

RECEPTION OF VATICAN II IN THE UNITED STATES

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[The Second Vatican Council has been received in stages in the United States. Pope John XXIII's opening address and the council's awareness of the interplay between doctrine and life, between faith and history, shaped the first generation of Church leaders and enabled them to develop a distinctive pastoral vision. Within a contested field of changing practices, they creatively engaged the historical process, balanced contraries and rooted public actions in classic traditions of religious anthropology. A recovery of this now obscured vision might prove helpful in the Church's present difficulties.]

THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS in the Catholic Church in the United States has occasioned a host of commentaries and interpretations, many of which have used the events of the past year to reconfirm mutually polarized positions established in the broader context of political and social "culture wars."¹ In this article I try to move beyond these currently reigning politicized categories of understanding and to place at the center of discussion the responsibility of the scholarly and episcopal community to make a holistic and constructive contribution to a solution.² In the long run,

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¹ See for instance recent books by George Weigel and James Carroll and the perceptive juxtaposition offered in John Jay Hughes, "An Opportunity for Purification," *National Catholic Reporter*, November 1, 2002, 18.

² The standard division between "progressives" and "traditionalists" in the United States is well analyzed by Joseph A. Komonchak, "Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes toward Vatican II," in *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995) 17–36. See also *What's Left: Liberal American Catholics*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1999). See, e.g., for extreme examples, Michael W. Cuneo, *Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University, 1997);

I think that what the present situation calls forth from leaders and scholars is a *ressourcement* of Vatican II,³ its fundamental dynamic and its recentering of the whole Church's identity as that was articulated in *Lumen gentium* no. 8 "The Church, however, clasping sinners to its bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal." We are all still receiving the council, still understanding its depths, and we need to plumb more deeply than our current public classification allows.⁴ After describing what I think might be an appropriate metaphor for the process of change in the Church, I elaborate on the theme of pastoral leadership and conciliar reception in three distinct parts: a recovery of the conciliar meaning of "pastoral"; an anatomy of "pastoral leadership" during the first period of conciliar reception in the United States, 1967–1983; and a brief application of these notions to leadership at the present time.

A GUIDING METAPHOR

Let us begin with an exercise of imagination, placing ourselves as participant-observers in a small chemical laboratory "at the rear of a courtyard, in a curious narrow, twisting alleyway, which branched off the Piazza della Crocetta," part of the University of Turin in the fall of 1937. We watch as a young chemist named Primo Levi, 19 years old, is given the assignment to prepare zinc sulfate. It is a rather simple procedure that requires that one combine the element zinc with a small portion of sulfuric acid diluted with water. Levi drops the zinc into the solution: Nothing happens. He does it again: Still, nothing happens. Something is missing. The student is learning his first lesson: pure zinc cannot be used in the experiment; it "obstinately resists the attack." To create zinc sulfate one needs an impure sample of zinc. We listen as our young chemist extrapolates from his experience the following observation: "One could draw from this two conflicting philosophical conclusions: the praise of purity, which

Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power* (New York: Cambridge University, 1999). Broader global ecclesial background can be found in *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua, and Joseph A. Komonchak (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1987).

³ See Yves M.-J. Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1950) 43, 623, for the historical definitions of this term. My present article was originally stimulated by some of the reflections in Justus George Lawler, *Popes and Politics: Reform, Resentment, and the Holocaust* (New York: Continuum 2002).

⁴ The Synod of 1985 is a confirmation of this fact of continuing reception. See Giuseppe Alberigo, "New Balances in the Church since the Synod," in *Synod 1985: An Evaluation*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and James Provost, *Concilium* 188 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986) 138–46.

protects from evil like a coat of mail; the praise of impurity, which gives rise to changes, in other words, to life.” Levi learns to discard as an ideal the first option; it is untrue to his experience and produces, as he has learned, nothing useful. Instead, he argues: “I lingered to consider the second [philosophical conclusion], which I found more congenial. In order for the wheel to turn, for life to be lived, impurities are needed, and the impurities of the impurities in the soil, too, as is known, if it is to be fertile. Dissension, diversity, the grain of salt and mustard are needed. . . .”⁵

Now, let us fast forward some 75 years later. Our laboratory, no longer in Turin but in almost any city in the United States, is without walls. We have changed positions from participant-observers to becoming in a much more pronounced way the interacting elements themselves. During the last two years we have experienced a period of great public exposure, a chemical reaction within the Church and between the Church and society, which has occurred precisely because of the presence of impurities: the immoral and criminal behavior of some of the clergy, the difficulties and disagreements, some would say “incompetencies” and “injustices,” of the episcopal leadership, the wrangling among the intellectuals as to how to address the situation, the differences in cultural approaches between American and Roman centers of ecclesial government, the various dispositions and convictions of an angry, interested, or indifferent populace. All of this has engendered various reactions: the confirmation of anti-Catholic prejudices, the identification of the media as hero or culprit, the hardening of the warring parties of ecclesiastical restoration and structural reform, the interacting affective/spiritual reactions of compassion, weeping, numbness, confusion, or deep and abiding scandal. And in this situation of severe chemical reaction, we are confronted with the same twin hermeneutics posed by our young Jewish chemist so many years ago.

How do we interpret the present chemical reaction within the community and between the Church and the society? We can begin to address this and other questions first by recovering the conciliar definition of what it means to be “pastoral” and then by carefully identifying the operative ecclesiology of some prominent ecclesial leaders during the first period of conciliar reception in the United States, 1967–1983.

THE CONCILIAR TURN TOWARD THE PASTORAL

When John XXIII opened the Vatican II on October 11, 1962, with his magisterial address *Gaudet mater ecclesia*, most commentators noted at the

⁵ Quotations from Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table* (New York: Schocken Books, 1984) 23, 34. For background, see Carole Angier, *The Double Bond: Primo Levi, A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002) 112–26.

time that his phrasing was extremely nuanced and established an intellectual and practical path that represented a new way in the Church.⁶ The key term was “pastoral,” and with it went a whole historical word association that included *aggiornamento*, signs of the times, dialogue, adaptation, evangelization.⁷ The key paragraph reads:

From the renewed, serene and tranquil adherence to all the teachings of the Church in their entirety and preciseness (and they still shine forth in the acts of the Councils of Trent and Vatican I), the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward. This step should lead toward a doctrinal penetration and formation of consciences in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine. This doctrine, however, should be studied and taught through the method of research and the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient teaching of the *depositum fidei* is one thing; the manner in which it is presented is another. This latter must be taken into great consideration; if necessary, with patience. Everything must be measured in the form and proportion of a magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character.⁸

With this statement Pope John wished to give a line of development for the council, an interpretive key to its work. Following the same path that

⁶ A good summary can be found in *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2: *The Formation of the Council's Identity*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997) 10–26. For comments, see Antoine Wenger, *Vatican II*, vol. 1, *The First Session* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1966) 17–32; M.-D. Chenu, “Un Concile ‘pastoral’,” *Parole et mission* 6 (15 avril 1963) 182–202.

⁷ This was certainly the understanding of Paul VI. See “Allocution du Saint-Père aux participants à la Semaine d’aggiornamento pastoral,” [6 septembre 1963], *Documentation catholique* 60, no. 1409 (6 octobre 1963) 1266–70. See also Abbot Christopher Butler, O.S.B., “The Aggiornamento of Vatican II,” in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal*, ed. John H. Miller, C.S.C. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1966) 3–13; M.-D. Chenu, “Les signes des temps,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 87 (1965) 29–39; Bernard Häring, C.Ss.R., “A modo de conclusion, nuevos derroteros, nuevas perspectivas,” in *La Iglesia en el mundo de hoy, estudios y comentarios a la constitución “Gaudium et spes,” del Consilio Vaticano II (Esquema XIII)*, ed. Guillermo Baraúna, O.F.M. (Madrid: Studium Ediciones, 1967) 684–93; François Houtart, “Les aspects sociologiques des ‘signes du temps,’” in *L’Église dans le monde de ce temps: Constitution pastorale “Gaudium et spes,”* ed. Y. M.-J. Congar and M. Peuchmaurd (Paris: Cerf, 1967) 2.171–204; Mariasusai Dhavamony, S.J., “Evangelization and Dialogue in Vatican II and in the 1974 Synod,” in *Vatican II, Assessment and Perspectives, Twenty-Five Years after (1962–1987)*, ed. René Latourelle, vol. 3 (New York: Paulist, 1989) 264–81. For a more comprehensive word study, see Miguel Angel Molina Martinez, *Diccionario del Vaticano II* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1969).

⁸ Translation taken from Vincent A. Yzermans, *A New Pentecost: Vatican Council II: Session I* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1963) 118. For a significant commentary and an analysis of the original text, see Giuseppe Alberigo & Alberto Melloni, “L’allocuzione *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* di Giovanni XXIII (11 ottobre 1962),” in *Fede, tradizione, profezia: Studi su Giovanni XXIII e sul Vaticano II* (Brescia: Paideia, 1984) 185–222.

he had outlined in the speech convoking the council, the pope situated its activity in the long progress of history and the life of the Church down through the ages.⁹ He spoke of the “modern conditions of faith,” the challenge to the Church of “bringing herself up to date wherever required,” the importance of “wisely organizing mutual cooperation.” The entire speech was set over against “very zealous people” who “do not have very much discretion or judgment,” those who “have learned nothing from history,” “prophets of gloom, who are always forecasting disaster, as if the end of the world were imminent.” Breaking from a mentality and practice that had been shaped by both the juridical-social-customary arrangements of the Constantinian era and the apologetic doctrinal postures associated with the Counter-Reformation,¹⁰ Pope John described the present age as one also governed by divine Providence “leading us to a new order of human relations.” “Today,” he proclaimed, “the Spouse of the Church prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day more by demonstrating the validity of her teaching than by condemnation She opens the fountain of her life-giving doctrine which allows men, enlightened by the light of Christ, to understand fully who they really are, their lofty dignity, and their purpose for existence. Finally, through her children, she spreads everywhere the fullness of Christian charity.”

