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WHO IS JOHN PAUL II?

— *John Kenneth Weiskittel*

"A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" is how Winston Churchill once described the Communist regime in Russia. It is a representation that could just as easily apply to "Pope" John Paul II. Never has any man who sat upon the papal throne been the subject of so many articles and books with conflicting ideas about his beliefs. His seemingly self-contradictory stands have been a puzzlement to the press—to religious as well as secular writers. He has been, as the saying goes, a hard man for the media to "get a handle on."

Now entering his sixth year in office (one cannot say "the sixth year of his reign" since he was not crowned with the papal tiara, but chose, rather, "collegial" *inauguration* to the centuries-old coronation ceremonies), John Paul is often called a pope of "firsts": first non-Italian pope in over 400 years; first Pole—and first Slav—ever chosen; first to be from a Communist country; first professional theologian to occupy the papal throne in more than 700 years; first (and, hopefully, the last) to have a disco song written about him; first to *jog* on the roof of the apostolic palace; first to visit a U.S. president (Carter) at the White House; first to preach in a Protestant church...etc.

John Paul has been called "the most charismatic leader in the Western World" (he finished second to President Reagan, in a recent Gallup Poll, as the man Americans most admire), and has also been called a "spiritual superpower" whose public appearances remind some observers of "a pop star greeting his adoring fans."

And yet, for all the media exposure, many professional journalists say they are still uncertain as of what to think about this pontiff. "The Paradoxical Pope" is the title of a cover story carried by *Atlantic* magazine. Father Richard McBrien, the "progressive" Conciliar columnist, writes in *Commonweal* that John Paul's beliefs are "difficult to place on the spectrum," and that it is not yet "unmistakably clear" whether he will steer a "conservative" or "progressive" course. *U.S. News and World Report* notes that his "varied attributes make him an enigma to many." Then there's the priest-turned-novelist, Andrew Greeley, who is quoted by *Life* as saying that the orientation of John Paul is neither "left" nor "right" because the pope is a "personalist" (later, in his own column, Fr. Greeley decided that the orientation is *both* traditionalist and modernist—a sort of theological split-personality).

The confusion, however, began long before—even back to that October day in 1978 at St. Peter's in Rome when it was announced that Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, the Archbishop of Kracow, Poland, had become the new pope. Almost immediately, a barrage of information—and misinformation—flooded world communication sources about the newly elected Bishop of Rome. In *Pope John Paul II: The Life of Karol Wojtyla,* the Polish priest Mieczyslaw Malinski recalls the widely varying accounts that appeared in the German press after the conclave selected his friend as pope. Those accounts ranged from the liberal newspaper that called it a "positive choice" to another calling him a "compromise Pope" to a third that saw the election as meaning "a shift to the right, a more conservative, almost pre-Conciliar trend." (pp. 22-23)

Another question that crossed millions of minds around the world on that day was what sort of stance would the new pontiff take towards Communism. Again, confusion was the order of the day. Some pointed to the fact that, while a bishop in Poland, John Paul frequently compromised with the totalitarian authorities (ironically, he was said to have earlier been an *active* opponent to the Nazis, by participation in the Polish underground), and the same observers praised this "pragmatic" approach. Peter Hebblethwaite, a writer for the leftist *National Catholic Reporter,* in his book, *The Year of Three Popes,* says that uncertainty about John Paul II's position on the issue of Communism has led to his being labeled "dangerously pro-communist or, alternately, vigorously anti-commu-

nist." (p. 183)

Veteran Vatican-watchers have noticed similar mixed reactions. Malachi Martin, the laicized Jesuit who was an insider in Rome during Pope John XXIII's pontificate, writes in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church:*

> There have been strong reactions to John Paul II. For many conservatives he is "sympathetic" but "way off" on matters such as marital love, contraception, abortion, homosexuality. For many traditionalists he is too much of a "showman" and not quick enough to undo the ills Paul VI wreaked on the church. For progressives and liberals in the Western world he is a demagogue, a species of Polish outlander who has made his way into the Vatican...(p. 237)

All of which leads us back to what is alluded to in the first paragraph of the present article: Can the riddle of the pope be solved? Can light be shed to answer the question: "Who is John Paul II"?

The aim of the rest of this study will be to sort through these clashing views in order to address the questions. I have done my utmost to use all relevant data. Thus, information that would present John Paul in a favorable way has not been deleted to satisfy those who call him a devil incarnate. Neither, however, will there be any omission of facts that would be unsettling to those readers with bisque statuettes of him (yes, they really exist), those who have, as it were, canonized him "ante mortem."

It should be pointed out that some of the material to be presented will parallel part of the text of my article, "Exposing the Conciliar Con Game," which appeared in the January 15 issue of *The Athanasian*. Nevertheless, while many readers will notice similarities between the two, and I certainly don't discourage such comparisons, this article was not conceived to be a sequel to that one.

The Conciliar Pope

Mary Martinez (an accredited member of the Vatican press corps since 1973 and an accomplished researcher on the background to the crisis in today's Conciliar Church) is a thoroughgoing traditionalist. In her book, *From Rome Urgently,* she has described succinctly a certain segment of John Paul's supporters when she writes:

> Conservatives, those Catholics who, though dismayed at the changes, obey because Rome orders them to, welcomed Pope John Paul II as a rescuer. They took and continue to take each exhortation to prayer and each slight pull on the reins of discipline as proof that here is a man sent by God to put everything aright, to do all the things good Pope Paul had tried unsuccessfully to do. If he mentions the Second Vatican Council half a dozen times in every discourse it is because he knows what the Council—abused by the radicals and so wilfully misunderstood by the traditionalists—was really about. (p. 31)

Those conservatives mentioned, many of whom, no doubt, are reading this article, might quarrel a little over the title of this section, saying it is obviously the work of a traditionalist. That would be a mistake, though, because the phrase "the conciliar pope" appears in the conservative *National Catholic Register's* issue of October 10, 1982.

