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## THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND TODAY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICA

### **Sobór Watykański II a współczesny Kościół katolicki w Stanach Zjednoczonych**

**Abstrakt:** Od momentu powstania Stany Zjednoczone były krajem słynącym z wyjątkowej wolności religijnej. Dominowały jednak różnorodne wyznania protestanckie. Pierwsi katolicy przybyli do Ameryki Północnej wraz z Hiszpanami w 1513 r., rozpoczynając pracę misyjną wśród rdzennych mieszkańców. Jednak brytyjscy koloniści, anglikanie i purytanie, przenieśli na grunt amerykański także silny, mające swoje źródło w reformacji, antykatolicyzm. Kościół katolicki nie był główną instytucją religijną w Ameryce Północnej: na początku rewolucji amerykańskiej katolicy stanowili zaledwie 1% obywateli i tylko stan Maryland był w większości katolicki. Szybki rozwój Kościoła rzymskiego w USA rozpoczął się na początku XX wieku, wraz z kolejnymi falami imigracji z krajów katolickich w Europie. W 1928 r. Al Smith był pierwszym katolickim kandydatem na prezydenta, a w 1961 r. ciesząc się dużą popularnością katolik John F. Kennedy został prezydentem Stanów Zjednoczonych. Współcześnie obserwuje się dynamiczny rozwój katolicyzmu i zanik postaw antykatolickich, wiele instytucji publicznych czy społecznych zostało założonych przez katolików, katolicy stali się też ważną częścią amerykańskiego dyskursu intelektualnego. Współpraca dyplomatyczna prezydenta Ronalda Reagana i papieża Jana Pawła II przyczyniła się do upadku komunizmu w Europie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Sobór Watykański II, Kościół katolicki w USA, reformacja, wyznania protestanckie

## The Roman Catholic Church in the United States

Since its foundation, the United States has been a Protestant country, famous for its unique religious liberty. The reason why the USA has been free of state religion is not – as many claim – the enlightenment of the Founding Fathers, but the variety of Protestant denominations in which the majority of American inhabitants believed. The first Catholics came to North America with the Spaniards in 1513 and started missions for the aboriginal inhabitants. After the Reformation in Europe, British colonists, who were usually Anglicans and Puritans, brought their anti-Catholicism to America; members of the Roman Church started being persecuted; some Protestants claimed that this activity could unite Protestant sects. The Roman Catholic Church was not a main religious institution in North America: at the beginning of the American Revolution, Catholics constituted only 1% of citizens and Maryland was the only Catholic State. The Church in America was developing rapidly and the number of faithful was rising due to conversions and immigration from Catholic countries in Europe – at the beginning of the 20th century, one sixth of the population was Catholic. In 1928, Al Smith became the first Catholic presidential candidate, whilst John F. Kennedy was the first President of the United States who was a member of the RCC. His cadence stopped discrimination against Roman Catholic Christians in the public sphere on suspicion of being agents of the pope and Vatican. In 1973, Catholics played a big role in the discussion about abortion against the background of the *Rhodes vs. Wade* case, as the most committed defenders of prenatal life amongst the American public.

Nowadays, the culture war in the USA also influences Americans' religious life and theological discussions. The fragmentation of American Protestantism has made the RCC the largest church and the discussion on abortion a few years ago showed us that it is also the most vital and orthodox.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, looking at the condition of the Church in the USA and the life of the typical, ordinary Catholic, we can say that this condition could be described as good only in comparison to liberal religious communities. Today's (after 1965) post-Council Catholicism has lost much of what was characteristic of it in the past, such as:

The arcanery of decorations on albs and chasubles, the processions of Holy Water blessings, the grottos with their precarious rows of fire-hazard candles flickering away in little red cups, the colored seams and peculiar buttons that identified monsignors, the wimpled school sisters, the tiny Spanish grandmothers muttering prayers in their black mantillas, the First Communion girls wrapped up in white like prepubescent brides, the mumbled Irish prejudices, the loud Italian festivals, the Holy Door indulgences, the pocket guides to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Bottum, *The Death of Protestant America: A Political Theory of the Protestant Mainline*, [www.firstthings.com/article/2008/08/001-the-death-of-protestant-america-a-political-theory-of-the-protestant-mainline-19](http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/08/001-the-death-of-protestant-america-a-political-theory-of-the-protestant-mainline-19) [accessed April 10, 2013].

Thomistic philosophy, the Knights of Columbus with their cocked hats and comic-opera swords, the tinny mission bells, the melismatic chapel choirs....<sup>2</sup>

Since the reforms, it has a new image. Joseph Bottum claims that these changes were important and necessary for the Church, but also admits that new tendencies in theology and the reforms of the Vatican II have contributed to the decline of the authority of American bishops, the hemorrhaging of priests, nuns and parishioners, and divisions among hierarchs, who are uncertain of what is correct in Catholic doctrine, because the Council changes have shown us that every element of it is changeable.

In recent years, we have observed the emergence of Catholics in American public debate – magazines, television and universities. A coalition has sprung up, made up of Catholics, conservative Protestants and Jews against some liberal conceptions like legalization of abortion, euthanasia and gay marriage; an example of this coalition is some neoconservative communities, e.g., ones connected with the magazine “First Things”. Although in my opinion, such a coalition is conservative only when compared to the left-wing mainstream, and leads to syncretism, which is not good for Catholic identity and could make the Roman Church more and more similar to liberal Protestantism and Judaism, I still consider that Catholicism could become the most influential power in America and the whole world but it has to overcome the crisis which occurred after the Second Vatican Council (however, the bad tendencies had been developing even earlier) and make today's teachings appropriate to its centuries-old Tradition. The main theme of this article is describing the “reformative” tendencies which resulted in changes in Catholicism after 1965 and how they could be linked with the contemporary condition of the USCC.

## Introduction

As modern philosopher Nicolas Gomez Davila said: “At the thought of the current Church (clergy, liturgy, theology), an old Catholic first becomes indignant, then astonished, and finally he just bursts out in laughter.” In fact, each of us is a witness of the crisis of the Roman Catholic Church, but if somebody is not convinced that the church is in a bad situation, they can look at some statistics. For example, in the United States, where – on the one hand – the number of Catholics (62 million or 23% of the general population) went up by 454 668 people last year,<sup>3</sup> other information doesn't look so optimistic. This growth is caused mainly by immigration, especially from Latin countries. The number of priests, which in

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *When the Swallows Came Back to Capistrano*, [www.firstthings.com/article/2009/01/002-when-the-swallows-came-back-to-capistrano-catholic-culture-in-america-40](http://www.firstthings.com/article/2009/01/002-when-the-swallows-came-back-to-capistrano-catholic-culture-in-america-40).

<sup>3</sup> S. Flis, *Kościół amerykański w statystyce*, [www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/Z/ZD/usa.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/Z/ZD/usa.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

the years 1930–1965 doubled to 65 thousand, in the years 1965–2003 decreased to 45 thousand. In the year 2020, it will amount to only 31 thousand (and half of them will be over seventy). The percentage of parishes without a priest grew from 1% in 1965 to 15% in 2002. In that period of time, the proportion of clerics decreased by 90% and existing seminaries by two thirds. Nowadays, the amount of people going to mass regularly has decreased from three quarters to a quarter; moreover, the number of Catholics getting married is now smaller by two thirds than in the past. Only 10% of religious instructors accept an ecclesial attitude to contraception and 53% of them think that you can remain a good catholic despite abortion. 77% of Catholics believe that they have the right to divorce and a second marriage; 78% of believers don't see anything wrong in being absent from Sunday mass. Members of the RCC don't know the Christian definition of holy mass; 70% of them think that it is only the commemoration of the Last Supper.<sup>4</sup>

After looking at these statistics, we should ask a question: Why is the situation of the Church so bad? What are the reasons? And, on the other hand, why is the condition of the Roman Church in the world still relatively better than that of other Protestant and Christian communities?

