

Chapter 4 – The Mystery of the Church

The Unilateral Aspect of Roman Ecclesiology

On December 5, 1962, in the course of the 34th General Session, the patriarch charged that the first schema “On the Church” was unilateral in presenting the truth. He showed, for example, how much harm the exclusive and excessive affirmation of the Roman primacy does to the Church. Such a primacy does not fit into the general framework of the hierarchy, which is essentially a ministry of love.

To discuss a draft of a text, in order to supply amendments, or even to demand its complete recasting, should not be considered as an act of hostility, and even less a deviation from sound doctrine. It is rather a proof of the interest which one brings to that text and the importance that one attaches to it.

This schema “*De Ecclesia*” is the doctrinal centerpiece, by far the most important document of the entire Council. In fact, our task is to complete the teaching of the First Vatican Council relative to the whole of the Church, and more particularly, concerning the episcopate, so that the primacy and the infallibility of the Roman pontiff may be apparent in the general framework of the hierarchical ministry and of the infallibility of the universal Church.

In that perspective, may I be permitted to note what, in the first chapter, does not appear to me to correspond to sound ecumenical theology.

In a general manner, I would say that this chapter does not contain errors, but it does not tell the whole truth. It is incomplete, and, being incomplete, it falsifies the perspective of the very truths that it sets forth.

Here are some examples:

1) The comparison of the Church with “an army set in battle array” (*confertum agmen*) is not a very happy one. This “triumphalism,” as has been already stressed in this venerable assembly, has no foundation in the Gospel. It risks falsifying the conception of the Church which—as Body of Christ, who suffered and rose from the dead—is called to consummate with its Leader, in faith and suffering, the redemption of mankind, and with it the entire creation.

2) Number 5 sees the foundation of the diversity of the members of the Body of Christ only in the command of some and the submission of others. That is partially true, but it is not the whole truth. In fact, between the ecclesiastics and the laity there are many other relations than those of chiefs and subjects. This purely juridical character of the Church falsifies the true idea of the Church of Christ. Through the insistence that one places on it and the exclusiveness which surrounds it, it becomes a concept that is foreign to the thinking of Christ. Here is a typical instance of stifling legalism: since, according to the authors of the schema, jurisdiction is the basis for all powers in the Church, and as titular bishops do not, of the very nature, have jurisdiction, the schema does not even mention them in its chapter on the episcopacy, as if titular bishops, who are indeed successors of

the Apostles and members of the episcopal body, did not exist. We find here oversights or very significant reticence.

3) However, the unilateral and consequently incomplete aspect of our schema appears above all when it speaks of the primacy of Peter and his successors. Beyond the unhealthy insistence on recalling this truth, as if all Christianity were contained in this dogma, the text isolates the Roman pontiff from the rest of the hierarchy, as if in the Church there were only the pope, to represent Christ, and the flock subject to him. That is also a false conception and a false presentation of the Church of Christ. Once again what is said positively here is true, but it is equally not the whole truth, for our Lord established the Apostles and their successors to be shepherds of the Church also, in union with Peter and under his leadership, and He likewise built the Church on the Apostles and the prophets. Saint Paul clearly teaches us, saying, “You have been built on the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets, and the cornerstone is Christ” (Ephesians 2:19-20). And St. John says in the Apocalypse, “He showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God... The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:10,14).

I do not wish to push my deductions any further. I have simply wished to give examples of this unilateral character, I would say this partiality, with which a certain school deals with theological problems, going so far as to disfigure them, indeed to accuse ecumenism of wishing to weaken the truth and to seek compromises in the faith. Nobody wishes such compromises, neither the Catholic ecumenists nor our Orthodox or Protestant brethren. What we ask, and what they ask, is that the whole truth be spoken, and not a part of the truth, and that it be spoken accurately.

Venerable Fathers, the primacy of Peter and his successors is truly comprehensible only in the perspective of the ministry of the hierarchy. The primacy is not a human “*imperium*” or a likeness to the rule of the Caesars, but a ministry, a pastorate of love given by the Lord to the Church, His spouse, in order to unify and guide the efforts of all His Apostles and their successors. It was not in vain that Christ, before entrusting this ministry to Peter, asked him three times, “Peter, do you love me... Feed my lambs, tend my sheep.” It is not in stressing the human aspects of this ministry, which are contingent and variable, that one exalts the papacy. It is not by flattering or self-interested exaggerations that one raises its prestige. Christ has tied jurisdiction to love, and confided it to Peter, a man like all human beings, and a repentant sinner.