In that issue, which commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the opening session of Vatican II, an article appeared, by reporter Andrew Zwernemann, entitled "John Paul II and the Shape of the Future." Zwernemann writes that "John Paul II has been characterized as 'the conciliar Pope.' And as time goes on, this increasingly appears to be true." In this respect, the conservative position is, in a sense, correct—John Paul *does* know what the Council "was really about." Possibly more so than any man alive.

Father Malinski, in his biography, says that, after his election, John Paul addressed the assembled cardinals on what would be "the guiding principles of his pontificate." This was laid out in great detail. Malinski continues:

> To begin with, the Pope declared that he intended to be faithful to the Second Vatican Council and that his first task would be to carry out its principles and to create *a new mentality* in the Church according to its teachings. He directed particular attention to the Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, which he called the Council's Magna Carta. He went on to say that he wished to give a full meaning to the collegiality of bishops and...appealed to all the faithful to remain loyal to the Church by adhering to the magisterium of St. Peter, especially in doctrinal matters...(pp. 23-24, emphasis added)

To stress collegiality, Hebblethwaite reports that, at the end of the same speech, John Paul "instead of giving the traditional papal blessing,...asked them all to bless each other and to bless him." (p. 187) And the words of the pope at the meeting included these:

> We consider our primary duty to be that of promoting, with prudent but encouraging action, the most exact fulfillment of the norms and directives of the Council. Above all we favour the development of conciliar attitudes. First we must be in harmony with the Council. One must put in practice what was stated in its documents; and what was "implicit" must be made explicit in light of the experiments that followed and in light of the new, emerging circumstances. (p. 186)

Here, it would seem, John Paul is endorsing not only the Council and its attendant mentality but also the "experiments" that have endangered millions of souls.

Bothersome, as well, in the above passages are the notions that Catholics need a "new mentality" to adhere to dogmas of the Church and that *Lumen Gentium* is an ennobling document, a spiritual Magna Carta. The fallacy of the first notion is obvious on the face of it but the second needs to be explored a bit more.

Lumen Gentium ("Light of Nations"), the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, deals with the nature and structure of the Church. Some of the chapters in the 16,200-word document are "The Mystery of the Church", "The Hierarchical Structure of the Church, with Special Reference to the Episcopate", "The Laity", "Religious" and "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church."

Despite titles with a traditional Catholic flavor, the work is anything but traditional in its direction. The original schema, drafted by the Theological Commission before the start of the first session, was thrown out by the liberal pressure groups that held sway over so much of the proceedings (to the point of choking out all opposition).

In his introduction to *Lumen Gentium* in *The Documents of Vatican II,* the "new wave" theologian Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J. ridicules the original draft, saying it "resembled the standard treatise of the Church as found, for example, in most of the theological manuals published between the two world wars. Influenced by centuries of anti-Protestant polemics, the writers of this period placed heavy emphasis on the hierarchical and juridicial aspects of the Church, including the supremacy of the Pope." (p. 10) In other words, Fr. Dulles is griping because it sounded too *Catholic.*

There is no griping from him with the finished product, however. On the contrary, Fr. Dulles hails it as "the most imposing achievement of Vatican II." A quick look at the thinking of this priest will tell reams about the true character of *Lumen Gentium.* Michael Davies states, in his *Pope John's Council:* "Fr. Dulles... wishes to relegate the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady to the status of an optional belief, in order to facilitate union with Protestants who reject this doctrine." (p. 61) *Lumen Gentium* also seems unwilling to take a firm stand (strange for a *Dogmatic* Constitution). In the same place Mr. Davies notes that it "contains a great deal of traditional and orthodox Catholic terminology well calculated to inspire confidence. Such confidence is likely to be weakened, however, when it is realized how pleasing the document is both to Catholic ecumaniacs as well as to Protestants. If the document is as sound as it appears, then why do those who reject Catholic teaching praise it?" For one reason, answers Fr. Dulles, because the "tone" is so "strongly ecumenical." Also, he argues, because it avoids "right definitions." It "is not and does not purport to be," he stresses, "a definitive document." (p. 13) How, then, I ask, does it purport to be a *Dogmatic* Constitution?

A final note on *Lumen Gentium:* John Paul II's heralding it as the Magna Carta of the Church is not his expression originally. That distinction must go the the French (?) Jesuit, G. Dejaifve, who wrote an article in the *Nouvelle revue theologique (New Theological Review)* of January, 1965, entitled "La 'Magna Charta' de Vatican II" ("The 'Magna Carta' of Vatican II"). Methodist theologian Albert C. Outler, in his analysis contained in *The Documents of Vatican II,* calls it a *Magna Carta* as well as a "masterpiece." (p. 105)

There must be more to earning the title, "the conciliar pope," than simply expressing a commitment to the teachings of that council. John Paul's credentials thus go beyond mere recitation of words. In fact, even before leaving Kracow for warmer climes, he had gone far past the average bishop, not only in implementing conciliar directives but, as Andrew Zwernemann points out, he was "the only bishop from among the Council Fathers to construct a systematic book on the principles of Vatican II." (The book's English title is *Sources of Renewal.*)

Just how much was contributed to the Council by the (then) Bishop Wojtyla may never be known entirely. My research would tend to hint at a much larger role at influencing the proceedings than is generally assumed. What is clear, though, and well-documented, is the fact that he was the only bishop to attend all four sessions of the Council (and from behind the Iron Curtain, yet!); the fact that he had very significant input in at least two other major Council official papers: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) and Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae Personae*); and the fact that he was a vigorous defender of the Council.