Today, the consensus is that the process of secularization is an ineluctable result of modernity and progress. This thesis now has the status of a classical statement and the only explanation for this process. However, we can't agree with this thesis, because it tells us nothing about the real reasons for the laicization, nor can it explain the growth in religiousness in most parts of the world, especially Asia, Africa and South America. However, the process of secularization is occurring, but it is diversified in its geography (especially "Western" countries – America and Europe), religion (for example, among Protestant communities only the more "liberal" ones are noting a decrease in number of worshippers, while the more "conservative" ones are not recording such a phenomenon<sup>5</sup>) and time. This secularization has its sources in a doctrine of the Catholic Church, which separated religious from state power. Such a procedure was carried out in our civilization in the past, but it doesn't mean the same as what we understand as secularization today. Nowadays, we can see that the religious sphere is becoming less and less "religious"; the Christian Church is giving up its Christian heritage, and that is the quiddity of laicization.<sup>6</sup>

No one doubts that the biggest change in the modern – or indeed in the whole – history of the Church was ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, which took place in 1962–1965 during the pontificates of Popes John XXIII and

<sup>4</sup> All statistics from: Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: *The Church since Vatican II*, ed. K. C. Jones, [www.fsspx.org/en/teaching-of-the-faith/the-crisis-in-the-church/a\\_statistics-of-catholicisms-decline-in-the-us](http://www.fsspx.org/en/teaching-of-the-faith/the-crisis-in-the-church/a_statistics-of-catholicisms-decline-in-the-us) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>5</sup> *The Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches*, [www.nccusa.org/news/100204yearbook2010.html](http://www.nccusa.org/news/100204yearbook2010.html) teologiapolityczna.pl/kilka-uwag-o-sekularyzacji...

<sup>6</sup> A. Kołakowska, *Kilka uwag o sekularyzacji w XXI wieku*, [www.teologiapolityczna.pl/kilka-uwag-o-sekularyzacji...](http://www.teologiapolityczna.pl/kilka-uwag-o-sekularyzacji...) [accessed April 10, 2013].

Paul VI. The slogan of this council was *aggiornamento* – “open the windows of the Church to let in some fresh air”,<sup>7</sup> as Pope John said. This means that the Church wanted to accommodate the modern world and communities which are beyond it. After the last (Second) Council, the Church started to proclaim new doctrines such as ecumenism, religious freedom, collegialism, and a change in rites of sacrament. Looking at statistics in the “Yearbook” we can see that some bad tendencies began at the time when the Church was implementing the changes of the Vatican II Council. The majority of Catholics who defend the achievements of the Council say that traditionalists – people who have criticized the reforms as damaging and incompatible with catholic doctrine – are making a *post hoc, ergo non propter hoc* error, which means that the crisis of the Church is not a result of changes made before, but of today’s secularization. However, the same people affirm that the “new spring of the Church”, which – according to them – is to take place in the modern Church, is regarded as being a result of reforms made in the years 1962–1965. Many Catholics doubt whether new ideas proclaimed commonly by today’s hierarchy have a good influence on the Church and are in accordance with its doctrine.

Now, I would like to describe the ideas of the last council, their relations to the traditional teaching of the Roman Church, indicating their sources and trying to characterize their influence on the situation of Christianity today.

## The Tradition

The ideas preached by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council are in many meaningful points discordant with the doctrine that was taught before, which we can term “traditional”. Firstly, we have to ask the question: ‘What does the Tradition mean for the Catholic?’ and describe its sources and beginning, which will help us to understand the problems with the church’s doctrine today. Answering the question, the Tradition does not only mean being attached to old customs and ideas, but also to a second source of the Divine Revelation, which is close to the Holy Scripture. As the definition says:

The Tradition is passed down from generation to generation by the word of mouth doctrines or rules of faith, which have not been written; it is an evidence of the earliest customs, thanks to them various practices, truths of faith, moral teaching of Christianity and facts from life and times of Christ became known; it is a teaching of the Church given orally and announced as true and free from errors in passing, a source of the Revelation or faith<sup>8</sup>.

The Trident Council and the First Vatican Council tell us that it is the deposit of faith given to the Apostles by Jesus Christ and passed down to our times,

<sup>7</sup> M. Sullivan, *101 Questions and Answers on Vatican II*, New York 2002, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *The Concise Catholic Dictionary*, Kansas City 1992, p. 334.

accepted by the Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> These words are compatible with a statement by the Apostle Paul: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”<sup>10</sup> The Church, when it defines dogmas, doesn’t create them, but reveals them from its sources to those concerned and explain a dogma of faith.

The beginning of the Tradition took place in the times of the first parents, who had a broad knowledge of revelation (e.g. about the dogma of the Holy Trinity). After the first sin, man broke the covenant with God, but the Holy Father decided to redeem the human race by his Son. To prepare people for his coming, He chose the Nation of Israel and gave them his Revelation. Until the times of Moses (1280 BC), it was passed down orally and a large part of it was deformed by the Nation of Israel; meanwhile, the Israelites deformed the Revelation and Tradition.

## Judaism

According to Polish philosopher priests, Michael Poradowski and Felix Koneczny, at a certain time, two branches of religion can be differentiated in Israel – Judaism and Mosaism (Jahvism). Mosaism was a religion revealed by God to patriarchs and prophets to prepare Jews for the coming of the Messiah. Judaism was a complex of beliefs created by Israelites under the influence of Middle Eastern polytheism, based on the Cabala – a deformed Tradition which superseded the Torah and commentaries on the Torah.

Sources of Christianity are to be found not in Judaism, but in Mosaism and Hellenism. In Greek-Roman culture, as St. Augustine mentions, there were elements of faith in Providence, and metaphysics – created by this culture – helped Mosaic Jews (e.g. Apostles and disciples) to understand the dogmas of the Holy Trinity, Incarnation of Jesus and accept Him as a Messiah. Christ often criticized the faith of Judaists (e.g. in the “Acts of Apostles” 4: 26–27), who didn’t recognize him as a saviour and crucified him.

Since the beginning of the existence of the Church, after the Ascension and Pentecost, many Jews have harmed Christianity, either attacking it directly or indirectly by the introduction of traditional Jewish customs into the new religion by proselytes (called *judaizantes*). All of the first heresies had their source in Judaism, like Ebionitism – a sect which considers Jesus only as a notable man, not the Son of God. It is very similar to a later religious movement – Arianism, which

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<sup>9</sup> The Council of Trent, The Fourth Session. 8 April 1546, *Decree regarding the Sacred Books and the Traditions that need to be received*; The First Vatican Council, Constitution *Dei Filius*, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apc\\_19670101\\_indulgentiarum-doctrina\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-vi_apc_19670101_indulgentiarum-doctrina_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>10</sup> 2 Thes 2: 15.

negates Christ's divinity and the conception of the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of Bishop Arius gained control over the majority of the Christian world until the times of St. Athanasius and the Council of Nicaea.

## Reformation

In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had to combat many crises and opposing ideas, but the most serious problem was the Reformation of Martin Luther, which took place in 1517. His movement was, at the beginning, a reaction to the bad situation of the church in the period of the Renaissance. This time is connected with a revival of paganism and Greek-Roman culture, which became popular amongst the then elites. But in the second phase, due to the pope's negative reaction to Luther's thesis, the reformer had to ask German princes – who were very keen on becoming independent from the papacy – for help. The political situation and the many anti-Catholic views of the former monk led to the formation of a new religion, which attracted almost half of Europe.

The new heresy has its sources mainly in the personal problems of Martin Luther, but the spreading of Protestantism can be attributed to local German monarchs. In brief, the principles of Protestantism were common priesthood, self-interpretation of the Bible, salvation by faith and predestination. When Luther attacked the Catholic doctrine of Mass, he claimed that it was not the sacrifice of Christ and that the real existence of Christ and Eucharist made the existence of the priesthood inconvenient. People who can read and interpret the Bible don't need the Church, the Pope and the magisterium; their judgment has supremacy over every rule of faith. Protestants have always said that they based their conceptions on the authority of the Bible, against the lies of Rome, but – in fact – there are many excerpts in Scripture legitimizing papal power, 7 sacraments, and Apostolic Tradition as a second source of Revelation. These ideas could easily legitimize *cuius regio illius religio*, by which princes in Germany became, in fact, religious leaders in their countries in opposition to Rome. The distraining of Church and monastic property by lay power become possible. The new religion was anthropocentric, deprived of metaphysics: it was a return to German Paganism, but retaining Christian symbols and nomenclature.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Protestantism abandoned the achievements of Christian civilization in theology, philosophy, art (it was a new form of iconoclasm) and Latin. The reformers denied the divine provenance of the Church; their movements destroyed its unity – today we can differentiate thousands of Protestant sects in the world.

