

THE SOURCES OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE ROMAN
CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

by

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Introduction

1. The aim of this paper is to give a brief account of the sources of our moral knowledge, or, if you will, the criteria of moral awareness within the perspective of the theological teaching and ministry of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. The author refers explicitly to the directives of Vatican Council II in the Decree on Priestly Formation (Optatum Totius) n.16: "Special attention needs to be given to the development of moral theology. Its scientific exposition should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching. It should show the nobility of the Christian vocation of the faithful, and their obligation to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world." The Decree on the Teaching in Seminaries, 6.1.70, both repeats and amplifies this counsel.
3. The author, even though referring to this tendency, voiced among authors by Tillman, Häring, Jacques Leclercq, etc., does not fail to recognise that until very recently another school of thought prevailed - that of casuistry and the "Natural Law" (P. HUERTH, S;J P. ZALBA, S;J. etc.)

This paper hopes to give an impartial account of any differing points of view.

1. PART ONE - THE SOURCES AND OBJECTIVE CRITERIA OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE

11. FIRST TREATISE. Specifically Christian sources of moral knowledge.

111. Section 1. Sacred Scripture

1111. a) Historical Background

The Fathers of the Church give moral teaching in their commentaries on Sacred Scripture, even though some of them, notably St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, draw also on Philosophical tradition. For example:

St. Ambrose availed himself of Cicero's "De Officiis" while writing the "De Officiis Ministrorum." Every time he quotes, however, he is most careful to note that the point in question is contained in the Bible. For this reason he has frequent recourse to the Book of Job and other Old Testament writings. In his view, it was the philosophers who borrowed from the Jewish tradition. E.g. Plato, who became acquainted with the writings of Jeremiah while in Egypt.

St. Augustine taught Christian morality in his homilies, the "Ennarationes in psalmos." From the psalms he would draw moral lessons, according to the "sensus moralis" of Scripture, which he would then seek to confirm and develop with New Testament texts.

St. Gregory, influenced by both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, followed the same method in his "Moralia in Job". It was this work that served as a basis for moral theology until the beginning of the scholastic period.

11112. In the second half of the Middle Ages, moral theology underwent a change. The Faculty of Arts continued to comment on the Ethics of Aristotle, but now, with a more humanistic tradition, Cicero and Seneca came once again to the fore.

In theological studies, moral was taught side by side with dogmatic theology in a triple cycle. For two years as "baccalaureatus biblicus" a student explained the Scriptures cursorie - that is, cursorily. Moral doctrine was found in the Sermon on the Mount and Romans XII-XVI etc. He then followed a two years' course as "baccalaureatus sententiarum", during which time his moral studies were taken from Book III (Faith, Hope, Charity, The Decalogue) and Book IV (The Sacraments) of Peter Lombard's Libri Sententiarum. Finally, as Master, the student would resume his biblical studies for a further three years. St. Thomas' commentary Ad Romanos also contained a wealth of teaching on Faith, Hope Charity, Baptism and Conscience.

11113. After the Council of Trent, theological studies followed a new course. Exegesis fell into second place and predominance was given to the Summa theologica of St. Thomas, where moral teaching is contained in the Secunda Pars. But, at the same time, the Bible reappeared under the form of "argumentum ex Scriptura" side by side with the "argumentum ex Patribus" and "argumentum ex ratione" of the Summa.

Parallel to this doctrinal aspect of moral theology, a course in "cases of conscience" was introduced in order to prepare the future priests as good confessors. This two-fold training, (doctrinal and casuistic) has survived only in the Faculties and studia under the direction of Dominicans.

11114. On the other hand, a retrogressive movement constantly diminished the place held by moral studies in scholastic theology, until the course finally became "dogmatic" interspersed with but a few reminiscences of moral theology. The Gregorian University in Rome and the Jesuits always treat of sin, faith, hope and charity in the dogmatic theology course. While moral theology, especially from the time of the French revolution, is officially studied only in the course of casuistry.

The basic principles lacking in this moral theology were often sought in the so called philosophy of the "Natural Law". This move towards the "Natural Law" corresponds to two other factors. The Philosophers (Voltaire, Rousseau, etc) referred frequently to the "Natural Law". Hence the theologians thought that by thus adopting their point of view they would find an audience among the philosophers. At the same time, the reaction against Jansenism succeeded in eliminating the predominance of charity in moral theology. Fénelon's exaggeration of "l'amour pur" caused suspicion. Hence it was necessary to fall back on a natural morality, identified with the Decalogue.

11115. For historical reasons, too lengthy to pursue at this point, German speaking Catholics did not follow this line of development. Their theological faculties continued to teach moral theology, reserving the course of casuistry for the year immediately preceding ordination. They also continued to hold biblical studies in high esteem and it was here that the moralists were able to find the basis of their teaching. From these faculties has come the renewal in moral theology, now based on Scripture and its foremost teaching, agapé.

1112. b) The use of the New Testament in moral theology and the formation of conscience.

111121. Problems involved.

This renewal of interest on the part of moralists in the New Testament has not failed to pose certain problems.

- Even outside "progressive circles" there is a widespread consensus of opinion that the words of Jesus Christ contained in the Gospels have, at times, undergone a revision by the early catechists and the primitive community. Thus criticism must be used to determine the exact sense of the words spoken by Our Lord.

- The theory of literary forms demands similar critical adjustment.

- Finally, the authors of the New Testament might well have been influenced, even unconsciously, by the mentality of their times when formulating the moral directives which they place on the lips of Christ. St. Paul by no means justifies slavery, but he appears to consider it a necessary evil.

Some of his directives seem to contain a trace of anti-feminine prejudice. It is impossible to transpose the rules made for his period to our own, with its completely different mentality, without making the necessary adaptations.

1112.2 "The Law of Christ"; (Gal. 6,2) "The Law of Faith" (Rom.3.27)

Roman Catholic moralists are making an ever clearer distinction between the different stages of moral commitment and of law. There are at the basis of all Christian ethic certain general principles. The Gospels and Pauline Epistles give more precise precepts, rules for their application, lists of virtues (the fruits of the Spirit) and sins. Thirdly there are temporary laws. The letter of these may become obsolete as times and mentalities change - even if their spirit is to be observed. Here I wish to deal with the basic general principles.

These have been formulated in three different ways.

1112.2.1 The first, centred on the "primitive kerygma", has found favour among both Protestants and Catholic exegetes. It highlights the four basic themes of the early apostolic preaching (Acts 2,36 ff; 3,12 ff; 13,32 ff; 16,27 ff) to be developed later by St. Paul: e.g. Romans and Galatians.

The first of these themes is the Resurrection which constitutes Christ as Saviour. The others describe how man is saved - he must believe (pistis), do penance for his sins (metanoia) and be baptised, thus committing himself to a "life for God", "the life of the Spirit".

1112.2.2 Alternatively, the law has been presented from the standpoint of the "theological virtues" - terminology dating from the XIIIth century. It would, perhaps, have been better to speak of gifts or graces, and divine instead of theological - a term coined by the scholastics who knew no Greek.

It seems to me, that within the Church of England, there is a certain reticence about accepting this theme, exalting, as it does, charity at the expense of pistis. Bishop Kirk appears to share this opinion. That this view is essentially Pauline is clear from Romans 4, 5 (particularly v.5) 12, and following: 1 Cor.13. The gift of the Spirit becomes the gift of faith which enables man to adhere to Christ and acknowledge Him as Saviour. This faith, once tried, begets hope (Rom. 5,4). Charity comes at the climax. It is God's gift, revealing how much He loves man and how man must respond to that love.(Rom 5.5) "So that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love,.....you are filled with the utter fullness of God" (Eph. 3, 16-19).

1112.2.3 Yet a third way of presenting the Law of Christ is to develop the great themes of the New Testament which invite man to accept the divine gift. E.g.

- Divinisation (theosis). Transformation into the new man, in Christ, in the image of Christ.

- An identification of sentiments with Christ (Phil.2,5) altogether more literal than one finds in the Synoptics; "to walk as Christ", "walk with Christ", "Christ is the Way".

- Precepts. Obviously, each author presents his own point of view. Matthew insists that the law will remain, even after it has been transformed by Christ. Luke is not interested in the Old Law. He highlights the Sermon on the Mount, placing it in the context of charity. St Paul, has no love for the Old Law and even, on occasion, criticizes law in general. Nevertheless he reintroduces the law - but in a new sense - and speaks of precepts (parraggelia)

St John uses the term entolé and urges mutual charity. But throughout there runs the idea of accepting God's will (boulesisis tou theou) whatever our sentiments may be.

- Finally, sanctions. New Testament morality is completely disinterested as P.Didier has brought out (Le désintéressement du Chrétien, Paris 1951.) Its sole guarantee is that those who have followed Christ in this life, will be with Him in the next. He will acknowledge them before His Father. The others will be left aside, as they desired.