Bishop Wojtyla strongly opposed, during the drafting of *Gaudium et Spes* ("Joy and Hope"), any specific attacks on Communism. Why? According to Xavier Rynne, liberal defender of the Council, while many Catholics around the world—including groups that represented victims in Red concentration camps—urged a strong condemnation of Communism, the Polish leader "called for moderation, approving in general what the schema now said: 'Atheism can be taken up here only with difficulty because the question is so complex.'" (pp. 476-477) This rationale entirely begs the question regarding the horrible nature of Communism. As those who have been tortured body and soul in slave labor camps will attest, the question is brutally simple. In the end, the "pragmatists" won out and no specific condemnation of Communism ap-

peared in the final text. More than a decade later, writes Mary Martinez, Karol Wojtyla (by now Cardinal) reaffirmed his commitment by teaching the faithful: "We respect all ideologies." (p. 35)

The thrust of *Dignitatis Humanae Personae* ("The Dignity of the Human Person") denied the Catholic concept, "error has no rights," replacing it with the Liberalism condemned by the Church. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, in a speech he gave in Spain in 1975, stated that this declaration was inspired by Masonry, and further said:

> ...There is only one religion here below that can save us; let them not tell us that, according to human dignity, all religions are good. That is what Father (Yves) Congar said when they explained to him that the truth had always been proclaimed by the Church, the truth of the Catholic Church, the truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only means of saving souls. He replied that now things are no longer considered from the point of view of truth but from that of human dignity—human dignity, in order to speak of religious liberty, of liberty for all religions!

The ultimate goal of this unlimited freedom that puts the truth aside, says His Excellency, is the creation of a Masonic "universal religion."

Now, the Fr. Congar mentioned above, who, by his own admission, was a suspect theologian during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII ("I knew nothing from that quarter but an uninterrupted series of denunciations, warnings, restrictive or discriminatory measures and mistrustful interventions."), enjoyed celebrity status at Vatican II. He was "forward-looking", "progressive", an "expert" who had his share of influence. Fr. Malinski says that John Paul, speaking of that Council, praised the "tremendous part played by such eminent theologians as Henri deLubac, Jean Danielou, Yves Congar, Hans Kung, R. Lombardi and Karl Rahner."* (p. 184)

On October 21, 1963, during debates over religious liberty, Bishop Wojtyla argued: "It is not the role of the Church to lecture unbelievers. We are involved in a search along with our fellow man...Let us avoid moralizing on the suggestion that we have a monopoly of the truth. One of the major defects of this draft is that in it the Church appears merely as an authoritarian institution." (Hebblethwaite, p. 167) The National Catholic News Service, in its book, *John Paul II "Pilgrimage of Faith,"* observes: "He helped fight off critics of some of the most important passages in the Council's 'Declaration on Religious Liberty,' a landmark document that says freedom of religion is a basic human right with which civil authorities have no power to interfere." (p. 15) The Church, then, is reduced to being "just another religion," without the elevated position she rightly enjoys as the Spouse of Christ and without the monopoly of *infallibility*.

In the waning hours of the final Council session, and immediately following it, Bishop Wojtyla showed himself a staunch defender of Vatican II, and the Polish College in Rome proved to be the stage for some lively debate over the need for a Council. One student there, an "extreme traditionalist," held firmly the conviction that, since the Council defined nothing and condemned nothing, it lacked the authentic character of all previous Councils—in short, it had no reason for existing. Bishop Wojtyla countered, saying:

> Vatican II had as its starting point the awareness of a crisis situation. The Church was becoming less effectual in modern conditions, the gulf between it and the world was widening; religious faith was in conflict with science and technological progress, modern forms of behaviour were in conflict with Church ethics; atheism, materialism and indifferentism were on the increase. The choice of a remedy was dictated by the Church's reflection on itself and on the world. (Malinski, p. 183)

Further, he added, the Church should see that the time was at hand for a "reinterpretation of the Gospel."

How extraordinarily similar much of this sounds to certain of the 65 Modernist tenets *explicitly condemned* by Pope St. Pius X in the syllabus *Lamentabili Sane* ("Truly lamentable"): 2. The Church's interpretation of the Sacred Books is by no means to be rejected; nevertheless, though, it is subject to the more accurate judgement and correction of the exegetes.; 4. Even by dogmatic definitions the Church's magisterium cannot determine the genuine sense of the Sacred Scripture.; 57. The Church has shown that she is hostile to the progress of the natural and theological sciences.; 59. Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and to all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places.; and 63. The Church shows that she is incapable of effectively maintaining evangelical ethics since she obstinately clings to immutable doctrines which cannot be reconciled with modern progress.

The bottom line, so to speak, would be what to do about "the widening gulf" between the Church and the world. Is it the Church that is going astray? Does the world have the answers? The answer that Vatican II, and its defenders such as Bishop Wojtyla, seem to be telling us is that, in order for the Church to be more successful in dealing

*All of John Paul's "eminent theologians," with the exception of Fr. Lombardi, are notorious for their radicalism.

with the world, it must fashion itself into the image and likeness of the world, and not the other way around. The resulting chaos which naturally follows such thinking is what Pius X called, nearly eighty years ago, "truly lamentable."

As John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla's tireless promotion of "the principles of Vatican II" reached a new stage when he formally issued the Conciliar revision of Canon Law. Father William Jenkins, writing in the traditionalist magazine, *The Roman Catholic,* for May, 1983, called the new Code "the legal expression of Vatican II." John Paul is in total agreement with that assessment. He did, in fact, express this, even as he announced enactment of the new Law, saying: "...it is certain that the *Conciliar postulates,* just as the *practical directives* marked out for the ministry of the Church, find in the new Code *exact and precise counterparts,* sometimes even verbatim."

