The Oxford Handbook of VATICAN II
THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

VATICAN II
In memory of our friends and colleagues,
Joachim Schmiedl, ISch (1958–2021)
John W. O’Malley, SJ (1927–2022)
Acknowledgements

It would not be possible to complete a project as large and complex as this one without the dedication and support of many. We are especially indebted to our contributors for their patience as we worked to bring this project to completion—especially over the last year and a half when we, and they, have laboured under the considerable constraints brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are mindful of those, both far and near, who have suffered greatly from its cruel pains that have tested our societies’ claims to protect and care for the vulnerable.

We are grateful to Tom Perridge, Karen Raith, and the staff at Oxford University Press for their confidence in our undertaking and for their assistance with some of the translations and the countless tasks involved in bringing the volume to publication. We are thankful as well for the meticulous work of Peter Beckwith and Jason Lamantia, graduate assistants, and for the financial support of the Research Centre on Vatican II and 21st Century Catholicism at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. The expertise of Anne Louise Mahoney and Pierre Laviolette has been invaluable in the final stages of editing and in preparing the indices. Thanks go out as well to our colleagues at both Villanova and Saint Paul Universities and to our families who have supported and encouraged us along the way.

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<tr>
<td>AAS</td>
<td><em>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</em>, 1909–</td>
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<tr>
<td>AASPS</td>
<td>Archives de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAV</td>
<td>Archivio Apostolico Vaticano</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADSE</td>
<td>Archives des Dominicaines du Saint-Esprit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td><em>Amoris Laetitia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arch. Prefettura</td>
<td>Archivio della Prefettura/Archive of the Prefecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARCIC</td>
<td>Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td><em>Acta Synodalii Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticanii II, Cura et studio Archivi Concilii Oecumenici Vaticanii, 6 vols. in 33 tomes</em> (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970–99)</td>
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<td>ASE</td>
<td>Archives du Séminaire d'Écône</td>
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<tr>
<td>Att. S. Sede</td>
<td><em>L'Attività della Santa Sede</em>, Città del Vaticano/The Activity of the Holy See, Vatican City</td>
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<tr>
<td>BECs</td>
<td>Basic ecclesial communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBCI</td>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCOE</td>
<td>Code of Canons for the Eastern Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELAM</td>
<td>Conference of Latin American Bishops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPAC</td>
<td>Conferentia Episcopalis Pacifici, Episcopal Conference of the Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>revised Code of Canon Law</td>
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<td>CIP</td>
<td>Coetus Internationalis Patrum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td><em>Christifideles Laici</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CLAI</td>
<td>Latin American Council of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONIC</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristas do Brasil</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSPEC</td>
<td>Conférences spirituelles à Écône</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Catechesi Tradendae</td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td>Caritas in Veritate</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Documento de Aparecida</td>
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<td>DdeP</td>
<td>Documento de Puebla</td>
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<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Dominus Iesus</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIMMID</td>
<td>Dialogue interreligieux monastique/Monastic Interreligious Dialogue</td>
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<td>DM</td>
<td>Dialogue and Mission</td>
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<td>DP</td>
<td>Dialogue and Proclamation</td>
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<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Ecclesia in Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Evangelicals and Catholics Together</td>
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<tr>
<td>EG</td>
<td>Evangelii Gaudium</td>
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<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td>Evangelii Nuntiandi</td>
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<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Ecclesia in Oceania</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Ecclesiam Suam</td>
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<tr>
<td>FABC</td>
<td>Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>Fides et Ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDE</td>
<td>General Directory for Catechesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>GeE</td>
<td>Gaudete et Exsultate</td>
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<tr>
<td>HG</td>
<td>Humani Generis</td>
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<tr>
<td>HV</td>
<td>Humanae Vitae</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDOC</td>
<td>International Documentation and Communication Centre, Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>Inter Oecumenici</td>
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<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Laudato Si’</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Mortalium Animos</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Mystici Corporis</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRCIC</td>
<td>Methodist–Roman Catholic International Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICE</td>
<td>National Incentive Convention for Evangelization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCID</td>
<td>Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP</td>
<td>Plenary Council of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCPCU</td>
<td>Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>Pascendi Dominici Gregis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Populorum Progressio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Pacem in Terris</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Redemptoris Missio</td>
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</table>
SAAS Service des Archives de l’Archidiocèse de Sherbrooke
SNC Secretariat for Non-Christians
SOE Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum
SPCU Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity
SRS Sollicitudo Rei Socialis
SSPX Society of St Pius X
TMA Tertio Millennio Adveniente
UUS Ut Unum Sint
VS Veritatis Splendor
WCC World Council of Churches
WEA World Evangelical Alliance
WUCWO World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations


AA Apostolicam Actuositatem, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 18 November 1965
AG Ad Gentes, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, 7 December 1965
CD Christus Dominus, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 28 October 1965
DH Dignitatis Humanae, Declaration on Religious Liberty, 7 December 1965
DV Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, 18 November 1965
GE Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration on Christian Education, 28 October 1965
GS Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 7 December 1965
IM Inter Mirifica, Decree on the Mass Media, 4 December 1963
LG Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 21 November 1964
NA Nostra Aetate, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 28 October 1965
OE Orientalium Ecclesiarum, Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, 21 November 1964
OT Optatam Totius, Decree on the Training of Priests, 28 October 1965
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Document Title and Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td><em>Perfectae Caritatis</em>, Decree on Renewal of Religious Life, 28 October 1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td><em>Presbyterorum Ordinis</em>, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 7 December 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td><em>Sacrosanctum Concilium</em>, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 4 December 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td><em>Unitatis Redintegratio</em>, Decree on Ecumenism, 21 November 1964</td>
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INTRODUCTION

CATHERINE E. CLIFFORD AND MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

1. The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II and the History of the Studies on the Council

The enterprise for an *Oxford Handbook of Vatican II* began during the pontificate of Pope Francis, who inaugurated a hermeneutical shift in the interpretation of the council, thanks to his background as a Jesuit and pastor from Latin America. Francis opened the Catholic Church to a more global understanding of itself and its mission, one that is less centred on the Western hemisphere. In this sense, this volume is itself an act of reception of the questions raised by Pope Francis on the part of contemporary scholars. More generally, it reflects a particular moment in the life of Catholicism as it takes stock of the challenges of the turn to the global.

The present volume takes its place within a long history of the reception and interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, now sixty years old. The profile of its authors, women and men from every continent recognized for their expertise, and of their studies on Vatican II, reflects the growth of the scholarly community from its mostly male, clerical, and Western composition into a truly polyphonic, global chorus interpreting a council meant to give voice to the global Church. This work stands on the shoulders of the giants who have shaped the history of the reception of Vatican II, especially the

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series of commentaries published immediately after the conclusion of the council,\textsuperscript{2} those published in the second phase of reception,\textsuperscript{3} as well as the five-volume historiography of Vatican II, the first to draw extensively from the \textit{Acta Synodalia}. The latter set a new standard of scholarship and has yet to be matched by a comparable comprehensive investigation in more than twenty years.\textsuperscript{4} This \textit{Handbook} is being written following the publication of a new series of commentaries in the past decade in different cultural contexts\textsuperscript{5} and recent historical works based on newly available archival materials. They provide a more complete picture of the council\textsuperscript{6} without altering the master historiographical narrative shaped between the 1990s and the early 2000s.

2. The Hermeneutics of the Council: Striking a Balance

The publication of the \textit{Oxford Handbook of Vatican II} occurs within the context of the hermeneutical shift of the last two decades towards an approach that is more attentive to the local and the inculturated dimensions of the reception of Vatican II while at the same time considering Vatican II from a global, but not universalist, horizon. It aims to take these perspectives seriously without losing sight of the centrality of the conciliar event, from John XXIII’s announcement on 25 January 1959 to the preparation, the


\textsuperscript{6} See the series of Francisco Gil Hellín, ed., \textit{Concilii Vaticani II Synopsis} (Rome: Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, completed 2019); Alberto Melloni, gen ed., Federico Ruozzi and Enrico Galavotti, eds., \textit{Atlante storico del concilio Vaticano II} (Milan: Jaca Book; Bologna: Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose, 2015); trans. into Eng. as \textit{Vatican II: The Complete History} (Mahwah N), Paulist Press, 2015); translated into several other languages.
council sessions, and its closing act on 8 December 1965. In this sense, this volume seeks to contribute to a rebalancing of the interpretations of Vatican II. It is informed by an awareness of the need for a historical anchoring of its texts in a particular time and place and, at the same time, for an insertion of its hermeneutical effort within the pastoral and ecclesial contexts that the documents and their authors sought to address, and not only their academic and intellectual concerns.

The Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of 1985, with its attempt to re-balance letter and spirit, provided an opportunity for the most international and comprehensive historiographical work on the council to date. But the fruits of that historiographical work were met with scepticism by the institutional Church of the day, when a certain historical interpretation of Vatican II served as part of a larger effort to resist the council’s ecclesiology of the local Church and the application of a historical-critical approach to the council itself as a theological event. That new wave of institutional interpretation of Vatican II reached its peak in 2005, with Pope Benedict XVI’s famous speech on the ‘two hermeneutics’, which became the key for a particular stream of works with influence in the English-speaking world. It spawned a range of interpretations that were critical of historiographical approaches and, at the same time, sympathetic to a more traditionalist view of the conciliar documents.

In the past two decades, important works have appeared in response to the revisionist tendencies of interpreting Vatican II. Still, the tendency to minimize the impact of Vatican II persists in the institutional Church of the English-speaking world. It takes the shape of a reading of the conciliar event as a kind of sacred history (historia sacra), not subject to modern historical criticism, adopting an almost exclusive focus on the four

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conciliar constitutions at the expense of the complementary decrees and declarations, not to mention all the other documents that made Vatican II. What has re-emerged, in new ecclesial contexts and new forms, is an outright rejection of Vatican II: not just of the ‘spirit’, but also of the ‘letter’ of its documents, of their theology and magisterial import. The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II is a response to the hermeneutical distortions that attempt to bend the conciliar event and its documents to fit a neo-integralist logic or to dismiss Vatican II altogether.

3. Understanding the Council in a World Church

It is our hope that this volume might serve as a contribution to a more scholarly reception of Vatican II. When we first set out to plan this project, we noted the need for a resource that would be both comprehensive and systematic in its approach to Vatican II in historical-theological terms and that would include a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. We have sought to incorporate perspectives from scholars who share a respect for the historicity and the ecclesiality of the Second Vatican Council and who understand its importance as something more than the production of the final sixteen documents. Their contributions are made even more important by the election of Pope Francis, who introduced new hermeneutical sensibilities into the institutional reception of Vatican II by the papal magisterium on matters relating to the liturgy, ecclesiology, mission, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue.

We made a conscious choice to affirm the hermeneutical shift in the interpretation of the council by inviting the contributions of authors who represent historically under-represented voices in terms of both gender (with a presence of female authors not found in previous milestones of Vatican II scholarship) and geographical location (with forty-four authors from every continent). This is not a concession to the spirit of the age, but a historical and theological option in favour of a catholic understanding of the most important ecclesial event since the sixteenth-century Council of Trent. It is a choice that flows from recognition of the need to develop new sources in global Catholicism and to reflect the ecumenical perspectives that animated the authors and the texts of Vatican II. Further, it is a sign of the shift in the demography of World Christianity and of Catholicism since the conclusion of Vatican II.

10 For example, see The Word on Fire Vatican II Collection, foreword by Bishop Robert Barron (Des Plaines, IL: Word on Fire Institute, 2021).
The basic structure of the Oxford Handbook of Vatican II reflects our dual concern to carefully contextualize the Second Vatican Council and its teaching and to consider its continuing impact within a world Church. Part I is comprised of a series of essays that will assist readers to place the event of the Second Vatican Council within the broad context of ecclesial, social, and cultural history, pointing to its unique character in the trajectory of conciliar history. It also introduces the basic sources for the study of the council. The ten essays of Part II focus on the principal features of the teaching found in the sixteen documents and the ancillary texts of the council, approaching them in an organic or symphonic manner, rather than one by one. We turn our attention to the post-conciliar reception and non-reception of the council in Part III, as reflected in the evolution of church governance; the development of new approaches to theology; the renewal of canon law; and social, political, cultural, and gender issues.

Part IV is devoted to one of the principal aims of the Second Vatican Council: advancing the cause of Christian unity (Unitatis Redintegratio). While Vatican II was a council of reform for the Catholic Church—the largest single religious community in the world—it would also have profound implications for all of World Christianity. More than one hundred delegates from every major Christian confession took part in the four sessions of the council as official observers. The experience of a new openness and the conditions set out by the council’s Decree on Ecumenism established the possibility for the frank and sustained dialogue between the Christian churches that has marked the last half-century. Authors from Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, and Evangelical perspectives reflect on how the orientations of Vatican II have influenced the life of their own communities and on how the post-conciliar dialogue has nourished the bonds of genuine ecclesial communion while uncovering the roots of persistent division, enabling us to see them in a new light. Vatican II’s new spirit of dialogical engagement extends to the reconfiguration of the Catholic Church’s relations with non-Christian religions. This includes its clear affirmation of the Church’s dependence upon Judaism, the olive tree upon which it has been grafted (Rom. 11:17–18), with its renunciation of all forms of anti-Semitism. The council opened the path to an attitude of friendly dialogue and a new solidarity with representatives of Islam and with all other religious traditions.

The contributions of Part V introduce the reader to the diversity of world Catholicism today. Authors from every continent reflect on the unique contributions to the council by representatives from the local churches and its reception, considering the experience and challenges of the Church in diverse geographic and cultural regions. This variety of perspectives provides a window into the rich diversity of global Catholicism today and the many issues that face the Church as it looks to the future.

This volume could not have come together without the efforts of a large team of authors, to whom we are deeply indebted. It might also be considered the fruit of a decade of renewed studies on Vatican II led by international research networks. We note in particular the role of the Vatican II Studies Unit of the American Academy of Religion (active since 2012) and the intercontinental network of scholars collaborating on the preparation of a new multi-volume commentary of the council documents,
Vatican II: Legacy and Mandate, under the leadership of a team at the Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule, Vallendar, Germany, since 2018. The chapters in this volume have benefited greatly from the many exchanges that have taken place over the years in these and other fora for research and shared reflection. It is our firm hope that the Oxford Handbook on Vatican II will serve as an indispensable reference for anyone seeking to study or teach on the Second Vatican Council—its religious, social, and cultural significance, as well as its theological orientations and their continuing significance as the Church navigates the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Catherine E. Clifford
Massimo Faggioli

Pentecost, 2021
PART I

CONTEXT AND SOURCES
Vatican Council II did not fall out of the heavens. Like any institution and most especially like any institution of the Catholic Church, the council can be understood only in the context of the situations and the issues it inherited from the past that the fathers of the council decided to address. Although that context must be understood in the full scope of the Christian tradition, the four hundred years that stretched from the Council of Trent through Vatican I to Vatican II are particularly important in that regard.

1. Background to the Council of Trent

The Reformation raised grave problems for the Catholic Church. Luther’s triad of grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone encapsulated a radical dismissal of any role of merit in Christians’ relationship to God, a dismissal of ‘reason’ in relationship to belief, and not only a reduction in the number of sacraments but also a significant redefinition of those that remained.