1112.2.4 It is plain that, for Roman Catholics, the importance of these themes is relative to certain criteria.

a) Importance shown by repetition. St Paul refers twenty times to the triad (ta tauta tria) Faith, Hope and Charity. This would hardly be so if he considered them of secondary importance.

b) Also to be taken into consideration is the relation of these moral directives to the essence of the good news of salvation. In each of the three methods of presentation mentioned above, moral conduct is intimately linked to salvation in the risen Jesus. It constitutes the *sine qua non* of Christian living. Compared with this the "taceat mulier in Ecclesia" is relatively unimportant

c) Roman Catholics are members of the Church, whether they are aware of the fact or not, and, thus, can no longer make moral choices alone. It has always been the entire Christian community, leaders and people, that has formulated its moral code, be it in catechesis preaching, the formulation of theological systems or directives of popes, bishops (councils, all types of letters). The way in which this influence has been exercised has, of course, varied with the times; but it has always been present, right from the earliest days. At the same time, it should be noted that this influence pertained not only to those in authority. E.g. In the Synoptics and Acts the making of the Lord's precepts is a privilege exercised by the whole primitive community

1112.3. Rules of application.

1112.3.1 The Apostles translated the great imperatives of Faith, Hope and Charity into more precise precepts, closely connected with everyday life. From the principle "The will of God is your sanctification", St. Paul drew a host of practical conclusions (paraggelia) (I Thess. 4,3 et subs) - keep away from fornication and lust; use the body in a holy way only; respect others. A little later, in v.9, he explains how the most important precept, that of charity, has many practical applications: living quietly, attending to one's own business and earning one's living. In the same way the First epistle to the Corinthians (13, 4-7) makes agape consist in a series of moral attitudes: it is not impatient, envious, conceited, proud; it does not take offence; is not rude or selfish, irritable or resentful. Rather, it loves justice and truth, goodness, faith and hope.

1112.3.2 In the Gospels these secondary precepts are often found expressed in the oriental literary form, the parable, and are thus not so precise. It is by no means certain that Matt. 6,30-40 can be interpreted in terms of a precise and binding moral code: turn the other cheek, if anyone asks you for your tunic, give him your cloak as well. Hyperbole, surely! And yet the spirit is that of v.42 "Give to anyone who asks". All the exigences of the Gospel ethic are to be found here. "The Sermon on the Mount" has served as the model for the moral code of the Roman Catholic Church and has been the inspiration of many Christian lives. The practical implications have been drawn from this new law of love: namely, poverty of spirit, meekness, courage in the face of affliction and persecution, thirst for justice, mercy, purity of heart, and a yearning for peace (Matt. 5, 3-10) peaceful co-existence with others and the rejection of strife, (v.20-26) the condemnation of adultery and even lustful thoughts, (v.27-30) rejection of divorce (v.31-32) oaths (v.33-37) and vengeance (v.38-42), but rather, love of one's enemies (v.43-48)

1112.3.3 It is important to note that these secondary precepts, similar to those to be found in the Old Testament and the philosophers, should always be animated by faith, hope and charity. The First Epistle to Timothy, which contains an injunction to put a stop to superstitious practices, gives a clue to the "spirit of the Christian law". "The only purpose of this instruction is that there should be love, coming from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith". The theme "finis legis caritas" was dear both to the Fathers and the Scholastics. For the latter it was a final cause; for the former it expressed the stepping of all law in love and faith. Another idea too, is to be found in the New Testament: "Never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" Col. 3,17. This is the same as Matthew's "propter regnum caelorum" which inspires virginity (Mtt. 19,20) and renunciation in general. The scholastics took this directive very seriously and discussed to what extent it could be interpreted as a precept

They normally dealt with this problem in their Commentaries on Peter Lombard's Sentences, concluding that the orientation of moral acts towards God, by faith and charity, was necessarily an habitual disposition - virtual for Christians. The Jansenists went further and insisted that every act was related directly to God (actu et non tantum virtualiter) as we have mentioned above the opponents of a moral code based on charity took advantage of this tendency

1112 4 Temporary precepts in the New Testament

For some twenty years now, exegetes have been of the opinion that the truths taught by Our Lord and the injunctions given by Him must have been adapted to the mentality of His hearers - despite the radicalism of His message. When the Apostles gave moral teaching, they applied these new ideas to the old institutions, which they were unable to change - even had it occurred to them to do so. St. Paul's advice to wives, children and slaves necessarily reflects to social practices of the time. E.g. Ephesians 5, 21 - 6, 9 or Colossians 3, 18-41. Authors such as Blanck (Concilium N. 25) or Manaranche (Y a-t-il une éthique social chrétienne?) have called attention to the necessity of distinguishing between permanent principles and prescriptions due to social or historical factors. On reading Ephesians 5, 21-32 (to which we have alluded above) we find that wives are enjoined to submit to their husbands. Nowadays, women are no longer considered to be inferior and woe betide the husband who fails to take account of his wife's views. We prefer v. 21: "Give way to one another in obedience to Christ" to vv 22-24: "Wives should obey their husbands" etc. During the marriage service, when we hear: "Husbands, love your wives" (Eph 5, 25 ff) we know full well that the balance will be restored in the sermon, which will exhort wives to love their husbands. Such is the equality between married couples in our times.

It cannot be denied that the adaptation of certain New Testament precepts can be difficult. The criteria mentioned in par 112 24 should always be kept in mind. Nor should we allow ourselves to be led astray by those who reject Christian morality (though preserving some of its expressions), replacing it with a purely human morality (Tillich, Robinson).

1113 c) The Old Testament and the formulation of a Christian morality

1113 1 Problems involved

Roman Catholics are divided between two radical positions on this point.

The one could be called "Pauline" as it sees the Mosaic Law only as a preparation. Hence the Christian need not concern himself with the Old Testament in formulating his moral system.

As regards practical conclusions (though not as regards motivation) the opinion of many Roman Catholics of the last two centuries merits mention. For them the Old Testament was a pledge of faith - it had no contribution to make to morality - quite the contrary.

On the other hand the Church has always included the books of the Old Testament in her liturgical readings. As we have already remarked, the Fathers used them frequently. Precepts were drawn from them. E.g. the Sabbath-rest from Deuteronomy (6th cent) or the injunctions against sexual impurity in Leviticus (12th cent). The Decalogue, strongly decried for a long time, became the subject of popular catechesis from the 13th century (especially among the Franciscans) and also of post-tridentine casuistry.

For many years attempts had been made to distinguish between the different types of precept in the Old Testament: - moral, ceremonial and judicial. In one sense, it was the Jews themselves who made this distinction. To the pagans who wished to embrace their religion they offered two alternatives: that of "proselytes of justice" bound to observe the law in its entirety and accept circumcision (ceremonial precepts) or "the God-fearing" and "proselytes of the gate" who conformed only to the mainly moral precepts given to Noah (Gen. 9, 1-11). The penitential discipline of the 2nd century gave a similar interpretation to the Apostle's letter mentioned in Acts 15, 20-29. The sacrifices to idols were taken to mean idolatry, the blood-homicide and unchastity - adultery. Thus the three major sins came to be defined. These, it was thought, could not be forgiven. The others were punishable with an extremely long and painful penance. On the other hand the Jewish prohibition against certain meats was not enforced - a prohibition to which St Paul himself was forced to submit.

Today this distinction between different types of precept is still made. E.g. H. J. HOLTZMANN, Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie II, Tübingen, 1911, p. 25; W. BOUSSET, Der Brief an die Galater, Göttingen, 1917, p. 50; Ch. MAURER, Die Gesetzeslehre bei Paulus, Zurich, 1941, p. 6, 19; G. F. MOORE, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, II Cambridge, 1954, p. 10; P. FEINE, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Berlin 1951, p. 199; W. SCHRAGE, Die Kronrethen Einzelbebote in der paulinischen Paränese, Gütersloh, 1951; C. HAUPE, Die sittliche Rechtsfestigung bei Paulus, Halle, 1957, 20-30.

However this distinction is subject to criticism nowadays. This criticism is all the more severe in view of the fact that the distinction can be applied only by doing violence to the texts Genesis 9 and Acts 15 mention the Jewish taboo on the blood of animals. Today these texts are unanimously interpreted as referring to ceremonial. Those who support a moral code based on the Ten Commandments cannot fail to remember that the two primitive texts (Exodus and Deuteronomy) contain two ceremonial precepts: the prohibition against making graven images and the sabbath-rest, upon which Our Lord took up such a clear position. (Mk 2, 23) (Mt 12, 12). Both those Christians who are in favour of a certain return to the Old Testament (some for ecumenical reasons, others in the name of a "progressive morality" admitting of both divorce and polygamy) and the staunch supporters of a morality based on the faith, hope and charity of the New Testament, are asking how one section of the law can be judged to be permanent, and the others not. Others wish to replace this vertical fragmentation with a horizontal division, in which the law of Moses forms one stage in the history of salvation.

1113.2

"But now the law has come to an end with Christ, and everyone who has faith may be justified" (Romans 10,4)

This text has been subject to differing interpretations. Some exegetes are of the opinion that St Paul is here claiming that Christ brought the Mosaic law to an end. For others Christ himself is the term to which the Mosaic law was moving. The majority, however, accept both senses, as, for example, P. Zorelli in his Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti, Paris 1931, col 1312: in eum (Christum) Lex tendebat, eo adveniente desitura erat.

From personal experience, St Paul, found that his zeal for the law had led him into sin. E.g. his part in Stephen's death and his persecution of the Church. Christ showed him that life and salvation could be gained only through faith in Him. The Christian, transformed by grace, is thus able to act correctly. The Law of Faith (Rom 3) takes the place of the Mosaic Law. Salvation, justification come not from the forces of nature, but from Jesus Christ.