The revised Canon Law of the Conciliar Church has thrown out numerous (most) grounds for excommunication, including membership in Masonic lodges. It is, then, possible for those in the Conciliar Church to belong to these "synagogues of Satan" without fear of losing their seats in the pew. Later, the New Vatican, in typical manner, covered its tracks by saying that it was still wrong to join the Masons, and that those who joined such groups would not be allowed to receive Communion—but neither would they be excommunicated. My guess is that this later "warning" is but a smokescreen; the tactic seems to follow Lenin's revolutionary dictim, "Two steps forward, one step backwards." Will the next step forward be to relax entirely any prohibitions concerning the Masons?

As Fr. Jenkins puts it in "New Code, New Church" (the article cited above), "The post-Vatican II Church is not one in faith, nor one in worship, with the Roman Catholic religion. It has its own ecumenical faith and its own ecumenical liturgy. Now—to crown them both—it has its own ecumenical code of law...." Yes, John Paul has demonstrated—in his enactment of this new Code and, indeed, in all of his acts as head of the Conciliar Church—his unflagging commitment to the Second Vatican Council. It is that *commitment* that we must always keep in mind, no matter how traditionally sounding some of his utterances may be at times.

Why Was Cardinal Karol Wojtyla Elected?

Albino Luciani, who had named himself Pope John Paul I, ruled the Conciliar Church little more than a month when he died in late September, 1978. A new conclave was summoned to select a successor, and great debate began on who should lead: Should the new Bishop of Rome continue with the proposed agenda of John Paul I, whose name was a composite of the two popes who presided over Vatican II and was meant to represent a continuation of their policies? Or should he be committed to restoring orthodoxy that had been so besieged after the Council?

Various factions of cardinals began jockeying for position, and the result resembled nothing more closely than a political convention. The "progressives" and "moderates" had their favorite sons and this race, like any political contest, had its dark horse. The first major push, however, was by none of these forces, but by supporters of the conservative archbishop of Genoa, Giuseppe Cardinal Siri.

Cardinal Siri had gone along with the Vatican II reforms, but no one who knew him would ever confuse his lukewarm response with the exuberant zeal of a Karol Wojtyla. Conciliar liberals dubbed Siri "a reactionary" (Greeley), and "an ultra-conservative of whom it was maliciously said that he had not yet grasped the fact that a council had taken place and that it was doubtful that he would ever do so." (Malinski) The truth is that the Cardinal was quite aware that the Council had occurred, for he had referred to it as "the greatest disaster in recent ecclesiastical history." And of the initiator of Vatican II, John XXIII, Cardinal Siri said: "it will take the Church fifty years to recover from his pontificate." Moreover, he was openly sympathetic to the stand taken by the Council's best-known critic, Archbishop Lefebvre.

Most of Cardinal Siri's voting bloc were Italians, and Fr. Greeley, in *The Making of the Popes 1978,* asserts that "all of the foreign cardinals giving interviews at the (Rome) airport (at the start of the conclave) have absolutely insisted on the need for a man who will appeal to the world the way John Paul (I) did." (p. 192) Naturally, this would rule the Cardinal out, since real Catholicism isn't considered appealing to the world or the liberals.

After several ballots, both sides not budging an inch, the idea of a "compromise" candidate was proposed, someone who would appeal to everyone. There were some who remained in the Cardinal Siri camp to the bitter end but, eventually, enough defected from it to turn the tide to the left. The man responsible for the sudden shift was the "progressive" cardinal from Austria, Franz Koenig, archbishop of Vienna. Investigative reporters Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts, in their recent bestseller, *Pontiff,* state that the Austrian prelate mounted "an astonishing campaign inside and outside the conclave to have (Cardinal Wojtyla) elected pope." (p. xi)

Quickly, Cardinal Koenig formed an ad hoc committee of sorts to promote the candidacy of the Pole. Only two of

those could be identified in any sense as conservative (Cardinals Hoeffner of Germany and Wyszynski of Poland), while the majority were much more modernistic in beliefs (Cardinals Baggio of Italy, Hume of England, Ratzinger of Germany and Willebrands of the Netherlands). According to *Pontiff*, based on interviews with sources inside the Vatican, Cardinal Wojtyla seemed hesitant to be considered for the post, but Cardinal Koenig approached him at the Vatican dining room and in his quarters to reassure him. "You must prepare yourself for the outcome," he reportedly said. "You must be called John Paul Two... You *must* be called like that because that is a mark of the continuity we all want." (p. 319)

When the final vote was reached, the Sistine Chapel (where the balloting took place) erupted into a sea of pandemonium: African and South American cardinals, reports *Pontiff*, "are using their clinched fists to hammer the tabletops"; several Italians shout "Viva! Viva!"; the Germans are "ecstatic," and Cardinal Ratziner, usually very composed, cries out that the Holy Spirit has prevailed. (p. 321)

Vatican employees had never witnessed such bedlam in those venerable and august chambers. Nor had anyone else before them, say *Pontiff's* authors, since Philibert of Orange stabled his horses in the Sistine Chapel during his sack of Rome four hundred years earlier.

One figure, however, seemed unmoved by the euphoria; "(Cardinal) Siri manages a wintry smile." His lack of ardor must in large part be based on the fact that he realized this election embodied the "continuity" of "the greatest disaster in recent ecclesiastical history," an event that he in no way wished to celebrate.

John Paul II and the Sex Education Controversy

Father Paul Wickens is a parish priest who has demonstrated in more than one case a commitment to Catholic tradition. (He remains, however, a priest of the Conciliar Church—Ed.) Early last year, his archbishop, Peter Gerety of Newark, New Jersey, ordered all priests to implement a sex education program in the Church schools that would be comprehensive in its reach (from kindergarten to senior high school) and pornographic in its conception (the book, *The Joy of Sex,* which promotes contraception, promiscuity and perversion as acceptable lifestyles, is recommended reading).