John XXIII concluded the main portion of his speech by holding out the great mission of unity entrusted to the Church: “first, the unity of Catholics among themselves, which must always be kept exemplary and most firm; secondly, the unity of prayers and ardent desires with which those Christians separated from this Apostolic See aspire to be united with us; and thirdly, the unity in esteem and respect for the Catholic Church which animates those who follow non-Christian religions.” In the pope’s thinking the term “pastoral” in the phrase “a magisterium predominantly pastoral in character” encompassed all of these realities: the turn toward history and change, the reading of present realities in terms of God’s presence not absence, both fidelity to Church teaching and the need to distinguish substance from form, “discretion,” “judgment,” “doctrinal penetration,” the “formation of consciences,” the healing of the “medicine of mercy,” the ecumenical and global opening.

⁹ See the apostolic constitution *Humanae salutis* [December 25, 1961], translated and published in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: America, 1966) 703–9. For the importance of this address, see *The Reception of Vatican II* 91–114.

¹⁰ The importance of this “turn toward history” is well outlined in Giuseppe Alberigo, “Cristianesimo e storia nel Vaticano II,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 5 (1984) 577–92; M.-D. Chenu, “La fin de l’ère constantinienne,” in *Un concile pour notre temps*, ed. J.-P. Dubois-Dumée et al. (Paris: Cerf, 1961) 59–88.

The volatility of the term “pastoral” as a code word for a whole self-presentation of the Church became manifest as soon as the council began in earnest. The debates over liturgical changes set the stage for deeper issues of inculturation and the role of the bishops as teachers,¹¹ but the major shift toward John XXIII’s understanding occurred in the open disagreements over the schema on divine revelation.¹² For some the meaning of “pastoral” was embodied in the draft preparatory document presented to the assembly on November 10, 1962.¹³ This original schema was immediately and severely criticized by numerous participants, including Cardinals Léger, König, Alfrink, Suenens, and Bea. For the American Cardinal Joseph Ritter the preparatory presentation, “clouded in pessimism,” abounding in “ambiguity,” lacked “usefulness,” containing “nothing new, no accommodations which render either Christian doctrine or Christian life of greater significance or efficacy for modern man.”¹⁴ On November 19, the Bishop of Bruges, Emile de Smedt, addressed the council on the “True Nature of Ecumenical Dialogue,” an intervention that some characterized as the end of the “age of polemics.” He described the prevailing methodology that marked the preparatory schema in these words: “We Catholics have thought it enough to make a clear declaration of doctrine. Non-Catholics have had the very same idea. Each side has expressed its doctrine in its own terminology, from its own point of view, but what was said by Catholics was misinterpreted by non-Catholics, and vice versa. By this method of “clearly stating the truth no progress towards reconciliation has actually been made.”¹⁵ De Smedt then went on to describe the “new method” of dialogue which, while excluding every trace of “indifferentism” and “faithfully” portraying “the complete and integral Catholic doctrine,”

¹¹ See Mathijs Lamberigts, “The Liturgy Debate,” *History of Vatican II* 2.107–66, and the significant interpretation by Dom Cipriano Vaggagini, O.S.B., “The General Principles of the Liturgical Reform Approved by the Council,” in Yzermans, *A New Pentecost* 171–82.

¹² For background, see Giuseppe Ruggieri, “The First Doctrinal Clash,” in *History of Vatican II* 2.233–66; Ruggieri, “La discussione sullo schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae de fontibus revelationis durante la I sessione del Concilio Vaticano II,” in *Vatican II commence: Approches francophones* (Leuven: Bibliotheek van de Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, 1993) 315–28; Yves Congar, “A Last Look at the Council,” in *Vatican II Revisited by Those Who Were There* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1986) 337–58; George H. Tavard, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (New York: Paulist, 1966).

¹³ See Aram Berard, S.J., *Preparatory Reports, Second Vatican Council* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965) 32–34; *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, ed. Vincent A. Yzermans (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967) 95–104, with speech by James Cardinal McIntyre [dated November 16, 1962] 106–7.

¹⁴ Ritter, Intervention, cited in Yzermans, *American Participation* 105.

¹⁵ The speech is printed in Yzermans, *A New Pentecost* 204–7, at 205. For its importance and interpretation see Xavier Rynne, *Letters from Vatican City: Vatican*

also knows the opinions of its interlocutor and chooses its wording and manner of presentation in view of how the recipient would understand and assimilate the message. The Bishop of Bruges, following the same approach that Pope John had outlined in defining “pastoral,” here clearly joined his “ecumenical method” with a return to the gospel, a move beyond Scholastic and juridical categories toward biblical and patristic sources, the awareness of the new world situation, and a methodology of dialogue that implied genuine reciprocity, deepening, and adaptation.

Although a clear majority of the council participants called for a complete revision of the original text (1,386 voted against the schema; 822 in favor), the assembly remained deadlocked because of procedural norms. On November 21, John XXIII intervened to break the stalemate and established a mixed commission that would oversee the composition of a new draft schema.¹⁶ Eventually, *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, was adopted on November 18, 1965. The debate that marked the evolution of this document is central if today we are to deepen our reception of the conciliar in any meaningful fashion. Continued reception of the council in our present circumstances means an appreciation of its “pastoral turn.” Let me explain by outlining the stark divergence that surfaced in the fall debates of 1962.

For the proponents of the preparatory schema “pastoral” meant the duty of the pastor to teach the truth, to defend and promote Catholic doctrine in its most exact formulation. This concept presupposed a theology set within a defensive context and thus primarily concerned to define boundaries, establish differences. The context of the Counter Reformation and the struggle with the laicized state and philosophical modernity in the 19th and early-20th centuries had encouraged the preservation of the Church’s institutional memory through a heavy reliance on abstract, Scholastic methodology, deductive principles, and an undeveloping “deposit of faith.” The approach oriented itself to the refutation of errors and was marked by juridical clarity. The supporters of this view juxtaposed “doctrinal” to “pastoral,” with the latter implying some watering down of the truth, some accommodation to modern methods, some “adaptation,” some change in the clarity and truth of doctrine, the tolerance of weakness. For the opponents of the first schema, those more oriented toward not only the preservation but also the communication of the faith, particularly within the context of the search for Christian unity, “doctrinal” and “pastoral” were

Council II (First Session, Background and Debates) (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, 1963) 140–73.

¹⁶ For these dramatic events see *Council Daybook, Vatican II, Sessions 1 & 2*, ed. Floyd Anderson (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1965) 83.

aligned, both being seen as in opposition to “abstract,” “juridical,” “removed,” “theoretical,” “ahistorical,” and “propositional.”

At the beginning of December 1962, Archbishop Guerry of Cambrai, summarizing some of the elements that had shaped the debate, described the decisive nature of the “conciliar turn,” and gave new substance to the term “pastoral” in its relationship to “doctrinal.” His attempt, following Pope John, to steer a middle course was evident.¹⁷ Guerry argued in a public interview in the French newspaper *La Croix*:

(1) “The separation between ‘doctrine’ and ‘pastoral’ is inadmissible.” The interpretation of “pastoral” is instead connected with how one interprets the situation. In times when Christianity is socially ascendant, the need may be to search and safeguard doctrine, to denounce errors, to protect. But in mission country, the preoccupation needs to become the search to “communicate the doctrine of salvation to all peoples.” The missionary situation obliges the bishop to deepen and assimilate doctrine so that it can be presented to unbelievers and to the indifferent in a form that is “accessible, living, attractive.”

(2) “Doctrine” is the “message of truth, of life, and of salvation,” entrusted to the Church, which brings to people the “Word of God, the living word, the Word Incarnate.” It reveals to them the “design of the love of the Father to save them . . .” To align the pastoral and the doctrinal means to respect a legitimate diversity of opinion in the Church while concentrating on the communication of authentic doctrine.

(3) “Doctrine” in this sense is not adapted or minimized, but it is also not simply the repetition of formulas. A doctrine that is pastoral, and a pastoral that is doctrinal, is shaped by a missionary anxiety to reveal this “truth of salvation” in a clear and simple form that is intelligible “to the people of today and to their most profound needs.”

(4) To align “doctrine” and “pastoral” is not easy but represents a “more difficult way” for the pastor. It requires not a new theology but openness to the needs of the times, and “new efforts of thought, study, reflection” to safeguard authentic doctrine by considering new fields of penetration and light.

This unity between “doctrinal and pastoral” was expressed most directly in the explanatory footnote added to *Gaudium et spes*, the Pastoral Con-

¹⁷ Guerry’s analysis may be taken as emblematic of the new definition of “pastoral.” The following is taken from “La révélation: La presse et les techniques audio-visuelles,” *Documentation catholique* 59, no. 1390 (16 décembre 1962) 1582–84. My summary here is from the French and for the sake of brevity interprets the meaning in the light of Chenu, “Un Concile ‘Pastoral’,”; Congar, “A Last Look at the Council”; Häring, “A modo de conclusion, nuevos derroteros, nuevas perspectivas.” See n. 7 above.

stitution on the Church in the Modern World.¹⁸ The use of “pastoral” presupposed that the Church is at the same time both teacher and learner, both faithful to tradition and creative in adaptation, existing in time and history in a relationship of reciprocity with the world.¹⁹ Paul VI encapsulated this understanding in his first encyclical letter *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964), and returned to it in his apostolic exhortation to the bishops on the fifth anniversary of the closing of the council (December 8, 1970) in which he quoted *Gaudet mater ecclesia*, and in his postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975).²⁰

Several key themes summarizing this conciliar turn toward the pastoral were articulated by John XXIII in *Gaudet mater ecclesia*, the fundamental charter that shaped the council’s work. As we shall see, it was this trajectory of the “pastoral” and its key elements that shaped the thinking and activity of significant ecclesial leaders during the first phase of conciliar reception in the United States.

(1) Pope John’s opening speech interpreted the events of history from a theological reference point: the presence of a providential God operating from within history, all of human history, with its development of different perspectives, values, and demands. Here there is an organic relationship between intellectual, cultural, social, political, and economic developments and the life of the Church itself, its evangelizing drive to make the gospel alive for people. Classic expression of that methodology is found in his encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963).²¹

¹⁸ See *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1975) 903. This is in direct contradiction to the position of those who would separate conciliar documents by the use of their terms “dogmatic,” “pastoral,” “declaration,” thus arguing that the word “constitution” is used for texts of doctrine and the word “decrees” is used in “disciplinary matters.” See Berard, *Preparatory Reports, Second Vatican Council* 32; also the important explanations by Congar, “A Last Look at the Council,” and Häring, “A modo de conclusion.”

