magisterium to follow; but it is something for the magisterium to know about. The Church must inquire into its own living tradition, and in practice, before defining certain truths, takes the common sense of the faithful into account. Excellent instances of such investigation are the inquiries that were made prior to the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The profession of faith made by the Christian people does, indeed derive its force from the official teachers. Yet, since

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 343-60.

³⁰ *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS 42 (1950) 757.

the Holy Spirit directly and immediately influences also the faithful, their belief possesses its own weight; and, as it precedes the definition, can give a certain orientation to the magisterium.³¹ That is why the magisterium, when it is on the point of defining a truth that interests the devotion and life of the whole Church, interrogates the living faith of the Catholic populace.

This present, living tradition in the Church is precisely the universal Christian sense, through which the Holy Spirit gives testimony of the truth. When Mary's prerogatives that are dependent on God's free selection are in question, theological reasoning is unable, of its own resources, to demonstrate with an evidence capable of convincing all theologians their inclusion in the deposit of faith. No theologian has succeeded in devising such a proof for the two Marian dogmas proclaimed within a century.

Therefore the magisterium did not think that it ought to wait until a fully conclusive demonstration was forthcoming. Although the Supreme Pontiffs inserted into *Ineffabilis* and *Munificentissimus* the arguments worked out by theology, they did not thereby issue any pronouncement on the value of those arguments. What they found important to know was not whether Mary's prerogatives were correctly deduced from revealed principles, but whether they are contained in revelation. To satisfy themselves on this point, they inquired into the *conscientia fidei* of the whole Church, of the teachers as well as of the taught.³²

Most essential among the magisterium's relations to the Christian sense is the duty of interpreting and judging it, for the official teaching authority alone has the ability to determine without error its dogmatic value and universal character.

This predominant role of the magisterium is emphasized by Pius XII. The judgment of the bishops is what particularly interests him. "Especially We desire most earnestly to know whether you . . . think that the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin can be proposed and defined as a dogma of faith."³³ In the harmonious teach-

³¹ C. Balić, O.F.M., "Il senso cristiano e il progresso del dogma," *Lo sviluppo del dogma secondo la dottrina cattolica*, pp. 126, 133.

³² C. Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, p. 371.

³³ *Deiparae Virginis*, AAS 42 (1950) 783.

ing of the magisterium and the corresponding faith of the Christian populace that is sustained and directed by the magisterium, the Pope recognizes the sure sign that this privilege is a truth revealed by God and contained in the sacred deposit.³⁴ Doctrinal agreement among members of the hierarchy possesses a power, not alone of authentic testimony which is within the capacity of the lay faithful, but of authentic teaching. "The universal consent of the ordinary teaching authority of the Church furnishes a certain and solid argument to demonstrate that the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven . . . is a truth revealed by God."³⁵

Therefore, in evaluating the Christian sense, the first and the last words belong to the magisterium, because from it the faithful receive the knowledge of the deposit which is the basis of their insights, and because it judges the dogmatic weight of their perceptions. Thus the Christian sense, as a factor in doctrinal development, and the magisterium are not on a par; the former is subordinate to the latter.

Accordingly, when zones of uncertainty remain on the side of the Christian sense, the teaching authority of the Church alone can resolve them. Properly to discharge its mission of faithfully guarding and expounding the deposit, the magisterium requires an infallible charism of penetration and discernment enabling it to perceive clearly and surely all that is involved in the great truths of revelation.³⁶ Hence the magisterium is a momentous factor in doctrinal development. It is divinely equipped for its task by a power that is superior both to the natural capacities of reason and to the intuitions of the Christian sense.

Ultimate recourse to the magisterium is not a desperate expedient contrived to solve the problem of doctrinal development when the efforts of theologians are deficient or when the witness of the Christian sense proves inconclusive. It is in the nature of things. It does not imply any degradation of the theologian's function or depreciation of the value of the Christian sense. It merely takes into account the power conferred on the teaching Church which surpasses both our human logic and the vigor of the sense of the faith.