When Fr. Wickens absolutely refused to allow the children of his parish to be poisoned by such means, Archbishop Gerety "rewarded" his concern by suspending him. To his credit, Fr. Wickens held firm and accused the archbishop of heresy and Modernism.

In 1982, Fr. Wickens published a booklet entitled *Christ Denied: Origin of the Present Day Problems of the Catholic Church* (TAN Books, Rockford, Illinois). The theme of *Christ Denied* is familiar enough to regular readers of this newsletter for it says that the origin of today's problems is Modernism. The two Modernist theologians whose works he examines most extensively are Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner, two European Jesuits who often veer toward pantheism in their thinking. At the end of the work, he offers the false hope that there is light at the end of the Modernist tunnel for Catholics in the person of *John Paul II* ("It seems that the official doctrine of the Church—*the Church of Jesus Christ*—is in good hands."). Apparently, Fr. Wickens is unaware that John Paul has praised Fr. Rahner's "tremendous part" in Vatican II and that, as Cardinal Wojtyla, he wrote in his book, *Sign of Contradiction,* a passage saying Genesis 2:7—in contrast to the Creation account given in Genesis 1:27—"seems to be closer to the modern trend towards biblical evolutionism, that of Pere Teilhard de Chardin for instance." (p. 21)

Certainly, one would think, John Paul ought to come to the aid of this "papist priest," so maligned by his Modernist superior. And, too, hadn't the semi-traditional *New Jersey Catholic News,* while supporting Fr. Wickens and exposing Archbishop Gerety, said that the sex-ed plan was wrong because, among other reasons, "it disobeys the instructions of the present Pope and many Popes before him."

It is a fact beyond dispute that many popes have condemned sexual instruction in the schools. Pope Pius XI, in the Church's most comprehensive statement on education (the 1929 encyclical on Christian Education of Youth), called such indoctrination a "very grave danger," "foolhardy" and an "error," and felt the matter of such importance as to devote an entire section to refuting its false claims. John Paul may have made some statements in the past to which *New Jersey Catholic News* refers (he has condemned in his own way certain modern sex practices) but I was unable to find one for this article.

My question is this: has John Paul done anything at all to see that Archbishop Gerety cease polluting the minds of the children of Newark and its suburbs? I ask in all sincerity because I don't know and, if any of our readers in the Northeast could provide us with information on this case, I would be happy to include such material in a future article. I am not particularly optimistic in this regard though.

The reason for my pessimism (which I prefer to think of as realism) appeared in the December 12, 1983 issue of *Newsweek* under the headline, "The Vatican Course on Sex Education." The article reported on a then-released

document from the Vatican, "Educational Guidance in Human Love," and began by stating: "Parents who oppose sex education in Roman Catholic schools can no longer look to Rome for support." "The document," comments *Newsweek,* "avoids the sterile moralism of many past church annoucements." The magazine then went on to quote the directive as urging "positive" sex-ed to secure "the psychological and spiritual maturity" of adolescents and to safeguard against "the ignorance and widepread degradation" of human sexuality.

Still another reason for fearing a deception is the kiss of death given to John Paul II by Fr. Greeley who, in his book of essays, *A Piece of My Mind...on Just about Everything,* praises the "conciliar pope's" talks on sex as "landmarks in Catholic thought." This is the same Andrew Greeley whose sex-obsessed novels have been called, in review, "scandalous" and the sort of books that used to get authors excommunicated (so delighted was Fr. Greeley with such reviews that he used them to promote his works); the same Andrew Greeley whose *The Making of the Popes 1978* was serialized in *Playboy* (this is a matter for boasting on the publishing information page of the book); and the same Andrew Greeley who offers John Paul II the following bit of ironic praise:

> When the Roman inquisitors are finished with the Swiss and Dutch theologians (e.g. Hans Kung), there is another popular Catholic teacher against whom they ought to take action. This man may well be the most dangerous of all. In a recent talk to tens of thousands of people he spoke of the human experience of nakedness and what it reveals about our nature. Can you imagine the harm such a talk would do to the faithful?...I trust that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will go after him. They won't have to look very far—over to the audience hall where Pope John Paul II speaks every Wednesday morning. (pp. 203, 204)

Finally, Fr. Greeley applauds John Paul for talking "about the human body in a way in which most Catholic priests would not yet dare."

The Question of Traditional Catholics

For all his equivocations on other topics, John Paul's position on those who would preserve Catholic tradition is clear: "You cannot remain faithful and be attached to secondary aspects (sic), valid in the past but already outdated." According to *Pontiff,* his meeting with Archbishop Lefebvre, little more than a month after his election, was graphic proof of his unswerving loyalty to Vatican II over and above Catholic tradition. It was also a very different John Paul than the warm, charming, personal crowd-pleaser; a John Paul as cruel and barbaric as the Soviet stooges who control his native land.

On November 21, 1978, the archbishop, accompanied by Cardinals Siri and Silvio Oddo, visited John Paul II at the Vatican. For fifteen minutes, behind closed doors, Archbishop Lefebvre met with him alone. Then the doors opened, John Paul embraced the French prelate, and the visit ended almost as quickly as it had begun.