¹⁹ Classic expression of the “reciprocity” is found in *Gaudium et spes* nos. 40–44 which considers what the Church “offers” and what the Church “receives.” But see also the numerous references to “adaptacion,” “dialogo,” and allied terms in Martinez, *Diccionario del Vaticano II*.

²⁰ For complete texts see *Ecclesiam suam, The Paths of the Church* (New York: America, 1964); *Apostolic Exhortation*, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco (henceforth cited as: AASF), part II for *Gaudet mater ecclesia*; *Evangelii nuntiandi* in Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: More Postconciliar Documents* (Northport, N.Y.: Costello, 1982).

²¹ For a fuller explanation, see Alberigo, “Cristianesimo e storia nel Vaticano II” (see n. 10 above). See also *Pacem in terris* nos. 39–45; 75–79; and 126–29, cited in *Renewing the Earth, Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice, and Liberation*, ed. David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1977).

(2) This theological prism demands that the Church—the people, the scholars, and the leaders, all of whom need to be “pastoral”—read with discernment, judgment, and discretion, the events of history as “signs of the times,” so as to establish their evangelical importance and potential. Here there is a refusal to reduce the Catholic tradition to one or the other of its elements, to fix it at a certain point in time or formulation. Tradition is an interactive field of people with different gifts and responsibilities, everyone embedded in history but sharing the same Spirit.²² While rejecting a pessimistic and defensive reading of history, this pastoral approach in the words of Paul VI maintains the Church’s vitality by “scrutinizing it all carefully and retaining only what is good.”²³ It involves the entire Church in a continual process of listening and teaching—and with the official magisterium exercising a final judgment.²⁴

(3) *Gaudet mater ecclesia* initiates a path of pastoral renewal by making a careful distinction between “the substance of the ancient teaching of the *depositum fidei*” and the “manner in which it is presented.” While this distinction clearly has a long philosophical tradition, for John XXIII it was also rooted in his understanding of himself, his spiritual experience, and his pastoral responsibilities. Two examples from his own personal diary may be given:

16 January [1903] Practical experience has now convinced me of this: the concept of holiness which I had formed and applied to myself was mistaken. In every one of my actions, and in the little failings of which I was immediately aware, I used to call to mind the image of some saint whom I had set myself to imitate down to the smallest particular, as a painter makes an exact copy of a picture by Raphael. I used to say to myself: in this case St. Aloysius would have done so and so, or; he would not do this or that. However, it turned out that I was never able to achieve what I had thought I could do, and this worried me. The method was wrong. From the saints I must take the substance, not the accidents, of their virtues. I am not St. Aloysius, nor must I seek holiness in his particular way, but according to the requirements of my own nature, my own character, and the different conditions of my life. I must not be the dry, bloodless reproduction of a model, however perfect. God desires us to follow the examples of the saints by absorbing the vital sap of

²² See for background Robert Guelluy, “Les exigences méthodologiques d’une théologie des signes des temps,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 12 (1981) 415–28. For a classic presentation of Tradition and Church as fields of interactive relationships, see Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église*.

²³ *Ecclesiam suam* no. 52, referring to 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22. For fuller interpretation, see Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église* 339.

²⁴ A good example is Paul VI, *Octogesima adveniens* no. 4: “It is up to these Christian communities, with the help of the Holy Spirit in communion with the bishops who hold responsibility and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all men of goodwill, to discern the options and commitments which are called for in order to bring about the social, political, and economic changes seen in many cases to be urgently needed.”

their virtues and turning it into our own life-blood, adapting it to our own individual capacities and particular circumstances.

13 August [1961] The prudent man is he who knows how to keep silent about that part of the truth that it would be inopportune to declare, provided that this silence does not affect the truth he utters by gainsaying it; the man who knows how to achieve his own good purpose, choosing the most effective means of willing and doing; who in all circumstances, can foresee and measure the difficulties set before him, and knows how to choose the middle way which presents fewer difficulties and dangers; the man who, having chosen a good, or even a great and noble objective, never loses sight of it but manages to overcome all obstacles and see it through to the end. Such a man in every question distinguishes the substance from the accidentals; he does not allow himself to be hampered by the latter, but concentrates and directs all his energies to a successful conclusion; he looks to God alone, in whom he trusts, and this trust is the foundation of all he does.²⁵

We see in these two passages, under the terminology of “substance” and “accidents,” the union between John’s understanding of the human being (himself) as a spiritual person with particular needs and possibilities and his approach to others as human beings with concrete limitations and possibilities, particular spiritual visages. Implied in this approach is the relationship between the pastor’s own spiritual growth and his work on behalf of the gospel (an integration of the private and the public, the affective and the intellectual, the spiritual and the bodily). This “spiritual anthropology” as the fulcrum for teaching and action encourages a methodology of gradualism, a patience with both the possibilities and limitations embedded in a dialogic relationship with the other, always done with a view toward the end, which would be the communication of the plenitude of the Church’s teaching.

(4) This pastoral approach, according to *Gaudet mater ecclesia*, “prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than of severity.” Once again we can turn to John’s own writings, his reflections on Charles Borromeo, to clarify the meaning:

As a great example, S. Carlo carries for us a precious encouragement. It is natural that the novelties of time and circumstances suggest various forms and attitudes to the exterior transmission and reclothing of doctrine itself: but the living and always pure substance of evangelical and apostolic truth in perfect conformity with the teaching of Holy Church often permits here with advantage the application of “*ars una: specie mille*.” Particularly when it is a question of the *bonum animarum*. . .²⁶

The application of the “medicine of mercy” opens up the teaching of the faith to particular circumstances, places, and people.

²⁵ See John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) 106–7, 309–10. I am indebted to Alberigo, “Cristianesimo e storia nel Vaticano II,” for these references.

²⁶ Giovanni XXIII, *Discorsi messaggi colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII* (Vatican City: Vatican City Press, 1964) V.13 [the text dates from November 4, 1962], translation mine.

AN ANATOMY OF THE "PASTORAL" AS RECEIVED IN THE UNITED STATES

A Time of Contestation

The span of time from 1967 to 1983, beginning with the Bishops' Pastoral *The Church in Our Day* and ending with the collective pastoral *The Challenge of Peace* in 1983, marked the first phase of the reception of the council in the United States.²⁷ By almost every interpreter's admission these were tumultuous cultural times. The family role definitions of the 1950s, which the Church had reinforced with its own moral teaching, now gave way to fundamental shifts in the relationship between men and women, the gendered boundaries between the personal and the political dimensions of identity, the interface between public and private morality. Men and women were thus forced to incarnate their faith in a new way, to discover a new religious path on the fundamental level of their human relationships.²⁸ The civil rights movement raised the issue of the moral compromise embedded in inherited institutional and legal structures, again structures in which the Church itself participated. When people protested,

²⁷ The postconciliar period can be best interpreted through "phases" that are as tightly connected with cultural issues as they are to internal issues in the Church. Although the early 1980s brought new public conflicts into the life of the Church (e.g., the seminary study, the study of religious life, the Seattle investigation), a more prominent role for the Roman congregations, an increasingly public role in shaping decision making for the more conservative Catholic groups, and beginning around 1984–1985 a definite shift in episcopal leadership, to some extent these trends coincided with and reflect the emergence of the second phase of the Cold War with its ideology of containment. It could be argued that the first phase extended through the issuance of U. S. Bishops' pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All* (1986) but an exact dating is not possible. For significant interpretive comments, see Jane Sherron De Hart, "Containment at Home, Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity in Cold War America," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2001) 124–55; Jim Castelli, *The Bishops and the Bomb: Waging Peace in a Nuclear Age* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1983).

²⁸ See Jeffrey M. Burns, *Disturbing the Peace: A History of the Christian Family Movement, 1949–1974* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1999). For a detailed treatment of this interpretation, see my forthcoming *The Catholic Community at Prayer, 1926–1976*. For further background, see *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994); *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order 1930–1980*, ed. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000); *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harvard Sitkoff (New York: Oxford University, 2001).

they learned to practice their faith in a new way.²⁹ The critique of Cold War politics and its easy equation of religion and the American economic and political way of life—so classically articulated in the bishop’s pastoral of 1952—reached an apogee with the militant opposition to participation in the Vietnam War. The bishops’ acceptance of selective conscientious objection in their pastoral letter of November 15, 1968, baptized the choice to practice the faith in a new public way.³⁰ In all of these areas, in addition to the specifically religious and ritual practices associated with sacramental life, the situation would be akin to what Yves Congar described as the experience of many in the French Church in the wake of the resistance experience of World War II: “When one has been once outside the framework of what is legal, one has entered as if into another world. One knows that the domain of the good does not stop at the frontiers of the law considered in its strict materiality, but is able to continue, and at times even begin truly outside of it.”³¹

This historical context sharpened the distinction between the “received Christian world” and the demands of gospel Christianity. Simultaneously, Vatican II opened up for the Church the new path of the “pastoral.” It is not surprising then that the task of the first generation of postconciliar leaders in the American hierarchy would occasion a significant rethinking of how best to distinguish between the substance of the faith and “the manner in which it is presented,” how best to differentiate the practice of authentic Christianity from inherited custom. Cardinal John Dearden (1907–1988), the president of the newly structured National Conference of Catholic Bishops, captured the heart of the pastoral dilemma very well in his press release, November 17, 1967:

A change in the way of life of the world’s Roman Catholics was launched at the Vatican Council. It is up to each individual nation to adapt to its particular conditions the broad guidelines laid down, and it our belief that this session of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has taken several steps forward in the process that must continue into the future. . . .

There will be criticism from some who are given to the notion that failure to alter radically any form of the past is a grievous fault in itself. There will be balancing criticism, it may be presumed, from those at the other extreme [*sic*] who see any adaptation to conditions in the world about us a desertion of the sacred heritage of the past.

These criticisms, as well as those made by the great body of the faithful lying

²⁹ For the civil rights movement, see John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996) esp. chaps. 7 and 8.