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<sup>11</sup> Swedish King Gustav I Vasa, who as one of the first monarchs to become Protestant, said: "Coming back to the faith of our predecessors – that's what we want to do." M. Poradowski, *Kościół od wewnątrz zagrożony*, Wrocław 2001, p. 56.

Martin Luther, who was personally a zealous anti-Semite, created a new confession, which has many confluxes with Judaism. In it, the minister has a function similar to that of a Jewish rabbi: not a priest, but only learned in scripture. Protestantism is dominated by texts from the Old Testament – the concept of scary Jehovah from Jews' visions replaces the merciful Christian God. Neither religion accepts art presenting images of God and the saints. We can say that Protestantism is a *judaisantes* movement of modern times.

One of Luther's ideas condemned by Leo X in *Exsurge Domine* is very significant :

9. A way has been made for us for weakening the authority of councils, and for freely contradicting their actions, and judging their decrees, and boldly confessing whatever seems true, whether it has been approved or disapproved by any council whatsoever.<sup>12</sup>

This means that the essence of Protestantism is the creation of an autonomous subject whose subjective judgment is above any authority; in the political sphere, the consequence of such thinking is state independence from the Church's authority, in fact dominating the Church as an institution and hence monopolizing the religious sphere in the given country – so it is a return to Caesaropapism.

## Freemasonry

The second biggest threat to Christianity in its history was freemasonry. This organization, which has its origins in Medieval masons' associations, from the 18th century on started being active in the philosophical sphere as well. There are many theories concerning masonry; no one knows exactly what this organization is. Some people claim that their aim is to destroy the Church and faith, others make light of this accusation. But we can find some quotes which are related to the topic. Albert Pike, mason of the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree and founder of Scottish rite masonry said:

Around altars of Masonry Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, adherent of Confucius or Zoroaster, can unite as brothers in common prayer to one God over all of gods; Masonry has to let everyone analyze the basis of his faith.<sup>13</sup>

In the masonry magazine *Le Symbolisme* we can read: "Brothers, you can't let say that Masonry is anti-Church. It was merely a circumstantial term. In principle, Masonry wants to be super-Church, in which all other religions will be united."<sup>14</sup> and: "religion of masonry should be a clear doctrine of Luciferism"<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Leo X, *Exsurge Domine*, [www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo10/110exdom.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo10/110exdom.htm) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>13</sup> A Pike, *Instructions*, [in:] R. Amerio, K. Stehlin, *Ekumenizm grzechem przeciwko miłości*, Warszawa 2002, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.



Another prominent mason, Bronisław Trentowski, claimed that the aim of his organization is the deifying of man, building a temple which contains everyman without regard to his belief. According to him masonry has to spread the conception of a universal and humanistic god – “The Great Architect Of The World” and man as a new savior.<sup>16</sup> The main concept of Masonry is encapsulated in a sentence from Genesis: “to be as God” and thus replace the Roman Church as an institution uniting people.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Masonry gained popularity among the aristocracy and elites. The first Church's reaction was condemnation and excommunication of members of lodges in its document *In Eminenti* issued by Pope Clemens XIV in 1738. From then on, Masonry was criticized by all popes until the Second Vatican Council<sup>17</sup>. The Holy See in those documents in the beginning deflected attacks on Papal States, and later dispraised Masonry as an anti-Catholic movement and warned against Masonic influence on theology. After the French Revolution, Masonic lodges became more powerful and increasingly infiltrated and attacked the Church.

### Liberal Catholicism

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some Catholic intellectuals claimed that to prevent progressive laicization, the Church needed to desist from its confrontational attitude and accommodate the ideals of 1789; this approach is termed ‘liberal Catholicism’. Liberalism, according to the encyclopedic definition,

may also mean a political system or tendency opposed to centralization and absolutism. In this sense Liberalism is not at variance with the spirit and teaching of the Catholic Church. Since the end of the eighteenth century, however, the word has been applied more and more to certain tendencies in the intellectual, religious, political, and economical life, which implied a partial or total emancipation of man from the supernatural, moral, and Divine order. Usually, the principles of 1789, that is of the French Revolution, are considered as the Magna Charta of this new form of Liberalism. The most fundamental principle asserts an absolute and unrestrained freedom of thought, religion, conscience, creed, speech, press, and politics. The necessary consequences of this are, on the one hand, the abolition of the Divine right and of every kind of authority derived from God; the relegation of religion from the public life into the private domain of one's individual conscience; the absolute ignoring of Christianity and the Church as public, legal, and social institutions; on the other hand, the putting into practice of the absolute autonomy of every man and citizen, along all lines of human activity, and the concentration of all public authority in one ‘sovereignty of the people’. This sovereignty of the people in all branches of public life as legislation, administration, and jurisdiction, is to be exercised in the name and by order of all the citizens, in such a way, that all should have share in and a control over it. A fundamental principle of Liberalism is the proposition: ‘It is contrary to the natural, in-

<sup>16</sup> A. Nowicki, *Bronisław Trentowski (1808–1869) w niemieckich tygodnikach masonskich z lat 1862–1865*, Nomos 2006, No. 55–56.

<sup>17</sup> We could count 18 papal documents condemning masonry.

nate, and inalienable right and liberty and dignity of man, to subject himself to an authority, the root, rule, measure, and sanction of which is not in himself'. This principle implies the denial of all true authority; for authority necessarily presupposes a power outside and above man to bind him morally.<sup>18</sup>

A pioneer of liberal Catholicism was French Priest Felicite de Lammenais (1782–1854). He stated that the intellectual progress of humanity made us create a new order of relations between the state and the Church, which had to be independent and to give equal rights to every religion.<sup>19</sup> The Church has to give up claiming to be the only way to know the Revelation. The teaching of Lammenais had the support of Pope Gregory XVI, who named the liberal thesis as “delirium” and “absurd”. In 1854, Pius IX issued a very important document, *Syllabus errorum*, attached to the encyclical *Quanta Cura*. It is a list of errors of modern times. The most significant condemnatory points were:

77. In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship. 78. Hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship. 79. Moreover, it is false that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power, given to all, of overtly and publicly manifesting any opinions whatsoever and thoughts, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to propagate the pest of indifferentism. 80. The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.<sup>20</sup>

## Americanism

Meanwhile, on the American continent, the tendencies to reform Catholicism in the spirit of modernity also began to bear fruit. The young Church in the United States of America had been progressing on slightly different terms than on the Old Continent. In Europe, on the one hand, there were tendencies like Gallicanism in some countries, but on the other hand, popes from Pius IX to Pius XII were bolstering the centralism of their power. Americans, on the basis of the Rhode Island Bill Of Rights, implemented “institutional apportionment” of state and religion into their Constitution, as well as equal rights for all religious communities. This system had to conduce the “interacting” of the state and religions.<sup>21</sup> The majority of American settlers were Protestants from the Netherlands or Great Britain, and Catholics were a small group of people who were, in spite of legal tolerance and equality, often discriminated against. However, Catholicism exhibited significant

<sup>18</sup> *Liberalism*, [in:] *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, [www.newadvent.org/cathen/09212a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09212a.htm).

<sup>19</sup> F. de Lammenais, *Oeuvres complètes de F. de Lammenais*, t. 10, Paris 1836, pp. 317–318.