Venerable Fathers, we confess that we were truly shocked when we read in books made available to everyone statements like the following,

“The pope is God on earth... Jesus has placed the pope above the prophets... above the forerunner..., above the angels..., Jesus has set the pope at the same level as God” (St. John Bosco, *Meditazioni*, Vol. I, Ed. 2a, pp. 89-90).

The papacy has no need of such intemperate language which turns into impiety, and which misleads consciences and scandalizes even the souls of non-Christians. The papacy is great enough and lofty enough in itself to captivate our minds and subjugate our hearts. It is a charism that Christ, the divine Spouse of the Church, has granted to the Church, for the benefit not only of the Church itself but also of all humanity. The duty of us all,

especially of those of us who are pastors of souls, is to help the Church in carrying out its salvific mission to the world, by loving it, devoting ourselves to it, by striving with our humble means to purify it from profane dross, so that we may present it to the world in the beauty in which it was divinely constituted. The primacy of the bishop of this Church of Rome is a primacy of ministry, of universal mission, which is the first among all the others only because, according to the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch, “it presides in charity,” for God is Love.

The Absence of Eastern Theology

The next day, December 6, 1962, during the 35th General Session, Archbishop George Hakim of St. John of Acre and of all Galilee, repeated the charge against this schema that he had already made against the dogmatic schemas in general: Eastern theology did not recognize itself in them.

We have all come to this Council, sustained by the hope that great things would be accomplished in us and by us, in spite of our weakness and our small numbers. This hope certainly comes to us from our beloved Pope John XXIII—for whom we wish a prompt and complete recovery—who in his call “*Ad Petri Cathedram*,” in his convocation of the Council, and above all in the opening address to the Council traced a very specific line of conduct.

The pope has certainly opened a new course of action, which corresponds to the aspirations of the world, which, St. Paul tells us, is suffering the pains of childbirth, this world that expects the Church to be its universal mother, “everyone's Church, and especially the Church of the poor,” as the Holy Father said on September 11, and as His Eminence Cardinal Lercaro has reminded us in deeply stirring terms.

It is certain that the real results of this council will only be felt in ten or fifteen years. What will the world, what will the Church be like then? Whether we like it or not, a council held during the latter part of the twentieth century must be the council of the twenty-first century, at a time when humanity will have doubled, reaching six billions, at a time when hunger will also have doubled. Where will the evangelization of the world be then?

That is why we would prefer to find in the schema on the Church not the texts of our classic manuals of yesteryear, no matter how exact they may be, but rather what the world of tomorrow expects from us. We would ask that the language be that of our century, that Vatican II do for the episcopate what Vatican I did for the papacy, that, in brief, the language be that of John XXIII, that of the Gospel. It would be so comforting to speak of the Church as “*Mater Amabilis*,” of papal primacy and episcopal power as service, as the reply to the Lord's loving question, “Peter, do you love me more than these?” Such language would be understood by all Christians, and even by non-Christians.

Now here is my comment from the Eastern point of view, and we are grateful to His Eminence Cardinal Frings for having suggested it with his characteristic firm clarity and with unequalled force. Like the schema “*De Fontibus*,” “*De Ecclesia*” does not take Eastern thought into account. It is conceived solely in juridical categories, and the Mystical Body itself is reduced to visible realities alone.