Man is freed from the law, as a woman becomes free on the death of her husband (Rom 7, 1 ff). That is why you my brothers, who through the body of Christ are now dead to the law, can now give yourselves to another husband, to Him who rose from the dead to make us productive for God" (v 4). The Apostle reproaches the Pharisees for refusing to go beyond the law, seeking justification by their works alone: "because no one can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the Law: all that the Law does is to tell us what is sinful" (Romans 3,20). The law of "works" must be replaced by the Law of Faith (=Commitment to Christ) (Rom 4, 27-28). On this point St. Paul takes up two opposed positions, which can only be reconciled if we keep in mind the order of his thought. In an earlier phase, while still under the influence of the Pharisees legalism, he interprets the law as an end in itself, rather than a means by which God may enter into a relationship with man and lead him towards Himself (*finis. praecepti caritas*). At this stage, the law serves only to define sin: it tells man what he must do, but does not give him the strength to do it. Above I have cited Romans 3, 20b. There is also Romans 7,7. "I should not have known what sin was except for the Law. I should not for instance have known what it means to covet if the Law had not said 'You shall not covet'".

Later, and more precisely, St Paul no longer blames the Mosaic law as such but rather the fact that it has been inherited by a man, corrupted by sin and living according to the desires of the flesh. "it was this commandment that sin took advantage of to produce in me all kinds of covetousness" (Rom. 7,8). "For sin took advantage of the law. (the law is sacred) but it turned out death for me: but sin, to show itself in its true colours, used that good thing to kill me: and thus, thanks to the commandment, was able to exercise all its sinful power" (Rom. 7, 12-13). We must pass from obedience to the flesh (=man) to obedience to the Spirit (= God). The Law thus becomes useless. Now the Spirit inspires a conduct worthy of Christ, in imitation of Him. "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. God has done what the Law, because of our unspiritual nature, was unable to do. God dealt with sin by sending his own Son in a body as physical as any sinful body, and in that body God condemned sin. He did this in order that the Law's just demands might be satisfied in us, who behave not as our unspiritual nature, but as the Spirit dictates." (Rom. 8, 3 - 4) Cfr. Ph 3, 8-9.

A number of Christians have interpreted some of Our Lord's sayings as substituting for the Law. The Judaists place their hope in both Christ and the Mosaic Law. But for St Paul the one excludes the other: either one is saved by faith in Christ and one's conduct nourished by His grace or one seeks salvation by keeping the Law. "If you look to the Law to make you justified, then you have separated yourselves from Christ, and have fallen from grace. Christians are told to look to faith for those rewards which righteousness hopes for" (Gal, 5,5). The dangers of a latent Christian-judaism were brought out in Pelagianism, post-tridentine rationalism and, to a certain extent, in the Natural-Law theory, in so far as moral rectitude was considered a result of purely human effort and not of divine grace with which man is expected to collaborate. According to St. Paul a choice must be made between New Testament morality, based on grace, faith and love and that of the Mosaic Law as it was interpreted by the Jews, as human striving and good works alone. In this case, grace has well and truly put an end to the law.

1113 3 Elements of the Mosaic law may, though in a new spirit, be included in the new law.

The law of Moses, as such, has passed away. Nevertheless, there are some Old Testament texts which are still valid for Christian morality. E.g. submission to God, prayer in the heart, recommended by the prophets, all prayer (the psalms), respect for certain human values. The outstanding text is St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (13, 8 - 10) where the apostle gives a Christian interpretation to the second half of the Decalogue: "Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men then you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: "You must love your neighbour as yourself". Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour, that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments. I agree with Lagrange (Epitre au Romains, p. 316) that this refers to the Mosaic law "no longer obliging in itself but as fulfilled in its essential elements by love". Some hold, with P. Spicq (Agape dans le N.T.) Analyse des textes, tome 1, Paris 1953, p. 259-266) that "law" in the passage refers not so much to the Old Testament as to law in general. However, the examples cited by the Apostle are taken from the Old Dispensation.

Two terms merit a special mention "are summed up" (anakephalaion) "the answer" or "fullness" (pleroma)

The verb anakephalein means "to sum up" "to recapitulate" (Christ brings everything together Eph. 1, 10) or "to bring many things together under one head or principle of unity". We find the same ideas expressed in St. Matthew's Gospel (22, 40). For him the law and prophets are summed up in love for God and men. He insists on the latter, supposing the former to be already acquired. He might have presented love for God as summing up the first part of the Decalogue. But this was more difficult. The Sabbath-observance, in particular, needed explaining. Hence, instead of juxtaposing some 613 precepts, he gives them a new sense, a new spirit, a new purpose and profundity, basing them on brotherly love. In this lies the force and simplicity of his Gospel. The interior assimilation called for by Jeremiah (chap. 31) had finally been realised. For the Old Testament "Do no evil" was the absolute for moral conduct. According to the new law it was still wrong to steal and to kill - but it was wrong because you loved your fellow-man, or rather, the precepts of the old law became the logical consequence of brotherly love: He who loves his brother does not steal from him.

Pleroma, so the philologists tell us, has a passive sense. This does not mean, however, that the practice of charity is equivalent to a punctilious fulfilling of the entire Mosaic law. It is charity that sums up all the precepts of the law. (Feuillet, Loi ancienne et morale chretienne d'apres l'Epitre aux Romains, H.R. Th. 1970)

A moral coward - even though aggressive by nature - may well remain within the bounds of a negative law: "Thou shalt not kill". A Christian must go further: he must always try to do good. His is a debt that can never be paid. For good is always waiting to be done.

Both the Christian community, then, and individual Christians have found lights in the Old Testament to direct their service of the Lord, and the ordering of their lives. Care must, of course, be taken. The Old Order must be adapted to the spirit of the new. But the example of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Gregory prove that the task is neither impossible nor fruitless.

112. The Church's Magisterium.

112.1. A child speaks.

In a recent novel, *La Maison de papier* (Paris, Grasset, 1970) Mme F. Mallet-Joris describes the phases - both religious and non-religious through which her children passed. She recounts a discussion on moral issues.

Vincent: "Can you be a Christian and a revolutionary at the same time?"

"Many people would like to know that"

Albert: "Why don't they write and ask the Pope? He can always give them a dispensation."

(p.127 - the little girl has already remarked

"You have only to write to the Pope, and tell him

"Look this is unjust. I am afraid I shall have to

start a revolution;" And he will send a dispensation)

"You know very well that the Pope can't make all our decisions for us"

Albert (annoyed): "Well, what use is he then?"

This cannot be taken seriously - much less proposed as a general attitude. Roman Catholics faced with a moral problem do not write to the Pope for a solution or a dispensation. Such childish simplicity is by no means the full picture - yet I do wonder, if some of the less-educated members of the Church do not entertain some such notion. This is one of the very reasons which leads us to speak of a post-conciliar crisis of authority.

112.2 Schema of two types of intervention of the Church's magisterium.

112.2.1 For the sake of clarity, I describe a pre-conciliar papal intervention on matters of social or individual ethic in three stages.

112.2.1.1 a) In the first place the necessity of intervention usually results from a change in circumstances. In the 19th century the conditions of the working classes deteriorated, Marxism offered a solution in the struggle between social classes. In our own day some think to find the "Catholic" solution to contraception in Ogino's or Chanson's methods or in "the pill". Doctors are doing their utmost to ensure painless deliveries. But Roman Catholics are afraid of infringing Genesis 3,16 "In pain you shall bring forth children". At times it is circumstances that force the issue; at times public opinion. During the pontificate of Pius XII it was by no means rare to hear of committees meeting in Rome and putting questions to His Holiness in private. The Pope alluded to these questions in his speeches.

112.2.1.2 b) In the second stage the church actually intervenes. Leo XIII published the encyclical Rerum Novarum, to be adapted later by Pius XI in Quadragesimo anno and John XXIII in Pacem in Terris. On Dec. 31st 1929 Pius XI severely criticised contraception in Casti Connubi, adopting a rather polemical tone against Lambeth. Pius XII, however, allowed for the regulation of births and justified Ogino's method (suspect by some) in a speech to a group of Italian midwives who had presented their case of conscience to him (1951). The therapeutic use of the pill was permitted in 1958. But in a speech to doctors who had requested a decision, its use as a means of birth control was reproved. The violation of nuns which took place during some of the decolonisation disturbances posed a problem which was not answered by a direct intervention of the Holy Office. Instead three theologians of the Holy Office gave a positive decision, expressed in a markedly authoritative tone.

On the other hand Chanson's method was declared suspect by an official decree of the Holy Office. This second stage (b) is typically Roman. It consists of different types of interventions: encyclicals, above we have quoted those of Leo XII, Pius XI, and John XXIII: speeches such as those of Pius XII, an excellent public speaker: decrees of congregations - for instance the Holy Office, which has monopolised this type of intervention since the 19th century, when it shared the responsibility with the Sacred Penitentiary: finally the interventions of specially commissioned theologians. Theologians concerned about sources and scientific method distinguish very carefully between these four very different manifestations of the Church's magisterium. For the vast majority of Catholics, however, all these documents are pretty well on the same footing. Shortly before the 1940 war, Ageorge, a French journalist, author of a "bulletin Parisien" in "La Libre Belgique" (a conservative Catholic periodical, published in Brussels) stated: "There are some people who wish to determine when the Pope is infallible - others who wish to determine when he is not. Such theories haven't a leg to stand on. If the Pope is infallible, in my opinion, he is always infallible."

There are some who throw doubt on the authority of the Pope's theologians and weigh their conclusions against their arguments. It must be remembered that the authority of these theologians depends on their being recognised by the Pope and not censured by him. Frs. Genicot and Salsmans in their Institutiones morales avail themselves of the same idea in favour of probabilism: this moral system was taught in the 17th century in the Roman college (later the Gregorian University). The popes would never have permitted a doctrine to be taught, at such close quarters, which would be diffused throughout the world as Roman, if that doctrine had been false. It follows that this system is a true one.