³⁰ See *Human Life in Our Day* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1968) chap. 2. See also David J. O’Brien, “American Catholic Opposition to the Vietnam War: A Preliminary Assessment,” in *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers*, ed. Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1980) 119–50.

³¹ Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme* 46, my translation.

between, are welcome. They serve the useful purpose of keeping ever fresh in our minds the great task entrusted to the Church in the United States by the Council—that of adapting ancient and unalterable truths to new cultural settings.³²

As ecclesial leaders in the United States received the council in the period from 1967 to 1983 they confronted many significant issues that called for a pastoral response. One of the key bodies charged with addressing these issues and integrating their pastoral and doctrinal dimensions was the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices. By statute this working group included the chairmen of the major conference committees on liturgy, ecumenism, doctrine, and canonical affairs. Established in 1967, the Committee really began to grapple with the major difficulties in a concerted way in November 1971. Each issue it discussed touched the entire Church as a system of people in relationships of aspiration, desire, power, authority, tradition, creed, sacraments, hierarchy, and decision-making responsibility. It is helpful to list the more prominent "areas of contestation" to understand how widespread was the search for new religious practices at the intersection of doctrine and life: (1) adaptation of the liturgy; (2) moral dilemmas associated with integration in fair housing and employment; (3) conscientious objection related to a particular war; (4) the reception of *Humanae vitae*; (5) directives regarding sterilization and ethical guidelines for Catholic hospitals; (6) Communion in the hand; (7) the order of first Communion/first confession; (8) the pastoral care of Catholics living in marriages not recognized by the Church; (9) the charismatic or pentecostal movement; (10) the practice of general absolution; (11) women in ministry including minor orders and ordination to the priesthood; (12) guidelines for confessors in questions of homosexuality.

If we look carefully at the ensemble of these areas of contestation, not isolating them one from another, and examine their evolution in the Church in the United States from 1967 to 1983, we can discover at least two significant dimensions of the historical process that shaped the actions of postconciliar pastoral leaders and scholars.

The Historical Dimensions of New Religious Practices

The Symbolic Character of Religious Practices

Each of the areas listed above involves the practice of religion, its "lived content." Each is a symbolic activity—a life of faith in action: reading the

³² "Statement by the Most Rev. John F. Dearden," NCCB, November 17, 1967, AASF. For a summary of the activities of the U.S. episcopal conference and its consensual procedures during this period, see Thomas J. Reese, S.J., "Conflict and Consensus in the NCCB/USCC," in *Episcopal Conferences, Historical, Canonical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Thomas J. Reese (Washington: Georgetown University, 1989) 107–35.

Word of God, marching in the street, burning a draft card, using a new technology, touching the holy, rearranging the order of rituals, repositioning the body in relationship to God, defining behavior in relationship to faith profession. As a human practice with religious reference each action has dense and multiple levels of significance. It is a single embodied practice where multiple interests intersect.³³ For example, artificial contraception involves the intersection of the technological and the doctrinal, the private and the public, the clerical and lay dimensions of the Church. This “practice,” given an explicitly religious meaning, touches the relationship between inherited moral norms and questions posed by new social and familial possibilities; it encompasses not only the American context but also the international one; it is not simply a private practice but attempts to define the boundaries between the private and the public and thus touches questions of the relationship of the Church to the world.³⁴ Embedded in it are both cultural and religious interpretations of tradition, authority, asceticism, sacrifice, and liberation. On another level, when examined in the light of the dynamics between knowledge élites and popular practices, the very practice itself represents a struggle to control the public space of authority.³⁵ What today might be read as a sectarian moral imperative, an identifying mark of Catholic identity, needs also to be read historically as a symbolic practice in which the forces of faith and history intermingle.

We can see a similar type of intermingling of issues operative in the controversy over a very different type of practice, the reception of Communion in the hand. First surfacing as a widespread “unauthorized prac-

³³ For “religious practices” see the helpful comments in Robert Orsi, “Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward A History of Practice*, ed. David Hall (Princeton: Princeton University, 1997) 3–21; and numerous essays in *Theology and Lived Christianity*, ed. David M. Hammond, Annual Publication of the College Theology Society 45 (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third, 2000); for application to the United States, see *Prayer and Practice in the American Catholic Community*, ed. Joseph P. Chinnici and Angelyn Dries (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2000).

³⁴ Paul VI enumerates some of these intersections in *Humanae vitae* [dated July 25, 1968]; text in *Vatican Council II: More Postconciliar Documents* 397–416. For an interpretation that attempts to recognize multiple dimensions, see Bishop John R. Quinn, “Birth Control and the Irrelevant Church,” *America* 119 (September 7, 1968) 159–62; and “A Broader Perspective on ‘Humanae Vitae’,” *Origins* 8 (May 24, 1987) 10–12.

³⁵ See the wider cultural contexts described in Mark H. Leff, “The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II,” *The Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991) 1296–1318; Time Essay, “On Tradition, or What Is Left of It,” *Time*, April 22, 1966, 42–43; Richard John Neuhaus, “The War, The Churches, and Civil Religion,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 387 (January 1970) 128–40; David Farber, “Introduction,” in his *The Sixties* 1–10, on cultural authorities.

tice” in the immediate postconciliar period, this simple ritual received approbation only in 1977, after having been rejected by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1973.³⁶ When the practice first emerged in 1967–1969, the Sacred Congregation was enough concerned about it to conduct an international survey and issue a study paper.³⁷ Certainly the issue touched questions of lay participation in the liturgy, but it also symbolized much wider questions: the interpretation of tradition, reliance on modern medicine, infantile versus adult authority relationships, theological and philosophical understandings of transubstantiation, the locus of the holy, the definition of an appropriate public etiquette code, and the sociological sources of institutional power.³⁸ As the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy summarized its argument in 1970: “The restoration of the venerable practice in which the minister places the consecrated host in the communicant’s hand is a serious and sensitive matter. It is proposed for a pastoral reason, namely, to acknowledge and develop greater awareness of the dignity of the baptized Christian. This has created the desire for a more dignified and indeed more reverent manner of receiving the holy Eucharist among many of the most sincere and devout faithful.”³⁹

Religious practices or human practices with religious reference thus include within themselves certain tensions. Each action involves the choice to engage the faith with a particular historical situation. To interpret practices, from within their context, as simply questions of authority and power, or simply questions of the reclaiming of rights, or simply issues of fidelity or change, or simply battles between the values of equality and hierarchy,

³⁶ For an initial history, see *Thirty Years of Liturgical Renewal: Statements of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy*, ed. Frederick R. McManus (Washington: Secretariat, Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, NCCB, 1987) 194–95.

³⁷ See Benno Cardinal Gut, to the episcopal conferences, October 28, 1968, which mandates a questionnaire, AASF; Benno Cardinal Gut, “Instruction, The Manner of Administering Holy Communion,” May 29, 1969, Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, NCCB Liturgy Committee, AASF.

³⁸ See Franz H. Mueller, “Host in the Hand,” *Adult Religious Education* (Newsletter for Wichita, Kansas, September–October 1971); Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., to Pastoral Research and Practices Committee, September 1, 1972, “Communion in the Hand,” AASF; “U.S. Bishops Approve Communion in the Hand,” *Origins* 7 (June 16, 1977) 49, 51–55; James Franklin and Herbert Black, “A Question about Holy Communion,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, 31 October 1976, front page. For the density of the symbolic meaning, see also Jude A. Huntz, “Rethinking Communion in the Hand,” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 97 (March 1997) 16–25. For changing definitions of public etiquette, see Kenneth Cmiel who talks about the growth of “an alternate politeness, one not based on the emotional self-restraint of traditional civility but on the expressive individualism of liberated human beings” (“The Politics of Civility,” in *The Sixties*, ed. Farber, 263–90, at 271).

³⁹ Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, “Reception of Holy Communion in the Hand,” November 16–20, 1970, AASF.

or simply choices of obedience and freedom, or simply signs of accommodation or withdrawal, or simply issues of national and not universal importance, sunders them from their own history and significance within the believing community. A false and dichotomous hermeneutic abandons the multidimensionality of the reality itself, and in terms of leadership it refuses to recognize the complexity of the conciliar definition of “pastoral.”

The Interactive Quality of Religious Practices

It is a simple fact of history that new religious practices, involving as they do many different perspectives and responsibilities within the Church, take several years to gestate, mature, purify themselves, and, if possible, reach equilibrium in relationship to the whole body of Church believers. Two significant examples may be given for the period under consideration: the pastoral care of Catholics in marriages not recognized by the Church, and the sequencing of first Communion/first confession.

The “pastoral care of Catholics living in marriages not recognized by the Church” engaged almost the whole community of believers from the time of the council to the early 1980s. Openly initiated by an article in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* for April 1966, issues of “good conscience” marriage cases, the boundaries of private and public toleration, and the reception of Communion by those in second marriages, vexed the laity, their priest counselors, canon lawyers, theologians, bishops and Vatican officials from that time forward. In 1972 it was estimated that over five million Catholics lived in invalid marriages.⁴⁰ What could be done for them? The entire issue was referred to the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices in 1971 and engaged three successive groupings of that body and several official reports up to 1979. It became the occasion for an informal exchange between representatives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in March 1977. The whole discussion from 1966 through 1980 showed the different sectors of the Church trying to reach equilibrium on an issue in which doctrine and life, person and institution, the need for public order

⁴⁰ See for beginning reflections, B. Peters, T. Beemer, C. van der Poel, C.S.Sp., “Cohabitation in a ‘Marital State of Mind,’” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 46 (April 1966) 566–77; Ladislav Orsy, S.J., “Intolerable Marriage Situations: Conflict Between External and Internal Forum,” *Jurist* 30 (January–October 1970) 1–4, and this entire issue of *Jurist*; John D. Catoir, “When The Courts Don’t Work,” *America* 125 (October 9, 1971) 254–57; Samuel J. Thomas, “Dissent and Due Process after Vatican II: An Early Case Study in American Catholic Leadership,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17 (Fall 1999) 1–22; Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., to Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices, July 25, 1972, Pastoral Research and Practices, Difficult Marriage Cases, AASF.

and the real consideration of private needs were hopelessly entangled.⁴¹ History, magisterial teaching, human experience, advances in the psychological sciences—all of those things that go into the conciliar definition of the “pastoral”—in this instance provided no easy solution. The question touched larger cultural discussions regarding the private and the public, the legal and the moral, the boundaries of belonging and exclusion. The issue encompassed not only canonical/moral questions or sacramental/theological ones, but also the embodied social definition of community. No definitive solution was established; the issue was extraordinarily complex. Practices are dense centers of sometimes contrary but not contradictory values.