Here is a simple corroborative detail: in the approximately three-hundred notes and references of this schema, which cover nearly half of the pages, only five references mention the Greek Fathers. Is not the Catholic Church interested in enriching itself with this thought, which is part of its patrimony, so as to be truly Catholic, and thus more open

to ecumenical dialogue? Now, what are we declaring here? The realism of Greek theology is being atrophied by the legalism of the schema. Here are two examples:

1) First, the Church, according to the Eastern Fathers, is the continued *mysterion* of Christ. This mystical reality, into which one enters by an “initiation,” and which is nourished by the liturgical mysteries, assumes its consistency and its authenticity in a visible society, with its powers and its *magisterium*. This essential visibility, however, does not encompass the mysterious substance of the ecclesial Body. Never have Chrysostom, Basil, the two Gregories, in their catechesis, or John of Damascus — whose feast we have just celebrated and who is the author of the first theological summa, which could be advantageously consulted — never, I say, did these Fathers reduce St. Paul's doctrine of the Mystical Body to a system in which authority on one side, and obedience on the other, would suffice to define the attitude of the faithful. Thus it is with pained surprise that we read the chapter on evangelization, which is presented only as an indisputable right, and not first of all as the proclaiming of the Good News to men of good will, as the identification of Christ with the poor, according to Jesus' own words, “I was hungry and you gave me to eat.”

2) The Episcopate: According to the perfect logic of this ecclesial mystery, bishops are not defined first by their jurisdictional authority, but by the mystery itself, of which they are, by their consecration as successors of the Apostles, the architects and the strategists, to use the words of the Greek hymn of the third century.

Thus the episcopal body proceeds from Christ, and jurisdiction simply localizes, in accordance with the pontifical power, a function which in itself and collectively concerns the entire ecclesial Body.

This collective responsibility is extraordinarily exercised in the Council, but it is the normal duty of every bishop, in as much as he is, beyond his own diocese, in solidarity with the entire work of salvation that Christ has confided to the apostolic college with Peter at its head.

It is a serious matter to diminish this truth. We affirm it with the vigor of the Eastern theology, which has always expressed this truth in its doctrine and in its synodal institutions. The church is a community rooted in mystery, and it thus transcends the juridical system.

In the texts of John XXIII we would find these ideas; why not in the schema?

I suggest that this schema, like that of “*De Fontibus*,” be sent back to a commission including experts on Eastern theology and most fortunately they are numerous among our Latin brothers themselves from whom we Easterners have acquired love and respect for our Tradition and our Fathers.

Finally, may I be permitted to say, to calm one or another Father here present, that if we appeal to the Eastern Fathers, it is not through provincial fanaticism, but rather in order to return to the apostolic wellsprings.

There is no need to say that these very sources confirm us in our fidelity to Peter and his successor, to whom we vow an obedience, of which we have the occasion, in various countries where Eastern Catholics are an infinitesimal minority, to give at times proofs with our very blood. It is with love and joy that we do this, especially those of us who live near the beautiful Lake of Galilee, where these words of our Lord still resound, "Feed my lambs, tend my sheep."

The Church and the Churches

On the same day, December 6, 1962, Metropolitan Athanasius Toutounji of Aleppo intervened in the council to make three suggestions:

- 1) that there be better clarification of the concept of Church and of Churches;*
- 2) that the Roman Church should not be identified with the Mystical Body of Christ;*
- 3) that the ecclesial character of Orthodoxy should not be called into question.*

Since the intervention could not be read aloud, for lack of time, it was transmitted in writing to the secretariat of the Council.

May I be permitted to express before the holy Council three desires relating to the nature of the Church:

1) The first is that the concept of the Church and of the Churches be more clearly stated. We all know that the Church of Christ is one. It is even one of the truths of the Profession of Faith, concerning which there is unanimous accord among all Christians. And yet St. Paul himself talks sometimes about the Church, sometimes about the Churches. These expressions are found in the writings of the Fathers of the Church and in our liturgy, in which we pray every day “for the well-being of the holy Churches of God and the union of all.” The sovereign pontiffs themselves call the Roman Church “Mother of all the Churches.” Thus it seems to me that we must believe that this concept of the Church and of the Churches represents an enrichment of the ecclesiological doctrine that must not be lost.

If I may be permitted to express my opinion on this subject, I would say that this double use of the word indicates a twofold reality. The first is that the Church is an organic body, and not an aggregation of cells directly connected with the head. Just as in every organic body there are members, constituted diversely and functioning diversely, likewise in the one and catholic Church there are Churches which are so many members.