³⁴ *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS 42 (1950) 756.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 757.

³⁶ C. Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, p. 359 f.

IV. FROM IMPLICIT TO EXPLICIT

Yet our minds remain unsatisfied as long as we do not clearly see how the truths proposed for our belief are contained in the deposit of revelation. In our endeavor to approach such perception, we must distinguish two steps in the delivery of the deposit to the early Church.³⁷

The first step ended when the deposit was received in the collective intelligence of the apostles. The apostles came to their knowledge of the Christian mysteries by way of revelation that was proposed to them through the channels of sight and hearing, and was clarified by a prophetic light. This light emanated from Christ and from the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent to them after His ascent to the Father. It reached each apostle directly; it is the light of revelation.

In the second step the deposit issued from the apostles to be received in the intelligence of the primitive Church. Since the prophetic light that clarified revelation in the minds of the apostles did not pass over to the communities of the faithful, the latter could not penetrate its meaning as deeply or know it as comprehensively as did the apostles. For the apostles, as foundations of the Church (Eph. 2:20), had to understand the economy of grace with a perfection that was proper for masters sent out with the heavy commission of teaching all the nations.

This does not mean that they carried in their minds the explicit formulation, automatically elaborated, of all the dogmas that would be promulgated during the coming centuries; the hypothesis seems highly improbable. If the apostles possessed such knowledge, how are we to explain their negligence or refusal to transmit it to us? And if they did so, what are we to think of the deluge of oblivion suddenly inundating the second generation of Christians?³⁸ Nevertheless, personally formed by Christ and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, they had an exceptional grasp of revealed truth, which they understood in the clarity of an infused prophetic light they could

³⁷ C. Journet, *Esquisse du développement du dogme marial* (Paris, 1954), pp. 20 ff.

³⁸ H. de Lubac, S.J., "Bulletin de théologie fondamentale: Le problème du développement du dogme," *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 152.

not share with their fellow men. They had to translate their knowledge into formulas which their contemporaries could comprehend. The deposit of revelation as thus expressed in their words, their writings, and their institutions is the point of departure for doctrinal development.³⁹

To deliver the deposit, the apostles employed both the oral and the written word, as occasion warranted. The truth received from them by way of writing is Sacred Scripture; the truth received by way of oral speech is tradition, taken in the restricted sense as distinct from Scripture. To account for belief in revealed truths that are not expressly formulated in Scripture, we need not in all cases conclude that they emanate from oral preaching never put down in writing. The first Christian generations read the Scriptures as explained by the apostles and their immediate disciples, and so were in a position to understand the written word in the sense intended by the authors. Thus with regard to *kecharitomene* in Luke, chapter one: since verbs in *oo* imply a plenitude, the verb can hardly be translated better than "full of grace." Any uncertainty about its real force was easily resolved by oral clarification of the text; and this understanding was never lost in the ages that followed. Hence we are quite justified in taking *kecharitomene* as a basis of theology about the Blessed Virgin.

For another example we may consider the doctrine on the necessity of baptism for infants. No text of Scripture expressly mentions children in this connection. Does that mean that we have to appeal to an oral source? Perhaps not. This teaching may well be comprised in texts such as the following: "Going, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" (Matt. 28:19); "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5); "Know you not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him in baptism into death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3 f.). What is needed here is less a recourse to an accessory, extra-scriptural revelation, than a light on the meaning intended by the apostles. And if the Church is di-

³⁹ C. Journet, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

vinely assisted to declare this meaning it has no need, in cases such as this, to appeal to an oral tradition parallel to Scripture—of which there is no early record.⁴⁰

Accordingly the point of departure for doctrinal progress is furnished by the apostolic formulas as they came from the mouth or pen of those who framed them, and as they were grasped by the Church which was still under the direct magisterium of the apostles. Yet, however loyally the primitive Church adhered to these announcements, it was incapable of reading in them all their content that was still implicit. Many events and much time were required to exploit all the wealth stored in them. Such development would no longer be, as in the ages before Christ, a progress stemming from new revelations; it would be effected by new explicitations of the revelation that had been completed. To guide this progress a magisterium infallibly assisted by the Holy Spirit would be enough.