A second example of the complexity of this interactive process that is the life of the Church in history—its “pastoral” structure—was the new catechetical sequence of first Communion/first confession. Here, a religious practice underwent experimental adoption, reversal by authority, and then a slow implementation which mixed both the “experiment” and its reversal. The pattern of reversing the sequence of first confession/first Communion first grew up spontaneously in the immediate postconciliar period. The *General Catechetical Directory* (April 1971), while clearly privileging the older position of first confession before first Communion, made provision for the change but called for study and evaluation. The new practice grew in popularity so that by 1972 96 out of 120 dioceses replying to a questionnaire affirmed the existence of the innovation. More than half the parishes of 53 dioceses, a significant number of parishes in 34 dioceses, and at least 15 parishes without the approbation of the local ordinary sequenced the sacraments in this fashion.⁴² The sequencing was studied in the spring and summer of 1972. Some 80 percent of the bishops replying to the survey indicated that the experiment was successful; it was a “pastoral success.”⁴³

In November, 1972, the executive committee of the U.S. Bishops voted to petition the Holy See for a two-year extension. Embedded in the sequencing were questions of catechesis, Christian anthropology, the relationship between tradition and innovation, adaptation to modern child

⁴¹ For examples, Richard A. McCormick, S.J., “Indissolubility and the Right to the Eucharist—Separate Issues or One?” in *Ministering to the Divorced and Separated Catholic*, ed. James J. Young (New York: Paulist, 1979) 65–84; Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices, “Divorced and Remarried Catholics and the Internal Forum Solution,” September 11–13, 1979, AASF; Consultation with U.S. Diocesan Family Life Directors, “Summary of Consultation Process Recommendations for the 1980 Roman Synod,” AASF; Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices, Spring 1972, AASF.

⁴² See Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices, November 1972, AASF.

⁴³ Thomas C. Kelly to Bishop John Quinn, May 30, 1972; Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices, November 1972, AASF.

psychology, and the interpretation and normative value of papal statements, in this case *Quam singulari* by Pius X (1910) which set the initial pattern of first confession/first Communion. Proponents argued throughout that the emphasis was not so much “on administering Communion *before* confession, but, rather, on *delaying* confession until children are generally more ready for it.”⁴⁴ Opponents wondered what was happening to the understanding of human sin and questioned the influence of modern theories of psychology on such fundamental rites of initiation into the community.⁴⁵ The issue was also not simply local but international. On May 24, 1973, the Congregations for the Sacraments and Divine Worship and for the Clergy released a declaration that reestablished the normative value of Pius X’s decree. The U.S. Bishops then queried the Vatican whether the new declaration was a response to their November 1972 request for an extension. A gradual phasing out of the experiment was to occur over the next year. A good example of the pastoral dilemma that then ensued can be seen in Savannah, Georgia, where the new practice had become official diocesan policy in January 1971. Bishop Raymond W. Lessard wrote to his diocese:

After wide consultation, both in our own diocese and elsewhere, I note a number of serious problems, practical as well as theoretical, arising from any immediate action on this declaration. It will be necessary to examine more carefully these difficulties and to seek satisfactory solutions in collaboration with those in the pastoral ministry as well as parents and educators, both locally and in the context of the wider church. Any precipitous change would risk thwarting the underlying intent of the declaration as well as losing the good effects of our present practice. I would ask, therefore, that no modification in existing diocesan programs be introduced without my prior approval.⁴⁶

Other dioceses, for example, those of Hartford and Minneapolis-St. Paul, issued directives for the strict implementation of the declaration.⁴⁷

In September 1973 the Division of Religious Education for the United States Catholic Conference issued a “Study Paper” that purposely at-

⁴⁴ See notes on “Moral Development,” Pastoral Research and Practices Committee, n.d., AASF; “A Study Document on the Practice of First Communion and First Confession,” in Dr. Christiane Brusselmans, Rev. Brian A. Haggerty to Antonio Cardinal Samone (Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of Sacraments) and John Cardinal Wright (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy), August 26, 1973, with quotation from p. 15, ASSF.

⁴⁵ See John Cardinal Wright to Bishop Bernardin, 4 May, 1972, Pastoral Research and Practices, AASF; “A Letter from the Vatican: First Penance, First Communion,” *Origins* 7 (June 2, 1977) 17, 19–20.

⁴⁶ Lessard to “My dear friends in Christ,” July 27, 1973, AASF.

⁴⁷ The controversy and differences of interpretation are summarized in Jerry Filteau, “First Confession, First Communion: Clarifying the Confusion?” *NCNews Service*, Tuesday, August 28, 1973, AASF.

tempted to integrate the new practice with the recent Vatican decree by “forging a new sacramental practice,” one which while placing first confession ahead of first Communion also took account of the “positive catechetical knowledge and advantages learned from the first confession after first Communion experience.”⁴⁸ Numerous dioceses adopted new norms over the next two years, but in 1977 the congregations again felt it necessary to insist on their 1973 declaration.⁴⁹ The issue would be raised finally in Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger’s September 30, 1985, letter to Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. Three years later, after considerable discussion, the Archdiocese of Seattle would issue new guidelines similar to those extant in other dioceses. While clearly stating the Vatican’s preferred norm, the new directives also took into account contemporary advances in catechesis, child psychology, and the importance of communal faith formation. As Hunthausen wrote in his cover letter, “Any change in pastoral practice requires much work and great sensitivity.”⁵⁰

In summary, these two dimensions, the symbolic or polyvalent meaning of practices and their rootedness in the interactive dimensions of the community, formed a new context for the development of postconciliar pastoral leadership in the period from 1968 to 1983. If we examine the areas indicated we will discover that the dynamics of church life in the United States engendered the following historical pattern:

(1) The development of a religious practice, usually on a popular level but involving both clergy and laity together, is reflective of the intersection of the reception of the council’s pastoral teaching with socio-cultural mutations. This may be a practice that in a new context has suddenly become self-conscious (e.g. the regulation of births, the pastoral care of Catholics living in marriages not recognized by the Church); or it may be a practice that suddenly appears as “new,” sometimes even occasioned by the teaching Church itself (e.g. Communion in the hand, charismatic prayer, women as lectors in church); or it may be an extended application of a new practice (e.g. the question of women’s ordination as a possible application of the role of women in ministry flowing from the equality of all the baptized).⁵¹

⁴⁸ Charles C. McDonald, Director, “A Study Paper for First Confession,” September 11, 1973, in letter to Bishop James S. Rausch, AASF.

⁴⁹ “A Letter from the Vatican: First Penance, First Communion,” *Origins* 7 (June 2, 1977) 17, 19–20.

⁵⁰ Raymond G. Hunthausen to Dear Father, July 7, 1988; *Guidelines for First Penance of Children* (Archdiocese of Seattle Liturgical Guidelines, Revision July 1988); *The Progress*, August 4, 1988, AASF.

⁵¹ Although I refer to the issue later, the development of the issue of women in ministry is beyond the scope of this study and would require a much longer analysis. It is clear that the question followed a pattern of development and mutation that involved the various dimensions I have named. The discussion should be followed

(2) The Church as the Body of Christ then searches from within itself for the relationship between this new demand with its expressions and the inherited practices and interpretations already in place. This stage involves multiple levels of discussion and argument, a *ressourcement* in the tradition, and a dialogue with the contemporary. Historically, this process of interaction has different durations. It is essentially an exercise in collective discernment, as for example took place in the charismatic or pentecostal movement, 1967–1975.⁵²

(3) A third stage takes place while the initial practice is assimilated into the life of the Church, directed by the appropriate authority to develop in certain ways, modified, abandoned, or simply tolerated. We have seen this reception occur in different ways in, for examples, the acceptance and

carefully in its development from 1968–1983 as the responses of the various parties can be interpreted only from within a field of interaction. Even after the more acrimonious Second Women's Ordination Conference in 1978, the Bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church was still holding dialogue sessions with WOC "to discover, understand and promote the full potential of women as persons in the life of the Church." This type of dialogic process, which still affirmed the official teaching, would indicate the continued institutional commitment to a conciliar methodology of the "pastoral." The commitment to the "pastoral" in this area would decline rapidly after the first draft of the collective statement on women in April 1988. Equilibrium would be reached in some areas, but not in others. For an initial discussion, see Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "Place of Women in the Liturgy," February 14, 1971, AASF; *Women in the Church: A Statement by the Worship and Mission Section of the Roman Catholic/Presbyterian-Reformed Consultation* (Richmond, Virg., October 30, 1971), AASF; Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "Liturgical Institution of Women in Ministries," Pastoral Research and Practices, 1972, AASF; "NCCB Report, Women Priests?" *Origins* 2 (December 29, 1972) 437–38, 443; "Impressions from Detroit," *America* 134 (January 17, 1975) 26–31, on the first Women's Ordination Conference. For proceedings of the 1975 WOC, see *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision, Proceedings of the Detroit Ordination Conference*, ed. Anne Marie Gardiner, S.S.N.D. (New York: Paulist, 1976); *New Women, New Church, New Priestly Ministry, Proceedings of the Second Conference on the Ordination of Roman Catholic Women, November 10–12, 1978, Baltimore, Maryland*, ed. Maureen Dwyer (Rochester, N.Y.: Women's Ordination Conference, 1980). On the dialogues, see U.S. Bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church, "Report of the Last Three Sessions," *Origins* 12 (May 20, 1982) 1, 3–9. For a good overview, Karen Sue Smith, "Catholic Women: Two Decades of Change," in *Church Polity and American Politics: Issues in Contemporary Catholicism*, ed. Mary C. Segers (New York: Garland, 1990) 313–33.

⁵² Compare, for example, the movement in the Episcopal Conference from neutrality toward the charismatic movement (1969), to discrimination as to its positive and negative characteristics (1972), and to acceptance (1975). See James Byrne, *Threshold of God's Promise: An Introduction to the Catholic Charismatic Movement* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1971); Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices, "Statement on the Charismatic Renewal," *Origins* 4 (January 30, 1975) 497, 499–502.

rejection of *Humanae vitae*, the practice of Communion in the hand, the pastoral care of people in marriages not recognized by the Church.