The second reality is that in each of the Churches the complete notion of the universal Church is found, and that in the universal Church are found the features of each of the particular Churches. In this twofold sense, the Fathers of the Church, and the Apostles before them, have given the name of Church, in the particular sense of the term, to each diocese. This is all the more true for a group of dioceses united around an archbishop or a patriarch. It is in this sense that it is very proper to speak of the Western Church, the Maronite Church, the Syrian Church, etc.

2) My second desire is that the Roman Church not be identified with the Mystical Body of Christ. As His Eminence, Cardinal Lienart has already emphasized, the Roman Church certainly is not to be identified with the Church suffering or the Church triumphant in heaven. Now, the Church militant on this earth is not the whole Church. It is above all with reference to the Church in heaven that the Church in general is to be defined. I would add that, even for this short life, the Roman Church should not be identified with the Body of Christ. One can, in fact, belong more or less intimately to the Body of Christ. If certain Christians are at odds with the Roman Catholic Church, they must not on that account be excluded from belonging to Christ.

3) Finally, I ardently implore the Fathers of the Council not to support excessively the views of a certain theological school, too imbued with legalism, and to safeguard the ecclesial character of our Orthodox brethren. These brethren do not constitute the one and only true Church of God, but they are nonetheless a Church. They possess the word of God, the sacraments, a hierarchy, and all the elements that are required for a church, in the sense that we understand it. The sovereign pontiffs have on several occasions not hesitated to recognize in them this ecclesial character. They are a Church separated from us, but they are a Church.

I humbly submit these three suggestions to your venerable assembly. They are of some importance, it seems to me, for a deeper conception of the Church and to pave the way for a union of all Christians.

The Call to Holiness in the Church

In this intervention, which was simply delivered to the secretariat of the Council, Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Patriarchal Vicar at Damascus, asked for a deepening of the call to holiness according to Holy Scripture, then stressed some aspects of holiness as Eastern theology conceives it.

It can be said of the chapter “On the vocation to holiness in the Church,” that it contains many good elements, but that it lacks other essential elements. One of these good elements, and not the least, concerns Holy Scripture. It is true that a few biblical citations illustrate the assertions of this chapter, but that is not enough. We would have desired to see Holy Scripture animate the very inspiration of the subject, not only through some texts that are cited, but, more profoundly, through the idea of the divine Counsel which has been revealed to us in the Sacred Books. But this inspiration is missing. This flaw seems to be the result of a twofold cause:

1. First, to the method of developing the schema. If I am not mistaken, the absence of expert exegetes is clearly apparent in it. Why is biblical theology reduced to silence in the theological commission, to the point that such a deficiency can be seen in the wording of this schema? In contrast, the Sovereign Pontiff Paul VI expressly declared to the observers here present the necessity of biblical theology in the exposition of the mystery of the Church.

2. Then, the defect touches the very thinking of the schema, which depends almost entirely on a certain recent Latin tradition, going back only four centuries, and which, as a result, simply ignores the Eastern tradition of the Church, and which ignores even more the ancient Latin tradition. In those times the Fathers were closer to the living wellspring of the biblical tradition, and that is why they must once again become our teachers. This is very serious, as much for the “*sensus fidei*” of the universal Church as for ecumenism.

That is why, in the spirit of our Fathers, I propose these four observations:

- 1) The vocation to holiness is intrinsic to the mystery of the People of God. The People of God exists because it forms the object of the pre-existing love of God. God is Love, and through love He calls all mankind to share in His life, “in many and various ways, formerly by the prophets...in these last days by the Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). The People of God is essentially called by the Word of God. This calling, in the course of the history of the people of God, has been revealed thus:
 - The People of God is holy because, from Abraham to the present, it has been called by the Word of God and justified by faith in Him.
 - It is holy because, having been saved by the blood of the Paschal Lamb, it has been freely purchased by “Yahweh the Savior,” that is to say “Jesus” in the paschal mystery.
 - It is holy because it receives the perfect law from the new Moses, that is to say the Holy Spirit, who writes in our hearts the law of Love.
 - It is holy because the promise of Love (“I shall be your God, and you shall be my people”) is consummated in a new and eternal covenant.

