

The “Pastoral Council”

Any Catholic old enough to remember the Church, when it was recognizable as such, will recall the unsettling liturgical changes that were being introduced, just before the Second Vatican Council was convened in Rome in 1962. By the council’s conclusion in 1965, the ill-effects of Vatican II could already be felt in doctrinal matters, as well. Those who suspected the council to be the source of the disturbance were chided for not enthusiastically welcoming the “glorious renewal” that was bursting forth in “the Church.” Now, after 34 years since the close of the council, only the youth, the uninformed or the most naïve are still unable to draw a connection between Vatican II and the abysmal emptiness that has become characteristic of parish life.

For decades, champions of the council have been cranking out, through the pages of their books and syndicated columns, variations of the same old tired explanation of where the Church seems to have “gone wrong.” They, of course, reject the standard by which Christ told us we could judge all things: “A good tree will not bear bad fruit.” Could the council *itself* have been the cause of the Church’s ills? “Impossible!” they will insist. “Vatican II was the work of the Holy Ghost,” so they reassure us. But at the same time, they explain that Vatican II was unlike any other, previous ecumenical council, in that it was only a “pastoral council.” For some, this term has come to mean: a non-binding synod which advanced an assortment of non-dogmatic opinions, some of which may not have been consistent with the Church’s manner of expressing theological formulas of the past, but which in no way compromised the pope’s infallible teaching authority. Because of its unique status, so they tell us, Vatican II can not be held to the same test as the general councils of the past. It just so happens that a massive rebellion erupted within the Church’s structures, over the very issues that were thrown open to question by the council. The problem, the council’s defenders contend, is *not* Vatican II *itself*, but the *erroneous interpretations* of its decrees, which have come from various members of the laity, the clergy and even the hierarchy who are disobedient to the “pope” and the “spirit of Vatican II.”

No equivalent distortion or misrepresentation of the mind of the Church has ever occurred in the wake of previous councils, however. Thus, no precedent can be cited for the apparent failure of a legitimate ecumenical council of the Church. Nor can conciliar apologists refer to any previous example of a general council that was convoked during a time of relative doctrinal certainty, liturgical stability, and administrative accord, but was immediately followed by confusion in dogma, chaos in worship and revolt in discipline. The general councils of the past, from Jerusalem to Vatican I, established order from disorder, not the other way around.

When John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 1962, he designated it as the 21st Ecumenical (general) Council of the Catholic Church. But, soon thereafter, the term “pastoral council” began to be applied to it (by whom, it is still unclear), as if it were only a regional synod of bishops. Seldom has it ever dawned on the faithful that there was any contradiction between the two descriptions of Vatican II. To some, “pastoral” meant one thing, to others, something else. This was exacerbated by the fact that, prior to Vatican II, there was no official definition of the term, “pastoral council,” as such had never occurred before.

The deception of calling Vatican II a “pastoral council” was indeed a diabolically clever device by those who sought to put the traditionalist bishops off guard all during the council’s

deliberations, when heretical formulas were constantly being proposed for adoption as part of the teaching of the “Church.” To head off a backlash by the bishops, Paul VI cleverly refrained from forcing the council fathers to sign the conciliar decrees, either during or after the council. To be sure, many of the council fathers were uncomfortable with some of its documents. Over twenty percent of the world’s bishops, about 670 in number, avoided signing their names to the final, definitive version of the council’s decrees. None were ever overtly threatened with disciplinary action for not signing, as had occurred with the handful of bishops who refused to sign the decrees of Vatican I in 1870.

In any event, once the council had been given the ambiguous label of “pastoral,” its erroneous decrees would somehow *not matter*, because none would “bind the faithful.” Thus, the bishops could simply return home, and pick and choose those documents from the council they could tolerate, and disregard the rest, or so, some of them seem to have reasoned. The ultimate effect of this calculated chicanery was that the bishops, even those who had not signed, were practically mute in their resistance to the heresies proposed by the “pastoral council.”

But the word *pastoral* does not mean “fallible,” or “non-binding.” Rather, it refers to how the dogmatic teachings of the Church apply to the salvation of souls. For instance, *pastoral theology* is generally defined as:

“That branch of theology which deals with the care of souls. It takes the teaching of dogmatic, moral and ascetical theology and the rules of canon law and applies them to the everyday work of the parochial clergy in all its aspects.”¹