All reporters of the event have agreed upon that much. The disagreement was over what took place *behind* the doors. Fr. Greeley wrote that John Paul "simply charmed" Archibishop Lefebvre. Others said that a cordial meeting had ended with the archbishop being convinced by his host to believe in the "living tradition" of the Church and to drop his antiquated thinking. But, "the truth," *Pontiff's* authors argue, "is far different." The scene they unfold is shocking only to those who feel that the New Vatican will listen to traditional requests or read their petitions:

> John Paul, with a forcefulness which stunned Lefebvre, stated that he could excommunicate the archbishop—and might yet do so before Lefebvre left the Vatican. In his tone and in his choice of words, the pope was cold to the point of brutality. When Lefebvre tried to speak, he was angrily told to remain silent... John Paul stated that if the archbishop persisted in remaining outside the mainstream of Catholic thinking, he might be allowed to stay in his Swiss mountain fastness; but his well-known penchant for publicity, the way he had over the past thirteen years used the media to attack previous popes—this must stop now and forever...Further, Lefebvre must ensure that his followers also desist from their public promotion of doctrine which is against the Church's present teaching. Otherwise, they too will face excommunication. ...Then, in little more than a whisper, Marcel Lefebvre capitulated. (p. 350)

Since I was unable to speak with either of the participants of this little drama, it is left to the readers to decide which scenario—if any—is the correct one. My feeling is that the scene as described by the authors of *Pontiff* is probably closest to the truth. When John Paul II said "we respect all ideologies," he didn't seem to have traditional Roman Catholics in mind.

More recently, however, Archbishop Lefebvre has again taken a *hard-line* approach. On December 9, 1983, joined by retired Bishop Antonio de Castro-Mayer of Brazil, the archbishop issued an "Episcopal Manifesto" to John Paul II, in the form of an open letter, which said its purpose was "rendered all the more urgent by the errors, not to say the heresies, of the New Code of Canon Law and by the public ceremonies and addresses honoring the fifth centenary of the birth of Martin Luther."

Whom to Believe

There are, among John Paul's conservative supporters, some who, reading this article, will dismiss anything in it that would present him less than favorably. Their minds are made up, and virtually nothing anyone could say (including John Paul himself) will change those minds. Reason has nothing to do with it!

Some critics of this study might point to the many traditionally-oriented statements he has made: upholding the family ("The family is irreplaceable and, as such, must be defended with might and main."); essential values ("the obligation of protecting...the authentic dignity of man; of the good of the person; of the family; of nations."); the denouncing of terrorism ("...the way of hatred, by the murdering of defenseless people, by the methods of terrorism."); materialism ("an idolatry which attaches itself today to money, to power, to sex."); and institutionalized atheism ("When Christ is denied all rights of citizenship, those same rights are denied to man; and when the 'death of God' is proclaimed, the 'death of man' is being planned as well.").

Few, if any, of our readers would disagree with such sentiments. They are not, however, strictly Catholic; any one can flip on the television on Sunday morning to the Old-time Gospel Hour and hear the Rev. Jerry Falwell make similar remarks—but such remarks don't make him Catholic. Also, as we have seen, grand words aren't always followed by equally grand performances. As Cardinal Wojtyla once asked, in his poem "Thought's Resistance to Word," "But when we act, can our deeds surrender the ultimate truths we presume to ponder?"

How our conservative friends will react to the praise heaped upon John Paul II by radical theologians is yet another question with which to deal. Do they not find it odd that a man with all the "progressive" credentials of an Andrew Greeley says, on more than one occasion, that John Paul II's election "represents the beginning of a new era." Finishing his John Paul II-as-theological-split-personality theme, Fr. Greeley writes, hopefully: "In the long run the radical John Paul will be the one who shapes Catholic history...Maybe eventually he will convert the traditional John Paul." (*A Piece of My Mind...*, p. 208.) Also taking up the cheer is Fr. Richard McBrien, author, theologian and chairman of Notre Dame's theology department, who told the National Catholic News Service that, while John Paul was conservative, he nonetheless "does seem to appreciate some elements of contemporary theology." Fr. McBrien also likes his "political realism" and the fact that he refuses to act from an "I've got to defend the truth" position. And Fr. McBrien really *hates* when a pope defends the truth: in his work, *Catholicism,* he attacks Pope St. Pius X for excommunicating the Modernist Jesuit, George Tyrell, while he defends the heretic.

I've only been able to include about half of the research I've done on John Paul II. For reasons of space, sections on his views on liberation theology, liturgical change, ecumenism, feminism, the U.N. and World government, disarmament and other subjects are left out. Omitted as well is any of the information I found on Max Scheler, the philosopher who influenced the young Polish priest, when Karol Wojtyla was searching for an outlook, into "a new way of thinking and observing humanity." (Malinski, p. 137) (Scheler's odd career saw him go from his Protestant-Jewish background to two conversions to Catholicism and on through to pantheism and "religious atheism," and could easily make up a section by itself.) These subjects—and more material on those covered here—could be contained in a future article, if reader response warrants one.

John Paul II poses serious difficulties for Catholics who seek to uphold Church traditions. When he greeted the assembled throngs from the main balcony at St. Peter's after his election, the multi-lingual Pole surprised the predominantly Italian crowd by speaking their language. "If I make mistakes," he joked, "correct me." Innumerable efforts, of course, have been made by traditional Roman Catholics over the past several years to "correct" John Paul II in matters of the gravest consequence relating to the one true Church. There is no evidence of any appreciable results of those efforts. But really, is John Paul II a Roman Catholic? †

Simple But Logical

Is there any flaw in the following line of reasoning? Simple though it is, it would appear to be perfectly logical.

John Paul II is the supreme head of the Conciliar Church. But the "Conciliar Church is not Catholic" (Archbishop Lefebvre—1976). Therefore, because John Paul II is the supreme head of a Church which is not Catholic, he cannot be a valid pope.

—Editor—

DEATH

There is hardly an adult who has not seen death in one form or another and no one who has, unless he be quite utterly devoid of feeling and emotion, could fail to be at least somewhat moved by it. Human nature being what it is, however, those people are most affected by death who thereby lose the companionship of one with whom they were closely joined in life through bonds of blood or friendship or marriage. Time alone and a strong, abiding faith in the good Providence of God can mitigate the wound which the loss of a loved one has inflicted and, while it is well that sorrow and grief be not unduly prolonged, it is regrettable indeed if the lesson death teaches fails to have any wholesome and lasting effect.