Transmission of the deposit necessitates its development. An inert deposit, such as a chest of jewels, is preserved without change. But a living deposit, as a plant or a child, is preserved by cherishing it and permitting it to evolve. If the deposit of revelation is living in the minds of those who possess it, they who have the duty of preserving it carry out their commission by fostering its development. Under the watchful care of the living magisterium the deposit slowly and progressively flowers into "new dogmas"; new, not in their substance but in their explicitation; not in their root but in their development; not by way of accretion from without, but by way of vital unfolding from within.

Since God wished the genuine sense of the revealed deposit, both oral and written, to be maintained for all time in integrity, He endowed the successors of the apostles with the light necessary for understanding and developing it infallibly, unceasingly, and publicly. Without this rule of faith we could not know with certainty the meaning of many revealed truths whose sense has been controverted, such as: "The Word was made flesh"; "This is My body"; "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." We would not know the real import of such truths

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

except in a human and even conjectural fashion, and so they could never be objects of divine faith.⁴¹

Passage of a truth from an implicit to an explicit state is effected according to rigorous logic, yet requires the enlightening action of the Holy Spirit. For the process by which a newly-defined dogma issues from the deposit of revelation unfolds entirely in the murky night of faith. It starts from a mystery, first grasped indistinctly and obscurely, to emerge in the same mystery grasped distinctly and clearly. To guide and guarantee this development, the sole light of human reason is not enough. The infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit must supplement man's intellectual deficiencies. Undoubtedly the theologian, beginning with a revealed principle, can obtain a conclusion by way of rigorous deduction. But apart from the magisterium divinely aided, he cannot be sure that the truth of faith standing at the head of his discourse has been apprehended without admixture of error or limitation and has been sufficiently penetrated to its depths.⁴²

It is quite certain, as proponents of the theory of an intrinsic, metaphysical connection between the virtually implicit and the deposit of faith maintain, that if revelation came to a close when the last apostle died, the truth that has developed must be logically attached to the primitive revealed truth. For, as they point out, if there is no line of objective identity between the original revelation and the dogma of today, and if no logical connection exists between the statement of the initial truth and that of the evolved truth, we are in presence of a new revelation.

But a logical connection may exist between a truth explicitly revealed and an aspect or implication of this truth not yet recognized, and nevertheless our minds left to themselves cannot clearly discern it. A divine light is needed to make it evident. Human logic, working necessarily on the inadequate concepts in which the revealed reality is conveyed to us, cannot bring forth all the wealth of the mystery. In such a situation the Holy Spirit, who has informed us about this truth through the medium of deficient formulas, does not communicate to a new truth—for then we would have a

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 54 f.

new revelation—but makes visible an aspect of the same truth that we did not distinctly grasp before.

Therefore logic connects our evolved belief with the original revelation. But this is a divine logic that elevates and perfects our human logic by supplying for its shortcomings. Through the formulas in which revealed realities are expressed God teaches us, not simply what these formulas of themselves communicate to us, but what He intends to make known by them. The Spirit of God leads us to the whole truth implicit in the formulas.

Thus a logical connection links Mary's Immaculate Conception and her Assumption into heaven with the revealed truth of her divine maternity. Our intellect, left to its own resources, is not indeed powerless, for it is able to appreciate the seemliness of these two privileges; but it cannot fully establish the connection. An increase of divine light must shine into our minds. That is the work of the Holy Spirit who, without revealing anything new, sharpens the perceptiveness of the Church in order that it may discern this connection which human reason by itself is incapable of completely vindicating. The truth of Mary's perfect maternity is not augmented by the new dogmas; the only thing new is the clear idea of the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption that was inadequately expressed in the human enunciation of her divine motherhood. What emerges at the term of the evolution is not a new truth, but the same truth more adequately manifested in some of its aspects.⁴³ We know, this time infallibly, by the increase of light which the illuminating activity of the Holy Spirit sheds on His Church, that the connection exists.