112.2.1.3 c) There is still a third stage. Here I am thinking not only of Roman theologians but of those from what one might call the periphery. They are asked - and this includes professors of scholastic philosophy - to give commentaries on papal documents, support them with fresh arguments, defend them against objections. The argument from authority "ex magisterio" (often linked with the ex-Patribus of the dogmatic theologians) does not merely occupy a place between Scripture and reason - it becomes everything. No place is found for critical reflexion, indeed, the professor of theology is so conditioned by his training that he does not dream of it. If today certain conservatives criticize present theological endeavour, it is because on two points it goes beyond their habits of thought: first of all, some men are recognised as theologians by bishops, or even by public opinion, without the Roman official stamp (cf. Fr. Boyer's criticism of Kung), further these men refuse to be mere commentators and wish to think for themselves. The last straw, in some eyes, is that they declare themselves invested with a charismatic magisterium in the manner of didascales.

112.2.1.4 This analysis, common before 1960, was abandoned by the majority in the Council but - let us be under no illusions it survives among the minority and in the anti-conciliar reaction. All the same it has undergone sharp criticism. With regard to our first "stage", for example, we remember that the role of laity, priests, theologians of the periphery, even of bishops, is not merely to put questions to Rome (or to denounce people who don't think as they do)

They must also think and live as enlightened Christians, accept their responsibilities, look for solutions. Certainly authority has the right to reserve to itself the last word, but that does not mean that it should always, even often, have the first word. We know today from the study of archives that the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, for example, was prepared very directly in conjunction with certain bishops and certain Catholics who devoted themselves to social questions: their part in the composition was clear from the two fold level of thought and of practical proposals. (Bishop Von Ketteler of Mainz, l'Union de Fribourg).

At our second stage, on the other hand, the "motu proprio" character of pontifical acts becomes relative. Few would believe (what some nevertheless maintain) that the Pope is "the prisoner of the Curia". The abusive remark of Luc Verus in 1932, "Holy Father, have you read your own encyclicals?" is no longer repeated except as a joke. On the contrary we know that Pius XII knew very well what he was about in preparing his documents, as does Paul VI. But we know also the importance of the preparatory work done under Pius XII by the group of Jesuits directed by Fr. Leiber. If one wants to know the sense of an ambiguous phrase of John XXIII about religious liberty in *Pacem in Terris*, it seems natural today to ask Mgr. Pavan, who was the principal drafter. Then one is rather astonished to hear him answer that an ambiguous formula was in the end chosen so as not to arouse the susceptibilities of the Holy Office. All the French papers presented *Populorum Progressio* as the work of the late lamented Pere Lebet.

The 'Roman' theologians - or more precisely the 'curialists', for the two groups do not coincide - flaunted their supremacy by presenting the bishops arriving at the Council with pre-fabricated schemata. And when the wind changed it was not without some pain and bitterness that we watched the tortuous manoeuvres of certain curialists to bring about, by non-conciliar means, changes in texts already voted. All this gave very much a relative character to the interventions of authority, but the principles remain, and can be preserved though integrated in a new analysis.

112.21 Analysis of post-conciliar interventions by the magisterium in moral matters.

112.2.2.1 In spite of what some people seem to think, Vatican II has in no way diminished the teaching and ruling mission of the Pope and the bishops. Even if the Council talked of diakonia, of service, it did not forget that Christ, Priest, King and Prophet, entrusted a pastoral mission and responsibility to the Twelve, guaranteed by charismatic and special powers. This is often found mentioned during the Council because this hierarchical structure of the Church is the very basis of its teaching. *Lumen Gentium* clearly gave a very special place to it in its chapter 3. All this is known - it is enough to recall, with Vatican II, the text of the universal mission of the twelve from St. Matthew's gospel, XXVIII, 18-20.

Without wishing to introduce scholastic distinctions here, one should point clearly to three aspects of mission:

- to preach, teach and win acceptance for the gospel
- to give new life through baptism
- to guide the lives of the new disciples according to Christ's directions.

Moral and pastoral directions spread through all this but touches especially the third point.

112.2.2.2. It is precisely thus that the Council conceives its task, in the assurance, many times appealed to, of being assisted by the Holy Spirit. United to the pope, it is infallible - as moreover the pope can be without the bishops. Vatican II does not disclaim Vatican I but completes it by showing how, apart from rare cases where the pope is juridically alone in deciding, the Church is normally directed by the successors of the twelve, the college, the corpus episcoporum. In the spirit of the logion mathéein, Vatican II has given further precision to certain truths, has concerned itself with sacramental life and undertaken a liturgical reform based at once on care for tradition and on pastoral needs. Preaching the faith, the Council is concerned to know how it shall be lived, (Lumen Gentium §25) it has given the primacy to charity, (DELHAYE - Le Kerygma de la charité à Vatican II, R;T;L;n.2), it has given directives on matters concerning marriage, culture, social political and international life (Gaudium et Spes) as for the apostolate of bishops, priests, laymen and missionaries.

112.2.2.3 As a result of this the Council has given many people, both inside and outside the Church, the impression of having abandoned everything. Without doubt, the reason for this lies in the new approach. Instead of condemning the errors of the times, to quote John XXIII at the opening of the Council, let us teach the truth positively. Vatican II, renewing early traditions, does not pronounce any anathemas. Above all, I believe that the new way of expression must be examined. The Council does not teach in its own name, it does not affirm on its own authority, it does not present any arguments. Its teaching is essentially the transmission of the Word of God, and the Bishops, the witnesses and servants of this Word. For some people, familiar with the older method, the difference is enormous, as at first they get the impression of pious exhortation. They need a time of reflection in order to understand that the authority invoked remains, no longer on the pastoral level, but on the level of the Gospel itself, of which they are the interpreters.

Finally, it must be said that the new method is most obvious in moral teaching. The Council does not lay down precise laws, but following the Gospel method, insists especially on general norms, motivations, principles and intentions. From there it asks everyone to assume his own responsibilities. Of course, Canon Law has not lost its use and necessity, but it must now be re-examined in a new perspective and withdrawn from the Colonialism which it has practised in the field of morality.

112.2.2.4 Different types of teaching and submission

Clarifying the situation mentioned above, Vatican II has specified several possible types and degrees in the authority of the Magisterium. To quote three important examples:

112.2.2.4.1. a) As we have said above, the Council mentioned pontifical and conciliar infallibility, without presuming to exercise it. In this case, the help of the Holy Spirit assures the immunitas ab errore, exemption from error, the faithful must adhere to it without reserve;" (c.f. Lumen Gentium no.25) This type of teaching is frequent in dogma, the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, Constantinople, Chalcedon thus regulated authoritatively the question of the Divinity of the Word and of the Holy Spirit. Has this type of teaching been applied to Moral Theology? If one understands by moral theology, the solution to matters of conscience, it would seem that the answer is no.

The opinions of reprobate laxists and rigourists of the 17th and 18th centuries were the object of condemnation by the Holy Office, not of infallible definitions. Thus it happens, that the condemnation of pleasure as such, by Innocent XI, was annulled by Pius XII in 1951. But if on the other hand, we consider Christian Morality more especially from the view point of faith, hope and charity, and if it is a continuation of the Sacramental life, one must acknowledge the fact that there have been certain interventions of Supreme authority.

112.2.2.4.2. b) Likewise, the pronouncements of Vatican II regarding other types of pontifical and episcopal teaching are important in Moral teaching and in the formulation of conscience; even if these are not infallible, they impose religious assent apart from the arguments proposed. It will be easy to explain these terms by applying them to the encyclical Humanae Vitae, of July 25th, 1968. This document has given a new meaning and a new dimension to the classical doctrine of Lumen Gentium. Let us examine two points of this passage of Lumen Gentium.

"This teaching is not infallible" such was one of the very first declarations of Mgr Lambruschini who presented the encyclical to the Press. Among the many surprises on that Monday, July 27 1968, this one was perhaps the least noticed. But it had its effect, since almost all the Episcopal letters introducing the teaching of Humanae Vitae to the faithful drew attention to it. According to the milieux and the authors, these episcopal documents gave two rather different meanings to this sentence. The first interpretation is "although this document is not infallible, it requires the submission of the faithful, taking into account however, conscience judgements". (we shall speak of this again later). The other interpretation is more radical: "Christians, you are required to submit, but after all, this judgement is not infallible and may be reformed or adapted when the whole question becomes clearer." There is nothing scandalous in this and any teacher of theology could find this doctrine in the manuals. However, if this was given lip-service, it was never applied, even among theologians, and in any case, it was never spoken of in front of the faithful. When the Encyclical Casti Connubii, appeared, one group of theologians claimed that the condemnation of contraception was an irreformable and infallible act of supreme magisterium. But this view point was not commonly admitted and when the minority of four tried to revive it at the Pontifical Birthrate Commission, they were obliged, for once, to give way to the objections of the majority of fifteen.

This teaching calls for "religious assent" independently of arguments put forward by authority: this is the second affirmation. What does this mean? That the authority of the Pope and Bishops is based on a charism, on the special assistance of the Holy Spirit and that the faithful must accept it with reverence. The motives for submission are based more on faith than on reason. However, a distinction follows immediately - in such cases, the help of the Holy Spirit is not all-embracing, Absolute authority is not involved and consequently, the same holds for the faithful. A certain number of episcopal letters call upon a letter of Newman to the Duke of Norfolk, which the Bishops of the United States unearthed in a library. An encyclical of the Pope is published, wrote Newman, a priori, I must presume his teaching correct. The Pope has intellectual graces which I have not. I recall that Christ said: "He who hears you, hears me". But, upon second inspection, I examine the doctrine more closely and strong objections to it arise. I pray for God's help, I work at and study the question.