- It is holy because it is chosen and sent forth as a royal priesthood, as the authentic Eastern tradition constantly affirms.
- It is holy because it is continually being purified and judged in exile and does not yet arrive at the holy land except through the promise of the Holy Spirit.
- It is holy because, thanks to the ceaseless divine solicitude, it is snatched away from its sins and transferred to the true freedom of love through the about-face that consists in penance.
- It is holy because its success is not of this world, but is granted by God alone in poverty; it is a people of the poor.
- It is holy because it is eschatological, anticipating here below the eternal life which is communion (*koinonia*) with the Father through the Son in the Spirit.
- It is holy, finally, because its vocation is cosmic: this royal priesthood is destined to sanctify and liberate every creature.

2) That is why the Holy Fathers have described the mystery of the Church in the image of the life of the Most Holy Trinity in the communion of love. The Christian vocation is completely contained in these words: “in” the image of God-Love, since the mystery of the unity of the people of God depends essentially on the bond of love.

- a. It is useful to recall here that the hierarchy and all the other ministries in the Church have meaning only in view of fostering love. Consequently, the title of paragraph 34, p. 21, line 35, cannot be “Under the authority of the Church,” as if the Church were identified with the hierarchy. The hierarchy is not the whole Church.
- b. This chapter could also speak at greater length about the newness of the Christian life as a participation in the life of the Most Holy Trinity, in whose name we have been baptized. It is through the Spirit, in fact, that we have already been made heirs of the promises referred to in my first observation.

3) Concerning deification: This expression “deification” was always very dear to the tradition of the Fathers, because it is an excellent explanation of the movement of the divine Counsel in which we live by the Holy Spirit. If this traditional doctrine of deification were explained more clearly, we could more easily avoid the sentimental tone of our preaching, and the faithful would have a deeper understanding of the unity and the simplicity of the “spiritual” life which is “life in the Spirit.” The Spirit, in fact, is the true gift of the promises by which “we become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). But, since we are still awaiting a new heaven and a new earth, the “spiritual” life of the People of God is paschal, in a new exodus, in which “Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7), “so that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings” (Philippians 3:10).

4) In this chapter, the word “Christians” is rightfully used in place of the word “laity.” The word “laity” certainly refers to the “people of God” (*laos tou Theou*) and consequently includes both those who are ministers and non-ministers.

However, under the influence of clericalism, the sense has been confined to those who are not ministers in the Church. And yet where holiness is concerned, we are all Christians, each one being called to the holiness corresponding to his or her particular charism.

In conclusion, I propose:

- 1) that the preamble explain more fully and in greater depth the nature of the vocation to holiness according to the treasure of biblical theology;
- 2) that the mystery of the Church, here and elsewhere, be presented more as communion in love, in the image of the mystery of the most blessed Trinity;
- 3) that everything that refers to holiness in the Church be drawn from the traditional doctrine of deification, and that it be said explicitly that “spiritual” life is life “in the Holy Spirit”;
- 4) that the terminology referring to the members of the Church be inspired more by the same terms in the Holy Scripture, as for example: faithful, Christians, brothers, saints, community of brothers.

Archimandrite Athanasius Hage, Superior General of the Chouerite Basilians, discussed the same subject in an intervention sent in writing to the secretariat of the Council. {Ed's note: In fact, Father Hage's opinion is contrary to the main current of Eastern spirituality which recognizes only one form of holiness in the Church: the life in Christ. Monastics and laity may live it to different degrees of intensity, but it the same life in Christ.}

Chapter IV, "On the Vocation to Holiness in the Church," offers us a doctrine founded on Scripture and Tradition, and contains some constructive elements concerning the universal calling to sanctity in general, as well as to the state of perfection in particular. It is necessary to note this beautiful dynamic development in the pursuit and acquisition of holiness by clergymen dedicated to the pastoral ministry, as well as by lay persons successfully carrying out temporal responsibilities and apostolic works, and by those who, whether living in the states of perfection or in the world, observe the evangelical counsels, so that all may collaborate in the extension of the kingdom of God.

Life in the states of perfection is here very well presented under its ecclesial aspect, that is to say, as an institution whose members are dedicated to the service of the Church, either in the contemplative life or in the active life. This does away with the conception that some may have of the religious life as being individualistic and self-centered, as if religious were concerned only with their personal perfection and their own salvation.