In his clash with Catholic adversaries, Luther soon came to the conclusion, moreover, that the Church had in the early centuries failed to understand the Gospel and began to teach the save-yourself heresy known as Pelagianism. The Church, discontinuous with the apostolic past, was thus a fraud—or worse! Justification by faith alone posed, therefore, an institutional as well as a doctrinal challenge.

Before Luther came to that conclusion about the Church and before his excommunication in 1521, he published his Appeal to the German Nobility, in which he exhorted Emperor Charles V and the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire to take in hand the reform of the Church. Although Luther’s Appeal was only one in a long list of reform proposals that circulated in Europe at the time, it articulated its proposals in a particularly
provocative way and framed them in highly controversial theological principles. Wide ranging in its reform agenda, it nonetheless focused especially on abuses in the Roman Curia and on the failure of the popes to remedy them. In that regard, it reflected the common persuasion of the era that the popes were principally responsible for the evils that beset the Church.

A century before Luther, the Council of Constance (1414–18) had met to resolve the Great Western Schism, the long-standing scandal of two, then three, men simultaneously and stubbornly claiming to be the legitimate pope. The council insisted that in the wake of the disarray caused by the schism, the Church needed reform ‘in head and members, in faith and mores’. It thus made reform, including reform of ‘the head’, a preoccupation of thoughtful Christians for the next hundred years. Luther was heir to this tradition.

Luther had to be answered, and councils were the traditional instrument for dealing with such a crisis. Ever since Constance, however, the popes had become wary of councils. Constance had resolved the schism by deposing two of the contenders, persuading the third to resign, and then electing a new pope. Those drastic measures made subsequent popes fearful of what a council might attempt against them, and they implicitly raised the question of the relationship between papal and episcopal authority, especially when bishops gathered in a council.

When ‘Pope’ John XXIII, the schismatic papal contender who initially convoked Constance in 1414 (later deposed and considered an anti-pope), fled the council in an attempt to sabotage it, the council issued its famous decree, *Haec Sancta*, in which it affirmed its authority ‘even over papal’ in matters pertaining to faith and the extirpation of the schism.

*Haec Sancta*, destined to have a long and highly contentious afterlife, was essentially an expression of the traditional view that an ecumenical council was the highest authority in the Church, empowered to take whatever measures were needed for the Church's well-being. In that regard, it reflected the collegial aspect of church governance initiated by the so-called Council of Jerusalem described in Acts 15:6–29. By the second century, the collegial character of governance had taken practical and widespread form in the many local councils convoked by bishops in various parts of the Roman Empire. Only after Constance and especially after the radical Council of Basle (1431–49) did a fractious and sometimes adversarial relationship between council and pope develop.

This situation largely accounts for the delay in the convocation of a council to deal with the Reformation. When a new pope, Paul III, was elected in 1534, he cooperated with Emperor Charles V in efforts that led to the successful convocation of Trent in 1545. The pope, eager enough to have the council address the doctrinal issues, did his best to reserve to himself reform issues, especially those concerning the papacy’s authority and the practices of the Curia. But most reform-minded Christians saw reform of the papacy as the first priority in any reform programme, and many doubted the popes were willing to carry such a reform forward.

Even before the Council of Trent met, therefore, several issues had emerged in a particularly critical way that for the next four hundred years consistently recurred and were
debated: the relationship between the papacy and the episcopacy (who is in charge), the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in doctrine and discipline (does the Church and its teaching change?), and the legitimacy and scope of reform (how far should reform go?).

2. Trent and the Tridentine Era

The Council of Trent opened on 13 December 1545. It concluded, after two long interruptions, eighteen years later, on 8 December 1563. It issued a large number of decrees, some of which dealt with doctrine, others with reform. It for the most part formulated the decrees in canons (ordinances, laws), which included penalties for non-observance.

The theologians and bishops at the council were keenly aware of Luther’s claim that church teaching did not reflect the Gospel. In reaction to that claim, no previous council ever implied or stated so regularly that there had been no change in doctrine since the apostolic age. Although the council professed to ‘reform’ mores, it only ‘confirmed’ doctrine. When it affirmed that in the Catholic Church the doctrine of the Eucharist had remained unchanged from earliest times, it made explicit for one of its doctrinal pronouncements what underlay them all.¹

In the meantime, a group of Lutheran historians began publishing in 1559 a multi-volume history of the Church, commonly known as the Magdeburg Centuries, that developed the discontinuity theme. In Rome, Cesare Baronio, a priest of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, published in 1588 the first volume of his Ecclesiastical Annals, a response to the Centuries. In it, Baronio validated the Church’s unbroken continuity with the tradition of the apostles. Thus were born two major historiographical traditions of long-range import. The discrepancy between these two approaches to the Christian past continued as a fundamental issue to trouble both Vatican I and Vatican II.

If doctrine did not change, it did not need reform. It was not subject to reform. The council itself, therefore, limited reform to reform of mores; that is, reform of public behaviour, especially of clerics. The bishops, in effect, focused that reform on clerics holding the three major pastoral offices in the Church—the popes, the bishops, and the pastors of parishes. They soon learned from the legates, however, that reform of the papacy was off limits. Nonetheless, despite the legates’ best efforts, the issue surfaced again and again; finally, in the third period, 1562–63, it reached such a crisis that the result was a ten-month stalemate, during which the council was unable to pass a single decree.

The crisis arose over a seemingly unrelated problem: the fairly widespread absence of bishops from their dioceses. Such bishops collected the benefice (a form of endowment income due to the office holder) from their diocese and then used part of the money to hire vicars to do the job. Moreover, some of them held more than one bishopric and collected the money from all of them. This was a widely recognized abuse, a violation of canon law, and the reformers at Trent were determined to put a stop to it. After all, if a bishop were not present in his diocese, he obviously could not perform his traditional duties there.

The loophole in the system was dispensations from residency granted by the papal Curia in exchange for financial considerations. In fact, money from this and similar practices constituted a significant amount of the annual papal income. The popes, though they sometimes made efforts to change the situation, needed the money. Reform of the bishops, therefore, touched on papal authority, the subject forbidden to the council.

The skilful papal legate Giovanni Morone was finally able to broker a compromise. In the aftermath, the reigning pope, Pius IV, realized that to bring the council to conclusion without another major crisis, he would have to allow it to impose certain other reforms on the Curia. Some of the major offenders against the rule of residence were members of the Curia themselves.

The crisis throws light on one of the great paradoxes of the Council of Trent: it failed to issue a decree on papal authority, yet many Protestant reformers denied that the pope had any role in the Church. Even though the bishops at Trent intended to answer every Protestant heresy, they could not address this one, because they were too divided among themselves about the precise scope of papal authority.

The doctrinal decrees that the council did publish gave Catholics a sense of coherence among themselves, which at the same time distinguished them from Protestants. Thus, the Council of Trent unwittingly helped further the religious division that became a hallmark of the modern Western world. The paradox in this instance is that Emperor Charles V saw the council as an instrument of reconciliation with the Lutherans, and he prevailed upon a reluctant and sceptical Pope Paul III to go along with that goal. It was not to be. By the time the council met, Lutheranism had developed into a full-fledged confession, a religious system, that was incompatible with Catholicism.

The decree on justification, the council’s centrepiece, was too long and complex to have direct impact except, once again, to let Catholics know that the Protestant position was wrong. It therefore had the unfortunate and very much unintended effect of leading Catholics to say they believed in good works and Protestants believed in grace.

For the next hundred years, the Church recovered some of the territories that earlier seemed lost to Protestantism and flourished in a number of other ways. It was more creative in its pastoral outreach than ever before, aided greatly by the birth of new religious orders of men and women dedicated to new forms of ministry, especially the management and staffing of schools for the laity. The era produced many saints.
Nonetheless, it was a bitter and highly contentious time. Theologians developed a new field called controversial theology that was designed to put Protestants in their place. Religious wars wracked Europe for a full century, culminating in the Thirty Years War, which brought Catholics onto the battlefield against other Catholics. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 finally brought the conflict to conclusion. A great turning point, it marked the end of the religious militancy of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. It implicitly proclaimed, however, that Protestantism was here to stay and that all efforts to make it go away had failed.

3. **The Century of Lights**

By the middle of the seventeenth century, therefore, Catholic rulers and churchmen wanted to put dogmatism, fanaticism, and religious wars behind them. They searched for arguments in their cultural heritage to bolster that desire and thus helped set the stage for the Enlightenment. Bishops, theologians, and monarchs appropriated new ideas as they came along, gradually and piecemeal, over generations, not always seeing what the ultimate consequences might be for the Church, for society at large, or for themselves.

Catholic thinkers now looked with favour on certain Protestant authors. Influenced especially by Descartes, they increasingly questioned some of the philosophical assumptions that underlay Catholic theology and sought ever more rational foundations for society. The Scientific Revolution was well under way.

Within the Church, old wounds festered. Principal among them was the relationship between the papacy and the episcopacy, which often also entailed the relationship between the papacy and secular rulers. The best-known form of politico-theological positions that emphasized the authority of councils, both local and ecumenical, was Gallicanism, which was only the French version of persuasions widespread across Europe among bishops and theologians of the era.

Gallicanism had roots deep in the past, but it received its classic formulation in the last quarter of the seventeenth century in the Four Articles of the Assembly of the Clergy of France, 1682. The first stated that Christ gave Peter and his successors authority over spiritual matters but not temporal ones. The second said that full spiritual authority resided in the papacy, but that the decree *Haec Sancta* of the Council of Constance remained in full force and was not just an emergency measure to resolve the schism. The third asserted that the long-standing customs, usages, and practices of the French Church, sanctioned by time and the esteem of the whole Church, were to be respected by the Holy See and were inviolable.

The fourth was that ‘In questions of faith, the leading role is that of the Supreme Pontiff, and his decrees apply to all churches … But his judgement is not unchangeable [Lat. *irreformabile*] unless it accords with the consensus of the Church.’ An important author of the articles was Bossuet, a theologian and renowned preacher. He provided a reliable interpretation of articles 2 and 4: ‘It is therefore the full, supreme, and universal
authority of the Catholic Church that supplies what is lacking even in the Roman Church.  

The Gallican emphasis on councils and on episcopal authority rested on impeccable historical credentials. In the first millennium of Christianity and even later, bishops—on their own and especially when gathered in council—governed the Church, a history that the Gallican bishops knew well. They respected the Holy See but were determined to safeguard the authority of councils and the diversity of traditions within the local Church.

No matter how legitimate were the theological principles the Gallicans espoused, kings and their ministers co-opted them to promote the ideal of national churches only tangentially related to the Holy See. In the middle of the eighteenth century, for instance, Emperor Joseph II of Austria took to heart the royalist bias in some Gallican authors and put them into action. He, for instance, suppressed well over five hundred religious houses in Austro-Slavic lands, reorganized the training of priests under the control of the State, and gave Protestants and Jews permission to practise their faith publicly. Although many of Joseph's reforms were badly needed, he was particularly high-handed in accomplishing them. Even the protest visit of Pope Pius VI to Vienna, an unprecedented action by a modern pope, did not result in any changes in Joseph's policies.

Duke Leopold of Tuscany, Joseph II’s brother, prevailed upon the willing bishop of Prato-Pistoia to summon in 1786 a diocesan synod. The Synod of Pistoia, a ten-day meeting of some two hundred priests, undertook reforms even more radical than those of the emperor. They included basing authority in the Church on the consent of the faithful and basing the authority of bishops on the consent of their clergy. The synod exalted, however, the authority of the secular rulers. It voted to replace Latin in the liturgy with the vernacular, to eliminate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to work for the reduction of the religious orders into one body.

The synod was the high-water mark of the attempt to implement such policies before the outbreak of the French Revolution three years later. Only in 1794, eight years after the synod, did Pope Pius VI dare to issue a bull, Auctorem Fidei, that condemned eighty-five of the synod’s proposals. The governments of Austria, Tuscany, Naples, Turin, Venice, Milan, Spain, and Portugal refused to publish the bull, a striking indication of the level to which papal authority had sunk.

Both Joseph and Leopold were Jansenists, and the synod represented late Jansenist goals as much as it did royalist versions of Gallicanism and the Enlightenment. Jansenism, a radical reform movement within the Catholic Church, was based on a highly contested theological foundation similar to John Calvin’s. Cornelius Jansen’s great book, Augustinus, was published posthumously in Louvain in 1640. Hardly had it appeared when it won a papal condemnation, for which the Jansenists blamed the

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Jesuits. It nonetheless spawned a small but powerful movement, especially in elite lay and clerical circles. As the decades passed, the movement received other papal censures and condemnations. For one reason or another, these measures failed to halt the movement, which became ever more international and influential.

In accordance with its austere moral code, the Jansenists sought a purification of piety. They disdained popular devotions, which had become almost a hallmark of Catholicism under the baneful influence of the Jesuits. The Jansenists reserved a special contempt for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a Jesuit favourite. They espoused, instead, a piety based on the devout reading of Scripture and faithful attendance at mass, which was to be celebrated in the vernacular.

The condemnations helped make Jansenists into champions of freedom of conscience, as they reacted against both royal and ecclesiastical leaders, whom they considered tyrannical and unprincipled. In 1713, Pope Clement XI, in his bull *Unigenitus*, condemned 101 positions attributed to the Jansenists. The bull created an uproar in France, where it was denounced as an illegitimate interference of the papacy in the affairs of the French Church. With that, many Gallicans thus became at least fellow travellers with the Jansenists.

By the middle of the century, a new generation of royal ministers emerged in the monarchies of France, Portugal, and Spain. Harbingers of the nationalism that characterized the next century, these men were intent on shoring up royal authority, which in their view meant lessening the authority of the Church and making it a department of the State. For them, the papacy—an institution with claims that transcended national borders—was the symbol of what they opposed. They sought occasions to humiliate the papacy and demonstrate its political impotence.

In a campaign to force the papacy to suppress the Jesuits, they found the cause they were looking for. When, in 1773, they applied such pressure to Pope Clement XIV that he did the deed, they vindicated the nationalism of their countries over the internationalism of the papacy. The papacy’s inability to protect a religious order as large and influential as the Jesuits showed that papal authority, extensive on paper, was powerless in the real world of politics.

Although Gallicanism, Jansenism, and a nascent nationalism are crucially important for understanding the situation of the Church during the eighteenth century, the impact of the Enlightenment was more pervasive. Complex and multiform, the Enlightenment was appropriated in various ways by different persons and counted within its ranks many bishops and priests. Complex though it was, it was fairly consistent in its fundamental goals and assumptions.

Among those goals was the pursuit of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which gained special currency in France. The pursuit of liberty seemed almost inevitably to entail freedom of speech and therefore the end of censorship by Church and State. Equality entailed at least a qualification of hierarchy in both civil and ecclesiastical society, while fraternity, when pressed to its logical conclusion, entailed the end of class distinctions. Underlying these freedoms was, moreover, the assumption that legitimate authority did
not descend from on high but rested upon the free assent of the governed. In France, these goals began to take on ominous overtones by the third quarter of the century as the financial situation of the monarchy deteriorated precipitously.

Even more basic to the Enlightenment was confidence in the power of human reason. The confidence in reason took different forms, some of which were perfectly consonant with the Catholic tradition while others denied the reality and relevance of anything that the human intellect could not understand. It thus denied the very possibility of the transcendent. Every form of the confidence in reason subscribed to the idea that reason would continue to triumph over ignorance, superstition, and all manifestations of repression.