And the lesson death teaches all who will but learn and profit by it is the simple one expressed by Saint Paul: "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment." In God's own good time death will come to each and every one of us for we have not here a lasting home. Although the time and place and circumstances of death are known to none but God, yet there is nothing more certain in all life than that it will one day come to an end. At that supreme moment, life ends and eternity begins. At that supreme moment, all of our earthly ambitions, all of our joys and sorrows, all of our hopes and plans suddenly and forever cease to be. At that moment, whether we be young or old, rich or poor, strong or weak (for death is no respecter of persons)—at that supreme moment, life and everybody and everything that have any connection with it become a part of the irrevocable past. The judgment of a just and merciful God alone remains, to be followed by the eternal consequences of that judgment.

And the moral for any Catholic, and indeed for anyone professing a belief in a future life of reward or punishment, is, of course, the obvious one of the absolute necessity of always being fully prepared. Whether any one of us will be alive a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour from now, no one knows but the God who made us. But, just as surely as we are now alive, just as surely will there come a day which will be our last upon earth, a day when we will stand before the judgment seat of the Almighty to render an account of our stewardship. How tremendously important, then, how absolutely essential it is to be ever ready for that supreme moment! "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity". A good life is the only sane and sound preparation for death. A living of every day as if that were to be our last upon earth is the only guarantee of a truly happy death. "Watch ye and pray for you know not the day nor the hour."

And so it behooves us Catholics to develop and to retain a truly Christ-like attitude towards death. This life is merely a period of probation, of trial, a time of preparation for the life of glory to come. Our few years on this earth are but a fleeting instant compared to the eternity that awaits us beyond the grave. We live to die, 'tis true, but death, if we are but ever prepared for it, is not the end nor hell our eternal destiny. Death is only the beginning, the beginning of endless happiness in the glorious Kingdom of God. In the words of the poet, "the grave is not our goal; dust to dust was not spoken of the soul." The grave is rather the gateway to eternity, the gateway to the Beatific Vision of the Infinite Godhead.

Let us, then, pray often and earnestly for that singular grace of final perseverance. And whenever we behold the sight of death, let us recall that prayer of the traditional Church offered by the priest at the grave of the deceased:

> "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee...that we may bear in mind that we are most certainly to follow... Give us the grace to make ready for that last hour by a devout and holy life, and protect us against a sudden and unprovided death. Teach us how to watch and pray that, when Thy summons comes, we may go forth to meet the Bridegroom and enter with Him into life everlasting. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

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(a supplement to the September 1, 1982 issue of *The Athanasian.*)

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There's Only One True Church

— *Fr. Francis E. Fenton*

Among the hundreds or thousands of Churches, denominations and sects which exist at the present time and which are called Christian, only one is the true Church and that is the Roman Catholic Church. All others are false, regardless of how sincere some of their clergy and members undoubtedly are. The nature of truth, the testimony of history and simple common sense—all give undeniable proof to this vital fact. Innumerable men and women, young and old, have led lives of extraordinary sanctity within its fold and multitudes have suffered martyrdom down through the Christian centuries for the sole reason that they were Roman Catholics. Consider too the millions in the course of history who, having investigated the claims of the Church and prayerfully studied its teachings, became Roman Catholics, some of them at the cost of no small sacrifice in one form or another. Indeed, in the ten years or so that preceeded Vatican Council II, the number of converts to the Church exceeded one hundred thousand per year—every year—in this country alone. (Many of the most zealous and apostolic in the ranks of traditional Catholicism today, incidentally, are individuals who were converts to the Faith prior to that disastrous Council.)

While true conversion to the Church, however knowledgeable of its teaching a non-Catholic may be, ultimately involves the gift of faith, no one who knows history can remain a Protestant. For approximately the first thousand years from the time of Christ, the Christian Church was the Catholic Church. There was no other. And it was not until the sixteenth century that Protestantism appeared upon the scene, some of whose leaders were apostate priests such as the abhorrent Martin Luther (whom the Conciliar Church will likely "cannonize" in due time along with the pro-Communist Martin Luther King). Almost countless, it would seem, is the number of Protestant Churches, as well as other non-Catholic denominations, to be found today in this country alone, all of which claim to be on God's side and teaching His revealed truth, yet plainly contradicting one another on scores of doctrinal and moral matters. But divine truth, the revealed word of God, is eternal, unchangeable, the same yesterday, today and always—and Protestantism has made a shambles of it, thanks in large part to Luther's theory of the private interpretation of the Bible. Divine truth is, in effect, up for grabs in Protestantism and one is free to believe whatever he chooses to believe regarding any or all of that truth. Indeed, "to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant" (John Cardinal Newman, Catholic convert from Anglicanism).

But if Christ, the Son of God, taught a definite body of doctrine and code of morality, and if He willed that all men accept His teachings and live according to His Commandments, and if He established an infallible and indestructible authority (the Church) to preserve His eternal truths and to dispense His salutary grace until the end of time—and He did all of these things—then that Church must exist today. As indeed it does, the same Church to which belonged the Apostles and the martyrs and the saints (Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Ignatius Loyola, Benedict, Athanasius, Francis of Assisi, Alphonsus Liguori and all the rest). But where is the Roman Catholic Church here and now? Surely it is not the Conciliar Church—and it totally escapes me how anyone who is well informed on the subject can honestly contend that it is. As I have frequently observed in the pages of this newsletter, the one true Church is to be found today in traditional Catholicism wherein is preserved and taught and practiced the entire body of Roman Catholic doctrine and morality as it was taught by the Church and believed and practiced by her members all down through the Christian centuries, and whose priests offer the true Mass and dispense certainly valid Sacraments. Either the Church founded by the Son of God exists at this point in time or it does not. If it does not, then the words of Christ declaring the perpetuity of the Church are false and the Church itself has been a monstrous fraud for some nineteen-and-a-half centuries. If the Roman Catholic Church does exist today, then traditional Catholicism is that Church. There is no third alternative.