(4) In some cases, an equilibrium is reached where the new practice becomes a matter of custom. In other cases, the different dimensions of the Church agree to disagree or work to develop appropriate boundaries between public speech and private application. In still other instances, conflict and tension continue. This stage, as an ecclesial reality, can be maintained as long as a full vision of the “pastoral” is accepted, that is, as long as the issue is seen to exist within the total complex of Church life, dialogue proceeds, and the contested practice does not migrate outside of communion through the fracturing of parties and the isolation of the part from the whole. In the period under discussion this pattern without its fracturing clearly appears in the issues surrounding first confession/first Communion, women in ministry, and in the debates over the pastoral care of homosexuals.⁵³

Pastoral Leadership in a Zone of Contestation

In response to this new ecclesial pastoral context, prominent leaders in the United States developed a distinctive style that enabled them to engage the situation creatively, to live and take their responsibilities from within history’s limits and possibilities. Here, I would like simply to identify four marks of pastoral leadership in a time of conflict and illustrate them briefly with reference to some prominent clerical leaders.⁵⁴

Embracing the Twin Poles of Fidelity to the Tradition and Innovation

We know that adaptations in the liturgy would eventually become one of the most contested of areas in the postconciliar period. However, the initial proclamation and implementation of *Sacrosanctum concilium* in the United States had met with widespread acceptance and some resistance,

⁵³ For an initial discussion of the pastoral care of homosexuals and the conflicts which emerged, see Pastoral Research and Practices, February 11–12, 1974, May 30, 1974, AASF; Father Howard P. Bleichner, S.S., and Father Gerald D. Coleman, “A Review and Some Reflections . . .,” *The Monitor*, February 3, 1983, 7–8; Jeffrey M. Burns, “Beyond the Immigrant Church: Gays and Lesbians and the Catholic Church in San Francisco, 1977–1987,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 19 (Winter 2001) 79–92. For the issue of women in ministry see n. 51 above.

⁵⁴ What follows evolved from a close reading of texts on the American Catholic scene. For a deeper theological presentation see Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église*, especially Part II in which he discusses the “conditions of a reform without schism.” In the present context I have concentrated on episcopal leadership, but it is important to bring to the surface the countless laity, religious, and priests, who have followed a similar course. See documents 86, 87, 88, 89, 93 in *Prayer and Practice in the American Catholic Community*.

with only the small “traditionalist movement” dissenting in any profound manner.⁵⁵ It was toward the end of our first phase of conciliar reception, in the late 1970s, that a discernible national movement began in opposition to some of the ritual changes.⁵⁶ Before this public polarization reached a critical stage, the implementation had been governed by efforts to form a large consensus that the reform needed to be truly “pastoral,” that is maintaining fidelity to the tradition while at the same time addressing the needs of the contemporary person. The basic principle was stated most clearly by the NCCB’s Committee on the Liturgy in a letter to the bishops dated August 19, 1970. “Currently,” the letter read:

there are two fundamental approaches to liturgical proposals—two distinct philosophies—of liturgical renewal.

The first tends to accept only those liturgical developments required by the Holy See. Once the official revisions are completed and published, it envisions a fixed, standardized liturgy as in the past.

The second position also recognizes the importance of liturgical order and stability. But spiritually helpful liturgical changes must be sought and developed, not merely accepted passively. This is really a middle course: It is progressive because it acknowledges changing situations and seeks to give episcopal leadership to liturgical developments. It is conservative because it depends on biblical, patristic, and liturgical precedents. It aims at organic development, with catechetical and educational efforts to prepare the Church for change.

The committee went on to refer to the basic principles of adaptation enunciated by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (nos. 1, 37, 40), the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no. 6), and the Instruction on Translation of Liturgical Texts (no. 43). The emphasis was placed upon episcopal leadership to seek “a consensus among the people” through education and catechesis while maintaining a “creative and forward looking approach.”⁵⁷

The letter of the Committee on the Liturgy was signed by seven bishops. Its approach however was indicative of the position taken by many other

⁵⁵ See for this argument, “Liturgy U.S.A./A Status Report,” *U.S. Catholic* 32 (July 1966) 6–17, whose evidence questions in some measure the comments of William D. Dinges, “Resistance to Liturgical Change,” *Liturgy: Journal of the Liturgical Conference* 6 (Fall 1986) 67–73. I would maintain that there was a great deal of argument about some liturgical change, but by and large the conciliar decrees have received a favorable implementation.

⁵⁶ See M. Francis Mannion, “Agendas for Liturgical Reform,” *America* 175 (November 30, 1996) 9–16; Rembert G. Weakland, “Liturgical Renewal: Two Latin Rites?” *America* 176 (June 7–14, 1997) 12–15.

⁵⁷ Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy to “Your Excellency,” August 19, 1970, AASF. The letter was signed by Terence Cardinal Cooke, James W. Malone, Thomas J. McDonough, Cletus F. O’Donnell, Thomas J. Grady, Thomas J. Gumbleton, John L. May. For specific applications, see the approach presented in Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, *The Body of Christ* (1977).

significant ecclesial leaders in this first phase of reception. Their own history had exposed them to changes in things that had once been considered sacrosanct, and this in turn had opened them up to John XXIII's vision in *Gaudet mater ecclesia*. Assimilating the conciliar definition of "pastoral," they worked along an axis that balanced the past and the future, the vertical and the horizontal. Their administrative decisions imaged the Church in an eschatological fashion as a body of believers moving toward fullness and therefore imperfect or incomplete in some fashion. By definition, leadership stood in this contested zone, with multiple perspectives, interpretations, and responsibilities. Nowhere was this captured more forcefully than by Joseph Bernardin, president of the conference, in his address of May 1977. Noting that the Church possessed both human and divine dimensions, he referred to Paul VI's speech at the opening of the second session of the council: "The church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the church, to be always open to new and greater exploration." Creative fidelity was the key to leadership. "Sometimes in the minds of some there may seem to be a sharp distinction," Bernardin argued, "between pastoral sensitivity and fidelity to the teaching of the gospel. This becomes most evident when, in fidelity to the gospel, we may not be able to respond to certain felt needs of the people whom we serve. I maintain that there is no real dichotomy between pastoral concern and fidelity to the gospel. Our service, as I said earlier, is service to Christ." Significantly enough, Bernardin tried to balance teaching with listening by referring to no. 10 of *Dei Verbum*, the conciliar decree that had sparked the debate over the meaning of "pastoral." "It is our task, then, in union with our people to listen, to learn, to discern, to judge. We must not become alarmed or overly defensive when what we hear is not in accord with our own thinking or conviction. At times we must encourage and affirm their efforts, at times we must correct, at other times we may have to withhold judgment until we see the situation more clearly. Always we must go about our ministry with patience, with love, with compassion, with a genuine respect for those whom we serve, with a willingness to forgive and do everything possible to heal."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ For entire address, see Joseph Bernardin, "Pastoral Sensitivity & Fidelity to the Gospel," *Origins* 7 (June 2, 1977) 29–32. For further verification, see John R. Quinn, "Opening Address to General Assembly of Bishops," November 12, 1979, AASF; *Shepherds Speak, American Bishops Confront the Social and Moral Issues that Challenge Christians Today*, ed. Dennis M. Corrado and James F. Hinchey (New York: Crossroad, 1986) with essays by Carroll T. Dozier, "The Church as a Community of Conscience," 3–10; James W. Malone, "The Role of the Bishop as Teacher and Listener," 11–19; Richard J. Sklba, "Theological Diversity and Dissent

Recognizing Limits and Developing the Moral Dispositions for Dialogue

Pastoral leaders in the first phase of conciliar reception in the United States experienced the vast growth of ecumenical dialogues within the Church and the proliferation of structures of collaboration on the local, diocesan, and national levels.⁵⁹ These developments coupled with the cultural emphasis on participative democracy created an ecclesial atmosphere that valued a living exchange among people. The context itself dictated that the reception of the council in its “pastoral dimensions” required a certain communal moral bearing on the part of the leader. Two significant examples may be given.

First, the address of Joseph Bernardin to the National Conference in November, 1977 identified his understanding of pastoral leadership.⁶⁰ The Archbishop of Cincinnati’s talk was significant because it came at the end of a term as president which had included such acrimonious issues as abortion, women’s ordination, the 1976 Call to Action, debates over the National Catechetical Directory, and a very critical and public rejection of

within the Church,” 20–33. For a changing relationship to context, see J. Francis Stafford, “The National Conference of Bishops: A New Vision of Leadership and Authority,” 74–86. For further indications of the conciliar definition of “pastoral” see Archbishop Jean Jadot, *Selected Addresses* (privately printed), AASF; John R. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999) chap. 2, 36–75. The tension between fidelity and adaptation could also be seen very clearly in the approach to ecumenical dialogues, which carefully attempted to be “creatively faithful” to the substance of the faith. Bishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk put the issue very clearly when he reported to the bishops on behalf of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs: “For the substance of the Church’s life, which is encoded in the deposit of faith, is itself a mystery of faith, accessible in the end only by faith, not by reasoning, and developed by the Church not by logical extrapolation but by creative fidelity and faithful creativity exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit” (BCEIA Report to the NCCB on the Bilateral Discussions Concerning Ministry, September 12–14, 1978, AASF). Such an understanding, relying on *Dei Verbum* would have an important consequence in how one translated texts. Behind the issue of language is the issue of revelation and history.