In Catholic areas of Europe on the eve of the French Revolution, four distinct political-cultural-theological phenomena dominated the scene: Gallicanism (and its counterparts), Jansenism, a nascent nationalism, and the Enlightenment. Although each was distinctive and sometimes seemingly incompatible with the others, they shared certain characteristics. Each in its own way posed problems for the papacy, and their convergence, as in the campaign against the Jesuits, was even more problematic.

4. The Revolution and Its Pan-European Aftermath

The French Revolution broke out in 1789. For the Church, the shocks came one after another. In 1790, the revolutionary government, desperate for funds, confiscated virtually all church property. It also suppressed all religious orders. That same year, the National Assembly passed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, a document that was to some extent fashioned from trimmed-down and reconceived Jansenist and Gallican principles.

The execution of the king and queen raised the horrid question of whether all monarchies might be doomed, even the papal monarchy. The Constitution and related documents drastically reduced the number of dioceses in France from 135 to eighty-three and reorganized their boundaries. The Constitution required bishops to swear allegiance to the State above all foreign authority—that is, the papacy. As the Revolution turned ever more radical, it abolished Sunday observance and all feast days, replacing them with secular ones. For a brief period, it turned Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris into a ‘Temple of Reason.’ The Reign of Terror sent bishops, priests, and nuns to the guillotine. Mobs sacked and destroyed churches and monasteries.

When, in 1796, the government launched a programme of foreign aggression, the Revolution took the first step in having a profound pan-European impact. That year, French troops under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy, cut through
opposing forces, and subjected the pope to humiliating terms of surrender in the Treaty of Tolentino. The next year, the French occupied Rome, deposed the pope, declared the Roman republic, and then took Pius VI prisoner to France, where he died shortly thereafter.

Once Napoleon became virtual dictator, he was able in the wake of his conquests to impose on other parts of Europe some of the same policies and structures regarding the Church that the Revolution had put in place in France. He was astute enough to recognize, however, that the vast majority of the French population was Catholic, and that it was to some extent more fervent and committed as a reaction to the atrocities done to the Church and to the indignities and hardships they had personally suffered. After a series of tense negotiations, he and the new pope, the equally astute Pius VII, were able to negotiate the Concordat of 1801, which became a template for similar concordats with other states that the pope negotiated after Napoleon's defeat. In them, the pope confirmed the right of governments to nominate candidates for episcopal sees, as was the practice in the ancien régime.

In France, the concordat brought stability to the religious situation and allowed Catholics to catch their breath and to rally. The very next year, François-René de Chateaubriand published *The Genius of Christianity*. The book was a brilliant, nostalgic, and imaginative reading of history to show how Christianity—that is, Catholicism—had produced the great cultural achievements of the past or had sublimated those otherwise produced. It gloried in the sacraments, the rituals, the bells, the vestments, and the clouds of incense that marked church life.

The book was an in-your-face rejection of the austere religious culture of the Jansenists. Often credited with inaugurating the Romantic movement in French literature, it laid the foundation for the nineteenth-century interpretation of the Middle Ages as the Age of Faith, after which religion had headed on a downward course that reached its nadir in the eighteenth century. Chateaubriand helped lay the foundations for the Catholic conviction that a revival of medieval philosophy and theology was the solution to the problem of the modern world.

In some quarters, the Romantic movement affected theologians, among whom Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) is especially notable. During his short life, he was an influential professor of church history at the University of Tübingen and later at Munich. Rather than view the Church in strictly institutional forms, as had been the dominant tradition since Bellarmine in the early seventeenth century, Möhler viewed it as a living organism, filled with the Holy Spirit.

More broadly, the Romantic movement provided a vocabulary and ethos for the Ultramontanes, the protagonists in the nineteenth-century drive for the definition of papal infallibility. With the Romantics as a silent ally, the Ultramontanes were able to adorn their arguments with noble sentiments and ideals, showing that infallibility was more than an abstract teaching and political expedient. It was a wellspring of benefits for the Church and society.
With the Congress of Vienna, 1814–15, the era of the Revolution ended, and a new era of restoration opened. With the definitive defeat of Napoleon, the congress was intent on turning back the clock, restoring monarchs to their thrones, and re-establishing the principles on which society had rested before the dreadful onslaught of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Temporarily and superficially, in those regards the congress succeeded. Over the long term, in those regards it failed. It did succeed, however, in what it did not intend, codifying and crystallizing the cultural division of Europe into two bitterly antagonistic ideologies: liberal and conservative. Liberalism styled itself as modern by trying to establish society on the basis of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Conservatism, in whose numbers were most of the leaders of the Catholic Church, had experienced that liberty, equality, and fraternity wrought nothing but carnage and chaos. It became, therefore, anti-modern.

By the time of the congress, the Church showed definite signs of recovery, but its hierarchy had undergone significant changes. In France, the Rhineland, and elsewhere in Europe, the bishops had been reduced in number. The redistribution of the boundaries of dioceses resulted in the loss of a sense of corporate identity as well as a loss of corporate influence.

In this situation, the bishops developed a livelier appreciation for the authority of the papacy, the international institution that could help them against oppressive governments. After all, Pius VII was the leader who stood up to the tyrant Napoleon and was able to negotiate with him. Bishops might still call themselves Gallican, but theirs was a Gallicanism more likely to welcome papal initiatives in their regard than was true earlier.

Jansenism was a shadow of what it had been before the Revolution. It had lost its influence in high places and was no match for the Romanticism that triumphed in literature, the arts, and ultimately in popular piety. Its archenemy, the Society of Jesus, had risen from the grave and was once again promoting the abominable devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Revolution, its aftermath, and then the Congress of Vienna had catalysed further development of nationalism, which became one of the defining characteristics of nineteenth-century Europe. Nationalism fuelled the drive in Germany and Italy for the elimination of smaller states into one country, a drive that in Italy spelled the end of papal temporal power. Nationalism was, moreover, counterpoint to the supranational and transnational claims of the Church.

The ideals and the cultural assumptions of the Enlightenment survived the recent events and, in some ways, emerged even stronger. They now presented themselves under the generic label of liberalism. Fundamental to liberalism were separation of Church and State, belief in progress, and freedom of the press, of speech, and of religion.
In practice, liberalism campaigned to secularize society and lessen the influence of the Church.

For Catholics and most other Christians, most troubling about the heritage of the Enlightenment was what they perceived as its corrosive impact on religious faith. They interpreted it as promoting rationalism, atheism, and religious indifference and as having a subversive influence on any belief system that based its claims on a truth revealed from on high. This was the most fundamental and most serious danger posed by the modern world.

The stage was thus set for the emergence of Ultramontanism, a strongly papal-centric ecclesiology. The word originated in Italy in the Middle Ages to designate a pope born ‘on the other side of the mountain’; that is, in northern Europe, on the other side of the Alps. Later, German and French authors reversed its meaning to designate the southern side of the Alps; that is, the papacy.

Although the Ultramontane movement was based on earlier traditions, it properly began in 1819 when Count Joseph de Maistre published *Du pape*, ‘On the Pope’. De Maistre, layman and aristocrat, diplomat and political theorist, in his earlier years a Mason, became profoundly disillusioned with the Revolution and returned to the practice of the Catholic faith. He became a fierce opponent of the Revolution and an equally fierce apologist for monarchy.

He came to see that the only hope for European society to recover from chaos was an absolute and sovereign authority whose decisions could not be challenged—whose decisions were infallible. Of all the monarchies, only the papacy fit that description. De Maistre was, therefore, inexorably opposed to any form of Gallicanism or any form of governance in which deliberative bodies had a role to play. He argued not from theology or church tradition but also from logic and political philosophy, yet he had a profound theological impact.

De Maistre became almost a byword for Ultramontanism, but the movement, like Gallicanism, was multifaceted. Shortly after the publication of *Du pape*, Abbé Felicité de Lamennais emerged as the initiator of a liberal Ultramontanism, a version of papal-centric ecclesiology that advocated a papacy aligned not with outdated monarchies but with the people, a papacy championing liberty, equality, and fraternity. The liberal movement remained small, was belittled and maligned by most Catholics, but managed to survive through the century and beyond.

In the Rhineland just slightly later, Joseph Görres, layman and political activist, emerged as a spokesman for yet another variation on the Ultramontane theme. He was incensed by the influence the Protestant Prussian state exercised in his homeland and saw that the bishops were not able to oppose it effectively. Only the papacy had the distance and prestige to do so. But his fear of despotism was so deep that he could not accept the idea of a papal authority without limit. In that critical regard, his Ultramontanism differed from de Maistre’s.

Other varieties of Ultramontanism appeared elsewhere. Every variety in some measure was, at least initially, related intrinsically to the political situation in which its proponents found themselves. Most varieties took the infallibility of the pope as their
cornerstone and saw it as a powerful statement against the modern world and as a remedy for the ills of that world.

De Maistre brought papal infallibility out of its relatively secluded haven in theological classrooms and set it boldly in the public square. Catholic journals, which began to proliferate at this time, made sure it stayed there, and they did so to such an extent that it became almost inevitable that Vatican Council I would address it. The press took sides in a battle of words between the Ultramontanes, who saw infallibility as required by the times, and those generally labelled Gallicans, who saw infallibility as a danger to the legitimate practices and self-determining traditions of the local Church. They saw it as an assault on the authority of ecumenical councils.

6. Vatican I: The Event

In 1848, two years after he was elected, Pope Pius IX was forced to flee Rome in disguise as a result of a liberal revolution in Rome and the Papal States. He remained in exile for two years and was able to return to Rome only because French troops ensured his safety. The event marked him for life and convinced him that the Church had to oppose liberalism with all its strength if it hoped to survive. This conviction deepened with the passing of the years, especially after the seizure in 1860 of almost all the Papal States by the forces of the new Italian monarchy. In the seized territories, the government deprived a large number of religious institutions of their legal status and confiscated a half-million acres of church land.

In 1864, Pius published the *Syllabus of Errors*. In eighty propositions under ten headings, the *Syllabus* condemned pantheism, rationalism, socialism, communism, Protestantism, the subordination of the Church to the State, religious freedom, and much more. The often-quoted final proposition condemned the idea that ‘the Roman Pontiff can reconcile himself and come to terms with progress, Liberalism, and modern civilisation’. No document could have set the Church more squarely against the modern world than did the *Syllabus*.

By the next year, Pius took the first steps in convoking a council. He deemed such an extraordinary measure necessary to deal with the extraordinary challenges posed by the modern world. Despite the problems of that world, its political and ecclesiological situation allowed the pope to undertake serenely a project that in the eighteenth century no pope would have dared.

Pius had closely followed the controversies in the press that raged between the Ultramontanes and the Gallicans. In unmistakably clear ways, he showed his support for the Ultramontanes. Nonetheless, in convoking the council, he gave no indication that infallibility was part of the agenda, nor did any of the many documents prepared for the council by his Curia.

The seizure of Rome by Italian forces in the autumn of 1870 cut the council short, so that it was able to publish only two documents. The first, *Dei Filius*, ‘Dogmatic
Constitution on the Catholic Faith, had been drastically revised from a draft document ‘against the manifold evils of rationalism’ to make a more positive statement. Nonetheless, each of its four chapters ended with three to six canons condemning erroneous opinions.

Just how well Dei Filius met the problems of the day is open to question. Whatever its limitations, it made a statement that was badly needed and provided the Church with a firm grounding in a world where the foundations upon which society had rested were crumbling and being replaced by others. In its core, the document could not have been more basic: God exists and, in some measure, can be known; religious truth is not unreasonable; in the last analysis, reason and revelation are not at odds; faith enhances life.

A small but well-organized number of bishops came to the council determined to put infallibility on the agenda and to see it through to a definition. By a series of deft moves, they achieved their goal, enabled by the growing support they received from other bishops. Pius himself became an open partisan in favour of the definition. Bishops opposed to it numbered at best 20 per cent of the total number.

Pastor Aeternus, ‘Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ’, contained three chapters on papal primacy and a fourth on papal infallibility. Although the minority bishops had certain reservations about chapter 3 on papal jurisdiction, the three chapters on primacy passed easily, which certainly would not have happened in the eighteenth century.

Over chapter 4, however, the debate was passionate and sometimes bitter. By this point, the minority bishops accepted that in some form or other, the council would define infallibility. Their goal, therefore, was to make sure the definition did not go as far as some of the more extreme Ultramontanes wanted. The bishops found, however, that the wording of the document allowed an extreme interpretation of infallibility that was (1) personal, as if infallibility rested in the person of the pope rather than in his office; (2) absolute, as if there were no limits to its scope; and (3) separate, as if the pope could make infallible pronouncements without taking account of the faith of the Church.

Their arguments had some effect on the final version but not enough to satisfy them fully. Nonetheless, after the council, as a result of several factors, an interpretation of the definition gained currency that allowed the minority bishops to inform the Holy See of their submission. Nonetheless, the persuasion gradually took hold that Pastor Aeternus had rendered councils superfluous. The pope could—and should—make all decisions.

7. Theological Ferment between Vatican I and Vatican II

At Vatican I, the minority bishops argued against infallibility partly on historical grounds: there were instances of popes teaching heresy. Such arguments made no headway in the council. In fact, the explanatory notes (the Relatio) that accompanied
Pastor Aeternus explicitly ruled out such arguments: ‘[Since infallibility is clear from Scripture and church pronouncements] it is impossible that it can ever be proved false by historical facts. If, however, such facts are brought forward to oppose it, they must themselves be deemed false insofar as they are opposed.\(^3\)

The majority at the council thus showed itself to be blind to one of the most characteristic features of the culture of the modern world: its highly developed historical awareness and sense of discrepancy between past and present. Newman had published his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* in 1845, twenty-four years before the council, but it had no palpable influence.

Building on the pioneer work of the Renaissance humanists, scholars in the nineteenth century refined their methods of historical research and boasted that their weighing of evidence was allegedly dispassionate. They turned their skills to sacred texts, including the Bible, and sometimes came up with results that shocked and scandalized churchmen who were not abreast of what was happening. The nineteenth-century fascination with evolution was a crucial part of this phenomenon.

The problem of change did not go away; it reached a climax some thirty years after the council when Pope Pius X condemned Modernism, a complex phenomenon with multiple facets. The pope saw it as a compendium of false philosophies, which included a belief that the doctrine of evolution applied to everything—to dogma, Church, worship, sacred books, ‘and even faith itself’. He followed the condemnation with ongoing measures of surveillance, repression, and punishment that were unprecedentedly extreme.

The measures had a deleterious impact on Catholic intellectual life, but when the next pope, Benedict XV, considerably mitigated them, that life began to revive. Indeed, it did so remarkably well, resulting in one of the liveliest periods of theological development in the history of the Church. The development was in large measure the result of positive engagement with the culture of the modern world.

Catholic exegetes realized that they could not isolate themselves from the new biblical criticism. In 1890, well before the condemnation of Modernism, the French Dominican Marie-Joseph Lagrange founded the École biblique in Jerusalem, which was a turning point. Pius X, though suspicious of Lagrange, never openly censured him. The new methods gained ground and in 1943 won public and official papal approval in Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.