<sup>20</sup> Pius IX, *Syllabus errorum*, [www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>21</sup> M. Novak, *The Truth about Religious Freedom*, [www.firstthings.com/article/2007/01/the-truth-about-religious-freedom-3](http://www.firstthings.com/article/2007/01/the-truth-about-religious-freedom-3).

and impressive development during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> There was a common belief that American freedom was what helped the Church beyond the ocean.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we could see in the American Church tendencies which would be termed “Americanisms” in the future. Its beginnings were linked with the coming of immigrants to the USA who wanted to adapt the Roman Catholic Church to North American values. Americanism is an idea, according to which if the Church wanted to attract believers, it should stop being dogmatic in moral cases and delete from its teaching everything which looks unmodern and constricts man's freedom and rights more than secular law. Americanists said that in modern times the direct influence of the Holy Spirit on believers was powerful enough to disengage from the authority and mediation of the Church.<sup>23</sup> Among the clergy and monks, they promoted the attitude of activism oriented to the temporal sphere. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar – a bishop at that time and today a saint – wrote about this conception:

Americanism found enough followers among the American clergy and lay society that had too much liking for individualism and material progress. Especially, it proclaimed ‘Anglo-Saxon Catholicism’ as the ‘Catholicism of act and freedom’ as compared to ‘Roman Catholicism’ as more passive, absolute and external.<sup>24</sup>

The main Americanists' ideologist was the founder of the “Paulist Fathers”, Redemptorist Father Isaac Thomas Hecker. Other adherents to this ideology were notable American churchmen like Archbishop Michael Augustine Corrigan, Archbishop John Ireland and Cardinal John Gibbons. He was an author of the idea that today's human could achieve excellence. Father Hecker considered that the future of the Church in the United States lay with American values inherited from the “Puritan Myth”. At the time of his activities, we can find the beginnings of ecumenical conceptions of truth divided between various Christian denominations and postulates of democratization of the Church. He claimed that his ideas were accepted by Pope Leo XIII.

The Pope reacted to errors which he found in Americanism and sent two letters to the hierarchs of the USCC – *Longinqua oceani* (in 1894) and *Testem benevolentiae* (1899). In the first, the Holy Father wrote that he recognized the advantages of the American model and praised the Church in North America. However, he simultaneously mentioned that the model of absolute equality of

<sup>22</sup> In 1750 in a 3-million person nation, there were 30–40 thousand Catholics, only one bishopric and one church. At the beginning of the 20th century, out of 65 million people, there were 10 million Catholics (one-seventh of the population), 74 dioceses, 14 archdioceses, 8 thousand priests, 3 thousand monks, 6 thousand churches and also 10 catholic universities, 25 seminaries and 82 cloisters. New York had become the third biggest Catholic city in the world (A. Szlagowski, *Leon XIII*, Warszawa 2002, p. 120).

<sup>23</sup> J. Perszon, *Ecclesia semper reformanda. Kolegialność Kościoła w posoborowej eklezjologii amerykańskiej*, Toruń 2009, pp. 53–54, 57.

<sup>24</sup> J. S. Pelczar, *Obrona religii katolickiej*, vol 2: *Jak wielkim skarbem jest religia katolicka i dlaczego ma dzisiaj tak wielu przeciwników*, Przemyśl 1920, pp. 356–359.

every religion and religious freedom cannot be affirmed as desirable for the whole Church and as a model for other countries. In the year of sending *Longinqua*, the apostolic delegate resisted Catholics taking part in interreligious “ecumenical” congresses organized by Protestants in the USA.<sup>25</sup> *Testem benevolentiae* pertained to Hecker’s and his colleagues’ ideas. The Pope wrote that their concepts, such as evolution of dogmas, postulates of changing moral teachings, the primacy of natural virtues, activism, contempt for monasticism and *deinstitutionalization* of the Church “wrapped minds in darkness” and declared Americanism as a new heresy. The Holy Father, looking at the European experience with the French Revolution, was afraid of the reception. He condemned the Americanists’ postulates, because they could support belligerent atheism.<sup>26</sup> American bishops complied with the Pope’s Pecci admonitions, but their attitude wasn’t candid. At that time, many people said that Leo XIII was fighting a “phantom”. Today, we could say that he was right and this heresy was a real danger.

## Modernism

Ideas from the New World appalled the majority of the clergy in Europe, but for some of them, the Americanists’ concepts seemed interesting. They had an influence on the birth of a new idea called Modernism, which was very significant for present Catholicism. Modernism wasn’t one, consistent idea, but rather a collection of various attitudes occurring in the Church at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the common denominator of which was the willingness to orient Catholicism towards the spirit of modern times. Modernists, in contrast to supporters of Americanism, working not only on a defined territory and being near to the heart of the Roman Church, had the ability to influence the hierarchy and theology.

The sources of modernism can be found in modern German philosophy (Kant’s cognitive agnosticism, Hegel’s evolutionism), which in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gained strong significance in Europe together with the military successes of the German Empire. Likewise, Neoromanticism in culture and the decadent climate of the *fin de siècle* impacted on the fact that the reforming of Catholicism became a kind of fashion in those times. Famous pioneers of modernism were under the influence of German thought – the author of the blasphemous “The Life Of Jesus”, Ernest Renan, and his disciple, Alfred Loisy. His book, “The Gospel and the Church”, wasn’t an open attack on Catholicism; similarly to others supporters of modernism, he presented a new perspective on Christianity. The Gospel is not a certain source of Revelation, because the words of Jesus are only quoted. The (Apostolic) Tradition constitutes a needless “commentary” on the

<sup>25</sup> J. Hennessey SI, *American Catholics*, New York 1981, p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> M. M. Reher, *Pope Leo XIII and “Americanism”*, Theological Studies 1973, No. 34, p. 686.

Scriptures, and the only facts that we can be sure of are those that it is possible to verify empirically – in fact, it's agnosticism.

After the announcement of the dogma of papal infallibility, the Popes were perceived as the main interpreters of the Christian tradition. St. Pius X, after incidents connected with Loisy's teaching, decided to start a 'war' with the conceptions of modernists, which had started gaining popularity. In the *Lamentabili* decree published in 1907, the Holy Office drew up a list of condemned statements (a form similar to *Syllabus*: that's why it is called a "second *Syllabus*"), which began with the words:

With truly lamentable results, our age, casting aside all restraint in its search for the ultimate causes of things, frequently pursues novelties so ardently that it rejects the legacy of the human race. Thus it falls into very serious errors, which are even more serious when they concern sacred authority, the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, and the principal mysteries of Faith. The fact that many Catholic writers also go beyond the limits determined by the Fathers and the Church herself is extremely regrettable. In the name of higher knowledge and historical research (they say), they are looking for that progress of dogmas which is, in reality, nothing but the corruption of dogmas.<sup>27</sup>

Thereafter, the pope criticized modernism in the encyclical *Pascendi Dominic Gregis*, in which he said that it "reeks of heresy" and is a "synthesis of all heresies", because it is a collection of opinions of some theologians, who – although they don't attack any concrete dogma – preach conceptions misrepresenting the teaching of the Church. Pius X listed a few aspects of modernists' claims: theological, religious, philosophical, historical, apologetic, reformatory and critic. A common feature of the ideas of all modernists is the rule *libre examen* – the right to free judgment of the Tradition and dogmas, which is a source of the next three features – agnosticism (God is not a subject of knowledge – clear rationalism), immanentism (the image of God is a projection of individual perceptions of man) and evolutionism (the truth about God changes over time). The Pope saw sources of this heresy in haughtiness, ignorance, contempt for the Tradition, scholasticism and Magisterium of the authors, and also in modern philosophy and Protestantism. Pope Sarto warned that it can lead to atheism and pantheism and began to fight it. He decided to continue the renaissance of Thomism, begun by Leo XIII, raising the quality of teaching of theology and making every new priest take an Oath Against Modernism.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> These errors are: depriving the Church of right to define the Tradition (points 1–8 and 20–26), denying the authenticity of the books of the New Testament (9–19), impossibility of the cognition of life and teaching of Jesus (27–28), contesting the character of sacraments (39–51), negation of the whole apologetic ecclesiology (57–65). Holy Office, *Lamentabili* decree.

<sup>28</sup> It reads: "I ... firmly embrace and accept each and every definition that has been set forth and declared by the unerring teaching authority of the Church, especially those principal truths which are directly opposed to the errors of this day. [...] And I sincerely hold that the doctrine of faith was handed down to us from the apostles through the orthodox Fathers in exactly the same meaning and always in the same purport. Therefore, I entirely reject the heretical misrepresentation that dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another different from the one which the Church held previously. [...] I also condemn every error according

However, this great Pope was convinced that modernism would be reborn in the future.