Just how did the word “pastoral” first come to be associated with the council? In his opening address to the council, John XXIII envisioned “a **magisterium** which is predominantly **pastoral** in character.” Again, this does not mean “non-doctrinal.” In fact, Roncalli used the words “doctrine” or “doctrinal” twelve times during his speech, in connection with the work of the council, whereas the term “pastoral” was heard just once, and only in the limited context cited above. By what pretense, pray tell, was this expression interpreted to make the council appear any less authoritative than general councils of the past? For, in John XXIII’s opening address to the council, nothing of the sort was even hinted. Although he expressed his view that no *new* definitions by the Church were needed at the time, he nevertheless advocated that a renewed emphasis be given to the already existing body of doctrine from previous councils. Moreover, he attributed special importance to the doctrines, which were handed down from the Councils of Trent and Vatican I. John XXIII gave every indication that the Second Vatican Council had been convoked for the preservation, accentuation and dissemination of the Church’s doctrinal treasure throughout the modern-day world, as evidenced by the following key passage of his speech:

“PRINCIPLE DUTY OF THE COUNCIL: THE DEFENSE AND ADVANCEMENT OF TRUTH

“The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously. That **doctrine** embraces the whole of man, composed as he is of body and soul. And, since he is a pilgrim on this earth, it commands him to tend always toward heaven . . .

¹ Donald Attwater, *A Catholic Dictionary*, 1945, Macmillan Company, New York, page 521.

“ . . . **In order, however, that this doctrine may influence the numerous fields of human activity, with reference to individuals, to families, and to social life, it is necessary first of all that the Church should never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers.** But at the same time she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world which have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate . . .

“ . . . The manner in which sacred doctrine is spread, this having been established, it becomes clear how much is expected from the Council in regard to **doctrine.** That is, **the Twenty-first Ecumenical Council,** which will draw upon the effective and important wealth of juridical, liturgical, apostolic, and administrative experiences, **wishes to transmit the doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion,** which throughout twenty centuries, notwithstanding difficulties and contrasts, has become the common patrimony of men. It is a patrimony not well received by all, but always a rich treasure available to men of good will.

“Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, pursuing thus the path which the Church has followed for twenty centuries.

“The salient point of this Council is not, therefore, a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all.

“For this a Council was not necessary. But **from the renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness, as it still shines forth in the Acts of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council,** the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a **doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine,** which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient **doctrine** of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a **magisterium** which is predominantly **pastoral** in character.”²

John XXIII affirmed that “the greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is . . . that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously.” Hence, the *stated* purpose of the council from the outset was to: 1) transmit the Church’s pure doctrine without “attenuation or distortion”; 2) penetrate and thus form consciences with the preciseness of the Church’s entire teaching, with particular emphasis on the Council of Trent and the First Vatican Council, and; 3) study and expound the doctrine through literary methods of “modern thought.” Thus, at no point did Roncalli imply that the council would be non-doctrinal or non-binding, but only that would not define any *new* doctrine.

Some of the councils in the past had been convened to settle disputes, but also, did not anticipate that they would define any new doctrine. Still, they always claimed to have doctrinal force. A thorough study of the doctrinal character of general councils of the bishops, organized under the

² Walter S. Abbott, S.J., “John’s Opening Speech To The Council,” *The Documents Of Vatican II*, 1966, Guild Press, New York, page 715.

authority of the pope, was published in 1908, by *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, and is quoted below in part:

“ . . .(VI: 3,c) . . . papal ratification formally promulgates the sentence of the council as an article of faith to be known and accepted by all the faithful . . . the ecumenical authority of the pope is sufficient to impart validity and **infallibility to the decrees he makes his own by officially ratifying them . . .**; (VIII) . . . All the arguments which go to prove the infallibility of the Church apply with their fullest force to the infallible authority of general councils in union with the pope. For conciliar decisions are the ripe fruit of the total life energy of the teaching Church actuated and directed by the Holy Ghost. Such was the mind of the Apostles when at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts, xv, 28), they put the seal of supreme authority on their decisions in attributing them to the joint action of the Spirit of God and of themselves: *Visum est Spiritui sancto et nobis (It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.)* This formula and the dogma it enshrines stand out brightly in the deposit of faith and have been carefully guarded throughout the many storms raised in councils by the play of the human element. From the earliest times they who rejected the decisions of councils were themselves rejected by the Church . . . General councils represent the universal Church and demand absolute obedience. . . ;(IX) . . . **A council’s decrees approved by the pope are infallible by reason of that approbation, because the pope is infallible also extra concilium, without the support of a council.** The infallibility proper to the pope is not, however, the only formal adequate ground of the council’s infallibility. The Divine constitution of the Church and the promises of Divine assistance made by her Founder, guarantee her inerrancy, in matters pertaining to faith and morals, independently of the pope’s infallibility: a fallible pope supporting, and supported by, a council, would still pronounce infallible decisions. . . **The infallibility of the council is intrinsic, i.e. springs from its nature.** Christ promised to be in the midst of two or three of His disciples gathered together in His name; now an oecumenical council is, in fact or law, a gathering of all Christ’s co-workers for salvation of man through true faith and holy conduct; He therefore is in their midst, fulfilling His promises and leading them into the truth for which they are striving. His presence, by cementing the unity of the assembly into one body - His own mystical body - gives it the necessary completeness, and makes up for any defect possibly arising from the physical absence of a certain number of bishops. The same presence strengthens the action of the pope, so that as mouthpiece of the council, he can say in truth, **“it has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and Us,”** and consequently can, and does, put the **seal of infallibility on the conciliar decree** irrespective of his own personal infallibility.