⁵⁹ *U.S. Catholic Ecumenism Ten Years Later*, ed. David J. Bowman, S.J. (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1975) for the pervasiveness of ecumenical endeavors. For participative structures among priests, religious, and laity, see Jay P. Dolan, R. Scott Appleby, Patricia Byrne, Debra Campbell, *Transforming Parish Ministry: The Changing Roles of Catholic Clergy, Laity, and Women Religious* (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

⁶⁰ Joseph Bernardin, “The Most Important Task of a Bishop,” *Origins* 7 (December 1, 1977) 369, 371–73. For further reflections, see “In Service of One Another, Pastoral Letter on Ministry,” in *Selected Works of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin*, ed. Alphonse P. Spilly, C.P.P.S., vol. 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000) 27–42. The text dates from 1985.

a book commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America and chaired by Anthony Kosnik, *Human Sexuality*.⁶¹ As pastoral leader, Archbishop Bernardin knew at first hand the divisions between bishops and laity and the pressures coming from the communications media, which “often seem more successful than we in capturing people’s attention and imagination, even with respect to religious questions.” In this situation, he asked: “What is to be done? Whatever is to be done, we cannot do it by ourselves.” He then identified seven essential characteristics needed for the task at hand: (1) “a direct, personal contact with all groups and individuals: those to whom we feel instinctively well disposed and attracted—those who are friendly to us, willing to listen to us and learn from us—and also those whom we may find alienated and hostile”; (2) sensitivity “to the needs and concerns of people as they perceive them”; (3) the willingness to take risks: “the risk of taking new steps for which there is no guaranteed success. The risk of looking foolish when our initiatives, even before they are taken, are misunderstood or rejected. The risk of being called unparishal”; (4) the proclamation of “what Christ teaches, through his church and particularly its magisterium in a faithful, integral manner”; (5) “a realistic awareness of the limits of our competence as bishops”; (6) a commitment to catechesis, a “display of ingenuity and initiative in responding to specific local conditions and needs”; and lastly, (7) “it is essential that in our own lives we give witness to our beliefs and values—our personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer. And this must be a visible and perceptible witness, capable of inspiring others. . . .”

Second, the speech of the Archbishop Jean Jadot, serving as Apostolic Delegate to the United States from 1973 to 1980, during the fall 1978 meeting of the National Conference also contained many of the dimensions that the council had associated with its “parishal” nature. Jadot’s main topic was the responsibility of the laity in the life and mission of the Church. The term “shared responsibility,” Jadot noted, was causing a great deal of difficulty. Even John XXIII had recognized that with respect to collegiality and co-responsibility “we are all novices. . . . Experience, making mistakes and achieving success will teach us how to go about it.”⁶² Creating such an image of the Church would require on the part of all a reading of the council documents in their entirety and an awareness that the Church is not a political system but a “mystery.” The first chapter of *Lumen gentium* (which set the people of God within the context of an

⁶¹ See for this enumeration of issues Bernardin’s interview printed in *NC News Service*, Tuesday, November 8, 1977, AASF.

⁶² “Address of Archbishop Jean Jadot,” November 13, 1978, AASF. The reference to “a proper mentality” is a quotation from the first address of John Paul II, cited in *Origins* 8 (October 26, 1978) 291.

economy of grace) was central. The Apostolic Delegate then went on to recognize that eventually “structural reforms will obviously become necessary,” but what was even more important “is the development of a proper mentality.” Jadot located a description of this mentality in no. 37 of *Lumen gentium*, which identified the following characteristics as central for the development of a collaborative model of clerical and lay pastoral leadership:

- *Concern for truth*, i.e. “free from personal preference or prejudice. This concern for truth is nourished by placing a high value upon competence . . . With experience, a natural product of age, the competence of the laity will render precious service.”
- *Courage*, “the strength to hold firm in the face of attack . . . the willingness to take initiatives.”
- *Prudence*, “the science, the art, the gift of choosing the most fitting means of attaining the agreed upon goal. It is an eminently positive quality which grows with observation, reflection and prayer in the friendship of the sages and saints.”
- *Reverence*, which “looks beyond those things which spontaneously attract or repel us. Reverence is to see God at work in his creature.”
- *Charity*, which reigns “because we care for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Demonstrating Patient Engagement with the Purifying Process of History

Clearly one of the dominant needs of the era under consideration was the need carefully to distinguish the Christian message from its cultural overlay, Christianity from “the Christian world.” But how was one to do this? Certainly, the virtues of prudence, discernment, and discretion were necessary,⁶³ but also history itself, the jostling interplay of sometimes competing forces, had its own role to play. John XXIII had argued as much in *Gaudet mater ecclesia*.⁶⁴ This intersection of faith and history required of the pastoral leader a patient engagement with the temporal process, an

⁶³ See for one example Jean Jadot, “A View towards Religious Priorities,” (1977) in *Selected Addresses* 11–13, where discernment is considered to be one of the primary needs of the Church. Discernment, the process of weighing alternatives and balancing interests under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, received its practical expression in the processes surrounding many of the contested issues. The charismatic movement stands out as one significant example. See n. 52 above.

⁶⁴ History as the teacher of life, learning from experience, the positive movement of God in the temporal process are major interpretive categories in the speech. See Yzermans, *A New Pentecost* 117, 119.

acceptance of diversity and pluralism, a sense of the gradualism with which the gospel grows in human beings and in society. One example of this vision of leadership may suffice.

The theological shift toward baptism as the central sacrament and the insistence of Vatican II on the fundamental rights of the person joined with an emerging women's movement in the United States to encourage the development of new structures of inclusion for women in the Church.⁶⁵ After the issuance of *Ministeria quaedam* (August 15, 1972), the declaration which barred women from the formalized ministries of acolyte and lector, lay men and women continued to assume non-formalized but very public ministries in the Church (readers, extraordinary ministers of Communion, organists, choir directors, song leaders, catechists).⁶⁶ The ordination of women in other Christian denominations, advances in biblical studies, and the growth of second stage feminism in the 1970s raised the cultural question of the relationship between authentic doctrine and Christian practice to an acute level.⁶⁷ While the first Women's Ordination Conference in 1976 "was marked by positive enthusiasm, the Baltimore meeting of WOC in 1978 was more consciously feminist."⁶⁸ Major addresses clearly indicated that well educated and significant women in the Church were beginning to apply a structural analysis and liberationist hermeneutic to the institutional Church itself.⁶⁹ The issue of women in ministry had coalesced into one of the ordination to the priesthood and was finding its voice in the language of "justice," "rights," "participation," "equality," and the "movement of the Spirit."

Just before the 1978 Conference, the Sisters' Council of the Archdiocese of San Francisco sent a letter to 50 cardinals in Rome who had gathered for the funeral of Pope Paul VI and the election of Pope John Paul I. A copy

⁶⁵ For two clear references see Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "Place of Women in the Liturgy," September 1971, AASF.

⁶⁶ See for the attempt to respond in some measure to women's concerns the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices, "Report on New Ministries," May 1978, AASF.

⁶⁷ See for example John F. Hotchkin to Thomas Kelly, O.P., July 25, 1972, "Ordination of Women in Other Christian Churches," Pastoral Research and Practices, AASF; Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, "Liturgical Institution of Women in Ministries," Pastoral Research and Practices, 1972, AASF.

⁶⁸ Mary Jo Weaver, *New Catholic Women, A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 114. See n. 51 above.

⁶⁹ See several of the articles in *New Woman, New Church, New Priestly Ministry* (n. 51 above), namely: Sheila D. Collins, "Chains that Bind: Racism, Classism, Sexism" (17-30); Mary E. Hunt, "Roman Catholic Ministry: Patriarchal Past, Feminist Future" (31-42); and Elizabeth Carroll, R.S.M., "The Political Implications of the Call" (109-15).

was forwarded to a prominent churchman in the United States with these comments in its cover letter:

We are convinced that the Church cannot call for freedom of religion in communist countries from a basis of human dignity as known by revealed truth and reason, and deny equality in the Church to women who have that same dignity. Nor can the Church preach against racial apartheid when it practices sexual apartheid.⁷⁰

The letter from the Sisters' Council clearly indicated the difficult problem of distinguishing just what comes from the Church's participation in the world and what comes from the "substance of the faith."

After inquiring about the signers of the letter, the churchman responded in words that encapsulated one pastoral leader's approach to the dynamics of contemporary Church life. While faithful to the magisterial decisions, he does not shy away from either the admission that the Church itself is sociologically conditioned or from its need actively to engage the historical process itself.

I read with careful attention your remarks. I share the concern of many religious women that—in conformity with the constant teaching of the Holy Father and the great number of Bishops—more consideration, study, and adaptations are needed in the Church in order to accord women the dignity that is theirs by virtue of their baptized status. Together, in agreement with the doctrinal position of the Church, we should explore how to reinforce present roles and develop new roles for women for the purpose of building up the People of God in unity of faith and charity.

Sociological as well as doctrinal values are in question. A procedure of clarification and education is required. Such will necessarily demand time. I fully realize that this will entail a period of suffering, frustration and even anger for some segments of the Church. What is important to remember is that the very process (the how) of growth is in itself as redemptive as the attainment of certain objectives (the what). The Spirit of Christ must be our guide in this movement. Otherwise not only is failure likely but the most precious gift—that of faith—is endangered.

The letter concluded with a reference to *Lumen gentium* no. 8, which this leader found to be a personal consolation.

The Church, like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God, 'announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes' (Cf. 1 Cor. 11.26). But by the power of the risen Lord she is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, her sorrows and difficulties, both those that are from within and those from without, so that she may reveal in the world, faithfully, however darkly, the mystery of her Lord until, in the consummation it shall be manifested in full light.⁷¹

⁷⁰ To Most Reverend Jean Jadot [October 1978], with letter to "Your Eminence" dated October 16, 1978, AASF.

⁷¹ Letter of November 13, 1978, AASF. This approach was not unique among this first generation of conciliar pastoral leaders. See for another example John R. Quinn, "Opening Address," National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 12, 1979; Quinn to Rev. William M. Shea, September 30, 1985 AASF.

Working from a Religious Anthropology Rooted in a Tradition of Spirituality

The emphasis on pilgrimage and participation in the process of ecclesial clarification as a methodology for differentiating sociological forms from the substance of the Church's life found its foundation among the first generation of conciliar pastoral leaders in their religious anthropology. One could survive within history only by being deeply rooted in the mystery of God and God's Incarnation among people. Many examples could be given, but we see the strong link between public service and personal spiritual development very clearly in the writings of John R. Quinn, the archbishop of San Francisco from 1977–1995.⁷² In one of his earliest writings in defense of the plenitude of teaching contained in *Humanae vitae* he placed the reception of the teaching within the context of salvation history and its culmination in the mystery of Christ's cross.⁷³ This spirituality that located personal action within the larger perspective of God's creativity in history formed a fairly consistent thread throughout his numerous writings: "The response to unbelief and doubt, the response to the widening secularization of culture lies, at its highest point, in our own response to the call to holiness and in our search for union with God. It lies, too in our presence and participation in human affairs and our active contribution to solving the anxious human dilemmas of our time and in our eager collaboration in building up the earthly city for the glory of God."⁷⁴ At the heart of this approach was Quinn's training in the school of Ignatius of Loyola.