The history of dogmas bears out these views. To define the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption the Church did not wait until theologians came to an agreement on the means of proving their definability. By its action in defining, the Church did not exactly "consecrate the theological speculation about these themes which implicitly contained the truth defined today."⁴⁴ Directed by the Holy Spirit, the Church placed the weight of its authority on the side of true logic—which is here the logic of God. This divine

⁴³ Cf. Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, pp. 102 ff.

⁴⁴ C. Boyer, S.J., "Qu'est-ce la théologie," *Gregorianum* 21 (1940) 264.

logic is by no means opposed to human logic but surpasses and elevates it. The Church can define infallibly a truth contained implicitly in the deposit of revelation because it has its ear attuned to this higher logic which it exercises in response to the impulse received from the Spirit of Truth.⁴⁵

Before proclaiming a dogma, the Church of course consults theologians, but also controls and judges them. It takes cognizance of the theological reasons they propose, but does not pronounce on the demonstrative value of their deductions. It does not confer on their arguments a logic that was previously lacking. It simply attests that the conclusions of these arguments correctly express the living faith of the Church which cannot err in interpreting revelation. The Church defines as a dogma only the truth it has discovered, with the Holy Spirit's assistance, to be implicitly contained in some mystery of faith that has been formally and explicitly revealed.

As is exemplified in the dogma of the Assumption, a truth that was at first regarded as a theological opinion and became universal little by little, may end up by being recognized as revealed. Because of its affinity with other truths of faith and the lines of argumentation designed to set forth its connection with the deposit, the idea dawns that this truth may be included in divine revelation. The Holy Spirit's influence will tend to insinuate into the mind an assurance secretly co-operating with the inferential procedures that have already shown how this truth may be integrated into the aggregate of Christian knowledge. The opinion, still hesitant, will emerge that there is question of a truth which the Church may some day define. This view will be reinforced in the measure that believers discover that they possess it in common. At the same time its fruitfulness and its harmony with the whole of Christian faith and activity will clearly appear. If the Holy Spirit continues to direct minds along these channels, the persuasion may be widely propa-

⁴⁵ Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 104. Cf. K. Rahner, "Zur Frage der Dogmenentwicklung," in *Schriften zur Theologie* (Einsiedeln, 1954), vol. I, p. 88: "The Church has the organ to hear whether what is perceived by us as the consequent of theological elaboration . . . is in fact the word of God Himself."

gated in the teaching and taught Church, until it becomes a quite general conviction.⁴⁶

The very fact that such a truth gains credit in Christian circles, among theologians and the faithful, is a presumption in its favor. The presumption gathers strength if the magisterium positively promotes the doctrine. Thus in our own day the magisterium has not only not disavowed the doctrinal current proclaiming Mary's core-demptive office, but is openly sympathetic toward it.⁴⁷ Recognition by the Church becomes more manifest when a traditional teaching is embodied in the liturgy. This kind of recognition was given rather early to the Blessed Virgin's Assumption, later to her Immaculate Conception.

In response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who infallibly guides the Church toward a more perfect knowledge of revealed truth,⁴⁸ conviction about the revealed character of the doctrine may continue to grow, to the point of inducing the official teaching authority to take a definitive position. Finally, if the Holy Father interrogates the bishops of the Catholic world as to their views, and if this inquiry issues in displaying a unanimous belief among the bishops in this doctrine, the infallibility of the Church is engaged. Then nothing remains but a solemn definition.

Assurance that the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are included implicitly in the deposit of revelation was gained along these lines. In a similar way the magisterium may propose other truths for our belief in the future.

The arguments which have been so carefully and lovingly drawn up to demonstrate the credibility of such dogmas have notably failed to win a unanimous verdict of approval. Confronted with the argumentation, some theologians speak of rigorously logical reasoning, of strictly scientific, fully convincing deduction. Others speak of reasons of appropriateness, of analogies, of considerations calculated to court the mind's assent. Accordingly these proofs do not

⁴⁶ E. Dhanis, S.J., "Révélation explicite et implicite," *Gregorianum* 34 (1953) 233 f.