"The (Conciliar) Church...is schismatical and heretical at the same time. This Conciliar Church is not Catholic. In the same measure in which the Pope, the Bishops, the priests or Faithful adhere to this Church, they separate themselves from the Catholic Church..." (Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, July 29, 1976). As true as these words were in 1976, they are, if possible, even more so in 1984—and no rightly informed truly traditional Roman Catholic would take exception to them. And that is exactly

what we have been saying in the pages of this newsletter for some time now, namely, that anyone who, from John Paul II on down, is a member of the Conciliar Church is, by that fact, not a Roman Catholic—however well-intentioned he or she may be. An individual is not a Roman Catholic merely because he thinks he is. While, due to truly invincible ignorance, a person may be saved who is outside the body of the Church, yet that same invincible ignorance does not make a member of the Conciliar Church a Roman Catholic, regardless of that person's sincerity or good faith. And so again, the one true Church exists now as always but it exists today in traditional Catholicism. There, and there alone, is the Roman Catholic Church.

But how pitifully small in numbers the membership of the true Church has become in the years which have intervened since Vatican Council II. From a total of some 30 million members a scant 20 years ago in this country alone, the Roman Catholic Church (traditional Catholicism) in the USA today counts its authentic membership, I would guess, at no more than some twelve thousand or so—and the same numerical proportion between past and present likely holds on a worldwide basis as well. A remnant indeed. Truly this is one of the supreme tragedies of our time, indeed, of all time. Fortunately, numbers have nothing to do with the determination of truth or of the justice and rectitude of a cause.

One of the sorrowful consequences, however, of the scarcity of authentic Roman Catholics is that traditional Catholicism is all but powerless to effect any significant influence for moral good upon the American scene. Will anyone, knowledgeable on the subject and old enough to remember, argue the point that the present decadent condition of this nation is due in large part to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is no longer a power to be reckoned with in politics, entertainment, education, etc.? Would abortion, homosexuality, sexual promiscuity and all the rest be the satanic scourge they are in America today if the clergy of that Church had remained loyal to tradition and had not succumbed in vast numbers to the massive subversion inflicted upon the Church (a subversion, we should add, in which numerous bishops and priests were conscious instruments)? Would not the USA be in a less wretched spiritual and moral condition at the present time if the Conciliar Church were simply to cease to exist?

And so it remains for traditional Catholicism, however meager its numbers and imposing the obstacles it faces, to preserve and to propagate the Roman Catholic Faith in this our day with the spirit and dedication of those countless saints and martyrs whose lives have been one of the signal glories of the Church all down through the Christian centuries. We traditional Roman Catholics belong, by the grace of God, to that very same Church which inspired and motivated so many of our predecessors in the Faith to reach the heights of sanctity in their lives and to give their lives in martyrdom. Can we not do what these have done?

Was there ever a time, I wonder, in the history of the Church when there was a more urgent demand for apostolic Catholics, that is, men and women of all ages who not merely live commendable personal lives but who are fervent and zealous to bring the one true Faith to others, openly to defend that Faith when it is attacked and maligned and, if need be, to sacrifice their lives in testimony to it? From my observation, the ranks of traditional Catholicism seem to be woefully lacking in this type of Roman Catholic. In a word, there is a crying need today for far more traditional Catholics who are *fighters* for the Faith. And where are they? I, for one, know no more worthy cause on God's earth for which to fight. †

Prayer For Conversion of America

Dear God, bring the Faith to our beloved country. It was once a virgin land wherein the only praise was that of the murmur of the Mass on the shore, the hills and the prairies. Zealous priests and explorers claimed it for Thee, giving Thy Holy Name to its rivers, lakes and cities. From east to west they traveled, from mission to mission, from Mass to Mass until the land was encircled by prayer and gave of its bounty to Thy glory. And now it is dedicated to Thy Immaculate Mother. May she find America again, as she once found the lost Child Jesus in the Temple. May she touch the hearts of our people, disposing them to receive the ancient faith, and thus showing them the things that are to their peace. We ask this of Thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Author Unknown—

Pray the Rosary Daily

TCA TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS SCHEDULE

COLORADO

AURORA (Denver area)
OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHAPEL
2566 Sable Boulevard
(303) 364-8040
Masses at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m. (every Sunday)
Occasional weekday Masses

COLORADO SPRINGS
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
(303) 636-1575
Mass at 10:00 a.m. March 4, April 1, April 8, April 22
Mass every Friday at 9:00 a.m.

DURANGO
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
Centennial Savings and Loan
1101 E. Second Ave.
(303) 884-2526
Mass at 10:00 a.m. March 11, April 1

STRATTON
OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHAPEL
(303) 348-5454
Mass on March 25, April 15

LOUISIANA

OPELOUSAS (Lafayette area)
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
Route 1, Box 195
(318) 942-9053
Mass at 11:00 a.m. March 11, April 8, April 22

MINNESOTA

ROCHESTER
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
5820 Viola Road, NE
(507) 282-5163 or 289-8522
Mass at 10:00 a.m. March 11, April 8, April 29

MONTANA

GREAT FALLS
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHAPEL
2020 Second Avenue North
(406) 452-8826
Mass at 11:00 a.m. March 18, March 25, April 15

NEW YORK

BUFFALO
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHAPEL
231 McKinley Parkway
(716) 537-9533
Mass at 10:00 a.m. on first and third Sundays

PENNSYLVANIA

EDDYSTONE (Philadelphia area)
(215) 876-8737

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP
Hilton Inn
154 West 600 South
(801) 278-7501
Mass at 11:00 a.m. March 4, March 25

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