Quinn's most famous speech came on the international stage of the 1980 Synod. On behalf of the American bishops he spoke on the "New Context for Contraception Teaching."⁷⁵ Toward the end of the speech he referred specifically to the non-reception of *Humanae vitae* among the Catholic people. Their "theoretical and practical dissent" had transformed the issue "from a moral to an ecclesiological question." He asked, how can the

⁷² For Quinn see "Special Edition," *San Francisco Catholic*, February 10, 1996. The numerous addresses of Bernardin in *Selected Works*, I, the essays in *Shepherds Speak*, and Jadot's *Selected Addresses* show the centrality of a spiritual anthropology in the thinking of the conciliar pastoral leaders. On another level, see *Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*, ed. Ernest E. Larkin, O.Carm. and Gerard T. Broccolo (Washington: USCC, 1973).

⁷³ Quinn, "Birth Control and the Irrelevant Church," *America* 119 (September 7, 1968) 159–62.

⁷⁴ Quinn, "Address," November 13, 1978, AASF. See "Personal Holiness: Source of Life and Ministry," (n.d.); "Some Views on the Underlying Goals and Philosophy of Seminary Training," (c. 1964); "The Priest As Professional," (1975), AASF.

⁷⁵ *Origins* 10 (October 9, 1980) 263–67, at 266. For another instance using the Benedictine tradition, see John R. Quinn, "A Rule for All Seasons," *Cistercian Studies* 16 (1981) 257–66.

Church “prevent the results of the contraception debate from eroding the role of the magisterium in the church?” Not to change the teaching, but to address its non-reception Quinn proposed the initiation by the Holy See of a formal dialogue with theologians. He took as a fundamental presupposition for successful dialogues the following statement from the prologue of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola: “It should be presupposed that every good Christian will be ready to give a good meaning to what he finds doubtful in the person he is speaking with rather than to condemn him. If what the other person says cannot be understood in a positive way, then let him be asked just how he understands it himself.”

Quinn was here arguing for a methodology of relationships within the Church that would take seriously the spiritual anthropology of one of the great Christian saints. The approach to pastoral leadership, the ultimate foundation of presence and evangelization, needed to be founded in just such a tradition. Jadot had called it “reverence”; Bernardin had spoken of “listening”; others referred to the nomenclature of “dialogue.” All of them related the stance to the action of Jesus in the Gospels. In another expression, the Ignatian tradition knows this position as “accommodation,” which contains within its process principles for the discernment of spirits.⁷⁶ Turning not to juridical or positional resolutions of a problem of conflict, the pastoral leader combines fidelity and innovation by finally acting from the mystery of God and how God’s action comes to fulfillment in Christ. It is here, in the cross and Resurrection of Jesus, that faith and history find their ultimate resolution.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1993) 81–84, and *passim* for examples of “accommodation.”

⁷⁷ The notions of “growth,” “gradualism,” “purification” were also applied, as they had been for John XXIII, on both the personal level and on the public level in the approach to difficulties such as the place of homosexuals in the Church. See for example Senate of Priests, Archdiocese of San Francisco, *Ministry and Homosexuality in the Archdiocese of San Francisco* (May 1983). In another place Quinn quoted from Paul VI: ‘It is only little by little that the human being is able to order and integrate his multiple tendencies, to the point of arranging them harmoniously in that virtue of conjugal chastity wherein the couple finds its full human and Christian development. This work of liberation, for that is what it is, is the fruit of the true liberty of the children of God. Their conscience demands to be respected, educated and formed in an atmosphere of confidence and not of anguish. The moral laws, far from being inhumanly cold in an abstract objectivity, are there to guide the spouses in their progress. When they truly strive to live the profound demands of a holy love, patiently and humbly, without becoming discouraged by failure, then the moral laws . . . are no longer rejected as a hindrance, but recognized as a powerful help’ (Paul VI, Address to the International Congress of the Equipes de Notre Dame, May 4, 1970, as cited by Quinn, “Address to the Spring Meeting of the NCCB,” May 2, 1978). By connecting these two passages, one dealing with public

LEADERSHIP IN THE PRESENT ERA

Our *ressourcement* of Vatican II has shown its unique definition of “pastoral,” its reception in the United States, and the qualities of leadership that accompany it. At the heart of the question is the breakthrough represented in John XXIII’s speech *Gaudet mater ecclesia*, which related faith and history, doctrine and practice, on such a profound level. Since the mid-1980s in the United States, the forces of history have led to the obscuring of this overall conciliar vision and the principles of its implementation. Another generation of clerical and lay leaders has faced different challenges in the 1980s and 1990s, not the least of which has been the advent of the second period of the Cold War and the reassertion of an ideology of containment. A resurgent cultural fundamentalism has significantly altered the interpretive hermeneutic applied to the council. These “culture wars” themselves transferred into the Church have become part of the canvas on which the pastoral leader now works.⁷⁸ In such a context, knowing our history and understanding the conciliar vision of the pastoral may give us some guidance in our present situation. In conclusion, as I reflect on this history, I would like to describe four general orientations that might help us as we approach the current debate over clergy sexual misconduct.

(1) The “turn to the pastoral” requires that all the members of the Church take its historical dimension seriously. To enter human history is to enter the field of limitation, imperfection, and at times moral deviance. History does not tolerate perfection. This means advance through gradual growth, learning at times from mistakes, choosing to live in a conflictual zone which itself can be purifying, striving always not for the perfect but for the better, keeping a vision of the whole, adopting a stance of justice and penitence at the same time. Perhaps the experience of the sexual misconduct of the clergy, the apparent mismanagement of the leadership itself,

life and the other with personal moral development, we see the profound link in this vision between human spiritual anthropology and ecclesiology.

⁷⁸ It is important to relate internal Church affairs to these international and national developments. For some suggestive parallels see *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Kuznick and Gilbert (see n. 27 above); “The New Right: Populist Revolt or Moral Panic,” in *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives*, ed. Francis G. Couvares, Martha Saxton, Gerald N. Grob, and George Athan Billias (New York: Free, 2000) 393–436; James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic, 1991); Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Oxford University, 2003); John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003); Donald G. Mathews, “‘Spiritual Warfare’: Cultural Fundamentalism and the Equal Rights Amendment,” *Religion and American Culture* 3 (Winter 1993) 129–54.

and now the surfacing of politicized solutions is not so much a barrier to the reception of the council as a challenge to receive its true depths, a challenge to move away from the obscuring of the pastoral in the midst of the culture wars of the last 15 years. Recognizing the historicity of this current and second phase of conciliar reception may enable us also to appreciate as part of the operative ecclesiology engendered by the council the vision and pastoral acumen that to some extent marked the first phase of reception. To quote *Lumen gentium* no. 48: "Already the final age of the world is with us (see 1 Cor. 10.11) and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real though imperfect. However, until the arrival of the new heavens and the new earth in which justice dwells (see 2 Pet 3.13) the pilgrim Church, in its sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and it takes its place among the creatures which groan and until now suffer the pains of childbirth and await the revelation of the children of God (see Rom 8:19–22)."

(2) In a society demanding order, a society that is unforgiving and excludes the imperfect, the inefficient, the weak, the impure, and the vulnerable from its own body, this entrance into history through the Church's willingness to live its own humanity is deeply connected with its mission of evangelization, its call to become a *lumen gentium*. In no way does it compromise its truth. The encounter with history and its demand for the adroit negotiation of polarities allows instead, in John XXIII's words, "a doctrinal/pastoral penetration" that is both faithful and creative. This course clearly requires some intellectual and affective humility as it chooses for one of its ritual symbols that most dramatic gesture of John Paul II when along with the heads of the Roman congregations he asked for forgiveness of the Church. Was this a passing action or a ritual expressing a permanent dimension of our deepest pastoral identity in the world?

(3) Once this "pastoral turn" is taken, leaders at all levels, clerical and lay, will necessarily engage themselves in the formation of a "new religious practice." The public disagreement between the bishops and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the tension between victims of sexual abuse and other members in the Church, the appeals on the right and on the left: all of this is part of the drama of the Church's life. To expect anything else is a historical illusion; to fracture the parties, to abandon communion through the search for an atemporal order either of the right or of the left, would be to remove the Church from the demands of history. Developing a true religious practice, a doctrine that is pastoral, and a pastoral that is doctrinal, has interactive stages and requires patience and charity.

(4) Lastly, in approaching this present situation—its demand for discre-

tion and prudence, discipline, charity, and humility, its challenge to balance contraries—perhaps the operative ecclesiology needs publicly to turn for its grounding to significant traditions of spiritual anthropology as they are contained in the Gospels and in the great embodiments of Catholic spirituality: the writings of Augustine, the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, the treatises of Bonaventure and Aquinas, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, the vision of Teresa of Avila or Francis de Sales.⁷⁹ The conciliar definition of the pastoral has as its partner an operative spirituality. All of the classic traditions of religious experience understand the mixture of good and evil in human life; all of them know of the need for discipline and order; all of them contain profound ecclesiological truths and practical traditions of communal reform; all of them have also developed wisdom, a “medicine of mercy,” a way of being pastoral that addresses the gradualness of human transformation within the Church and society. As pastoral leaders and scholars, might not an approach informed by religious masters and people schooled deeply in their tradition provide us with a more constructive path for the future?

⁷⁹ See for some examples of various traditions, Donald X. Burt, O.S.A., *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988); Michael Casey, *Truthful Living: Saint Benedict's Teaching on Humility* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1999); Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M., “Conflict and Power: The Retrieval of Franciscan Spirituality for the Contemporary Pastoral Leader,” in *Franciscan Leadership in Ministry, Foundations in History, Theology and Spirituality, Spirit and Life, A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 7 (1997) 205–21; Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas, Theologian* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1997).