### The Church before the day of revolution

Modernism, in spite of being condemned and combated to some degree, was infiltrating the Church, especially universities and seminaries, as a “new theology”. After the death of Pius X and the short pontificate of Benedict XV, there followed the pontificate of Pius XI. This Pope – in spite of his dogmatic firmness, announcement of the encyclical *Quas Primas* about the social kingship of Christ, and the unequivocal condemnation of both totalitarianisms – was to succumb to the influence of the progressivists. In 1939, Eugenio Pacelli took over the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church as Pius XII. Pius had to definitely combat the dangerous tendency in theology – modernism, which was reborn according to the predictions of Pius X. Pope Pacelli criticized neomodernism and some tendencies in philosophy in the encyclical *Humani Generis*, called the “third *Syllabus*”. In this document, the Church stood against the teaching of such theologians as (but not mentioned by name) Yves Congar, John Courtney Murray, Karl Rahner, Henri de Lubac, Hans Kueng, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Edward Schillebeeckx; they were to play a big role in the years 1962-65. The Pope warned against errors inside the Church which could destroy Catholicism. Ideas like Pyrrhonism, evolutionism, sentimentalism, historicism tear away the truth from the divine absolute and from atemporality, objectivity and universality.

Father Congar OP, whose books were censored by the Holy Office in 1952, came back into favor after the death of Pius XII to become a cardinal and a council expert. Congar named himself “a prophet of the new Church” and announced “the end of the Counter-Reformational Church”. His view of Catholicism was of a democratic institution without the power of the Pope, based on a community encompassing gentiles.<sup>29</sup>

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to which, in place of the divine deposit which has been given to the spouse of Christ to be carefully guarded by her, there is put a philosophical figment or product of a human conscience that has gradually been developed by human effort and will continue to develop indefinitely. Fifthly, I hold with certainty and sincerely confess that faith is not a blind sentiment of religion welling up from the depths of the subconscious under the impulse of the heart and the motion of a will trained to morality; but faith is a genuine assent of the intellect to truth received by hearing from an external source. [...] Furthermore, with due reverence, I submit and adhere with my whole heart to the condemnations, declarations, and all the prescripts contained in the encyclical *Pascendi* and in the decree *Lamentabili*, especially those concerning what is known as the history of dogmas. I also reject the error of those who say that the faith held by the Church can contradict history, and that Catholic dogmas, in the sense in which they are now understood, are irreconcilable with a more realistic view of the origins of the Christian religion [...] Finally, I declare that I am completely opposed to the error of the modernists who hold that there is nothing divine in sacred tradition; [...] rather, that the absolute and immutable truth preached by the apostles from the beginning may never be believed to be different, may never be understood in any other way [...]. Thus I promise, this I swear, so help me God.” Pius X, *Oath against Modernism*, [www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>29</sup> Y. Congar, *Rozmowy jesienne*, Warszawa 2001, p. 8; idem, *Vraie et Fausse Reforme dans l'Eglise*, Paris 1950, pp. 40, 45.

In the teaching of John Courtney Murray, we can find a willingness to import American ideas condemned by former popes, like the separation of the state and Church, freedom of religion and conscience of the whole Church, because they would have been appropriate to the level of political and social awareness of people. In 1955, he was forbidden to write about the relations of Church and state<sup>30</sup>.

Priest Karl Rahner was a German theologian who postulated abandoning Thomism and scholasticism and all of the old philosophy and theology. He was in favor of the reorientation of theology to the human and the building of a democratic and collegial Church. Pius XII reproved his thoughts concerning the liturgy, and the Holy Office was close to doing so with his statements about Mariology, such as negation of the Virginity of Mary.

In the cited encyclical, Pius XII wrote:

Some say they are not bound by the doctrine, explained in Our Encyclical Letter of a few years ago, and based on the Sources of Revelation, which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing. Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation. Others finally belittle the reasonable character of the credibility of Christian faith. These and like errors, it is clear, have crept in among certain of Our sons who are deceived by imprudent zeal for souls or by false science. To them We are compelled with grief to repeat once again truths already well known, and to point out with solicitude clear errors and dangers of error.<sup>31</sup>

The last popes before *Vaticanum II* had propositions and thoughts about convoking a council to condemn the new theology, laicization and totalitarianism. Pius XII knew that it would have been very difficult because of technical problems and claimed that *Humani Generis* was sufficient to criticize the threats to the Church. He was also afraid of the rising influence of neomodernists, who could try to dominate the council. However after his death, the new successor of St. Peter – the elderly John XXIII, who was perceived as an interim Pope who was not too restrictive for the Soviets, announced he would convene a new council three months after the election.

## The Council

Preparations for the Second Council: Pope John asked a group of several hundred people, both ecclesiastic and lay, to prepare appropriate schemes. The effects of their work were rated as the most valuable material in the whole history of the Church and absolutely compatible with previous teachings. However, a very strong and active reformative wing during the council managed to change them,

<sup>30</sup> J. C. Murray, *Theological Studies*, Vol. 25, New York 1964, p. 520.

<sup>31</sup> Pius XII, *Humani Generis*..., pars. 27–28, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_12081950\\_humani-generis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

and force through their own conceptions. The book “The Rhine Flows into the Tiber”,<sup>32</sup> written by Father Ralph M. Wiltgen SVD excellently describes the operations of a group of theologians from the countries bordering the Rhine (Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and France) who were steeped in liberal philosophy and wanted to practise their beliefs in moral, doctrinal and liturgical theology. As one of them said:

“I like thinking that man is not under any authority except himself”. The progressive wing was acting very ably. They rapidly took control over council commissions, changed procedural instructions, superseded appointed schemes by new – created *ad hoc* and slightly different. As one of the most liberal council experts stated: “a dream of avant garde of the Church is diffusing and thanks to the merits of the Council saturating the whole atmosphere of the Church”<sup>33</sup>.

The successor of John XXIII, who died during the Council, Paul VI, accepted changes in procedures and allowed “European tribute” free rein. Non-Catholic experts were also allowed to take part in Vatican II proceedings.

### **The slogan of the *Vaticanum II* – *aggiornamento***

The councils preceding *Vaticanum I* were convoked for 3 reasons: matters of faith, unity and to make reforms. The Catholic Church organized them because it wanted to unite people of other faiths, define new dogmas or solve internal problems. In a speech opening the Second Vatican Council of 11 October 1962, Pope John XXIII said that the Church would desist from condemning errors, preferring to “use the medicine of mercy”.<sup>34</sup> In this oration, Pope Roncalli also stated that the Catholic doctrine should be present in a new form appropriate to modernity. According to the decree *Presbyterium ordinis*, the above three aims could also be found, but in a different form, signaling the pastoral rather than dogmatic aim of the council. Adapting Catholicism to modernity as an aim of the Second Vatican Council was reaffirmed by Paul VI, when he was opening the second session of the Council.<sup>35</sup> The Popes’ pronouncements and the Council’s document tell us that the aim of *Vaticanum II* was adaptation to the world, the brotherhood of men and attention to civil life. This was admitted in the closing speech, when Paul VI said:

A feeling of boundless sympathy has permeated the whole of it. The attention of our council has been absorbed by the discovery of human needs (and these needs grow in proportion to the greatness which the son of the earth claims for himself). But we call upon those who

<sup>32</sup> R. M. Wiltgen, *Ren wpada do Tybru. Historia Soboru Watykańskiego II*, Poznań 2001, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> T. Molnar, *Christian Humanism*, Chicago 1978, p. 50–51, 73.

<sup>34</sup> John XIII, *The opening speech of the Second Vatican Council*, [www.ourladywarriors.org/teach/v2open.htm](http://www.ourladywarriors.org/teach/v2open.htm) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>35</sup> R. Amerio, *Iota Unum*, Komorów 2009, pp. 83, 85.



term themselves modern humanists, and who have renounced the transcendent value of the highest realities, to give the council credit at least for one quality and to recognize our own new type of humanism: we, too, in fact, we more than any others, honor mankind.<sup>36</sup>

During the Second Vatican Council, 4 constitutions, 3 declarations and 9 decrees were issued. Today, there are more and more doubts about their accordance with the Magisterium. One of the constitutions tells us:

[This Vatican Council] searches into the sacred tradition and doctrine of the Church—the treasury out of which the Church continually brings forth new things that are in harmony with the things that are old. [but another:] For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her<sup>37</sup>,

which suggests that the Apostle's Tradition could be erroneous and evolving. Now, we analyze the main points of Vatican II's teaching.

### Religious freedom

The dignity of the human person was the main idea of a large part of the Council's documents. In the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* it is the basis for allowing man a fundamental right to religious freedom, which should be guaranteed in civil law by every country. Church-state relations built on freedom and equality of the Roman Catholic Church and other religious communities are presumed as a basic value.<sup>38</sup> The Church and the political state should be independent and autonomous, building their relationship on noncommittal cooperation. There is nothing about the obligations of states towards the Church, but the Church is enjoined to accept the customs of nations. Political communities have to be organized on the basis of human values like justice, friendliness and the common good.