⁴⁷ Cf. Dillenschneider, *Le sens de la foi*, p. 112.

⁴⁸ *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS 42 (1950) 769: "Veritatis Spiritus . . . eam [Ecclesiam] ad revelatarum perficiendam veritatum cognitionem infallibiliter dirigit."

seem to lead to the desired goal if they are appraised solely in themselves, apart from the living tradition of the Church. In the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, what is involved is less the logic of syllogistic deduction than the logic of the will of Christ, who freely decided that His Mother should share completely in His own triumphant victory over the devil, sin, and death.

V. STATEMENT OF A THEORY

In all doctrinal development logic is at work, for newly-defined dogmas must be logically connected with the original revelation that was completed with the apostolic era. If this is not always human logic with its perceptions of metaphysical necessity arrived at by inferential procedures, it is certainly divine logic, the wisdom of God's free dispositions, entailing consequent necessity. God, if He so judges, with sovereign liberty wills a thing, an office, a function, a prerogative, an institution in the supernatural economy. Consequent on His willing, what He has willed is necessary. But how are we to discover this, since there may be no connection that is metaphysically imperative? In many cases such discovery is impossible without the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, which operates not by revealing new truths, but by illuminating the minds of Christian men and their supreme teachers to perceive all that is intended in truths that have been explicitly revealed, conformably with God's free appointing.

When confronted by diverging theories of doctrinal development, the theologian does not have to single out one of them and repudiate all the others. All of them may have some part of the truth. The danger is to confine oneself within a narrow exclusivism. Thus, denial of all efficacy to the process of theological reasoning in the evolution of dogma would be reckless.

An adequate solution must await an adequate and detailed history of the development that has taken place. That history has not yet been written; problems still exist, and they are many. "Who could flatter himself that he has solved all the problems? Would such a claim even make sense?"⁴⁹ Even if the desired history

⁴⁹ H. de Lubac, S.J., "Bulletin de théologie fondamentale: Le problème du développement du dogme," *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 132.

were at hand, the full solution would still elude us. "The complete law of dogmatic development cannot be established until the entire process has reached its term. . . . The attempt to draw up an adequate formula to account for all development, with the aim of controlling the course of its history and of rejecting deviations from it as false development, is doomed beforehand to failure."⁵⁰ The future reserves its own problems.

With such warnings in mind, and with a deep conviction that the underlying factors in dogmatic progress are, on the one hand, the Holy Spirit, inspirer and supreme illuminator of the deposit of revelation, and on the other, the Church with its divinely enlightened magisterium, I venture the following statement, which must be regarded as merely tentative. The basic theory accounting for all doctrinal development and capable even of shedding light on the vicissitudes that have marked its history, seems to be this: the Church, and especially its magisterium culminating in the Roman Pontiff, is empowered by divine illumination to read progressively in the initial deposit the full truth which God the Revealer meant to include in the concepts, propositions, and formulas in which His message to mankind is expressed—particularly in the case of those implicitly revealed truths that are not connected with what is explicitly revealed by intrinsic, antecedent, metaphysical necessity.

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Digest of the Discussion:

The discussion began with *Father Edward O'Connor*, of Notre Dame, who offered what he called a supplementary suggestion to Father Vollert's theory, which he considered excellent. He agreed that it is not always by rigorous logical deduction that new dogmas are determined but rather by other factors such as the sense of the faithful to which Father Vollert had referred. But he thought that something else was needed to explain the difficulty and for this purpose suggested a theory of signs. Much of the revealed deposit might be thus said to contain the so-called new dogmas, not as premises contain their conclusions, but rather by looking

⁵⁰ K. Rahner, S.J., "Zur Frage der Dogmenentwicklung," in *Schriften zur Theologie* (Einsiedeln, 1954), vol. I, p. 51.

at the revelation as a sign of God's intention. With regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary, for example, the revealed *kecharitomene* could be considered as a sign of what God intended as His will for Mary. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception would then specify one aspect of this signification.