And I acquire the conviction that the Pope is mistaken. Well and good! I must follow my conscience so long as the Pope does not commit himself further.

Here, there is a symbiosis between the doctrine of the Magisterium and that which concerns the rights of conscience. One could also say that in the Moral domain, this interaction is more normal than in the case of Dogma. A philosopher recalls the conditions: "human" and not exclusively rational, of the understanding of values; we shall speak of this again later. However, we note here another change in the post-conciliar usage regarding the arguments put forward by authority.

Previously, one would have said: nego suppositum... a conscience "cannot be of good faith after the Pope has spoken"; For modern man, there is here something difficult to understand, for we are all convinced that it is practically impossible to establish, still less to prove, good or bad faith. The theologians of antiquity and the mediaevals, on the contrary, found this affirmation absolutely normal. They were little concerned with the personal conditions of intellectual assent, and in their juridical spirit, they applied the principle, "No-one is ignorant of the Law". They esteemed that an error in good faith was unthinkable in the field of natural law or of the Gospel law. The doctrine, as also the practices of the Inquisition, were based on the idea that the heretic could not possibly be of bad faith. The conclusion reached was that, at all costs, he had to be brought to confess his fault. We must admit, that certain bishops had the same reaction after the publication of Humanae Vitae.

The bishop of Sion brought up the problem: One accepts the encyclical or one sins, and what is more, one is placed outside the Church. But this out-dated way of seeing things did not survive the easy Triumphalism of August, 1968. The Belgian bishops studied the question and were soon followed by their Canadian co-bishops and many others; affirming that, besides the faithful who had doctrinal objections, others, in good faith were unable to accept the teaching, basing their objections on the experience of their married life. There was a question of worrying them or of condemning them. One can see, the force of the argument of the non-infallible Magisterium in Morality is not easy to determine, largely perhaps, because one often forgets the distinction between a practical truth and a theoretical truth, between faith and a life of faith. However, we must point out that for the moral life of the Church as also for the conduct of individuals, the Catholic must take into account the teaching of the successors of Peter and the other Apostles. Without hoping to solve the question completely, another teaching of Vatican II, that which concerns the pastoral Magisterium of the hierarchy will perhaps throw some light on the subject.

112.224.2.

a) Finally, a third type of teaching of the Magisterium is mentioned and used by Vatican II. It is described as pastoral and characterizes Gaudium et Spes which is presented as a "pastoral constitution" as opposed to Lumen Gentium, a dogmatic constitution.

But what exactly does "pastoral" mean? Very different opinions have been expressed on this question. The commentaries of Gaudium et Spes on the subject are abundant, but to me, they do not appear to solve the problem. The explanation put forward by Fr. Rahner in his volume "Schema XII" edited by Mame, are perhaps more scintillating than convincing. One could consider comparing this teaching with circumstantial precepts of the apostolic writings,

with the pastoral Magisterium, spoken of in connection with encyclicals or with the "historico-prudential assertion" treated by Fr. de Soras in connection with the same document.

If we must allow this problem to unfold fully and wait until some basic conceptions of pastoral theology assert themselves (though I doubt whether (these latter can be unified.) one clue may be found in the first note on the Scheme XIII. The first part of this Constitution, we are told, is more specifically doctrinal; since it is concerned with principles and general doctrines; the second part is pastoral, because it adds to these, universal principles the consideration of their relation to particular circumstances and to persons: "The pastoral Constitution.... although made up of two parts, is nevertheless a whole: it is called a "pastoral" constitution because, while stressing doctrinal principles, it expresses the relationship of the Church to the world and to the men of today. In the last section, the subjects discussed, governed by doctrinal principles, contain contingent as well as permanent elements. This constitution should therefore be understood according to the general norms of theological interpretation, taking into account, especially in the second part, the changing circumstances which are by nature inseparable from the themes developed.

Thus, the chapter on married life, not only sets forth a personalistic theology of marriage but it also endeavours to find a solution to the two concrete problems facing the Christian couple: how many children shall we have? how to reconcile the demands of our love and those of fertility? These pages are all the more concrete and "pastoral" in that they do not propose a solution based on principles alone. They deal with the facts and state that if the intimacy of conjugal life is interrupted, there is the danger of a breakdown in the relationship of the couple (No. 50§1). The minority saw clearly that a turning-point had been reached by this recognition of the reality; accordingly, having failed to have the above statement suppressed, they tried to gloss over it by a return to purely theoretical principles, adding that "the Church reminds us that there cannot be any real contradictions between divine laws." (N. 51§2)

It is true that, on this theoretical level, one could ask oneself if in the sphere of ideas it is possible that there should be opposition between principles; one could also appeal to scientists to improve and perfect the method of Ogino (No. 52. §4). One could dream about improving economic, social, psychological and medical conditions which would enable parents to cope more easily with a larger family. But all that does not meet the tragic situation of the couple faced daily with what the French bishops had the courage to call "Conflicting duties". This is the big difference between theoretical moral theology and practical moral theology: the former deals with principles, the latter appeals to these principles but confronts them with facts.

It follows therefore that the directives given by religious authority run the risk of being different and the analysis made can only be specific. A pontifical or episcopal document of a pastoral nature must of course, establish and explain certain principles. I underline this because a certain number of dogmatists accuse us of trying to construct a moral system without principles. But such a document does not set out to examine principles as such; it studies them solely with a view to solving a problem of life. The search for truth is not thereby abandoned but is examined always in the light of concrete persons and in relation to the mentality of different epochs. I do not believe that the dogmatists of antiquity had to worry about common opinion regarding the meaning of physis or prosopon when they used these terms in attempting to analyse the unscrutable reality of Christ.

But a moralist today has to grapple with a modern value: that of responsible parenthood. At most, if he refuses to accept it for what it is, namely the responsibility of the parents regarding children, he will twist the sense of it and will consider also responsibility with regard to physiology or with regard to God. But if he wants to be heeded he cannot avoid the term and a minimum of the idea. One has only to reflect on the changeableness of mentalities and living conditions to understand that any true pastoral theology or teaching can only represent an approach to the truth. One cannot say "it is either true or false"; it is true in one sense, false in another.

In the autocratic mentality of the 19th century Pope Gregory XVI could only advise the Poles to submit in their struggle with the Czars to defend their liberty and their religion. We had to wait for the prophecies of Lamennais to be shocked by this attitude. The French-Canadian bishops of 1938 excommunicated those of their fellow countrymen who rose up against the exactions of the English; whereas Pius XI practically preached armed revolt to the Catholics of Mexico. Is this opposition? On the plane of theoretical truths, yes, without any doubt. On the pastoral level, I am not so sure, because in the latter case the point of reference concerns a reality which is changing, at least in the way in which it is discerned. These changeable circumstances may be just as much those of the common way of thinking and living as the economic, social and physical realities themselves.

From this point of view, the judgements made on Humanae Vitae can vary completely. For one stormy winter we allowed ourselves to be hypnotised by one single phrase, that which condemned contraception absolutely. But very few perceived all that was new in the teaching of the third part of this document with regard to a theology of sin, or its condemnation of adultery which had been condoned and excused in the erotic perspectives of recent years. Confining ourselves to the first point, we see that the papal document breaks with the obsession of casuists who sought primarily to distinguish mortal from venial sin. The moral life of the spouses is not presented here with reference to a theoretical norm but as a growth towards an ideal which imposes itself within the perspectives of the document but of which all the difficulties are recognised. The Sacraments are no longer considered as a reward, from which sinners are excluded. Only twenty years ago priests were obliged to question penitents closely on the subject of contraception, and withheld absolution until a period of probation had been undergone.... while absolving almost daily school boys guilt of masturbation. Humanae Vitae presents Confession and Communion as a means to receive the grace of God, to restore Christians to a state where the moral life becomes possible by ontological and psychological assimilation to the virtus Christi.

112.225

The Episcopal Magisterium in Morality.

If we continue to examine the contributions of Vatican II to the argument concerning authority in matters of morality, two points remain to be studied: the Episcopal Magisterium and the opening up of authority from the view point of inferiors. Let us consider first of all the role of the Bishops. In this study we shall not diverge from what we have said about the pastoral Magisterium. Because, while it is obvious, that bishops either individually, in an Episcopal conference or particular council or in an ecumenical council, do set forth doctrinal teaching, it is none the less certain that the majority of these acts of the episcopal magisterium are concerned with pastoral questions. The bishops teach the faith, preach the faith, judge according to the light of faith - with differing degrees of authority as in the case of the Pope - but even more frequently they speak to the faithful of their churches,

of the practice of faith and charity, of the imperatives springing from the confrontation of Christian revelation with concrete circumstances; underdevelopment, erotism, drug addiction and so on.

It suffices to read and compare the Councils to be convinced of this. The ecumenical councils condemn heresies, formulate precise dogmas, and where necessary give moral counsels as for example on marriage or on Sunday observance.