Every human has the right and duty to make appropriate judgments for themselves according to their conscience and to find the truth by “teaching, thinking and dialogue”. That is a freedom of conscience which would help people of different religions to adapt to “objective moral norms” for the “good of the whole of humanity”.

Freedom of religion and conscience was a postulate of the French Revolution<sup>39</sup> and then liberal Catholics. The Church had always been tolerant, to a cer-

<sup>36</sup> Paul VI, *Addresses of pope Paul VI during the last general meeting of the Second Vatican Council*.

<sup>37</sup> Second Vatican Council, Declaration of Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*, par. 1; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, par. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis...*, pars. 4, 13 and 73.

<sup>39</sup> “Art. X: No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.” (*Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, [www.historyguide.org/intellect/declaration.html](http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/declaration.html)); condemned by Pius VI in encyclical *Adeo nota*.

tain extent, of people believing in different religions, but had never given people freedom to err.<sup>40</sup> Freedom, in the Christian sense, could be used only when a human aimed at good and the only real good could be God. People are free from being coerced into faith, but not to believe in what they want to. That's why Pius VII was against writing this rule in the French Constitution in 1814. Gregory XVI in *Mirari vos* radically criticized it and warned that religious freedom could lead to indifferentism, which was repeated by Pius IX.<sup>41</sup> Pius XI stated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that this rule deprives Jesus Christ of his kingly dignity.

The main author of *Dignitatis Humanae*, John Courtney Murray SJ, was forbidden to write about these issues by Pius XII. Another council expert, Yves Congar, admitted that the text of this document was contrary to the cited sentence from the *Syllabus*. The postulates of the American Jesuit are a repeat of the ideas of the condemned Americanism; their contrariness to the teaching of Leo XIII and Pius XI was explained by him (Leo XIII) by the changing context of history. Leo XIII in *Libertas*:

Wherefore, civil society must acknowledge God as its Founder and Parent, and must obey and reverence His power and authority. Justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless and in *Immortale Dei*:

For God alone is the true and supreme Lord of the world. Everything, without exception, must be subject to Him, and must serve him, so that whosoever holds the right to govern holds it from one sole and single source, namely, God, the sovereign Ruler of all. 'There is no power but from God.'<sup>42</sup>

Pius IX in *Quas Primas*:

Nor is there any difference in this matter between the individual and the family or the State; for all men, whether collectively or individually, are under the dominion of Christ. In him is the salvation of the individual, in him is the salvation of society.<sup>43</sup>

The result of the proclamation of this idea after 1965 was the end of the Church's wish that all countries should be catholic, and it also led to some countries deleting such words from their constitutions (e.g. Columbia, Spain and the Swiss Canton of Vaud).

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<sup>40</sup> Before the Council, Cardinal Ottaviani's scheme about tolerance for heterodoxies understood in a traditional way, was first drawn up, but it was changed by a new contrary document advocating freedom for all religions, written by Cardinal Bea.

<sup>41</sup> Condemned sentence from *Syllabus*: "15. Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true."

<sup>42</sup> Leon XIII, *Immortale Dei*, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_01111885\\_immortale-dei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>43</sup> Pius IX, *Quas Primas*, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_11121925\\_quas-primas\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_11121925_quas-primas_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

## Ecumenism

The liberal spirit present at Vatican II pervaded the vision of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and other religions. The most significant principle for the new role which the Church would play was encapsulated in a sentence from *Lumen Gentium* that truth only “subsists in” (not “is”) the Catholic Church and that non-Catholic communities are perceived “as capable of giving access to the community of salvation”.<sup>44</sup> This issue was developed in two documents – *Nostra Aetate* and *Unitatis Reintegratio*. The new idea – “ecumenism” – is a quite different perception of the unity of people of different religions than the traditional *oikumene*:<sup>45</sup> heterodoxes now should not be converted (it is even forbidden<sup>46</sup>), but the Catholic Church has to take care of cooperation, dialogue and agreement.

The Council announced the “brotherhood of all men”, which would evince itself in common “harmony and apostolic cooperation” and joint ecumenical prayers. Non-Catholic Christian communities were given the name “Churches”, which equated their position with the Roman Church. Differences in their doctrine were omitted, and similarities in the teaching of the Gospel were emphasised.

According to non-Christians, the last Council commonly stated their belief in the same God-Creator (even pantheists such as Buddhists and Hindus, or Jews and Muslims who do not recognize dogmas of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation). All religions contained a beam of truth. In spite of the absolutely different character of Oriental religions, their aims were considered the same as Christian.

Holy Father John Paul II stated that “At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture”.<sup>47</sup> Nowadays, ecumenism is a main aim of the majority of the Catholic clergy, as demonstrated at three meetings in Assisi.

Leo XII in the former document about the unity of Christians emphasised that this question should be understood as unity in only one Catholic Church according to the willingness of Christ. Likewise, Pius XI in *Mortalium Animos* legitimized conversion to papacy as the only road to unity. He criticized “ecumenical” conventions and meetings as leading to indifferentism and atheism and

<sup>44</sup> Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, par. 3., [www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>45</sup> The traditional understanding of Christian unity was the union between Rome and the Armenian Church and also the announcement of the return of the Byzantine Church (however, it was not successful) at the Council in Florence in 1439. There was a union in Brześć from 1569 with some part of the Russian Orthodox Church in Poland. Pius IX before Vatican I summoned Orthodox Christians and Protestants to take part in it and return to the Catholic Church in the *Iam vos omnes* letter.

<sup>46</sup> As in the Declaration of Balamand in which “Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I together stated clearly: We reject every form of proselytism, every attitude which would be or could be perceived to be a lack of respect” (December 7th, 1987). Joint International Commission, the Theological Dialogue Between The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, *Seventh Plenary Session*.

<sup>47</sup> John Paul II, *Ut Unum sint*, par. 3, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25051995\\_ut-unum-sint\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

forbade Catholics to take part in them. His successor repeated this in the encyclical about the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ. Up till Pius XII, the Church had professed the rule *extra Ecclesia nulla salus* (but its strict meaning had been changed and toned down); other communities had never been admitted as a way to salvation.

The controversies surrounding the ecumenical dialogue conducted after 1965<sup>48</sup> do not result from discussions with representatives of other religions, but discussions about their errors and the unceasing finding of “truths which link us”. This must lead to a relativization of truth, justify errors and imply indirect consent for these errors by Catholics and – in effect – deform the Catholic faith.

Ecumenism negates the mission of the Church (“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”<sup>49</sup>) and divests other people of knowing the truth, which is a sin against love understood in the way of St. John Apostle. It is tantamount to contempt for thousands of martyrs who died for refusing conversion and defending their faith. After the Council, the Church forbade missionaries from converting people to the Christian religion.

During the ecumenical dialogue, it has not been observed that other religions have adapted to Catholicism, whereas the Roman Church has still been doing this (adapting to other religions), since receiving the teaching of the last Council. What’s more, it has been also limited in defining its doctrine, an example of which was a lack of an announcement of the new Marian dogma (Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces and Advocate), despite the fact that it had the wide endorsement of cardinals, clergy and Catholics, simply due to ecumenical reasons (it would not be accepted by Protestants and Orthodox Christians). What’s more, John XXIII desisted from the aim of the Council – which looked the most obvious at that time – condemnation of material communism. The Pope wanted to invite Orthodox “bishops” to deliberations of the *Vaticanum II*, but Moscow demanded that this condemnation not be issued, and John XXIII and the next Pope, Cardinal Montini ordered the hierarchs to desist.

## Collegialism

A subsequent aim of Vatican II was collegialism, decentralization and democratization of the Apostolic Church. After the *Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus* lectures, we can come to the conclusion that the authority of the Holy Father was legitimized not by God, but the Code of Canon Law. The last document, prom-

<sup>48</sup> The conception of dialogue with other religions and the world was first put forward by Paul VI in *Ecclesiam Suam* in 6 August 1964.