Father Vollert indicated that this concept had been developed by Charles Journet and agreed that it could be very helpful in approaching the problem. With regard to Mary, Father Vollert agreed that God had given a sign; the sign in this case is Mary's perpetual virginity. The faithful were able to keep alive for so long their sense of Mary's complete holiness because their knowledge was confirmed by this perpetual sign, Mary's virginity. Mary's holiness, so clearly presented in Scripture, meant so much to the faithful that they could not associate the notion of sin with her in any way. Of this, the faithful remained always convinced.

For the theologians, meanwhile, a difficulty arose in the doctrine of the universality of redemption. If all men are redeemed, then all men, including Mary, must have something to be redeemed from and that could only be sin. The belief that Mary had committed actual sin never gained any foothold, but the possibility that Mary had contracted original sin constituted a difficulty that plagued the Church for centuries. Finally the idea of preservative redemption was suggested and elaborated until, within a very short time, it was seen to contain the answer to the difficulty.

Thus, while even the greatest theologians were trying to reconcile Mary's holiness with the universality of the redemption, the faithful, to whom this difficulty would not occur, persisted in their belief and their refusal to admit that Mary ever had any sin. The sense of the faithful never faltered, not that the faithful preserved a belief that the Church did not; rather, the sense of the faithful was received and preserved as totally dependent on the magisterium of the Church. But the sign was in Scripture from the beginning, namely, Mary's perpetual virginity, her complete dedication to God.

Father Gerard Owens, C.S.S.R., of Woodstock, Ontario, asked Father Vollert to elaborate on his notion of consequent necessity. How would this differ from Marin-Sola's explanation of the metaphysical connection between revealed principles and their conclusions?

Father Vollert answered that a metaphysical necessity of conclusions from principles could not be verified in the case of all doctrinal developments. That is why so many who enthusiastically embraced Marin-Sola's theory in the beginning were gradually led to reject it. Father Vollert insisted that he could not see a metaphysical connection between the Immaculate Conception, for example, and the divine maternity which is its principle. He did not think that there is any metaphysical necessity

for the one to follow from the other and, he remarked, neither did a great many other theologians. The Immaculate Conception is entirely dependent on God's free act of willing. Prescinding from such an act of God's will, Father Vollert thought that it is possible to think of a woman being the Mother of God even if she did contract original sin. Historically, too, some theologians not only did not see any metaphysical connection in this development, but even saw a contradiction with another revealed principle, that of universal redemption. Marin-Sola has certainly made a great contribution and his theory has much to recommend it, but it does not account for all instances of development.

Father Owens then asked whether Father Vollert would hold that a developed doctrine is always included necessarily in another dogma, granted that we cannot always see the connection. Father Vollert said no, he did not think so, not in that sense of necessarily. Once God has willed the conclusion, then it follows necessarily from the principle in that sense. Father Owens asked whether this would constitute more than Marin-Sola's physical necessity. Father Vollert replied that the necessity here is totally dependent on God's will and subsequent to it.

Father Dominic Hughes, O.P., pursuing the same problem, asked whether these conclusions, described by Father Vollert as consequent, followed by necessity of the consequent or by a necessity of consequence. Father illustrated his question by reference to Mary's fullness of grace. Fullness includes the fullness of being, of power, and of end. In Mary's case the fullness of being is verified in the Immaculate Conception, the fullness of power in the divine maternity, the fullness of end in the Assumption. Once we have been given the conclusion in each case, can we see its involvement in the principle? Father Vollert agreed that we could provided we know that God has first willed the fullness in this sense.