“Some important consequences flow from these principals. Conciliar decrees approved by the pope have a double guarantee of infallibility: their own and that of the infallible pope. The council’s dignity is, therefore not diminished, but increased, by the definition of papal infallibility, nor does that definition imply a “circular demonstration” by which the council would make the pope infallible and the pope would render the same service to the council. It should, however, be borne in mind that **the council without the pope has no guarantee of infallibility**, therefore, the conciliar and the papal infallibilities are not two separate and addible units, but one unit with single or double excellence . . .”³

On December 7, 1965, at the end of the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI ratified the conciliar decree, *Dignitatis humanae personae*, by his “apostolic authority,” while invoking the Holy Ghost:

³ “Councils,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, The Encyclopedia Press, New York, pages 423-435.

“ . . . Each and every one of the things set forth in this declaration has won the consent of the Fathers of this most sacred Council. **We too, by the apostolic authority conferred on by Christ, join with the Venerable Fathers in approving, decreeing and establishing these things in the Holy Spirit,** and we direct that what has thus been enacted in synod by published in God’s glory.”

After going through the motions of invoking the Holy Ghost to confirm the authority of the council (and seemingly, its infallibility), the next day, Montini directed his papal brief to be read to the council by Archbishop Felici, by which the conciliar decrees were imposed upon the faithful:

“ . . . We decide moreover that all that has been established synodally is to be religiously observed by all the faithful, for the glory of God and the dignity of the Church and for the tranquility and peace of all men. **We have approved and established these things, decreeing that the present letters are and remain stable and valid, and are to have legal effectiveness,** so that they may be disseminated and obtain full and complete effect, and so that they may be fully convalidated by those whom they concern or may concern now and in the future, and so that, as it be judged and described, **all efforts contrary to these things by whoever or whatever authority, knowingly or in ignorance be invalid and worthless from now on.**”

Therefore, from all appearances, Paul VI seemed to impart the same binding authority upon the council, which was characteristic of the councils in the past, all of which had defined doctrine. The language of the Montini’s closing statement was consistent with John XXIII’s original, stated purposes of the council, which had specifically called for the “penetration and formation of consciences.”

The problem was, the council promulgated unambiguous heresies, including “religious liberty” and “ecumenism,” which could never have come from the true Church. (*See chapter: “Religious Liberty or Liberty of Perdition?”*) Sometime after the fact, Montini tried to qualify how the council had attempted to impose its new teachings upon the faithful.

“ . . . the teaching authority of the Church, even though not wishing to issue extraordinary dogmatic pronouncements, has made thoroughly known its authoritative teaching on a number of questions which today weigh upon man’s conscience and activity . . . ”⁴

This was classic Vatican II “doublespeak,” for: “We are going force you to accept new and heretical teachings contrary to the Catholic Faith, but without engaging the teaching formula reserved for definitions that protects the popes from error.” By this cynical ploy, Montini sought to hide the fact, that he, like Roncalli, was an antipope, devoid of the guidance of the Holy Ghost, possessed by true popes. (Lest we have given the previous impression that Roncalli was an innocent party to the deception, it should be pointed out that the numerous heresies espoused in his encyclical, *Pacem in Teris*, would be incorporated into the decrees of Vatican II.)

Today, even some “traditionalist” writers who recognize the errors that officially emanated from Vatican II, attempt to dismiss their significance by the imagined “pastoral” disclaimer of the

⁴ Paul VI, Closing Statement to the Second Vatican Council - Rome, 7 December 1965, *Council Daybook*; Vatican II, Session IV, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington D.C., page 361.

council. It is as if to say: “Since the council was pastoral, its heresies are irrelevant, and therefore, the infallibility of the Church is not compromised.” Others are content to say that the decrees of the council, from beginning to end, were neither proposed nor promulgated with binding force, thus, they may be ignored. Even Giuseppe Siri, in a moment of exasperation, declared, after the council’s decrees were ratified by Paul VI:

“They are not definitions; they will never bind us.”⁵

With all due respect to Giuseppe Siri, statements such as the above, completely avoid the relevant issue that is at the heart of the conundrum of Vatican II. The point is, there can be no such thing in the Church as a non-doctrinal, non-binding “ecumenical council.” The very idea of a non-doctrinal ecumenical council of bishops under the guidance of the pope (such as Vatican II was alleged to have been), is itself a sheer impossibility, unheard of in the history of the true Church. For, it is alien to the Church’s teaching regarding the infallibility and binding authority of general councils, as clearly stated in *The Baltimore Catechism*, and memorized by Catholic grade-school students, for six decades:

“Question: When does the Church teach infallibly?