<sup>49</sup> Mt 28: 18–19.

ulgated by John Paul II, clearly stated that power in the Church is exercised by the pope together with the bishops, which is contrary to the teaching of the councils in Vatican and Florence. The Council stated that the institution of the Synod governs the Church with the Roman pontiff “as the subject of supreme, plenary power over the universal Church”. This system is praised by progressive Catholics as a “new discovering of collegialism”. The Pope, since the last Council has been seen as *primus inter pares* amongst other hierarchs; this belief is similar to that of Eastern schismatics. On the level of particular local churches, the power of the papacy and individual bishops is restricted; new institutions – Conferences of Episcopates of each country dominate them, in which respect, the Catholic Church conforms to Orthodox autocephalies. Parsons now have this problem as well - they are limited by the voice of parish councils.

Jesus Christ gave his power to Peter personally, not to all the Apostles together. Collegial conceptions appeared in the scriptures of Y. Congar and in the pre-Council schemes of K. Rahner. The teaching of dividing papal power is contrary to documents of councils in Florence and the Vatican. Leo XIII warned, after St. Thomas, that it could be a danger for the unity of the Church. *Vaticanum I* clearly defined the highest authority of the pope and the sovereign power of bishops in their dioceses. Such a teaching was repeated by Pius XII in 1943:

[the bishop] rules it [their dioceses] in the name of Christ. Yet in exercising this office they are not altogether independent, but are subordinate to the lawful authority of the Roman Pontiff, although enjoying the ordinary power of jurisdiction which they receive directly from the same Supreme Pontiff<sup>50</sup>

and by John XXIII. Moreover, the traditional vision of bishops' power was presented in many more documents, such as Pius VI's constitution *Super Soliditate* and the letter *Deesemus*, Leon XIII's *Satis Cognitum* and the allocution of John XXIII of 15 December 1958.

Collegialism has weakened the institution of the Church. A strong liberal wing can resist all changes in an undesirable way, as it was in the instance of the conservative encyclical in moral questions: *Humane vitae* of Paul VI or *motu proprio* “*Summorum Pontificum*” of Benedict XVI, which “has freed” the Old Mass. This new doctrine is quite similar to the heresies of Conciliarism and Gallicanism.

## Mass and sacraments

We cannot omit to write something about changes in sacraments which are at the heart of Christians' lives. Although the core changes of the promulgated new rite

<sup>50</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, par. 42, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_29061943\\_mystici-corporis-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html) [accessed April 10, 2013].

of Mass were not introduced at the Second Vatican Council, it opened doors to them.

The first modifications in the traditional Mass since the Council in Trent were made in years 1955 and 1962 – before *Vaticanum II*. At the last Council, a constitution was promulgated about the *Sancrosanctum Consilium* liturgy, which in many points repeated the traditional teaching about Mass and no one expected radical changes. However, Paul VI wanted to change something and established a commission called *Consilium* led by Archbishop Hannibale Bugnini (suspected of being a freemason) and in which 6 Protestant observers took part. In 1965, a few “experimental” changes were implemented in the rite of Mass and in 1969 we were able to see the effects of *Consilium*’s work in the shape of *Novus Ordo Missae* – the New Rite of Mass. Every rite – both eastern and western – took its beginnings from one of the Apostles and was developed in an evolutionary way, but creating a new rite has been a precedent in the history of the Church. We cannot count the concepts of heretics like Luther, Calvin or Cranmer, who created his own rite appropriate to his condemned ideas.

The changes in rites of sacraments could be the subject of a separate book, but we can briefly state that the theology of the New Mass is slightly different from traditional Catholic doctrine. Not long after the promulgation of the new rite, Cardinals A. Ottaviani and A. Bacci wrote a letter to the then pope, in which the main points of the *Novus Ordo Missae* were criticized. Firstly, it did not express the propitiatory and sacrificial character of the Mass; it stressed that it is a “supper” and “memorial” instead of a bloodless renewal of Christ’s Sacrifice on the Cross. In the new rite, there are few elements and, furthermore, they do not directly refer to the Holy Trinity, transubstantiation, the real existence of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and the mediation of saints. The role of the priest acting from devotion *in persona Christi* is reduced to that of a man who only leads a congregation. With the aim of returning to ancient times, the creators of NOM, omitting elements that were considered to “improperly” add to the Mass, abandoned many old points of the Mass and limited use of the Canon – its central point which had developed in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century. Use of national languages was allowed and in effect, Latin – the traditional language of Western Christianity – is now almost not used.<sup>51</sup> The New Mass was deprived of aesthetics in liturgical actions, clothes, music and in the architecture of the churches. Modern sacral art usually looks strange, as it is devoid of what has always been characteristic for Catholic art and could be considered similar to Judaist and Protestant iconoclasm. What’s more, there were abuses like bite masses, masses in the rhythm of techno and dance or liturgies of new communities like the Neocatechumenal Way.

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<sup>51</sup> The national language in the liturgy was an invention of protestant reformers. The correct language for Greek and Russian Orthodox, Coptic and Syrian Christians, Muslims etc. is also an ancient language. Even Jesus on the cross spoke to his Father in old liturgical Hebrew, which was not understood (Mt 27: 46).

Compared to Eastern liturgy, from whose wealth the creators (of the new rite) could have borrowed, the new rite of the western Church looked completely different and even blasphemous.<sup>52</sup> A friend and advisor of Pope Montini, Jean Guittton, said:

The intention of Pope Paul VI with regard to what is commonly called the Mass, was to reform the Catholic liturgy in such a way that it should coincide with the Protestant liturgy. [...] There was with Pope Paul VI an ecumenical intention to remove, or at least to correct, or at least to relax, what was too Catholic in the traditional sense, in the Mass, and I, repeat, to get the Catholic Mass closer to the Calvinist mass<sup>53</sup>.

If we compare *Novus Ordo* with Cranmer's rite and traditional Mass, between the first and the second there are more similarities than between the second and third<sup>54</sup>. We can also observe that NOM is similar to the Judaic meal *berakah*. Looking at today's condition of Catholicism, we see a similar process to that after the Reformation (today, Protestant countries such as those of the former East Germany and Czech republic are totally laicized) – this heresy legitimized changes in the liturgy, people taking part in it lose their faith after some time, because it does not express Christian doctrine, according to the ancient Christian rule *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. It is stated that the aim of the new mass was man in the place of God, which is an expression of the doctrine of liberalism that is common nowadays.

Other sacraments have also been changed. Baptism, like Mass, is not now connected with exorcism. Today, in the West, confession is not said very often. On the one hand, the institution of the nonexistence of marriage is abused, and on the other hand, the Church allows marriages with non-Catholics in more cases. Extreme unction has been replaced by the anointing of the sick.

### Rank of the Second Vatican Council's teaching

If during an analysis of documents of the last council, we can notice some discrepancies with pre-Council teaching, which has been proven above, we should ask a question about which of the contrary doctrines is obligatory and, if they are, whether popes and the Council have a right to implement these changes. It is obvious that John XXIII can convoke a council. But the council described in this article, has from its beginning been recognized as "pastoral", and did not want to announce new dogmas, but only adapt the Catholic doctrine to modern times.

<sup>52</sup> The Russian "patriarch" has praised the comeback of the Latin Mass, which could bring the two communities closer together, [www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=53230](http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=53230) [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>53</sup> *Apropos*, "Christian Order" 1994, No. 17, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> M. Davies, *Liturgical revolution*; vol. 2: *Pope's Paul New Mass*, Dickinson 1980, pp. 513–519.

Nevertheless, Paul VI said that despite the fact that the pronouncements of the *Vaticanum II* were not binding, they had the rank of Ordinary magisterium.

Firstly, it is not part of *Magisterium extraordinarium*, the task of which is to define what is infallible and announce it as the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. To give such rank to any announcement it should be defined as infallible by the Pope. The Council rejected it from the beginning and popes after Pius XII did not want to announce any statements *ex cathedra*, as in the case of dogmas of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and Assumption in 1950. Therefore, it does not have the rank of an extraordinary Magisterium, but it has to be checked if it has the rank of an ordinary one. It is owed supposing a statement which is preached by the pope and bishops dispersed throughout the whole world. The key is the fact of dispersion, which would guarantee independence and freedom from external pressures and its authenticity would be apparent in its durability and homogeneity. We can state that a teaching is infallible only when it is proved that it is unalterably and precisely connected with God's Revelation.