Finally, a large and distinctive place is reserved for the states of perfection in the dogmatic schema "On the Church." May the authors of the schema receive our gratitude!

Nevertheless, this rich Chapter IV can be and should be amended and improved in certain respects.

In fact, it is highly inappropriate, either for the religious life or for the laity, to speak of only one form of holiness in the Church that everyone must attain, and to refer to the evangelical counsels in the world and in the states of perfection in the same breath, as well as to speak of clergy, laity, and religious under the same aspect, without speaking clearly and firmly of the fundamental distinction that exists between the life of the laity and the religious life, between the holiness of lay persons and the holiness of the state of perfection, and above all without mentioning the superiority of celibate life over the conjugal life. That is why this twofold distinction must absolutely be made, and that for diverse reasons:

1. The Theological Reason

On the one hand, the distinction between the category of the laity and the category or the order of consecrated virgins is based on a constant tradition: the Fathers always and carefully distinguish three orders in the Church, that is, the hierarchical order, the order of virgins and those who live in continence, and the order of lay persons. This tradition has its origin in the words both of Christ and of the Apostles who set up the counsel of virginity, as opposed to the matrimonial life, as absolutely better (cf. Matthew 19:11 and 1 Corinthians. 7:7: "I wish that all were as I myself am; but each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, one of another").

As for obedience and poverty, if in the Scriptures we have only a general call to cultivate the spirit of poverty and obedience, the Fathers, however, have recognized in this invitation and in the example of Christ and of the Apostles, as in the life of the first Christian community, a way of life appropriate to a special category of Christians.

On the other hand, the holiness of lay persons differs very much from the holiness of the life of religious: there is no question that, as the schema affirms, there is only one holiness in the Church, namely love; but this holiness can have specifically diverse degrees. In fact, holiness is attained in the use of earthly goods and the conjugal life according to the evangelical commandments, while in the states of perfection, sanctity is obtained, in contrast, by the renunciation of earthly goods themselves and conjugal life, by following the evangelical counsels.

2. The Psychological Reason

If this twofold distinction between lay persons and the souls consecrated to God is passed over in silence, a certain ambiguity can arise about it in the minds of the laity. Then the religious life will appear to them, not as a degree of holiness absolutely superior to conjugal life, but as something that is purely institutional and juridical in the Church. The laity, as a result, will not see sufficient reason for embracing this life.

On the other hand, if in the schema "On the Church" the religious life is clearly distinguished and emphasized, and if its superiority is praised, how great will be the life of thousands of religious spread out over the world in the service of the Church, and how great the encouragement given to them so that they may exercise more and more their apostolic zeal.

3. The Ecumenical Reason

Our Orthodox brethren consider the life of the monks as quite an eminent state in the Church, and the monks as forming an order distinct from that of the laity. Likewise, our separated Western brethren fully recognize the importance of the monastic life and are beginning to practice it well. To encourage the dialogue of union, it is very useful to reserve a place of honor in the Church for the states of perfection.

4. The Charismatic and Pastoral Reason

Religious life in the Church is a most eminent charism and constitutes an extraordinary witness of the spirit of abnegation in a world imbued with materialism and hedonism. That absolutely distinguishes the religious life and its holiness from the life of lay persons and their holiness...

Mary and the Church

The preparatory doctrinal commission had begun by preparing an independent schema entitled: "On the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of Men." On June 5, 1962, the patriarch wrote to praise two intentions expressed in the text, namely: no new title for the Virgin, no new Marian dogma. But already he had been struck by the absence in the text of patristic citations, above all Eastern ones, in a domain which the Eastern Fathers have explored superabundantly. Only popes are cited.

- 1) We agree entirely with the care demonstrated by the theological commission in not granting to the holy Mother of God any new titles that have not been accepted by the Tradition of the Church.
- 2) We equally agree with the care to avoid defining new Marian dogmas, in spite of the pressure, as blind as it is well intentioned, of certain groups of devotees of the Virgin. In this matter, as in so many others, we must never lose sight of our separated brethren, above all those of the East, and avoid that which, in our efforts to honor the Virgin, deepens the chasm that separates us from them. The Virgin surely is not pleased by a homage that unnecessarily contributes to the widening of the divisions among her children.
- 3) We would point out, with respect to the drafting of the notes, that one should not be content with citing popes, especially in a matter on which the Fathers of the Church have spoken so much and so well. We must avoid giving the impression that in the eyes of the theologians of the council only popes form the *magisterium* of the Church. With a unionist goal, it would even be good to cite in particular the Fathers of the Eastern Church.