Well before Vatican I, Abbot Prosper Guéranger published books on the liturgy that inspired others to research its history and theology. They were intent on discovering what impact their research might have on contemporary church worship. Thus was born the liturgical movement, whose collective scholarship led Pius XII in 1947 to publish *Mediator Dei*, the first encyclical devoted to the liturgy; the next year, he set up a secret commission to advise him on a general reform of the liturgy. Acting on the commission’s

recommendations, in 1951 and 1955 he completely reorganized the liturgies for the Sacred Triduum, the last three days of Holy Week. The bishops at Vatican II had, therefore, experienced significant changes in the liturgy and thus knew further changes were possible.

In 1879, the year after he was elected, Pope Leo XIII, the successor to Pius IX, published the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, prescribing the study of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas in all Catholic schools and seminaries. That philosophy, Leo promised, would provide principles for setting society aright. Few papal documents have had such profound and long-lived impact on Catholic intellectual culture.

Under the impetus of the encyclical, Catholics embraced the Middle Ages now more fervently and self-confidently as their own, the true Age of Faith. In considerable numbers, they devoted themselves to the study of all aspects of medieval life and culture. As the decades passed, they became ever more aware of how complex and conflicted the Middle Ages were. By the 1920s and 1930s, the movement had produced first-rate scholars such as Martin Grabmann, Étienne Gilson, and Jacques Maritain. But scholars soon sensed that simply repeating the arguments they found in Thomas Aquinas failed to meet contemporary problems.

In that regard, the French Dominicans are especially important. While remaining broadly faithful to the medieval traditions of their order, they approached those traditions with rigorous historical criticism, brilliantly described and defended in 1937 by Marie-Dominique Chenu in *Une école de la théologie: Le Saulchoir*. From this milieu came Yves Congar, perhaps the single most important theologian of Vatican II.

The Belgian Jesuit Joseph Maréchal had, in 1922, published his five volumes on ‘the departure point of metaphysics’, which launched the influential movement known as Transcendental Thomism. Like others at the time, Maréchal opened the door to a more subject-oriented and historically sensitive theology. By the 1950s, Karl Rahner had become the most notable exponent of this kind of Thomism.

Other scholars, feeling that neo-Thomism and other forms of neo-scholasticism had run their course, sought alternatives. They found one in the theology of the Fathers of the Church. Between 1844 and 1866, the French priest and publishing entrepreneur Jacques-Paul Migne had brought out 383 volumes of the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers, his *Patrologia*. For the first time, scholars had texts at their easy disposal, many of which they could earlier have consulted only as rare books in widely scattered libraries.

Theologians quickly came to see the discrepancy in style, focus, and even content between patristic and scholastic theology, between a theology based primarily on rhetorical principles and one based mainly on dialectical principles. They began to work with what they found. In 1946, the French Jesuit Jean Daniélou described the resulting ‘new theology’.

Daniélou argued that, unlike scholastic theology, this new theology provided nourishment for the soul. It could easily take into account the turn of modern thought to historicity and subjectivity. It drew its inspiration from three great, interlocking
sources—the Bible, the liturgy, and the Fathers. Those were the three classic sources of the Christian life and tradition that needed to be rethought and made operative.

In opposition to such developments, or at least in indifference to them, stood ‘Roman theology,’ as it was called at the time. Its chief exponents taught in the theological schools in Rome and had great influence through the books they wrote, which were often almost obligatory texts in seminaries around the world. In the eyes of its critics, Roman theology, besides its other deficiencies, amounted to an intellectual mind game, irrelevant to the real life of the Church. It was, however, deeply entrenched in the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition and would play an important role in the early months of Vatican II.

Catholic life was bustling outside theological circles. Because of the unsettled conditions of political life, the organizers of Vatican I had decided not to issue a formal invitation to ‘the Christian princes’ to take part in the council. Vatican I thus became the first ecumenical council in history in which the laity did not play an active and direct role.

But by the early years of the twentieth century, an impressive number of lay organizations were flourishing in the Church—the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Sodalities of Our Lady, and, in the United States, the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of America, and others. Of special importance worldwide was Catholic Action, vigorously promoted by Pius XI. It seemed to some, in fact, that ‘an age of the laity’ was dawning.

John XXIII’s announcement of a new council on 25 January 1959 led scholars to new scrutiny of Vatican I. They became more aware than before that the council was scheduled to debate a comprehensive decree on the Church in which the bishops’ authority and prerogatives as successors of the apostles was fully developed. Once Vatican II opened, bishops were determined to clarify their role, especially when gathered in council, in relationship to that of the pope.

By the eve of Vatican II, moreover, the modern world was considerably different from what it had been in the nineteenth century. The ravages of two world wars had trimmed the pretensions of liberalism and its dogma of inevitable progress. They had also, by 1945, helped promote belief that democracy was the political form best suited to secure peace and achieve justice and prosperity. Here, Catholics, so often excluded from participation in the political process after the Revolution, took the lead.

The horrors of World War II gave brotherhood a new urgency and led Catholics to cast a more favourable eye on the ecumenical movement. The horrors of the Holocaust forced Catholics into a serious examination of conscience about what responsibility they might bear for it. In such circumstances, how should Catholics understand the ancient axiom ‘no salvation outside the Church’?

Defence of human rights was becoming a Catholic cause. The social encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI, and, while the council was in session, Pope John XXIII, account for this remarkable development in Catholic self-definition, a development that in the period after Vatican II resulted in moving human rights and social concerns to a central position in Catholic moral theology. The Church looked as if it might be on the way to becoming the spokesperson for the protection and advancement of all humanity.
Suggested Reading

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF VATICAN II

Church and World

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

1. Introduction: The Catholic Church and a Global World

The historical context of the world in which a general council of the Catholic Church takes place is a fundamental element for understanding the event and its teachings. For the councils of the first millennium, as well as for the medieval councils and the councils of the ‘confessional era’ (Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II), the context is not just part of the picture but also part of its preparation, celebration, and reception. This is particularly true for Vatican II because of its ecclesiology of the relationship between the Church and the world, for the reception of historical thinking by the theology of Vatican II, and because of the different attitude from Vatican I in regard to modernity and historicity. If Vatican I reacted in opposition to the social and political context of its time, Vatican II was, to a large extent, a review of that intransigent posture of which Vatican I and Pius IX became a symbol and which shaped the Church’s message and language until the end of the ‘long nineteenth century’.

The historical global context has a key hermeneutical value for Vatican II because the council was the culmination of a movement of transition: this transition begins after World War I from the Ultramontanist movement, leading up from Vatican I to a theology of the relationship between the Church and the world towards a new age of globalized Catholicism. On the other hand, in comparison and in stark contrast to

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Trent, Vatican II develops an ecumenical approach that requires careful consideration of the global *oikumene* in a sense that is also non-confessional and non-religious.

## 2. Catholicism and the Modern World from Vatican I to the World Wars

The century that elapsed between the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) and Vatican II must be seen not only in terms of development of theological doctrines and religious practices but also in the context of a post-*Syllabus* Catholicism that developed along lines very different from those imagined by the pope, Pius IX, who called and contributed significantly to shaping the unfolding and the outcome of Vatican I.

The Catholic Church in the period between Vatican I and Vatican II makes a transition from Christendom to what philosopher Charles Taylor calls the ‘age of mobilization,’ in which religion is no longer ‘a community mentalité, but a partisan stance.’\(^2\) The political defeat of the papacy by the Italian nationalist movement and the loss of the temporal power over the Papal States between 1861 and 1870 was a defeat for the theology of an equivalence between the Church as *societas perfecta* and the State. But that defeat was also translated into a symbolical retrenchment and rallying of Catholicism around the papacy and into a magisterial response to the challenges of social and political modernity. Because of the changes in the economy (industrialization and market capitalism), society (the triumph of the bourgeoisie, the spread of state-run school systems), and politics (the rise of nationalism, parliamentarianism, and the extension of the right to vote) taking place in the Christian Western hemisphere, it was a Church that rallied around the papacy but also mobilized its people for a return of the secular world to Christendom. At the same time, Vatican I made room for a kind of ‘liberal ultramontanism’ (allowing for a distinction of theological and political planes) and left aside ‘legitimist ultramontanism’ (*droit divin du roi*); the former remained in the Church in the long run and shaped its relations with the modern nation states.\(^3\)

In the early 1900s, we have the development in the European churches of the Catholic Social Weeks that tried to recapture the working class from socialism and Marxism and to develop a Catholic resistance against both capitalism and socialism. In 1905, Pius X issued *Norms* to the laity, giving rise to a model (which remained in force for a long time) of association movements recognized by the ecclesiastical hierarchy: the bishops took the direction of Catholic Action, and the priests were present at different levels of

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the associations as ecclesiastical assistants and representatives of the ecclesiastical authority, which appointed them with the right of veto. Pius X's contribution was central to continuing and strengthening the line of a Catholic movement subject to the Vatican policy directed towards the social question—in the same years of the anti-modernist campaign. At that time, one of the most significant experiences of social Catholicism, the Social Weeks, came to light in different countries: in France in 1904, in Spain in 1906, in Italy in 1907, and in Belgium, Mexico, and Uruguay in 1908.

The redefinition of the role of the papacy in international affairs between Vatican I and the solution of the 'Roman question' with the Lateran Treaties of 1929 went together with a new Catholic activism in the social and economic realms. Vatican I was the first general/ecumenical council of the Catholic Church that excluded the participation of the representatives of Catholic states and empires, but it was also a prelude to a new kind of social activism in a Church whose official stance still prohibited lay Catholics in some countries from participating in politics. This was visible in the rise of the Catholic social movement and in the ecclesial movements that accompanied and followed the first steps of the foundational document of papal teaching on the Church and a modern socio-economic model, Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

The loss of Rome in 1870 shaped the conclusion and caused the sudden close of Vatican I. If it is true that the international relevance of papal diplomacy and papal authority declined during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in comparison to the pre-Westphalia age, on the other hand the diplomatic activity of the Holy See showed new vitality under Leo XIII also because Rome was at the centre of tensions and claims. At the time of the pontificate of Pius X, the Holy See had diplomatic relations with only fourteen states, the lowest point in the international role of the Holy See since the loss of Papal States between 1861 and 1870. In that moment, the Catholic Church saw the world disintegrate into World War I, with Catholics fighting against one another as members of inimical nation states, and with a Holy See whose international status was uncertain given the lack of solution to the Roman question created by the conquest of Rome by the new Kingdom of Italy in 1870.

World War I saw Catholics fight in both sides of the trenches; this was a political as well as a theological challenge for a diminished Holy See from an international and diplomatic point of view. Papal magisterium interpreted the war as one of the fruits of secularization and liberal modernity, but the war also became for some future leaders of Vatican II a fundamental moment to re-elaborate the relationship between the Church and the world. In 1919, the exclusion of the Holy See from the post-war peace conference

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was a major setback for the papacy’s aspiration to an international role. The legacy of World War I was also the beginning of a reflection on peace. This started with the experience of Catholics and of Catholic clergy on the ground, but also with Benedict XV’s several pleas for peace, especially of 1 August 1917, in which the pope called the war a ‘senseless slaughter’.8

The experience and the aftermath of the First World War are important for understanding ‘the crucial importance of the Pontificate of Benedict XV and Pius XI in the development of this Catholic internationalism’.9 The Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 dashed the hopes of anti-imperialists and anti-colonialists. In that same year, Benedict XV published the encyclical Maximum Illud, which reframed the relationship between missionary activity, empires, and nations to give the Church more independence from the colonial powers without embracing the anti-colonial feelings in Africa and Asia. It was a Catholic internationalism that had to deal with the threats of nationalism on one hand and those of internationalist communism on the other. The Catholic Church responded to the double threat of nationalism and communism not only with the diplomatic activity of the Holy See and a new magisterial activism made possible by Vatican I, but also on the ground, such as with the foundation of the Confédération internationale des syndicats chrétiens (CISC) in 1920 and of Joseph Cardjin’s Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (JOC, Young Christian Workers) in 1924.

Intellectually, Catholicism dealt with this ideological and political challenge with a transition from dualism to dialectic:

After the Great War, Catholicism came to be imagined by certain cultural and intellectual elites not only as being thoroughly compatible with ‘modernity,’ but even more emphatically, as constituting the truest expression of ‘modernity.’ Its eternal truths were capable of infinite adaptation to ever-changing circumstances. In a decade that mourned the decimation of its youth, Catholicism could be forever young.10

Pius XI chose the Fascist party over the Popular (Catholic) party in Italy, which meant the suppression of the Popular party and the exile of its founder, Fr. Luigi Sturzo, in 1924. But Pius XI’s Church did not give Mussolini and Hitler a blank cheque, and the relationship between the Catholic Church and the fascist regimes was not free from tensions. At that time, the Vatican accepted the League of Nations as ‘the start-up project of an international society’.11 More importantly, the condemnation of the Action française and

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Maurrassian nationalism in December 1926 had a universal significance and important effects on the thought of intellectuals such as Jacques Maritain concerning the relationship between Catholicism and democracy.

In a world where communism became a political religion and fascism and Nazism took up roles previously fulfilled by the Church in terms of ensuring social and moral stability in the crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, Pius XI dealt with fascism, Nazism, and communism with the arms of diplomacy. The age of Pius XI was also the age of the most unlikely endeavours in post–World War I instability to consolidate the position of Catholicism in Europe, such as the mission of Cyrille Korolevskij and Eugène Tisserant in eastern Europe and Turkey in 1923–4 and the intelligence-gathering trips of undercover French Jesuit Michel d’Herbigny in Russia beginning in 1925. But it was also a theological response in the form of the theology of the social kingship of Christ:

It would be a grave error, on the other hand, to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since, by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to him by the Father, all things are in his power . . . If, therefore, the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of their countries, they will not neglect the public duty of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ.

The institution of the Feast of Christ the King by Pius XI in 1925 is also to be understood as a political message at the time of the rise of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. This altered the boundaries between Church and State in favour of the power of the State, to the detriment of the authority of the Church.