Father Francis Connell, C.S.S.R., of Catholic University, then suggested that the principles presented in Father Vollert's paper might well be applied to the field of moral theology. He cited the case of the man who has had the operation of double vasectomy. It is by no means clear at the present time whether or not such a person is to be considered impotent by the divine and natural law. Either he is or he is not, one or the other is true, one or the other is actually God's will, but at the present time even the best theologians cannot determine for certain which it is. Father Connell indicated that he thought that in practice the impotence could be considered doubtful and therefore not an impediment. But he made the point that someday the Church could define the question one way or another, even though there is not now any agreement among theologians on the question. The matter certainly comes within the indirect and possibly even the direct object of the Church's infallible competence. The same thing would be true of many similar

moral questions such as organic transplantation, experimentation with human subjects, and the like. Father thought that eventually all of these questions might be decided by the Church on the basis of the principles set forth in Father Vollert's paper.

At this point, *Monsignor George Shea*, the president of the Society, injected a clarification of some points he had made relevant to this question in his presidential address of the evening before. Because it was his intention to deal only with the deposit of faith, he had omitted what the Holy Father had to say on the non-revealed moral law. But he said that he had no intention of denying that the Holy See had competence concerning the natural moral law. On the subject of the Church's competence in the non-revealed, Monsignor Shea recommended the article by Hürth in *Periodica* a few years ago. He stressed particularly the notion that in this area the Holy Spirit aids the Church not so much in her role as custodian of the revealed deposit but rather guides the Church considered as a divinely assisted pastor. To this, Father Connell added the observation that it is often difficult in practice to tell exactly how much of the natural law is also revealed, and how much is not.

Father Malachi Donnelly, S.J., of St. Marys, Kansas, then rose to ask for comment on the article by Jimenez in *Rivista española* that Father Vollert had listed among his suggested preparatory readings. In particular, he asked for clarification of the common terms used to describe various types of theological conclusions: formally implicit, virtually implicit, and virtually revealed.

Father Vollert explained that Jimenez, after a lengthy and complicated exposition, finally rejects the concept of virtually revealed as an impossibility. It is his notion that if a truth is virtually revealed it is actually a new truth that was not part of the revelation, its extension, or comprehension. Later on in the article, Jimenez explains further the notion of comprehension. All revelation, he says, is given by God in the form of a judgment, a judgment that contains a subject and a predicate. Therefore, since whoever gives the subject and predicate is responsible for the entire comprehension of both, then the full comprehension of the subject and predicate is revealed. When God gives us a sentence in revelation it is He that is responsible for the subject and predicate. Thus if God says that Mary is all holy, for example, then everything comprehended under the predicate holy is revealed, even though it takes us a long time to realize the full comprehension of the predicate. To Father Donnelly's question on whether we should then eliminate the concept of *fides ecclesiastica*, Father Vollert replied that he personally had never highly esteemed the term.

The final question was posed by *Father Walter Burghardt, S.J.*, of Woodstock, who was asked by the chairman to be brief since the time allowed for the discussion had almost expired. Given two minutes,

Father Burghardt, for his first "one minute question," referred to Father Vollert's remark that any of the apostles, if they had been asked whether Mary was immaculately conceived, would have been able to answer. Father Burghardt asked why. Father Vollert, in a "half minute answer" replied that it was because of the apostles' superior understanding of the revelation. Superior even to that of the contemporary magisterium? pursued Father Burghardt. Yes, replied Father Vollert, each of the apostles enjoyed a superior light by which the revelation was clarified for him.

For his second "one minute question," Father Burghardt asked whether he had understood Father Vollert correctly to say that even though theologians deviated from the revelation concerning Mary, the faithful never did. Father Vollert replied that this was not his meaning. Earlier in the discussion, he admitted, he did say that once the faithful get an idea, such as Mary's holiness, they tend to hold on to it. The idea is already formulated for them, in this case, in the revelation itself. It is unlikely that difficulties will occur to them such as the difficulties that will occur to theologians. The problem of reconciling universal redemption and Mary's freedom from revelation would be an example. It is merely a question of the theologians seeing more of the problems. With this exchange, brisk but not brusque, the discussion was brought to an end.

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