It will have been noticed that during the passionate debates that characterized the Council's discussion of this schema "On the Virgin Mary," Patriarch Maximos and the Melkite Greek Fathers refused to intervene. They were astonished to their very depths at the importance that was attached to recognizing or refusing this new title "Mother of the Church" to the Theotokos. Accustomed to the poetic language of their liturgy, in which the Virgin is saluted with a thousand titles, they had no trouble in accepting this new title, if it is interpreted in a large, liturgical, and poetic sense, or in refusing it, if it is interpreted in a sense that is too realistic and too literal.

Nevertheless, Patriarch Maximos, urged to speak, began to prepare the intervention that we publish below. Finally, he decided not to deliver it. This was in the 1963 session.

Before entering into a study of this schema "Concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary," it is proper to ask ourselves this question: Is it necessary that this Second Vatican Council, already swamped with questions, devote a special dogmatic constitution to the most holy Mother of God?

For my part, I do not think so. Certainly that is not because the subject is not important in itself or that the Mother of God does not deserve a special constitution, but because the

insertion of a question in the agenda of the council depends not on the importance of the subject but rather on its necessity or practical usefulness. Now, what is the necessity or practical usefulness of doing this? On the one hand, this constitution does not teach anything new either to the Catholics or to the Orthodox, and, on the other hand, it appears ill-conceived as a means of presenting the Catholic doctrine to our brethren of the Reformed Churches.

That is why I propose either to pass over this constitution in silence or to be content with a single, adequate paragraph inserted in the schema on the Church, to show the relationship of Mary with the Church, since, as it has been said, the Church seems to be the central theme of this council.

However, even if it is abridged, this text must be done over, in my opinion, in a different spirit and according to other methods. It should be less scholastic and more pastoral. It must emphasize the devotion to the holy Virgin and the need to develop it and purify it of affectations and exaggerations. In fact, this devotion must be the path which leads to our Lord, our only Master, showing that the Virgin is a channel that must never be transformed into a wellspring. Thus, in our Byzantine iconography, the Virgin is always represented with her Son, and never alone; for simply as a creature she is nothing, but with her Son she is everything.

Moreover, we need a text with higher inspiration, one that is more ecumenical and less "pontifical." Let me explain: the method, the terminology, everything in this schema has the savor of Latin scholasticism. There is nearly nothing of liturgy, spirituality, and the Eastern Fathers. It is always from only one viewpoint, as if that one viewpoint represented the whole Church. And, what is still more serious, it is that the authors of the schema seem to know no other source of Revelation than the pontifical encyclicals. Besides, they say so ingenuously. In fact, they declare in "*Praenotandum III*" that, in the light of the controversies of the theologians on the origin, the authority, and the interpretation of the sources of Christian Tradition, they have preferred to have recourse to the authority of the "*Magisterium* of the Church," and by the "*Magisterium* of the Church" they naturally mean the teaching of Roman pontiffs only. We must recognize that this is a bit simplistic. Thus, while there are one hundred twenty-three citations of popes, there are only two of St. John of Damascus and one of St. Germanus of Constantinople. And we know the riches of the Eastern Church, especially concerning the Virgin. Have not all the feasts of the Mother of God come to the Latin Church from the East?

Thus, I deem that for the dignity of the council, of which the sovereign pontiff is at once the head and a member, we must at all costs do away with the notes that accompany this schema. We must indeed remember that the purpose of the council is not to summarize the pontifical teachings, and that it is customary, in order to remain faithful to the tradition of these councils, to cite before all else the Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers of the entire Church.

At the beginning of this intervention we have suggested either passing over this constitution in silence or being content with a simple paragraph on the Virgin Mary because the need for it is not obvious. We have also done so with the aim of expediting

the work of the Council, for, the way things are going, the conciliar work could last indefinitely: moderation is the daughter of prudence. The council has begun; we should be able to finish.