Despite the heavy reliance of the Church and, in particular, of the Catholic laity upon the ecclesiastical institution in this ideological confrontation, the intellectual renewal did not come primarily from the institution but from Catholic theologians (the nouvelle théologie) and lay intellectuals engaged in socio-political issues. The mobilization of Catholic youth in the interwar period in response to communist and fascist youth organizations led not only to new relations due to this mobilization, especially communist mobilization, but also to a new activism of the Catholic laity in new forms of codependence with, if not independence from, the institutional Church. This allowed an increasing democratic sensibility to grow within Catholicism despite the continuity of the official magisterium of the Church. In the 1920s, ‘a fundamental issue for the programs of the often illegal or developing Christian Democrat

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parties was raised: democracy had to be the cornerstone of the future world.\textsuperscript{16} This democratic culture of Catholicism was born not just in exile from the official culture of the Church, but also in material exile, which was ‘a matrix of Christian Democrat internationalism’ in three phases: between the two world wars, during the Second World War, and after the end of that war.\textsuperscript{17} The survival of a Christian democratic political culture, the development of different Catholic international organizations, the growing awareness of the importance of intermediate bodies, and subsidiarity for the rebuilding of democracies after the age of totalitarianism and of World War II allowed Catholics to survive the failure of the Christian democratic parties in Europe until 1945. Catholic Action, along with Catholic students’ and workers’ movements, was at the heart of the ‘classical age of social Catholicism coinciding with Taylor’s “age of mobilization”, circa 1820 to the 1950s’.\textsuperscript{18}

This slow development of a Catholic culture of the State, government, and rights coexisted with the Conciliazione through the Lateran Treaties and the Concordat between the Holy See and Italy signed on 11 February 1929. The Catholic Church found a solution to the Roman question but also met with new problems arising from Fascist expectations that a religious endorsement, domestically and internationally, be provided to Mussolini’s regime. The pontificate of Pius XI was tested by the confrontation with political ideologies and the rise of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Compared to the total opposition to communism, the compromises reached by the Vatican with Fascist Italy (culminating in the treaties of 1929) and with Nazi Germany (with a Concordat very early in the life of Hitler’s regime, in 1933) remained a warning of the steep costs of maintaining the Catholic establishment in Europe as a legacy of the ‘Constantinian age’. It was also during Pius XI’s pontificate in the 1920s and 1930s that the intellectual and ecclesial formation of most of the theological and episcopal leaders who would be the leaders of Vatican II occurred. One of the results was that ‘Pius XI left the papacy much stronger—diplomatically, ideologically, and institutionally—in 1939 than he received it in 1922’.\textsuperscript{19}

The first few years of the international activity of Pius XII’s pontificate were absorbed by the Second World War; the former diplomat and (since 1930) secretary of state enhanced the role of the Vatican as an international religious and diplomatic centre (expanding from thirty-seven to forty-one nunciatures, plus eight in eastern Europe without a resident diplomat, and fifteen apostolic delegations).\textsuperscript{20} He also tried to shape the action of the Church in terms of both diplomatic activity—requiring a


\textsuperscript{19} Pollard, \textit{The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism}, 290.

difficult balance between the Axis and the Allies—and relief service to refugees and prisoners of war, including the Vatican’s involvement in the efforts to save the Jews from the Holocaust. This was a very important moment in the development not only of the international stature of the Holy See but also of the growing, if silent, awareness of the limits of the theology of the Catholic Church on issues of major importance for the role of the Vatican in the contemporary world: concerning Judaism and religious liberty, and the power of the state and of politics in the age of ‘biopolitics’ and total warfare.

The end of World War II and the fall of dictatorships that in the beginning had been supported by the Vatican did not mean the end of the confrontation with communism but only a clearer geopolitical framing of the ideological clash in a Westernization of Catholicism which would be called into question by Vatican II. The tragic experience of World War II contributed to the theological development that would become visible at Vatican II, despite the attempt to curb the new trends in European theology targeted by the encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950) and the beatification (1943) followed quickly by the canonization (1954) of the pope of anti-modernism, Pius X.

### 3. THE NEW WORLD ORDER THE COLD WAR AND DECOLONIZATION

In his radio message of 1 September 1944, Pius XII expressed for the first time, and in a cautious and qualified way, some positive views about the creation of a new international organization and the possibility of the compatibility between Catholicism and political democracy. The end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War provided the Catholic Church with the context for a new approach to understanding social and political modernity in the global world.

The defeat of authoritarian regimes in World War II and the opening of the papal teaching to democratic political systems was followed chronologically by a wave of victories of Catholic and Christian democratic parties in Europe. Catholics who were elected leaders of their nations (especially in Italy, France, and Western Germany) were part of a political-intellectual movement of ‘reconstruction thought’. In a difficult and largely unspoken re-elaboration of what had been collaboration between Catholicism and authoritarian regimes in Europe in the interwar period, the immediate post-war period was the beginning of the democratization and constitutionalization of the political culture of Catholicism. The Catholic Church came to terms with the new international, post-colonial, liberal democratic order: it was officially post-fascist and anti-communist, despite the institutional Church’s support for some fascist regimes.

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(Spain, Portugal, Latin America) even after the end of Vatican II, and despite the fact that millions of Catholics in Western Europe had voted for communist parties.\(^{22}\)

Europe was divided at its heart by the iron curtain, with the fate of a key country for the history of Christianity, Germany, uncertain (uprising in East Germany in 1953, construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961). But geopolitically, Catholicism was united in its Western allegiance in the name of anti-communism. More and more, the Catholic geopolitical sphere was identified with democratic regimes in Western Europe and the North Atlantic against Eastern Europe and Asia under the control or the threat of communism.

The Second World War had redefined the world the Catholic Church lived in: the end of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in Catholic countries in Western Europe (except in Spain and Portugal until the 1970s), the beginning of the division of Europe and of the world into two as of 1947, and the end of European colonial empires. In less than four decades, the Catholic Church had gone from dealing with a world dominated by the empires that fell with the First World War (Austria, Germany, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire) to new kinds of empires: the United States on one side and the Soviet Union and China on the other. The existential threat posed by the Soviet Union and communism to the churches in Eastern Europe moved the Vatican to open a series of diplomatic initiatives—known as ‘Vatican Ostpolitik’—in the early 1960s to find a modus vivendi—or, better, in the words of its chief architect, Vatican diplomat Agostino Casaroli, a modus non moriendi—for Catholicism in countries that were expected to live under communism for a very long time (Morozzo della Rocca, 2014).\(^{23}\) The Hungarian uprising of 1956, the revelations of Secretary Nikita Khrushchev of the crimes of Stalin’s regime at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party that same year, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the publications in Moscow (in Russian) of Solzhenitsyn’s One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich in 1962 and in Italy in 1957 of Pasternak’s Doctor Zhivago were the context for the Vatican’s diplomatic move in the years immediately before the opening of the council.

There were attempts to keep in place the remains of Christendom in those countries still untouched by post-war democratization, such as the Concordat of the Holy See with Franco’s Spain in 1953. But post-war Catholicism signalled the beginning of the end of the outright rejection of liberal democracies—in the beginning, more at the level of the lived experience of Catholics than at the magisterial level. Catholic and Christian political parties had a key role in Europe:

Across large parts of Europe, as the German occupation ended and the process of reconstruction began, Christian parties emerged as a major political player. The period from 1945 to 1965 was the golden age of Christian Democracy … In 1947 and 1948, as the split between Europe’s Soviet-dominated east and American-dominated west

\(^{22}\) See Leo Kenis et al., eds., The Transformation of the Christian Churches in Western Europe 1945–2000 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010).

\(^{23}\) For an early history of Ostpolitik, see Stehle, Die Ostpolitik des Vatikans 1917–1975.
became increasingly clear-cut, the role of Christianity and the churches as an integral part of Western identity was further emphasized.\textsuperscript{24}

The contribution of Christian labour organizations was very important also in the development of this period of Catholic internationalism.\textsuperscript{25} At the same time, between World War II and Vatican II, the rise of a new form of Catholic universalism in favour of international and supranational organizations, especially of the United Nations, was evident. This was part of a wider transition in Catholic theology, a consequence of the abandonment of the confessional state and the ‘intransigent model’ which was the basis of ‘traditional universalism’: ‘overcoming the reference to the medieval \textit{christianitas} meant abandoning the unrealistic prospect of the Church’s rule over the international community.’\textsuperscript{26}

This transition to a new, post-intransigent Catholic universalism was made possible in the immediate post–World War II period by the unlikely victory of Christian democratic parties attractive to a larger, multi-class electorate—unlikely given that political Catholicism was discredited because of its ambiguity towards fascism in the interwar period and because the hierarchy of the Church was morally compromised for the same reason. This victory took place in Western Europe and not in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe; the exclusion of political parties from Eastern Europe also meant the exclusion of Catholic traditions more prone to nationalism, ethnicism, and illiberal authoritarianism. The creation of transnational Christian democratic solidarity and cohesion in the face of communism meant intergovernmental cooperation, interparty cooperation, and European integration, which were now supported by the Vatican and not opposed, as in the 1920s and 1930s. This came about thanks to the stability of European Catholicism between the 1930s and the 1960s, which also made possible the co-optation of former fascists in these Christian democratic centrist parties.\textsuperscript{27}

The social and political modernization of Catholics was visible both at the national level—Christian parties and labour organizations—and at the international level—the beginning of the project for an economic and political unification of Europe. It was visible at the level of political philosophy—the embrace of a degree of pluralism in society, of the democratic principle in government, of a distinction if not separation between Church and State; and in socio-economic doctrine—socially balanced capitalism in economic life, capitalism tempered by government intervention.

This democratization and constitutionalization of Catholicism in the public square was far from uneventful and not free from contradiction. In theologically conservative quarters of the Catholic Church the attempt to side Catholicism with a pre-modern,
Historical Context of Vatican II

pre-liberal, and pre-constitutional social order persisted, often manifested in the par-
allelism between some Catholic leaders and extreme right-wing parties and polit-
ical movements that in Europe had not disappeared after the end of World War II. 28
 Meanwhile, this modernization of the Church was criticized by other Catholics for its
appeasement of the bourgeoisie: the phenomenon of Catholic dissent from Christian
democratic or Catholic politics (for example, Fr Lorenzo Milani and Fr Primo Mazzolari
in Italy, Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day in the United States) made visible the wide
spectrum of positions within the Roman Catholic Church on issues not only of social
and economic justice, but also of peace and war. The emergence of youth culture—again,
thanks to the expansion of higher education—in Europe and in the Western hemisphere
was also a challenge to tradition, to the churches and religion.

This modernization of the political culture of Catholics in the 1950s was accompanied
by ‘a process of de-confessionalization of the Catholic labour movements [which] set
in across the board, though with strikingly different modalities and timetables from
country to country’. 29 Disabused about the possibilities of illiberal Catholicism by the
encounter with authoritarianism and totalitarianism in the interwar period, Catholic
social and political culture was crucial for the establishment of a new national and
international order in the Western hemisphere after World War II: ‘by 1950, Christian
Democratic parties and mainstream Catholic culture had firmly committed themselves
to anti-Communism, family values, the “defense of the West”, and the reconstituted
nation-state as central values’. 30

4. The Globalization of Catholicism

In December 1945, Pius XII created thirty-two new cardinals, only four of whom were
Italian. This was a further step in the globalization of the Catholic hierarchy—a global-
ization that was taking place faster and deeper in the rest of the body of the Church on its
way towards the post-colonial age.

But globalization also meant deep changes in the Western hemisphere, where
the sociological make-up of Catholicism changed, thanks to urbanization, from a
Church of peasants and working-class people to a growing urban and then suburban
Catholicism: middle class in the US, but also lower class, proletariat, and under-
proletariat in the growing peripheries of newly urbanized Europe and Latin America. 31

Jahrhundert—Christian Democracy in 20th Century Europe—La Démocratie chrétienne en Europe au XXe
siècle (Vienna: Bohlau, 2001).
29 Misner, Catholic Labor Movements in Europe, 294.
30 James Chappel, Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church
31 See David Hempton and Hugh McLeod, eds., Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North
The end of the religious boom at the end of the 1950s was accompanied by significant processes of migration from Catholic countries to countries with a different religious composition within the same continent (from Catholic countries in southern Europe to northern European countries with a mix of Catholics and Protestants) or in another part of the continent (from Catholic majority countries in Latin America to Protestant majority countries like Canada and the United States). This allowed a new picture of the map of global Catholicism to emerge, with an American exception because of the religious revival in the US compared to Europe: after World War II, religion ceased to be associated primarily with specific denominations and denominational creeds and came to be associated with broad ethical and political trends along ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ political lines.32

This signalled the emergence of a new paradigm for those countries of Europe and America that had been the centre of Catholicism: from the paradigm typical of Christendom and of the age of empires—that is, mission and colonialism—to a new binomial, typical of the age of globalized Christianity—secularization (or secularism with state backing) and ecumenical/interreligious dialogue: ‘In the 1950s the great majority of people living in Western countries were nominally Christian … The ground was already well prepared for the crisis of Christendom in the 1960s.’33

In the less than two decades between World War II and the beginning of the council, Catholicism was subject to new pressures in the sense of an internal diversification. The geopolitical issue along the lines of positioning in the Cold War put different Catholic churches in different situations: in Europe and North America, where anti-communism and Atlanticism were the defining political issues, Catholicism was entering the cultural and political mainstream in societies with market economies regulated by the government and different types and degrees of entente cordiale between the Churches and the State in an age of global hegemony of the United States. ‘For America, “God’s Country”, the Cold War became a Christian enterprise, a crusade against the force of evil.’34 In July 1949, the Congregation of the Holy Office declared the excommunication of communists and those who aided and abetted communism. In the 1950s, the US went through a period of religious revival that was part of patriotism and the new civil religion, coexisting with the struggle against racism, segregation, and Jim Crow laws.

In Latin America, Catholicism was transitioning from colonial Christendom to the fragile versions of the ‘liberal state’ subject to the threat of military and authoritarian regimes. Theologically, this meant the shift from the theological model of the ‘new Christendom’ to a new kind of response to the social and political challenges of the continent. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, many Latin American countries were under the

33 McLeod, The Religious Crisis of the 1960s, 29.
rule of dictators, military and otherwise; Mexico and Colombia were two examples of the Church being involved in political civil wars; the revolution in Cuba in 1959 forced a majority of priests and religious sisters to leave the country; in Argentina and Brazil, the institutional Church identified with parties against Marxism and communism.

Around this time, there was growth in the theological and cultural awareness of Latin American Catholicism, with the foundation of Catholic universities in many countries between the late 1930s and the 1960s. In 1955, the first meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) inaugurated a new phase in the history of Catholicism in Latin America with the strengthening of national bishops’ conferences and the creation of a continental awareness of the Church with no parallels in other continents.

Before theological anti-Semitism became an issue in the context of the debate on the responsibility of Christians and the Catholic Church—first in Germany in the 1950s and 1960s around the validity of the Reichskonkordat of 1933, and then internationally thanks to Rolf Hochhuth’s controversial play The Deputy, which accused Pius XII of complicity with the Nazis—the papacy had to respond to one of the consequences of the Shoah (Holocaust) on the religious and political map of the post-war global world. In the Middle East, the post-war period for the Catholic Church was influenced by the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948 and the continuing conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, which had a minority population of Christians and Catholics. The new Jewish State also represented a theological issue for the Holy See: in its 15 May 1948 issue, the official newspaper of the Holy See, L’Osservatore Romano, wrote that ‘modern Zionism is not the true heir to the Israel of the Bible, but a secular state…. Therefore the Holy Land and its sacred places belong to Christianity, which is the true Israel.’ Pre-conciliar theology of Judaism shaped relations between the Vatican and Israel until Vatican II. Questions of who should control the Holy Land and whether to recognize the State of Israel were not addressed by Vatican II’s Nostra Aetate or by the conciliar debates. Informal recognition of the State of Israel in the early post-Vatican II period led to the official recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations only in 1993, as one of the fruits of the conciliar declaration.

In Africa and Asia, Catholics were involved in the transition from colonialism to the new states and in a situation of coexistence with other religions, often from a situation of minority. On the other hand, in colonial Africa, Roman Catholicism was more united than in competition with Anglicans, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and free churches in the British colonies. In Africa in 1950, the only independent states were Ethiopia, Liberia, Egypt, and a South Africa that was ‘fully committed’ to racial segregation. Decolonization proceeded with different politics for different African areas: Britain adopted a model of political independence; France and Portugal, political assimilation.