The Council of Nicea affirmed the Divinity of Christ but was also concerned with clerical celibacy; while refusing to make it obligatory, it imposed prudent measures concerning the co-habitation of clerics and women. It fixed the pastoral calendar. The Council of Trent debated at the same time dogmatic questions and the reform of the Church. But if we consider particular Councils, national provincial or local, we notice that the proportion is inverse. Professions of faith are repeated at the beginnings of the sessions but they are scarcely touched upon in debate. The bishops pass immediately to pastoral questions: the attitude to adopt towards the funerals of suicides, the penance to impose in such and such a case, the work that is forbidden on Sunday to permit servants to assist at services, what impediments to marriage are to be emphasised and so on. This co-responsibility, this collegiality of the ancient and mediaeval Church was exercised first and foremost on the pastoral plane. During the time that this Collegiality was dimmed and before it was restored in Vatican II, each bishop individually exercised his pastoral action by means of sermons, letters and synods. A good example of this compartmented work is that of St. Charles Borromeo: he places himself almost exclusively in the perspective of moral reform, and is concerned more with practical applications than with abstract principles. Hence when, in the context of a theology centred more on the Church's Magisterium, an effort was made to synthesise episcopal letters and decisions the results were very meagre and dissappointing. I am thinking of that work on the idea of "Ecclesiastical faith" begun by Mgr. de Perefuxe to pursue the Jansenist "appellants" to their last stronghold. There is a poverty of theory. It is not because this archbishop of Paris made no attempt to enrich the treatise on faith. He wished to be able to answer Port-Royal which asked him: "How is it that I must believe on divine faith that the five heretical propositions are in Jansenius? How could Christ and the Apostles have revealed this?" One had the same impression when the episcopal letters of the last century against the first manifestations of birth control were being studied. Theoretical arguments are astonishingly weak, sometimes they are borrowed from a theologian, Fr. Vermeersch for example, who launched the big enterprise "contra naturam";

On the other hand one finds valid stands taken on such a theme as the duty of fertility, the sense of responsibility and the duty of "dépassement".

But why search in the past for something which we have seen with our own eyes? The Pope promulgated Humanae Vitae alone to all appearances, certainly not in the framework of episcopal collegiality as the bishops of Indonesia note with regret. Different reactions appear in the backwash of the encyclical, and about thirty episcopal conferences undertake to present and adapt the Roman document to the different countries, no longer merely taking into account the principles proposed, but also the persons concerned. Collegiality and co-responsibility could not be exercised in the preparatory stages of the text, and the twelve bishops who were on the Commission received, it would seem, their share of the reproaches which the encyclical levelled at this body. Collegiality is nevertheless exercised in the subsequent stage and is reconstructed on the pastoral level. I say the pastoral level, and not the theoretical level, because none

of these episcopal documents attempt to take up again, explain or improve on the proofs that the encyclical intended to establish in the first and second parts with a view to condemning all contraception. Must we say that the Bishops did not want to contradict the Pope? This explanation evidently cannot be excluded but it cannot explain satisfactorily the absence of doctrinal considerations in the episcopal declarations. For some of these declarations do not hesitate to say that there are people in good faith who are not convinced by the arguments from natural law in Humanae Vitae. If one takes into account the episcopal understatement this would mean that the reasons brought forward are not convincing. Furthermore, the documents entirely in favour of Humanae Vitae do not repeat the effort of demonstration. One finds practically nothing on "the intrinsically wrong" or on the analysis of contraception. On the other hand the episcopal documents are extremely sensitive to the pastoral aspects of the problem and present a "morality-in-relation-to-persons".

This is so true that pastoral pluralism is everywhere in evidence. The Third World is in general favourable to the greatest possible fertility. It is men who are the primary source of wealth; the natural reflex in favour of pro-creation still prevails; the rich nations are suspected of wishing to diminish demographic expansion. Hence, the bishops of these countries give to the encyclical an unreserved adherence in which however it is clear that psychological and sociological reasons - those to which pastoral action is open - replace the arguments from the natural law. In the rich countries the mentality is completely different, because the desire to give children a better education opening the way to social advancement makes them alert to the dangers of proliferation. The pastoral problem is this: if the parents wish to safeguard their love they are going to have many more children than they, as responsible parents, can educate. This pastoral consideration peculiar to the Western hemisphere was expounded at the Council in November 1964 by Cardinals Suenens, Alfrink and Léger. It is generally adopted by the hierarchies of Western and Northern Europe as well as those of English and French America.

So the question which one reads between the lines of the episcopal texts is everywhere reduced to this: Are the faithful who cannot keep the law laid down by Humanae Vitae excluded from the Sacraments? The minimal solution is the desire to be indulgent towards penitents. The maximal solution consists in admitting to Eucharistic Communion those who do not respect the prohibition.

To this end the episcopal texts will open up two paths, one objectivizing, the ^{other} subjectivizing, both pastoral. In the first case it is admitted that there is no question of a conflict of principles, as Humanae Vitae itself repeated in making use of the addition made by the minority to the conciliar text. But on the level of facts, one's stand is taken on the text of Gaudium et Spes since there is a conflict of duties. On the one hand, there is the value of conjugal harmony, the stability of the married couple, their mutual fidelity, the education of the children in a relaxed, dynamic atmosphere. On the other hand, there is the value of respect for the natural law, for the link between conjugal intimacy and fertility. In this case it is not difficult to foresee the solution proposed on the pastoral level: the lesser evil is chosen, man's side is taken against the law. Added to this first solution found in concrete circumstances in another based on respect for conscience, on the difficulty of choosing the right values and on the need of education.

It is clear that the co-responsibility of collegiality has not sought to raise itself to the level of doctrine; it attempts to remain primarily pastoral. Theologians who study collegiality would do well to ponder on this. They ask themselves how the bishops can find their place alongside the Pope in the task of teaching doctrine and ruling the Christian people. As in the Middle Ages, some raise the spectre of the "two-headed monster". The problem is not a false one, but if I may be permitted to be frank, I would say that for the vast majority of bishops, the problem of collegiality lies elsewhere, notably in the legitimate desire to fulfil their role as responsible pastors, to give moral and pastoral directives adapted to the faithful whom God has confided to them without continual recourse to the Roman Curia.

112.226 The part played by the People of God.

To conclude our study of the thought of Vatican II on ecclesial influences on morality, we must consider the part played by the "taught Church": theologians, priests in the ministry, laity. More than ever the expression, last but not least, must be used here. This enquiry can be made in two directions: the sensus fidei and the voice of the times

- 112.226.1. Several texts of Vatican II show that the people of God are not simply executors of directives given by the hierarchy. To this external action corresponds the interior action of the divine Pneuma. Since the law is interiorized, it is to be expected that it be assimilated, understood, savoured and judged. When addressing his directives and advice to the readers of his first letters, St. John simultaneously declares that he depends on the aid of this interior teacher (I Jn. 2, 27); "But the anointing that you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you; as His anointing teaches you, abide in Him." The Johannine context shows quite clearly that faith is not merely truths to believe but truths to live.

Lumen Gentium has emphasised this with some insistence (even if only in the expression fidem credendam et moribus applicandam (No.25 § 1). The sensus fidei has a moral aspect too: "The holy people of God share also in Christ's Prophetic office. It spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity.... The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. Thanks to the supernatural sense of the faith which characterizes the People as a whole, it manifests this unerring quality when, "from bishops down to the last member of the laity" it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. By this sense of faith... and under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority... the People of God penetrates more deeply the faith once delivered to the Saints by accurate insights, and applies it more thoroughly to life" (Lumen Gentium No.12)

In these conditions obedience in no way excludes dialogue, the undertaking of responsibility, drawing upon experience. We find this further on in the Constitution Lumen Gentium No.37. "An individual layman, by reason of the knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged, to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the Church... With ready obedience, laymen as well as all disciples of Christ should accept whatever their sacred pastors as representatives of Christ decree in their rôle as preachers and rulers in the Church.... A great many benefits are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their pastors: in the laity a strengthened sense of

personal responsibility, a renewed enthusiasm, a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their pastors. The latter, for their part, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more suitably come to decisions which regard spiritual and temporal matters."

112.226.2. The Signs of the Times.

A further aspect of his openness of the hierarchy, from the point of view of the faithful and indeed of all men, is to be found in the signs of the times spoken of by John XXIII in Pacem in terris and which Gaudium et Spes attempted to develop. There are two separate stages here: one sociological, the other theological.

Firstly, it is a question of awareness of facts, together with an assessment of their significance. On July 14th, 1789, a crowd of Parisians seized the Bastille, the royal fortress and State prison, symbol of autocratic power. On that day Louis XVI wrote in his personal diary in which he recorded events and his reactions to them, the word "nothing". Others certainly saw in this event a significant fact, indicating the beginning of a revolution whose effects would be more far-reaching than ever the work of the States-General could be. It is by no means certain that many contemporaries gave to the event the profound meaning which the Third Republic gave it in fixing the French National holiday on that day. Which of us is capable of saying how much significance is to be given to the Cultural Revolution of the Sorbonne in May, 1968? Some see in it but a simple 'Street accident' others, the beginning of a new world, still others, a menace to be severely dealt with. There is a question here of that 'discernment of spirits' which spiritual books examined hitherto only in the context of the individual. Where does God manifest His power? In what direction is God guiding men? John XXIII seems occasionally to have used the criterion of generalization of a single incident. Today men, caught up in circumstances of the greatest diversity, are particularly aware of the limelight given to the dignity of the human person. In many places women are protesting against the inferior situation in which they find themselves. Vindication of the rights of human person, and in particular of women, is amongst the signs of the times.