Nonetheless, we cannot say that opinions voiced by popes and bishops since 1962 in matters concerning faith and morality do not matter. Well, these statements – even if they are not inerrable – have the status of an authentic magisterium which binds the faithful only potentially, since they are compatible with the Magisterium (teaching authority). If not, believers could discuss and not agree with them.

As is stated in the post-Council *Breviarium Fidei*, the only dogmatic opinion issued during *Vaticanum II* is the statement that the bishop's ordination constitutes completeness of the sacrament of ordination. In the same source it is written that although the Second Vatican Council was not a dogmatic but a pastoral council, many of the documents published under its aegis have a dogmatic character.<sup>55</sup> This looks like an inconsistency which should be addressed; however, the modern Roman Catholic Church has not done so. The Superior of the Society of Saint Pius X (a society founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre – a French bishop who was against the controversial reforms of the last council), Bishop Bernard Fellay, has said that 95% of opinions of the Second Vatican are acceptable and compatible with the previous teaching of the Church. The problem occurs when we look at the four points mentioned above:

The doctrine on religious liberty, as it is expressed in no. 2 of the Declaration *Dignitatis humanae*, contradicts the teachings of Gregory XVI in *Mirari vos* and of Pius IX in *Quanta cura* as well as those of Pope Leo XIII in *Immortale Dei* and those of Pope Pius XI in *Quas primas*. The doctrine on the Church, as it is expressed in no. 8 of the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, contradicts the teachings of Pope Pius XII in *Mystici corporis* and *Humani generis*. The doctrine on ecumenism, as it is expressed in no. 8 of *Lumen gentium* and no. 3 of the Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, contradicts the teachings of Pope Pius IX in propositions 16 and 17 of the *Syllabus*, those of Leo XIII in *Satis cognitum*, and those of Pope

<sup>55</sup> *Breviarium Fidei. Wybór doktrynalnych wypowiedzi Kościoła*, Poznań 2007, p. 464, 469.



Pius XI in *Mortalium animos*. The doctrine on collegiality, as it is expressed in no. 22 of the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, including no. 3 of the *Nota praevia* contradicts the teachings of the First Vatican Council on the uniqueness of the subject of supreme power in the Church, in the Constitution *Pastor aeternus*.<sup>56</sup>

Therefore, this teaching – which is not infallible and does not possess the assistance of the Holy Spirit – raises doubts as to its validity as Catholic teaching. The majority of Catholic hierarchs based their teaching mainly on just these fragments of the Second Vatican's teaching (Bishop Fellay's 5%), which caused a revolution in the Church's teaching over the last 50 years.

Many theologians would say that the tradition should “live” and that we cannot stop at some moment in time just because we want to and like it. The development of Tradition does not exclude its modifications, but changing major points of it completely could not be acceptable. After all, Jesus is “yesterday and today, always the same”.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

The theme of an academic conference that took place recently in Rome was: “How could a pastoral council have transformed into a ‘super-dogmatic’ one?” A masterstroke of the council fathers was to implant their ideas not as dogmas but as pastoral directives, which shortly afterwards became more important than dogmas. Implementation by the post-Council Church of the spirit of *aggiornamento*, under the guise of a return to apostolic sources, resulted in opening Catholicism to the world's ideas, which were previously considered a threat. In this article, I wanted to show that the majority of today's Church teaching has its sources in two movements which have always tried to combat Catholicism: Judaism – a basis of many heresies at the heart of Protestantism; and Masonry – the values of which formed the basis for the French Revolution and liberal tendencies in Catholicism. My second intention was to describe the relations of this teaching to the traditional doctrine. Liberal Cardinal Suenens named the Second Vatican Council “a year 1789 in the Church”, while Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has said that “after the Council nothing in the Church will be the same”. Conservative Mgr. Lefebvre stated that the Roman Church has adopted slogans of the French revolution such as: freedom as religious freedom, equality – collegialism and brotherhood – ecumenism. The last “super-dogma”, especially, has completely changed the direction of the Church – from an institution that converts people with the aim of saving them to discussing endlessly with everyone. We can see the influence of modernism – the worst heresy according to St. Pius X, with its

<sup>56</sup> J.-M. Gleize, *Debate about Vatican II*, [www.dici.org/en/news/debate-about-vatican-ii-fr-gleize-responds-to-msg-r-ocariz](http://www.dici.org/en/news/debate-about-vatican-ii-fr-gleize-responds-to-msg-r-ocariz). [accessed April 10, 2013].

<sup>57</sup> Heb 13: 8.

main idea – relativization of doctrine and giving everyone the right to adapt it to their fancies. This is what Pius XII was warning about in the last days of his life. We should add that the text of the third secret of Fatima, which was revealed in 2000 – regarding the crisis – was not the real (full) text. The real text would have stated what the Holy Mother had said in her revelations about the losing of faith, the crisis stemming from the popes and hierarchy being in apostasy and the coming of the last times described in the Apocalypse.

The crisis apparent in Christianity and in the moral condition of the world is a result, among other things, of the fact that Church is now unable to fight against the ideals of 1968 or against the institutions of omnipotent liberal states with their elites. As early as 1972, Pope Paul VI said:

Referring to the situation of the Church today, the Holy Father affirms that he has a sense that ‘from some fissure the smoke of Satan has entered the temple of God.’ There is doubt, incertitude, problematic, disquiet, dissatisfaction, confrontation. There is no longer trust of the Church; they trust the first profane prophet who speaks in some journal or some social movement, and they run after him and ask him if he has the formula of true life. And we are not alert to the fact that we are already the owners and masters of the formula of true life. Doubt has entered our consciences, and it entered by windows that should have been open to the light. Science exists to give us truths that do not separate from God, but make us seek him all the more and celebrate him with greater intensity; instead, science gives us criticism and doubt<sup>58</sup>,

Cardinal Ratzinger in 1986 could not see any positive reforms of the Council and John Paul II was worried in 2000 that Europe was in “silent apostasy” – these are the results of the modern reforms.

Looking at the example of France: in 1965, 41% attended Mass regularly; in 1975 – 14%; now it is about 3% and nearly half of those go to traditional Mass. We can see that traditional devotion could be a resolution to this crisis. Benedict XVI understood that and restored traditional elements in his liturgy: he stated that the Tridentine Mass has never been forbidden, remembered the fact that the Church on Earth is a “fighting Church” and talked with the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X about regulation of their canonical status. As a result of this conversation and of the acceptance of the status of this traditional society, the door could be opened to reading documents of the last council in the light of tradition, which is postulated by some sections of the clergy and theologians. Pope Ratzinger emphasized such values as discipline in the Church, a traditional vision of priesthood and the necessity of fighting against “silent apostasy”.

We can see some positive signs for Roman Catholicism in the Anglo-Saxon world. More and more people in the United Kingdom and United States today see a solution to the problems of the modern world in the Roman Catholic Church.

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<sup>58</sup> Paul VI, *Homily during the ninth anniversary of his coronation on 29 June 1972*, [www.the-american-catholic.com/2011/12/04/pope-paul-vi-and-the-smoke-of-satan](http://www.the-american-catholic.com/2011/12/04/pope-paul-vi-and-the-smoke-of-satan) [accessed April 10, 2013].

Last year, many Anglicans came back to Rome. In the USA, we can see the development of Catholicism and decline of anti-Catholic attitudes; many intellectual Catholic institutions have been founded in America and Catholics are a vital part of American intellectual discourse. Popular president John F. Kennedy was a member of the Roman Church, and diplomatic cooperation between Ronald Reagan and John Paul II led to the end of communism.<sup>59</sup> Looking at the fragmentation of the American Protestant Mainline, the USCC could have a big chance to dominate the public sphere in the future. I doubt that it is possible to do so due to the compromise between Catholics and Protestants working together, and between Catholics and the modern secular world. I think that the differences are too big, and changing the doctrine to become more similar to the world and other religions in the “ecumenical spirit” is destructive. I hope that the Roman Catholic Church will find a way to define clearly and properly its own doctrine, improve its condition and restore traditional values in the world.

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<sup>59</sup> P. Musiewicz, *Ronald Reagan a Jan Paweł II. Kontekst ideowy i polityczny współpracy prezydenta i papieża*, [in:] *Ronald Reagan. Nowa odsłona w 100-lecie urodzin*, ed. P. Musiewicz, Kraków 2011.