This globalization of Catholicism and the slow exit from the age of colonialism did not happen overnight but took the entire time between the end of World War II and Vatican II. In 1940, the Concordat between the Church and Portugal still included a ‘Missionary Agreement’. This did not end with World War II:

As late as 1953 a convention was concluded with the Brussels government regarding the Belgian Congo, granting tax exemptions to the Church in the colony in return for Belgian government involvement in the erection of dioceses and a say in the appointment of bishops (mainly vicars apostolic) … It is not surprising that both sides agreed that their agreement should remain strictly secret.\(^{37}\)

In the 1950s, Christianity was still a relatively small minority in Africa: “The religion of the colonial ruler was becoming the religion of the colonised.”\(^{38}\) At the same time, there is the establishment of Catholic hierarchies in British West Africa in 1950, in South Africa in 1951, in East Africa in 1953, in French Africa in 1955, and in Belgian colonies only in 1959 (from ‘vicariates’ to dioceses and archdioceses, still under the control of Propaganda Fide). The missionary movement in Africa remained strong in the 1950s. The first African-born bishop was consecrated in 1939, with twenty-two more by the end of the pontificate of Pius XII. On the eve of Vatican II, Catholicism in Africa was watching the evolution of the situation in Algeria (the Évian Accords of March 1962 for the independence of Algeria from France). The struggle to liberate the Church from colonialism was not just cultural or theological, but also political and military, involving Catholics from countries that played a major role at the council, such as France: ‘Although the Algerian War was not the first major violent conflict over decolonization, Christians who had a stake in the outcome of decolonization watched it with interest and a certain degree of trepidation.’\(^{39}\) Meanwhile, the disentanglement of Catholic institutions and theology from the colonial order was also a project of Catholic anti-colonialist leaders (especially in Africa) who were starting to gain a greater audience in the Vatican, even though their voices did not figure as prominently as European ones in the debates at the council: “The fates of Catholic missions and their converts amid the dismantling of European empires—and the French in particular—were crucial background to Vatican II, on both cultural and political fronts.”\(^{40}\)

Decolonization presented the Church with different challenges in Asia, where Catholics were a smaller minority compared to Africa. In the Indian subcontinent, the partition between India and Pakistan in 1947 caused the massive resettlement of

\(^{37}\) Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 404.


religious communities in very different kinds of establishments: the distinction between an Islamic state (Pakistan) and a secular one (India).

In other countries, decolonization mixed with the advance of communism in Asia in the 1950s and 1960s. In Asia, the situation of the Catholic Church was inseparable from the position on the issue of nationalism and the rise of communism in transition from the colonial age. The first half of the century had seen the growth of Catholicism in China: from 700,000 in 1900 to 3 million in 1949; the Catholic community in China was two centuries older than any Protestant community and in 1949 was more than three times as large, but Catholic missions relied more than Protestant ones on foreign (especially French and American) missionaries.\(^\text{41}\) The civil war and the communist revolution in China (1935–49) meant the break of diplomatic relations with the Holy See, the expulsion of the papal nuncio, and a long period of persecution for Christians in China. There were around 3 million Catholics when the People’s Republic of China was established; from 1949 to 1958, due to the three autonomous ‘patriotic movements of self-governance, self-support, and self-propaganda’, foreign missionaries were expelled and relations with foreign churches were severed. Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands in 1945 left a Catholic Church still largely led by Dutch missionaries. The first Indonesian Catholic priest had been ordained in 1926, and the first bishop in 1940.\(^\text{42}\)

Vietnam was liberated from France in 1953–54, when independence was granted also to Laos and Kampuchea. At the time of the partition of Vietnam, a majority of bishops and clergy migrated from northern to southern Vietnam, while a majority of lay Catholics remained in the north. At the time of the partition of Korea in December 1945 into a northern Soviet-controlled zone and a southern American-controlled zone, 60 per cent of Christians lived in the communist zone. In 1962, a diocesan hierarchy was established in South Korea, where at that time the number of Catholics was 520,000 (2 per cent of the total population). A significant pattern of relationship took form in Korea after the partition, with the Catholic Church continuing to mark a difference from a form of Christian nationalism that idealized the United States and its Protestant free-enterprise culture.

Overall, the twentieth century meant a rise in Christians in Asia from 10 to over 20 per cent, concentrated in the Philippines, parts of Indonesia (East Timor), and Vietnam.\(^\text{43}\) In Australia and the Pacific Islands, World War II brought great suffering and connected the region to the rest of the world; this ended the Pacific isolation but also ‘stripped the gloss off Christianity and “civilisation” elsewhere’.\(^\text{44}\) The displacement of missionary leaders caused Pacific Christianity to emerge more reliant on local leadership. In

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\(^{42}\) See Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century*, 185.


Australia, Catholicism was reshaped by the class shift, with the rise up the social ladder by native-born Catholics and thanks to the influx of Catholic migrants in the period during World War I and World War II, when the migration of Catholics to the US had been rendered more difficult due to the Immigration Act of 1924. An ambitious post-war migration programme aimed at increasing Australia’s population allowed non-British immigrants for the first time since the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. Nonetheless, it continued to be governed by a ‘white Australia’ policy. One of the most important effects of World War II in Australia was the transition of power and influence from the old Commonwealth to the new American ‘empire’. The 1950s saw the churches engaged in the fight against communism through the Cold War together with a pattern of secularization not dissimilar to that in Europe.

5. The World at the Opening of Vatican II

During the preparation (1960–62) and the opening of Vatican II (11 October 1962), the situation in Europe, especially Italy and Rome itself, was significantly different and more peaceful compared to the previous councils, Trent and Vatican I. In 1870, the council had been interrupted by war; by contrast the early 1960s were in the middle of the ‘glorious thirty years’ between 1945 and 1975. In March 1957 in the Eternal City, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed the Rome Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. In the summer of 1960, the Olympics were held in Rome, then one of the most glamorous cities in the world. Italy and Europe were enjoying a long period of economic growth that would last until the early 1970s.

In North America, the years of Vatican II coincided with the passing of major civil rights legislation. The civil rights movement was part of a larger theological movement towards a new role of Christian ethics in regulating morality and in legislating. The anti-racist movements reinterpreted the Christian message in a direction that was different from the legitimization of racism on the basis of theology. But on the other side, the role of Christian ethics in regulating issues such as abortion, the consumption of alcohol, the death penalty, homosexuality, and euthanasia came under attack; this approach was modified or repealed in the Western world. This was a transition from a Christian society to a ‘civilized society’ in the name of the expansion of individual freedom in the area of personal morality.

The age of Vatican II was also the beginning of a split within Western Catholicism in terms of different patterns of departure from Christendom:

In the 1940s and 1950s aspects of Christendom survived… But for more than two centuries there had been a process of erosion, as Christian doctrines and moral
teachings faced significant challenges, as a variety of religious options became available, and new secular ideologies (sometimes with state backing) tried to take the place of Christianity and the church.\textsuperscript{45}

The end of the European matrix for Catholicism also meant the beginning of different ways to deal with the end of Christendom: secularization, complexification of the religious landscape, and emergence of fundamentalisms and radicalisms in all global religions.

In the decades before Vatican II, during Vatican II, and until the 1990s, these differences were camouflaged by the global overarching ideological and political issue for Catholicism: communism. The Cold War loomed large over the Catholic Church and had an impact on the preparation and celebration of the council: the participation of many bishops from communist countries in Eastern Europe, Russia, and China was impossible for political reasons; that is, because of limitations to the freedom of movement and communication between these bishops and the Holy See. In 1962, international relations saw the hardening of the division between the two Germanies, the Sino-Indian War over a disputed border, and especially—right at the beginning of the council in October 1962—the Cuban Missile Crisis. This represented the major crisis between the US and Soviet Russia during the Cold War and involved the secret mediation of John XXIII. This was the spark that gave the pope the idea of the encyclical \textit{Pacem in Terris}, his last, published on 11 April 1963. Just a few weeks before, in February 1963, the Major Archbishop of the Ukrainians, Josyf Slipyi, arrived in Rome after spending eighteen years in Soviet prison camps. The Vatican obtained his release from the Russians—one of the fruits of the Ostpolitik (new Eastern policy) and of the détente between the Vatican and the Soviet Union. In September 1964, the Holy See announced the diplomatic agreement with communist-ruled Hungary, one of the most sensitive spots for relations between the Catholic Church and the communist sphere of influence. The agreement left unsettled the fate of Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty, the Hungarian primate, who had been in refuge in the United States’ legation in Budapest since the failure of the Hungarian revolt in 1956; he remained there until 1971, when he was allowed to go into exile.

Vatican II had to deal with a delicate international situation in the Middle East and in Israel, with obvious reverberations on the theological debates concerning the relationship between the Church and the Jews. A few weeks before the beginning of the council, on 1 June 1962, Adolf Eichmann was executed for war crimes; in 1964, Arab leaders created the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose founding charter called for a Palestinian Arab state encompassing the whole of the British Mandate for Palestine and declared the establishment of Israel ‘illegal and null and void’.

\textsuperscript{45} McLeod, \textit{The Religious Crisis of the 1960s}, 18.
6. Conclusion

In the recent debate on the reception and application of Vatican II, some voices have advanced the thesis that the council is the cause of the contemporary crisis of Catholicism. This view of the relationship between Vatican II and contemporary Catholicism is not only anti-historical; it is also the product of an exclusive focus on the Western Catholic Church, whose only challenge was supposed to be, according to those critics, secularization and the marginalization of Christian morality and culture. This is a short-sighted way to understand the historical context in which Vatican II was conceived, prepared, and celebrated.

A complex approach to the historical context of Vatican II needs to take into account three major factors that shaped the new global dimension of the world in the decades leading up to the council. The first is the rise of anti-colonialist movements and the processes of decolonization and political emancipation, especially in Europe’s colonies in Africa and Asia. At Vatican II, the voice of the Catholic Church in those countries found representation (although in great majority through missionary bishops from Europe) as never before in a general council. The second factor was the Cold War: the ideological and military confrontation between communism and the ‘free world’ was an element of the context not only for the Vatican II’s acceptance of constitutional democracy and human rights, but also for the rejection of a visceral anti-communism and the opening of a dialogue with contemporary ideological and cultural movements. The third factor was the beginning of a reflection, also by Catholics, on anti-Semitism and the complicity of Christians in the Shoah: this prepared the council’s denunciation of racism and anti-Semitism and a new sensibility towards ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

In the decades before Vatican II, the Church was confronted with political and geopolitical tensions together with major theological issues. The debates, the documents, and the event of Vatican II interacted with a complex of rapid changes taking place in the Church and in the world. This complex of factors is crucial in considering and assessing the interpretation of the history and reception of Vatican II, especially in the present world order, which is very different from the one which existed at the time of the preparation and celebration of the council.

Suggested Reading


CHAPTER 3

MOVEMENTS OF RESSOURCEMENT IN THEOLOGY

Foundations for a Council of Renewal

DAVID GRUMETT

This chapter will begin by tracing the origins of ressourcement (a movement of return to the early sources of Christian tradition) back to the mass production of Latin and Greek patristic and medieval texts in mid-nineteenth-century France, showing how this offered the beginnings of an alternative to the developing neo-scholastic theology. It will then show how, from the 1930s, Jesuit and Dominican theologians collaborated to make these texts available for use in constructive theology and undertook such theology themselves. Nevertheless, the council’s preparatory schemas employed a neo-scholastic method to endorse existing teaching, but when the bishops assembled, they determined that most of these should be set aside and new work be undertaken. These major revisions drew much more deeply on both Latin and Greek ressourcement. Most notably among the council’s documents, Lumen Gentium (LG) presents the Church as Christ’s mystical body. This organic ecclesiology provided the context for many other conciliar texts, including those that make no explicit reference to ressourcement. The most important conciliar documents for ressourcement will be analysed, and their use of the work of individual theologians will be summarized and appraised. As will be seen, even Thomas Aquinas was interpreted with direct reference to his own writings rather than via his neo-scholastic expositors.
1. Background

The deep roots of the ressourcement movement within Roman Catholic theology may be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century and the endeavours of the indefatigable priest Abbé Jacques-Paul Migne. In the decades following the French Revolution, as the Roman Catholic Church in France began to rebuild itself, a new generation of clergy and laity came into being. This provided Migne with an opportunity to contribute to the spiritual renewal of his country as well as a business opportunity.¹ Employing as many as 300 workers, he produced hundreds of low-cost, high-circulation volumes of original patristic and medieval texts in Latin (1844–55) and then in Greek (1857–66). Although their editorial and scholarly values did not meet later standards, they played a decisive long-term role in the Church’s theological renewal by making a large quantity of original-language sources easily available to theologians. These are extensively cited in the council documents themselves, under the abbreviations PL (Patrologiae Latinae) and PG (Patrologiae Graecae).²

Although patristic and medieval sources were thus extensively circulated, only very slowly were they incorporated into the teaching of the Church. The First Vatican Council (1869–70) cited patristic authors just three times: Vincent of Lérins on the Church forever accepting doctrine according to the same sense and understanding; and Irenaeus and Ambrose on the pope being to the Church like the head is to the body (Dei Filiius 4; Pastor Aeternus 4). The reason for this slow theological assimilation of new sources was the rise and spread of neo-scholastic Thomism. This occurred during the twenty years leading up to the council, while Migne’s publishing enterprise was operating. From one perspective, neo-scholastic Thomism was itself an important project in textual retrieval. It precipitated fresh engagement with the works of Thomas Aquinas, and in 1879 their new and ongoing Leonine edition was inaugurated. However, this retrieval had a more restricted theological objective than Migne’s: the establishment of the systematic and deductive neo-scholastic method in theology as normative. By promoting rational order within theology, neo-scholasticism made a significant contribution to the Church’s life and apologetics. In a modern era of growing intellectual and political hostility to Christianity, there were benefits in articulating theology clearly and coherently; for example, helping the Church to preserve itself and to withstand external pressures. The neo-scholastic interpretation of Thomas Aquinas was vigorously promoted by Pope St Pius X, who in 1907 condemned liberal, modernist doctrines in the decree Lamentabili Sane Exitu. In the following encyclical, Pascendi Dominici Gregis (PDG), scholastic philosophy was presented as the essential antidote to modernism (PDG 45–47).

Nevertheless, the neo-scholastic theological method supposed an unchanging dogmatic system. This was regarded as constituting the Church’s identity and, being such, as requiring robust defence from both external critics and internal dissenters. However, increasing numbers of theologians, including notable Jesuits and Dominicans, had deep reservations about neo-scholasticism and its implications for Christian life and mission. The first half of the twentieth century saw tremendous intellectual, social, and political change, which precipitated both secular critiques of Christianity and, at least as seriously, growing indifference towards Christianity. The Church, these theologians argued, needed to recover the historic roots of its theology prior to Aquinas and to articulate this theology in ways that connected with the experiences of a new generation.

Two key Jesuit leaders of this ressourcement were Henri de Lubac, who resided in his order’s house at Fourvière in Lyons and taught theology at the city’s Catholic University, and Jean Daniélou, professor of early Christian history at the Institut Catholique in Paris. The pair accepted responsibility for launching the Sources chrétiennes book series. This comprised original texts and included an extended critical and contextual introduction and—from early on—a parallel translation into French. The first volume was published in 1942. The series gave priority, especially initially, to Greek sources, because these had been relatively neglected by generations of theologians who knew Latin and were steeped in Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. The Fourvière Jesuits hoped that the series would achieve several objectives. Ecumenically, they wished to promote dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches, which had excommunicated each other as long ago as 1054. Theologically, they desired to unsettle the increasingly entrenched neo-scholastic Thomism by showing that it did not, as was claimed, constitute an objective synthesis of all prior theology. Simultaneously, they wanted to contest liberal theological methodologies that bypassed historical sources altogether. The Sources chrétiennes, which now extend to some 600 volumes, have made a major and widely acknowledged contribution to textual dissemination for theological renewal over seven decades.