The second stage (and a second criterion) is theological. The Christian conscience is forced by humanity as a whole to reflect on this or that fact which is in conflict with the Gospel. A Cardijn in face of the plight of the working classes urges the absolute necessity of social reform. The charism of a Helder Camara is to perceive a scandal in non-development. To grasp the meaning of human history in order to see in it the sense of the history of salvation is the task of all Christians. This requires a keen spiritual sense as well as continuous contact with reality. In this sense it is of importance for all Christians desirous to know what God wants of them.

12. Second Treatise. The non-religious sources of the knowledge of Christian morality.

12.1. a) The problem as it present itself today.

The question we ask here may be put as follows: To what extent and how can or must Christians complete their enquiry into specifically Christian sources of morality (Scripture, Magisterium) by research in the domain of human sciences, in order to establish and organize a morality or even to resolve a problem of life?

Christian thought has never ceased to swing between two poles in this matter; but since the two extreme tendencies are represented today, it is simpler to examine them in their present state and postpone the historical considerations.

12.11. The first tendency is that of abstention or withdrawal from philosophy. In the forties we were aware of an offensive in this direction by positive dogmatic theology against speculative theology. Fr. Charlier, for example, protested against the exaggerated importance attached in dogma to theological conclusions issuing from reasoned deductions from articles of faith. He stressed the weakness of theological reasoning and specially of conventional arguments. A purely historical theology commenting on documents of the Magisterium was in vogue. Paradoxically, one finds today something of the same negative tendencies in theology regarding the 'death of God'. We are asked to note that the hybrid mixture of the living God of the Bible and the Pure Act, immovable mover of Aristotle is of no value. The God of the Peripatetics prevents us from doing justice to Yahweh and His Christ. Some criticisms of Eucharistic theology derive more from doubts about the notion of substance and hence about the opportuneness of the word 'Transsubstantiation' than from the dogma of the Real Presence Itself. The same is true in the domain of moral theology. In spite of the fact that Biblical moral theology is very poor, some moralists refuse to go beyond this stage and would reject as non-Christian any speculation that prolongs or completes the Biblical datum. In the same spirit some look for the more specific in Christian morality. In general, they reach the conclusion that only the plan of grace, that is the theological virtues, surpasses the rational data of philosophical influences. Consequently they admit a methodological separation between 'morality' and 'faith'. Morality would then be a purely human, rational science; for Christians faith and charity would give it a different motivation.

12.12. Alongside this orientation is another which advocates and even claims to see already the re-absorption of Christian morality by the human sciences. I say "human sciences", for here the new subjects, sociology and psychology must be added to philosophy. There is no question here of starting with Revelation. At most verbal homage will be given to it. Tillich sees the death of Christ in the dis-association of essence (ideal) from existence (trivial). The resurrection is the awareness of a possible deliverance and a new start. For Metz, all that is left of Revelation is an eschatological ideal in the name of which a political theology criticizes men and institutions, while being on its guard against the ambition to reconstitute anything. In numerous meetings of Catholic moralists one hears the idea expressed that only philosophy can construct a moral system, and that Revelation is the present, actual event, or, more trivially, that there is no room for hesitation between St Paul and Paul Ricoeur; it is the latter one must choose, because he starts from the present, actual situation. Paradoxically some survivors of the school of natural law bring water to this mill: the Revelation of the Gospel is insufficient in moral theology, one must look to natural revelation, to nature (Fr. Hamel of the Gregorian).

We are here confronted with what Aristotle would call "a beautiful aporia". Let us try to delineate the two forces in question, the two moralities in competition. We shall then examine the possibility of collaboration between them.

12.2. b) The two moralities face to face.

The formula which we set forth will perhaps appear exaggerated to some. However, it seems to us to be based upon historical considerations such as reflection upon the fundamental project of these moral systems. The theological morality, - one is more and more tempted to say theologal - has in view the divinization of man through the grace of Christ, the second looks to his humanization.

12.21.

We have seen that theological morality is nothing other than the practical consequence of incorporation in Christ. It seeks to promote the image of God in man, to bring man to obey the law of God. A perpetual confrontation of man and God (or his representatives in the Church) is here implied. Is it necessary to recall that, for the Greeks, the situation is quite different?

12.22. Morality of the ancients

12.22.1.

Whether the ancient moralists accept or reject the divine (indeed, the problem is to pinpoint what they understand by divine), their point of reference is man, either alone, or in society. Socrates is the wisest of the Greeks because he indulges in serious reflections on his own conduct in a way which will later be called conscience. His precept is: "know yourself". This is rather different from the proclamation of the mystery of Christ, unless, as I have said, one is to give, with Tillich, a Christian name to the phenomena of interiority.

12.22.2.

Plato thinks first of all, of reforming the City, and for him as for so many other Greeks, ethics is merely the consequence of politics. Since social man interests him more than individual man, it is from the point of view of the City (The Republic, book IV) that he will infer virtues.

Paradoxically, his list of the four moral virtues, called in the fourth century, cardinal, is mentioned in the Book of Wisdom (8, 7) and has remained up to the present one of the themes of Christian morality, in large part, I believe, because their origin has been forgotten. In fact, for Plato, man is a stamped image of the City, and it is easier to observe sociological data than psychological phenomena. Thus one proceeds from the three social classes, each characterized by a virtue: the wise who govern the City apply themselves to prudence; the warriors need courage, strength; the prime virtue of artisans is temperance.

Obviously, the activity of the three classes must be coordinated and their assigned works and virtues maintained: this is the business of justice. Here we are, facing four virtues which we shall find in man. While justice in the individual looks to the harmony of the whole person, reason lodged in his mind governs with prudence, the irascible (situated in the heart) aims to be strong, while the concupiscible (the desires of the viscera) must be governed by temperance. The Pauline text, "Have in you the sentiments of Christ Jesus", would here have to be parodied, "Have in you the sentiments of society"; if it were possible to bring together two moralities of such diverse inspiration.

12.22.3. Aristotle is not an aristocratic citizen of Athens like Plato, but a Macedonian foreigner.

The evolution of his thought will lead him from Platonic idealism to the most clear-cut empiricism. The idea of the Good will yield to the Prime Mover which will itself be replaced by some fifty astrological movers charged with governing mechanically the world beneath the heavens. Morality does not exclude politics based on the study of data, but it gives a greater place to the individual man. Indeed, for the moralist, it is a question of drawing up a plan of life, of establishing a goal and the means to attain it. But, what do men want, if not to be happy? And how can they become so except by developing their potentialities? It will be precisely the role of virtue to establish, by right of habitus the acts of reason (intellectual virtues) and of will (moral virtues), most suitable to realize in actu what man is only in potentia.

12.22.4. Another great moral school of antiquity is that of Stoicism.

Its originality consists in substituting nature for the city or for society as a point of reference. "Live according to nature", is the first, and, in a sense, the only precept, since the one who practises it acquires perfect virtue which is simple and indivisible. Various nuances will emanate from this primary idea, but the appeal to nature will always remain the touchstone of stoicism.

For Zeno, this means especially to adapt oneself to the order of things and to accept events that happen. Let us not formulate any desire. Let us not give in to any passion. Apatheia and Ataraxeia are the only attitudes worthy of the sage. Seneca comments that he wished to go to the public baths, and during this time his purse was stolen in the cloakroom. Well, he continues, nature not only wanted me to bathe, she also wanted me to be robbed. Now I must conform myself to her without regret.

Chrysippus created a certain dissidence which survives in the history of the natural law, adding to conformity to cosmic nature that adherence to human nature which is reason. As a rule, the divergence can be absorbed because for the Stoics, nature is reason, as it is material fire, as in the case of Ulpian and Gaius. For one, the natural law consists in living according to the primary instincts common to men and to animals: the union of the sexes, the upbringing of offspring, for example. For the other, the natural law will be judged according to reason alone and the psychological factors proper to man. Just to mention it in passing, here we find the exact difference between Humanae Vitae and Gaudium et Spes. The encyclical condemns a contraception which turns aside from the physiological conditions of the sexual union. The Council has proposed only criteria based upon psychology; it had condemned only that contraception which depersonalized one or other of the partners.

12.22.5. Little though this matters, in our opinion, it is clear that the morality of stoicism like all the moral systems the Greek world, is centred upon man. Moreover, it is the reason why they are strangers to the biblical idea of sin. This implies that man has a moral partner, since to sin is to break the covenant or refuse the love of God. The Greek, perhaps, has social partners, as Antigone can condemn them in the name of the natural law, but the Greek's faults and failings are essentially errors (let us not forget Greek intellectualism) and failings toward himself.

12.23. Modern tendencies

Let us leave ancient history to reflect on today's moral tendencies. They demonstrate the triumph of the anthropological point of view to the extent of having made of this term a new taboo.

12.23.1. According to Bergson, "the two sources of morality and religion" are found in psychological analysis. On the one hand, we are drawn to shut ourselves in upon the little group of closed morality; on the other hand, mystics feel the call of universalism. In what are heroes necessary for common virtue? In that they encounter in every man a dissatisfaction before the limitations of the clan, and a need for efficient measures to reconcile in them the needs both of action and of thought. Whether one must see in Bergson, with Maritain, an antithesis of the Judeo-Christian morality, or, whether with Sertillanges, one must think of profound convergences, is another question. The fact is, that if morality becomes "a machine to make Gods", it springs from the effort of man to pull himself up, and not from a grace of God given to men to transform them. The most common reaction of theologians, upon the publication of this key-book was precisely to blame the author for setting out to build a morality based upon psychology.

12.23.2. The morality of values is also centred on man, whether it be violently and aggressively atheistic like that of Nietzsche or, on the contrary, open to participation in the Absolute Being.

