

1.9.80: 1.50 p.m.

Infallibility

4b - a proposed re-drafting

The fulness of truth is found only in God and all truth is his gift. By the ^{assistance} ~~inspiration~~ of the Holy Spirit ~~and in certain~~ ^{such a} ~~circumstances~~ the judgment of ~~a universal primate~~ ^{e.g.} or a general council ~~in respect of some aspect of revealed truth~~ may be protected from error. But words, ~~even those of Holy Scripture~~, are always inadequate fully to express the truths which they embody. The formulated decisions or definitions of a universal primate or a general council, although never adequate or irreformable, may yet, by virtue of their foundation in Scripture and their appropriateness to the need of the time, express a renewed unity in the truth to which they summon the whole church. Such statements are particularly necessary at times when the safeguarding of the faith requires the Church to make a decisive judgment on essential truth as part of its permanent witness. Such a statement not only makes it clear what the truth is but also enables the Church to be confident in proclaiming the gospel. The primary example of such judgments is to be found when general councils define the faith. There is the further consequence that the Church in declaring the truth is implying that those who cannot accept its judgement are placing themselves outside the visible koinonia. So St. Paul, in his concern to protect the gospel, used his apostolic authority to anathematise those who preached a different gospel (Gal. 1:9). To express the belief that these pronouncements are preserved from error, later tradition used the term 'infallibility'.