However, de Lubac and Daniélou understood that the production of theological texts would not in itself renew theology. If the ideas and perspectives they contained were to enter the theological mainstream, constructive work was also needed. Alongside the Sources chrétiennes, the pair therefore each produced major contributions to the new monograph series Théologie, which was under the collective direction of the Fourvière Jesuits. This series continued for thirty years and included studies of specific patristic theologians and approaches; broader diachronic surveys of theological topics; and critical engagement, from the standpoint of fundamental theology, with current social and political issues. De Lubac contributed several volumes, including on grace and nature.

3 Étienne Fouilloux, ‘Autour de l’histoire des “Sources Chrétiennes”’, in Fe i teologia en la història: Estudis en honor del Prof. Dr. Evangelista Vilanova, ed. Joan Busquets and Maria Martinell (Barcelona: Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya, 1997), 519–35.

in the Augustinian tradition and on Origen, and Daniélou wrote on Gregory of Nyssa.

A notable revisionist study by Henri Bouillard of Thomas Aquinas's theology of grace launched the series.

The Sources chrétiennes were a collaboration between their Jesuit editors and the Dominican publishing house Cerf. However, the Dominicans also made their own independent contributions to ressourcement. These were characterized by a reforming agenda, which was associated with the Saulchoir, their house of studies near Paris. Over a long period, the rector, Marie-Dominique Chenu, pursued important historical and critical work on Thomas Aquinas. His reforming agenda was very different from that of the neo-scholastic Thomists. Chenu's historical focus on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries fell later than that of many Jesuits. He was motivated by the promise that he believed ressourcement held for medieval studies and for correcting neo-scholastic misconstruals of Aquinas. In sharp contrast with the neo-scholastics, he regarded Aquinas as supplying the theological mandate for an extensive reform programme comprising several dimensions. Philosophy and theology, Chenu contended, must address the lived reality of believers, with speculative theological systems always placed at the service of revelation and of faith, rather than being used to determine them. Ressourcement would, he thought, promote this objective by breaking open the neo-scholastic system to reveal the plurality that it sought to homogenize. The implications of this project for ecclesiology included social action, in which the laity had a key role, and the movement of ‘worker-priests’ who were in secular employment rather than being paid a ministry stipend by the Church.

Alongside Chenu at the Saulchoir was his student Yves Congar, whose interest in ressourcement stemmed from his substantial work on an early nineteenth-century Tübingen theologian. For Johann Adam Möhler, the study of the Early Church Fathers constituted a charge to the Church to pursue ecumenical unity. If, during its first three centuries, the Church had been unified, and if texts from this period were once again permitted to shape theology, ongoing ecclesial separation was indefensible. Möhler regarded the universal Church as already possessing the mystical and intellectual unity

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of spirit that it needed to fulfill concretely in its body. If the Roman Catholic Church could recover a communal model of episcopal leadership and recognize the priestly dignity of all believers, Möhler believed, it could regain its necessary organic primacy and thereby become truly and concretely universal. Following Möhler, Congar founded the *Unam Sanctum* series with Cerf, in which *ressourcement* methods and perspectives were deployed to counter the dominant juridical ecclesiology. Congar himself contributed the controversial first volume, in which he drew on both patristic and medieval theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, to build his case for ecumenism.\(^{13}\) Deeply respectful of the Greek Fathers, Congar developed strong links with Orthodox theologians, which provided important inspiration for his ongoing work on pneumatology.\(^{14}\) The *Unam Sanctum* series ran to seventy-seven volumes, and a new series continues today.

As might be expected, the pioneering efforts of these Jesuits and Dominicans, and of many other contributors to *ressourcement*, were greeted with hostility by the Roman Catholic authorities. The most public and authoritative pronouncements against the movement came in the 1950 encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (*HG*), ‘concerning some false opinions threatening to undermine the foundations of Catholic doctrine’. Reference is here made to unnamed persons who wish to ‘bring about a return in the explanation of Catholic doctrine to the way of speaking used in Holy Scripture and by the Fathers of the Church’ (*HG* 14), and it is suggested that these figures wish to evacuate dogmas of their meaning and to reject established theological and philosophical language. A little later, the encyclical states that *ressourcement* theologians, by ‘giving force to a certain vague notion which they profess to have found in the ancient Fathers, especially the Greeks’ (*HG* 18), reject the formal magisterial teaching about the Church’s nature and constitution. They privilege early sources, the encyclical continues, on the supposition that the popes have no wish to adjudicate theological disputes. However, the judgement peremptorily concludes that ‘history teaches that many matters that formerly were open to discussion no longer admit of discussion’ (*HG* 19).

*Humani Generis* sought to pit *ressourcement* against magisterial authority and teaching. However, Pope Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical, *Mystici Corporis* (*MC*), ‘on the mystical body of Christ’, had appeared to embrace elements of the *ressourcement* methodology that was now under attack. While affirming the theological pre-eminence of the scholastic expositions of Aquinas (*MC* 35), this encyclical cites Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, as well as the Greek Fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril of Alexandria. Its methodology and content, which viewed the Church theologically and Christologically rather than as a human institution requiring governance and control, laid significant foundations for the Second Vatican Council.


juxtaposition of *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis* shows the contradictions that characterized the conflict between neo-scholasticism and *ressourcement*, which had come to be as much about authority and ecclesiastical politics as about substantive issues of dogma or method.

2. **RESSOURCEMENT AT THE COUNCIL**

Pope Pius XII died in October 1958. By month’s end, Angelo Roncalli, the Patriarch of Venice, had been elected Pope John XXIII. Just three months later he called the Second Vatican Council, which opened in October 1962. Because of the short intervals between the new pope’s election, his summoning of the council, and its opening, there was little opportunity for the conflicts just described to be resolved. Some of the early preparatory schemata read like neo-scholastic treatises and seminary manuals. They adopted a regressive method, which began with present magisterial teaching and employed patristic and medieval material to endorse it, rather than proceeding genetically, like *ressourcement*, by presenting a living tradition emerging from the past into the present, and continuing into the future.\(^{15}\) Also, the manualists tended to deploy concepts as if their meaning never changed; they proceeded according to legalistic deduction.

However, by the time the council opened in Rome, *ressourcement* methods and perspectives were gaining wide acceptance. The assembled bishops rejected most of the nine schemata that had been prepared in advance, objecting both to their content and to their scholastic expository style. Yet, over the course of successive revisions, the conciliar documents, in the assessment of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, came to ‘speak the language of Holy Scripture and of the holy Fathers of the Church’\(^{16}\).

Some of the council’s final documents explicitly commend *ressourcement*.\(^{17}\) *Perfectae Caritatis* (*PC*), the Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life, states that this requires the ‘constant return to the sources of Christian life in general, and the original genius of religious foundations in particular’ (*PC* 2). Moreover, the prayer of members of religious orders, the decree affirms, ought to be developed ‘in earnest study of the accepted classics of Christian spirituality’ (*PC* 6). In *Optatum Totius* (*OT*), the Decree on the Training of Priests, the study of the original languages of both sources and tradition is strongly advocated (*OT* 13), and it is stated that students must be taught the contributions of both the Eastern and the Western Church Fathers to understanding revelation (*OT* 16). In *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (*PO*), the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, the clergy

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\(^{17}\) O’Collins, ‘*Ressourcement* and Vatican II’, 373–74.
are instructed to ‘study the fathers and doctors of the Church and the other traditional classics’ (PO 19), and in the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR), all Catholics are urged to ‘avail themselves still more of these spiritual riches of the eastern fathers’ (UR 15).

However, it is striking that, excepting *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, these decrees, while advocating *ressourcement* in different ways, themselves make at best very light use of patristic or medieval texts. Although council documents sometimes draw on patristic ideas without attributing them to a specific source,\(^\text{18}\) it is important to examine explicit citations to gain an understanding of where and how the ideas of particular theologians contribute to specific points of teaching. Yet even major standard studies of the council and its teaching make little reference to the contribution of *ressourcement*. In the remainder of this chapter, my own methodology will therefore be to return to the conciliar texts themselves, examining the explicit citations of individual theologians in order to develop a detailed understanding of how *ressourcement* ideas and methodology shaped particular documents and points of teaching.

### 3. *Lumen Gentium*

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, was the council’s crowning achievement, containing over one-half of all its patristic and medieval citations and providing the theological setting for several other decrees. However, in its first draft the document was unremarkable. The original schema, *De Ecclesia*, did not significantly employ *ressourcement*, incorporating thirty-five patristic references but offsetting these with as many as 500 citations of past magisterial teaching. The editing of the document by the Preparatory Theological Commission changed little, producing only a slightly altered balance of forty patristic references to 460 magisterial citations.\(^\text{19}\)

The real shift towards what would become *Lumen Gentium* commenced with the revised schema *Concilium Duce Spiritu*, which was drafted by the Louvain theologian Gérard Philips. This was circulated in November 1962, once the council was in session,\(^\text{20}\) and was followed by two regional submissions, each also offering a much-expanded patristic selection. The first submission was made the following month by the German bishops and periti (experts), who prepared an outline schema that referred to Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, Clement, Cyril of Alexandria, and John Damascene.\(^\text{21}\) In February, the Chilean and other Latin American bishops then submitted a proposed schema that


\(^{19}\) Ibid., 167–96.


\(^{21}\) Ibid., 381–91.
 Movements of Ressourcement in Theology

included, in addition, Athanasius, Cyprian, Eusebius, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Isidore of Seville, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Origen, and Tertullian.\(^\text{22}\) Then, in March 1963, the Doctrinal Commission agreed that Concilium Duce Spiritu would provide the basis for Lumen Gentium.

In the Dogmatic Constitution’s opening chapter, the Church is presented primarily not as an institution, nor as a hierarchy, but as Christ’s gathered mystical body, founded by Christ in obedience to the will of his Father and sanctified at Pentecost by the sending of the Holy Spirit (LG 2–4, 7–8). The succeeding chapters deal, in order, with the people of God collectively, bishops, laity, the universality of the call to holiness, and religious orders. The text concludes with chapters on the eschatological character of the Church and on Mary. In this order of exposition, the institutional Church is situated within an ecclesiology that supposes its provisionality.\(^\text{23}\) Notably, the chapter on eschatology eschews the traditional scholastic vocabulary of societas, potestas, and civillis, presenting the Church in the terms of pilgrimage and itineracy.\(^\text{24}\) Its life is currently imperfect, and it will attain glory only in the future, when all humans, along with the whole of matter, are restored in Christ (LG 48).

In total, Lumen Gentium contains seventy-eight references to the Latin Fathers (c.150–c. 635) and twenty-seven citations of later medieval Latin texts. It also includes eighty references to Greek sources: twenty-five to the Apostolic Fathers (c.35–c.150), thirteen to the Apologists (c.100–c.230), and forty-two to later Fathers (to c.750).\(^\text{25}\) When the Dogmatic Constitution was promulgated, prominent bishops recognized its power. For example, in an address delivered in Rome in December 1965, the new archbishop of Turin praised the fact that it was rooted in the organic living tradition of the Fathers, who regarded the Church as possessing a Christological centre.\(^\text{26}\)

I shall now examine the contributions of specific Fathers, first Latin and then Greek, to the constitution.

Augustine (354–430), as bishop of the minor North African see of Hippo Regius, was free from heavy administrative demands and so had plenty of time both to write theology and to minister to his people and clergy. He is the most-cited patristic author in the council documents, being referred to fifty times. Of these references, nineteen occur in Lumen Gentium and support the constitution’s conception of the Church as an organic and provisional body in which lay Christians have just as important a place as the clergy. This theological presentation of the Church contrasts with the more institutional, authoritarian, and triumphalist ecclesiology that had been the norm since the later Middle Ages and which had appealed to medieval misreadings of Augustine. In

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\(^\text{22}\) Ibid., 393–416.
Lumen Gentium, in contrast, the Church is likened to a pilgrim consoled by God while suffering persecution by the world (LG 8; see The City of God 18.51.2). Augustine is cited in support of the identification of Christ as the power that gathers the Church together in any local community, regardless of how small or poor it may be (LG 26; see Against Faustus 12.20, Sermons 57.7). Married lay Christians have a full place within the Church, partly through begetting and educating children, but also because without their consent in matters of faith and morals, the Church’s universality would be incomplete (LG 11–12; see The Gift of Perseverance 14.37, Predestination of Saints 14.27). The ministry of a bishop is a frightening duty and a danger, although it is bearable because it presupposes the consoling grace of being an ordinary Christian alongside other Christians (LG 32; see Sermons 340.1).

Ignatius of Antioch (c.35–c.107) composed six letters to churches while being taken to Rome for martyrdom. All six were cited in the council documents. No previous ecumenical council had appealed to him, but a martyr-bishop provided a vivid model for episcopal ministry grounded in sacrificial service. Of the eighteen references to Ignatius, eleven occur in Lumen Gentium and are concentrated in its third chapter, on the episcopate. Bishops share in Christ’s consecration and mission as his successors and make possible the Church’s unity (LG 27–28; see To the Ephesians 5.1 and 6.1). They serve the community, necessarily taking God’s place in presiding over the Church as teachers, leaders of worship (especially the Eucharist), and governing ministers (LG 20, 26; see To the Philadelphians preface, 1.1; 2; To the Smyrnaeans 8; To the Magnesians 3; To the Trallians 7). The See of Peter presides over all the particular churches within the universal communion (LG 13; To the Romans, preface). In contrast with Augustine, who is frequently cited in support of the equal dignity of all Church members, Ignatius is thus deployed to endorse more traditional elements of Lumen Gentium’s ecclesiology. His letters could be viewed as carrying considerable authority because of his antiquity, his identification as a disciple of the apostle John, his appointment to his see by Peter, and his martyrdom.

Cyprian (c.200–58), the bishop of Carthage in North Africa who was martyred during the Valerian persecution, is cited sixteen times, of which thirteen are in Lumen Gentium. His pastoral letters are deployed for similar purposes to Ignatius’. Bishops gather God’s family together in a fellowship inspired by unity (LG 28; see Cyprian, Letters 11.3). They are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches, which are in the likeness of the universal Church and out of which the single catholic Church is constituted (LG 23; see Letters 55.24, 66.8). They assume Christ’s functions and act in his person (LG 21; see Letters 63.14).

Tertullian (c.155–c.240), who was a layperson rather than a bishop, also left texts presenting the Church’s hierarchical structure, on which Lumen Gentium drew. Bishops are appointed in a succession that stretches back to the apostles (LG 20; see Prescription Against Heretics 3). The episcopal order is collegial, with important matters settled by

agreement (LG 22; see On Fasting 13). Such clear endorsement of these points by a prominent early lay theologian usefully corroborates the validations of episcopal ministry by the bishop-theologians Ignatius and Cyprian.

Ambrose (c.340–97), the bishop of Milan who baptized Augustine, lent inspiration to the Marian theology in Lumen Gentium’s final chapter. Christ did not diminish his mother Mary’s virginity but consecrated it (LG 57; see Consecration of a Virgin). Mary is rightly invoked by the Church, but neither adds to Christ’s unique mediating power nor subtracts from it (LG 62; see Letters 63). In her faith, love, and perfect union with Christ, Mary symbolizes the Church, which is a virgin who maintains the purity and integrity of the faith by the power of the Holy Spirit and in hope and love (LG 63-64; see Commentary on Luke 2.7 and 10.24–25).

Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) was, following Augustine, the most-cited theologian at the Council. Of the twenty-one references to his work, twelve occur in Lumen Gentium. As discussed in Section 1, Aquinas was closely associated with the neo-scholastic theology that had been ascendant from the 1850s and was given new impetus in the early twentieth century by Pope Pius X. It might therefore seem strange to treat references to his work as instances of ressourcement rather than as challenges to it. However, Aquinas is directly cited rather than appealed to via the neo-scholastic theological system that, it was claimed, derived from him. Moreover, the positions that are attributed to him are among the most radical in the document. The Church is Christ’s mystical body, in which believers receive his life and are united to him analogously to how the soul gives life to the body (LG 7; see Summa Theologiae IIIa, q. 62, art. 5, to 1 and On Colossians 1.18, lection 5). Jesus calls all believers to perfection in holiness and to the love of God (LG 40, 42, 44; see Summa Theologiae IIaIIae, q. 184, arts. 1 and 3). These two propositions suggest an intimate union between believers, Christ, and the Church. Third, by baptism, and even more so by confirmation, believers become obliged to profess their faith publicly in word and action (LG 11; see Summa Theologiae IIIa, q. 65, art. 3 and q. 72, arts. 1 and 5). This active dimension of faith becomes prominent in Gaudium et Spes and will be further discussed below. Fourth, and most boldly of all, persons who have not yet received the Gospel of Christ may nevertheless be related to the People of God (LG 16; see Summa Theologiae IIIa, q. 8, art. 3, to 1).

As previously noted, a leading objective of ressourcement theologians was to disseminate the texts and ideas of Greek theologians. Many of the Latin Fathers just discussed had been cited at earlier ecumenical councils. However, few of the most-cited Greek Fathers had featured previously.

John Chrysostom (c.349–407), although best known for his turbulent final decade as archbishop of Constantinople, spent long periods before this as a lay Christian, as a deacon, and as a priest. Although he had not been cited at any preceding council, here he appears fifteen times. Of these, eight are in Lumen Gentium, which draws in several places on his high valuation of the Church’s diversity. Lay Christians in the world are urged to be like leaven in dough, multiplying through the world the fruits of the Holy Spirit (LG 38; On Matthew 46.2). Married couples, through their mutual support and raising children, show the continual generous love that is part of the work of the
Church, a sign of Christ’s love, and a sharing in that love (LG 41; see On Ephesians 20.2). Moreover, the Holy Spirit draws together Christians throughout the world, such that those in Rome recognize those in India (LG 12; see On John 65.1). Celibacy is a vocation and provides an important context for ministry by promoting complete devotion to God (LG 42; see On Virginity). Priests (and not just bishops) symbolize Christ (LG 21; see On 2 Timothy 2.4). Chrysostom’s holistic view of the Church, developed through the course of his own ministry and theology, thereby supports Lumen Gentium’s inclusivity.

John Damascene (c.676–749) had, like Chrysostom, not been cited at any previous ecumenical council. However, the Syrian monk and priest is referred to a total of seven times, all of them in Lumen Gentium. The document’s opening chapter, which unfolds the mystery of the Church, employs his attribution of the gathering of the Church into one to the unity of the Trinity (LG 4; see Against the Iconoclasts 12). It also evokes his eschatological depiction of the Church in heaven containing the just who lived before the time of Christ (LG 2; see Against the Iconoclasts 11). These are important contributions to Lumen Gentium’s overall ecclesiology. Then chapter 8, on Mary—which is more florid than any other chapter from any ecumenical council in its concentrated usage of patristic texts—refers to several of John’s homilies. Death came through Eve, but life was through Mary (LG 56; see Homily 2 on the Dormition 3). Mary was taken up body and soul into heaven so that she may be even more fully conformed to her Son (LG 59, see Encomium on the Dormition 2, 3, The Orthodox Faith 4.14), and continually intercedes there for the salvation of believers (LG 62; see On the Dormition 1.8). It might be supposed that the document’s Marian theology is chiefly derived from Western sources, especially Ambrose, as previously discussed. However, the multiple citations of John reveal an equally important Eastern inspiration.

Germanus of Constantinople (c.634–740), who, like Chrysostom, became the city’s patriarch, is relatively unknown. Nevertheless, four of his homilies on Mary also feature in chapter 8. Mary was spiritually fashioned as a sinless new creature (LG 56; see Homily on the Annunciation and On the Dormition 2). She was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory (LG 59; see On the Dormition 1, 3) and intercedes in heaven (LG 62; see On the Annunciation and On the Dormition 3). Three texts by metropolitan Andrew of Crete (c.650–712 or later) are also cited, a total of five times, in support of these and similar points (LG 56, 59, 60; see Canon for the Blessed Virgin’s Birthday 4, The Blessed Virgin’s Birthday 1, Homily on the Dormition 1, Homily 3 on the Dormition, and On Mary’s Birthday 4). Cumulatively, Eastern sources made a major contribution to shaping Lumen Gentium’s Mariology. In so doing, they assisted the council in endorsing Pope Pius XII’s 1950 promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

In summary, without ressourcement, Lumen Gentium could not have been written. Some of the Western Fathers, notably Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian, and Tertullian, were principally used to endorse a theology of hierarchical order. However, the Western Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and the Eastern John Chrysostom, were invoked to support ecclesial inclusivity. For Mariology, the Western Ambrose was extensively complemented by the Eastern Chrysostom, John Damascene, Germanus of Constantinople, and Andrew of Crete.
4. **Dei Verbum**

After *Lumen Gentium*, the council’s theologically most important document was *Dei Verbum*, its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Although little more than one-fifth the length of *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum* performed the crucial function of deploying *ressourcement* to correct the received understanding of revelation. As late as the 1950s, the magisterium had defended a ‘two-source’ model of revelation, according to which Scripture and Tradition constituted two harmonious but distinct sources of authority in the Church. For example, Pope Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis* (*HG*) had referred to revelation in emphatically plural terms. It stated that ‘theologians must always return to the sources of divine revelation: for it belongs to them to point out how the doctrine of the living Teaching Authority is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and in Tradition. Besides, each source of divinely revealed doctrine contains so many rich treasures of truth that they can never be exhausted’ (*HG* 21).

The original schema on revelation, *De Fontibus Revelationis*, had presented Scripture and Tradition in exactly this way: as complementary but distinct sources of revelation. However, this ‘two sources’ theory was opposed by *ressourcement* theologians such as de Lubac, who argued that there was only one source of revelation, namely Christ, who is manifested via Scripture and Tradition in inseparable conjunction. A mixed commission was appointed by Pope John XXIII to revise the document, and the witness of patristic writers provided key evidence. As Joseph Ratzinger, who was a peritus at the council, argued at the time, Tradition was certainly a foundational concept among patristic theologians. However, it was not viewed as existing independently of Scripture. Rather, Tradition was the ‘insertion of Scripture into the living organism of the Church and the Church’s right of possession of Scripture’. For the Fathers, he continued, Tradition was simply ‘Scripture in the Church . . . in the midst of its vital appropriation by the Spirit-filled Church.’ The opposing view of Tradition as self-grounding was Gnostic, because it relied on the authority of a source that, unlike Scripture, was not publicly accessible to all.

In *Dei Verbum*’s final version, Christ is God’s substantial Word and contains all the truth that God wished to manifest to humans for their salvation. The person Jesus completes the work of revelation such that no new revelation should be expected until the end times (*DV* 4). To support this single-source theory of revelation, the constitution affirms that Scripture is necessarily exegeted with reference to Tradition. Citing four texts of Augustine, the document states that, although Scripture is inspired by God, it requires interpretation according to the literary genres in use at the time of

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writing (DV 11–12; see On the Words of Genesis 2.9.20, Letters 82.3, City of God 17.6.2, and Christian Doctrine 3.18.26). The constitution also amplifies the importance of the whole of Scripture, stating that the Old Testament is of lasting value, having the New Testament hidden within it (DV 16; see Questions on the Heptateuch 2.73). This countered the tendencies to view Scripture as incomplete or contradictory, and therefore as requiring supplementation by ‘Tradition’. On the contrary, the constitution teaches that preaching and teaching must be rooted in deep inward listening to the whole of Scripture (DV 25; see Sermons 179.1).

Similar themes are supported by reference to Irenaeus. The New Testament is the written record of the preaching of the apostles, which is the foundation of the Christian faith (DV 18; see Against Heresies 3.11.8). Furthermore, the teaching function of bishops, who are the successors of the apostles and disciples—who directly heard Christ’s preaching, observed his life and ministry, and authored Scripture—is to teach the Gospel that these constituted (DV 7, 25; see Against Heresies 3.3.1, 4.32.1). Irenaeus is also invoked in support of Scripture’s consistency and completeness: the whole of the Old Testament is incorporated into the Gospel, and in the New Testament attains and displays its full significance (DV 16; see Against Heresies 3.21.3).

5. Ad Gentes

After Lumen Gentium, the document containing the second-highest number of citations from patristic and medieval texts is the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, Ad Gentes (AG). The most-cited individual source is again Augustine, who provides twelve references. These include striking use in chapter 4 of several of his sermons, which are used to affirm that the Church has a missionary calling that originates in the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which is thereby its soul and source of life (AG 4; see Augustine, Sermons 175, 266–69).

However, Greek patristic sources are especially prominent in Ad Gentes and are cumulatively more numerous. They are concentrated in chapter 1, which concerns doctrine. Indeed, this is the only one of the council’s documents in which there are as many Greek as Latin patristic sources. The decree’s leading vision of the Church’s mission progressively drawing the whole human race into a single body reborn in Christ rests principally on Greek Fathers (AG 7; see Hippolytus, On Antichrist 3; Origen, On John 1.16; Cyril of Alexandria, On John 1). Irenaeus’ view of history as the providential and progressive recapitulation of Christ is deployed in two key places, where mission is associated with this providential unfolding. However, the exposition is not triumphalist, because all human effort stands in need of Christ’s salvation and completion (AG 3, 7; see Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.18.1, 4.6.7, and 4.20.6–7, and Demonstration 34). Origen’s vision of spiritual unity incompletely and provisionally in the Church, and fully and eternally at the
general resurrection, is also vividly described, with the linguistic dispersal after Babel overcome by the mutual comprehension of Pentecost, and the preaching of the Gospel in this age directed to the fullness that will be fully realized only at the end time (AG 4; see Origen, On Genesis 1, Homilies on Luke 21, Commentary on Matthew 39, and Homilies on Jeremiah 3.2). Citations from Clement of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Basil, and Cyril of Alexandria also support these positions (AG 3–4; see Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation 112.1 and Miscellaneies 6.6.44.1; Athanasius, Letter to Epictetus 7; Cyril of Jerusalem, Catecheses 4.9; Basil, Letters 261.2; Gregory of Nazianzen, Letters 17 and Oration 41.16; Gregory of Nyssa, Refutation of Apollinaris 17; Cyril of Alexandria, Against Nestorius 1.1, Explanations of Genesis 2, and Fragments on Acts). Ad Gentes’s missiology is thereby rooted in Greek theology, especially in its providential and pneumatological aspects.

6. Presbyterorum Ordinis

In the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, Presbyterorum Ordinis (PO), a significant selection of traditional Latin patristic authors is assembled in the first part of chapter 2, on the function of priests. Notable among these is Jerome, who among much else served as secretary to Pope Damasus I and so is often anachronistically supposed to have been a cardinal. His biblical commentaries and letters are sometimes used to support predictable positions. For example, priests should minister collegially and collaborate with their bishop in diocesan administration (PO 7; see Jerome, On Isaiah 2.3). The chalices and vestments used in the Eucharist should be entirely clean and should be venerated like the sacrament itself (PO 5; see Jerome, Letters 114.2). However, other deployments of Jerome have a more radical undertone. Priests, if they are to bring people to the faith required for baptism, first need to preach the Gospel (PO 4; see Jerome, On Matthew 28.19). Furthermore, the corollary of worship is social responsibility (PO 6; see Jerome, Letters 58.7).

The missional context of priesthood is further emphasized with references from Tertullian and Athanasius on preaching preceding baptism in missionary contexts (PO 4; see Tertullian, On Baptism 14.2; Athanasius, Against the Arians 2.42). Early Church orders are also cited on the primary task of priesthood being the preaching of the Gospel, as well as on the necessity for priests to root the Christian community in the corporate celebration of the Eucharist (PO 4, 6; see Didascalia 2.59.1–3; Apostolic Constitutions 2.26.7). Moreover, clergy are to teach and to correct their people assiduously (PO 6; see Didascalia 2.34.3, 2.46.6, and 2.47.1; Apostolic Constitutions 2.47.1). In combination, these theologians and texts contribute a view of the Church as a dynamic community founded in mission. Numerically, Presbyterorum Ordinis is the third most important document for apostolic, patristic, and medieval textual citations.
7. **Gaudium et Spes**

In the controversial Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS*), there are fewer patristic and medieval references than in the other documents discussed thus far. However, those in paragraph 69, which is titled ‘The earth’s goods destined for all’, total over one-half of all such references in the document. Moreover, the historical authority of the teaching of this paragraph is affirmed in the main text. That ‘every person has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth’s goods for themselves and their family’, it asserts, ‘has been the opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, who taught that people are bound to come to the aid of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods’. Basil, Lactantius, Augustine, and Gregory the Great are all cited in support (*GS* 69; see Basil, *Homily on the text of Luke ‘I will pull down my barns’* 2; Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 5; Augustine, *Commentary on John’s Gospel* 50.6 and *Exposition of the Psalms* 147.12; Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels* 20.12 and *Pastoral Care* 3.21). In the same paragraph, reference is also made to Bonaventure (*Commentary on III Sentences* 33.1, *Commentary on IV Sentences* 15.2.2, *Questions on Superfluity* 186) and Albert the Great (*Commentary on III Sentences* 33.3.1, *Commentary on IV Sentences* 15.16). Furthermore, in the same paragraph, two radical positions regarding personal property are attributed to Thomas Aquinas: that we should view our lawful possessions not as our own but as held in common, because others may also benefit from them; and that a person in extreme need may take from others whatever he or she requires for survival (*Summa Theologiae* IIaIIae, q. 32, art. 5, to 2 and q. 66, arts. 2 and 7). The second of these justifies what many would regard as theft.

In view of *Gaudium et Spes’s* contested status, it is striking that this paragraph is supported by so much *ressourcement* material. Although Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, on capital and labour, had cited Tertullian, Gregory the Great, and Thomas Aquinas, the view remained among conservative bishops that the later conciliar document was inspired by a secular political agenda rather than by properly theological concerns. In the face of such criticism, the citation of patristic and medieval sources formed part of a strategy to cement the document’s authority.

8. **Other Documents**

The constitutions and decrees examined so far in this chapter are those in which *ressourcement* made the greatest impact. However, out of the sixteen main conciliar documents, six contain no patristic or medieval references, and this also requires comment, if more briefly. In some cases, the documents in question are decrees and declarations that deal with the applied aspects of matters already addressed in their theological dimension in *Lumen Gentium*. Although historical references are absent