“Answer: **The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the bishops, united in general council**, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims for all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.”⁶

Thus, the very concept of a non-binding, general, ecumenical council is an oxymoron at odds with the very constitution of the Church.

The conducting of Vatican II by the Masonic forces ensconced in Rome was, in reality, an exercise in constantly “pushing the envelope,” of “testing the waters,” and of gauging how far the old cardinals would allow council organizers to go in advancing the Masonic agenda at the council. An outright rejection of the Church’s principal doctrines would have been unrealistic, for a public rebuke of the council by the clergy and laity might have resulted. An undermining of the Church’s social doctrines, with which the bishops and their flocks were not too familiar, would be more practical. The teachings of recent popes on social issues were all that had stood in the way of the complete disappearance of Christian civilization, and if they were suddenly canceled out, all civil laws based upon the Decalogue would be swept away, eventually forcing Catholics underground. And if the council leaders could change the prayers of the Mass (first, under the guise of “updating” them, then later, by suppressing them), in a generation, they would change the way Catholics believed. In retrospect, all was orchestrated to prepare the way for the age of Antichrist. Few could have imagined that Antichrist and his precursor, personified by the false conciliar popes, was already in place, directing council organizers to carry out their sabotage of the Church by means of a false council that, from its opening session, violated the very nature of a true ecumenical council.

⁵ Francis X. Murphy & Gary MacEoin, *Synod 67; A New Sound In Rome*, 1968, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, page 100.

⁶ *The Baltimore Catechism #2*, 1933, Benziger Brothers, New York, page 25.

In actuality, Paul VI had provided for “binding definitions” at the council, all along:

“In view of the conciliar practice and practical purpose of the Council, this sacred Synod defines as binding on the Church only those matters of faith and morals which it has expressly put forward as such.”⁷

As it turned out, the “non-binding” Vatican II Council, included among its documents, a “Dogmatic Constitution.” Even in this document, errors can be found. This was only possible, once the rightful pope had been secretly overthrown and effectively silenced. Thereafter, the Masonic plotters could advance their program, by the incongruity of a “pastoral council,” that would promulgate bogus “definitions” upon the faithful. In 1969, Paul VI himself would refer to the teachings found in the conciliar decree, *The Church In The Modern World*, as “the Church’s new doctrine.” Thus, the work of the council was first portrayed as “doctrinal,” then “non-doctrinal,” then “doctrinal” again, as suited those who have sought to deceive the elect.

During the ecclesiastical upheavals of the last 30 years, there have been volumes of books and articles, tracing the beginning of the Church’s problems back to the time of the council. Yet, the authors of most of these works reject any thoughts that modern-day antipopes are the most likely explanation for the current, universal apostasy, and they therefore fall back to a position of denial that heresy was officially ratified at Vatican II.

Despite massive evidence that the council formally contradicted the irrevocable definitions of numerous popes, many conciliar apologists continue to say that Vatican II was only an insignificant, non-binding synod to promote an assortment of fallible opinions, which in no way compromised Paul VI’s infallible teaching authority. At the same time, they often admit that the council nevertheless has caused havoc, but only because of the endless, erroneous *interpretations* (of its otherwise “orthodox” decrees) which have come from certain anonymous members of the conciliar church who are “disobedient to the “pope.”

Others acknowledge the origin of the heresy to be the conciliar “popes,” but will not admit that such could be false popes. They must then grapple with the difficulty of how to interpret Christ’s promise to Peter: “I pray that thy Faith fail thee not, so once converted, confirm thy brethren.” They may even admit that these “popes” have spoken heresy, although never “officially,” but only “privately.” They contend that Vatican II is irrelevant because it was only a non-binding, “pastoral council.” Yet, they ignore the blatant contradiction that the “non-binding” council’s anti-Catholic prescriptions, and the “reforms” which they spawned, are arrogantly enforced as if they constituted, not just the supreme law of the Church, but her only law.

For, they have yet to consider that, had there been true popes upon the Chair of Peter during the last 40 years, neither the fraud of the “pastoral council,” nor any of its attendant evils, would ever have occurred in the first place.

⁷ Paul VI, Statement to the Council prior to the vote on the decree, *Lumen Gentium*, from: Declaration of Vatican II Theological Commission, Rome, 6 March 1964.