Nietzsche intends to announce to men that "God is dead": the chief guard of the prison where they are confined no longer exists, even if it is in his name that they are deprived of liberty and are led a hard life. It is necessary at any cost to abandon the scale of values which Judaism and Christianity have imposed on the humanist. Men have been given the mentality of submissive slaves, voluntarily humiliated. On the contrary, it is necessary to return to the Greek spirit of pride, of will, of power. Certain men, certain peoples, are made to dominate others. These create for themselves the values to pursue, in obeying their vital instinct and in refusing all morality imposed from without.

Many modern moralists centred on the idea of value have surely reintroduced God into their system or at least have admitted what they call the "transcendence of values". Thus these values are no longer totally created by some individuals or by the collectivity. They excel them (this is the sense of transcendence in such a case). But the very logic of the system requires that the values be referred to man, "immanent", to use the technical term. It is not merely a question of considering the Good, or Goods, in themselves, but in placing them in relationship with man in general or the individuals in particular. If it is a question of men in general, the problem will consist in showing how the values correspond to the needs, tendencies, desires of our being. The classification of Louis Lavelle, undoubtedly the most famous, very well shows the correspondence between the values and men. If man is considered dominated by nature, one speaks of economic values, existing outside, and of affective values, primarily interior. Man struggling against nature is attracted by intellectual values (exterior) and esthetic values (interior). Finally, the domination of nature gives access to moral virtues (ad extra) and spiritual virtues (ad intra).

In all these cases, the idea is that man must be permitted to realize himself and even to surpass himself in acquiring "personal goods". This perspective evidently allows morality to be personalized, for beyond a certain standard which can be required of all, one finds particular vocations where, by reason of one's sex, one's temperament, one's efforts, the individual creates values-for-himself. The scale of values of a scientist is totally different from that of a sportsman, while it is understood that both of them must be honest men, good husbands, good citizens. This relatively new presentation of morality springs first from man, not only by reason of his historical origins, but by the very logic of the requirements of the system.

12.23.3.

Let us take one last example, that of Marxism, whose "morality" today governs millions of men. It rises from a collective conception of man and of his essence, formed from the totality of social relationships. To consider oneself as a separate individual and to wonder what duty one should fulfil, is to accept the cleavage between essence and existence, it is to try to liberate oneself from alienations in the very frame of alienation. The possession of self by self and self-creation are not first of all the right of individuals as such; the subject of the activity is collective man.

He must before all else free himself from the religious alienation that he himself has created, for, in the end, it is not the master nor God who alienates, it is alienation which creates the master and God. The man who forgoes saving himself, but on the other hand, protests against his servitude, creates a God upon whom he projects his desires, but who, in reality, degrades him even further. The criticism of religion and of religious morality has as its goal to open man to reason so that he will cease to believe that he gravitates around the divine sun, but on the contrary, gravitates around himself.

Turning his back to the idea of creation, man must affirm himself as his own cause in practical activity! Work is the concrete form of this, it is that which, in the course of centuries, permits the authentic spawning of man in what Marx calls "the history of the world, taken in its totality". This latter progresses by collective revolutions. Humanity has come forth from animality, and has given to itself tools, "artificial organs". But some have confiscated for their own profit the progress of technology in appropriating to themselves the means of production. A final struggle of history is coming to a head. It will no longer see one minority replace another minority. This will be the victory of the majority over an oligarchy of exploiters, of the Proletariat over the capitalists, excessive holders of the means of production and the capital accumulated through profits.

12.24.

Conditions of a correct comparison.

Some will think perhaps that I have, in an exaggerated manner, defined the contrasts of these two types of morality: that of divinization and that of humanization. Manicheism is an enduring temptation, especially for professors who can more easily present an idea by putting all the white on one side, and all the black on the other.

I would like to answer three things:

12.24.1. The problem is to know, not whether the exposition is exaggerated,

but whether it is false. Does it synthesize in an incorrect manner the moralities of several great authors or of several major tendencies?

12.24.2. If a certain astonishment is manifested especially on the part of Catholics, it is because the question of relations between theological morality and that of the human sciences has been presented - in all good faith, of course, - in a naive spirit of concordism. The very recent Theologia moralis of R. P. van Kol, s. j. (Herder, 1968), writes in all candor that moral philosophy enjoys a certain Christian character (ut quodam caractere cristiano gaudeat, p. 4) (After that are we astonished that some people say to us: Christian morality has nothing specific?). How have matters reached this point? Well, it is because the Christian moralists who desired to utilize non-Christian works of ethics or simply philosophical ethics have done so in a climate of polemics or apologetics. These two attitudes have reinforced the conciliatory point of view, which, evidently, was theirs.

From this point of view, three epochs must be distinguished:

12.24.21. In ancient time, the Fathers most often have a "bad conscience" in having recourse to pagan authors. They must defend themselves on two fronts. The integrists of that epoch hurl invectives (think of St. Jerome) against the food (euphemism) of demons. The pagans say to them, "Why do you criticize us and wish to replace us if you make use of us?" It is therefore necessary (as I said previously, a propos of St. Ambrose) to indicate the concordances but to explain at the same time that the Judeo-Christian revelation says the same thing and even that it has been plagiarized. With this procedure, St. Ambrose can recoup many things from Plotinus, St. Augustine from his beloved Platonists.

Book VIII of De Civitate Dei poses many problems to historians of Greek philosophy by its astonishing will to welcome. Certainly in the Retractationes (lib. 1, cap. 1) one finds a severe re-editing of the question (édition DDB XII, p. 282), but the other point of view prevailed. In any case, one will note that no Father of the Church has tried to christianize the morality of Aristotle. He is generally considered by them as a perverse and dangerous man. The reason for this is, no doubt, that the Fathers had before them Aristotelians faithful to the last stage of evolution of the philosopher, become a materialist and an empiricist.

12.24.22. Nor do the Middle Age accept without resistance recourse to pagan moralists. As in antiquity, there is a whole body of literature which comments on this subject the "fas est ab hoste doceri". However, if integrism remains whole in principle, the polemical dispositions have disappeared. In medieval Europe there are no longer any pagans who are competing. One can be magnanimous toward a conquered enemy. The progressive discovery of Aristotle in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, provokes a dazzling response. Finally, they discover a logic and a scientific method quite superior to the literary procedures of patristic and monastic theology. In psychology, hylomorphism gives a deliverance in part from the yoke of platonic dualism. Neo ethics allows integration of the pursuit of human values by virtue of beatitudo imperfecta. So much the better for the doctrinal point of view! But on the level of history, one can ask oneself, with M. Gilson, for example, if

there is not a great misunderstanding. First of all, they do not know the evolution of Aristotle, and hold on to the works of the first and second periods, repudiated by their very author. Then the authors of the times present as Aristotelian doctrines their own philosophical ideas: this is the case for the theory of the person, and of liberty, which St. Thomas formulates. Finally, against the old Augustinian school, they attribute to Aristotle ideas which he has never held: that of the creation of the world, for example. Let us not reproach St. Thomas for these historical misinterpretations, they are nothing in comparison with the naïvetés of Abélard or of twelfth century professors of literature. Did they not succeed in making of the Ars amandi of Ovid a book of ethics, by commenting upon it allegorically?

12.24.23. From the sixteenth century onward, the perspectives again change. The prestige of pagan authors, of the "classics" will be such that one will say that they escape the rules of the Index. Furthermore, they will be very careful to prepare editions of chosen and expurgated works, of which the non-Christian or immoral aspect will have been rigorously eliminated. They will indeed say as a matter of principle that Horace is not always to be recommended but he will be presented, in spite of everything, as a moralist, since they will reproduce only those passages which are correct, if not edifying. Then again, the rapprochement between pagan ethics and Christian morality will be facilitated by the progressive secularization of the latter. As we have already said, at this epoch the theological virtues, charity itself, will be reduced to the bare minimum.

Grace, as well under the aspect of divinization as under that of help to a nature wounded by sin, will practically never be called to mind in moral theology. The Tract on human acts which studies involvement and responsibility will be situated at the level of natura pura, and not that of natura condita, lapsa, restaurata, as it is in the Fathers and the Scholastics. This idea of natura pura will assume such importance that it will require thirty years of theological battles - led with courage by Père de Lubac? - in order that Catholics may realize that what is under discussion is a purely hypothetical state of man. All men have been created for grace and for divinization, whatever may be the imperfection or inadequacy of vocabulary.

From the ecumenical point of view, it will not be useless to recall that this secularization of Catholic morality and the tacit eviction of grace are at the base of serious difficulties. Many of the Reformed have had the impression that Catholics were passing over to pelagianism, that they considered a morality of human effort alone ("good works", "free will") capable of leading men to salvation... It was never the official doctrine, but one cannot deny that it was the thought (or mental reservation) of many.

12.24.3. Finally, there is a third point that we must underline with regard to the comparison of divine and human morality. Most of the time, these rapprochements have been conducted only on the rational, ideological plane, and not at all at the existential level. Let us explain.

Christians believed that they would find in Plato and Aristotle a structure of their statement of morality springing from the orientation of man toward happiness, the vita beata, beatitudo, the vision of God. Most of the manuals of morality still give

homage - more and more perplexed - to this view of things. Moreover, one expected to find in Plato and Aristotle a theology of the contemplative life: the works of Pseudo-Dionysus imposed this view. Besides that, it was considered normal to take lists, definitions and classifications of virtues from Cicero and Macrobius. It is commonly said (despite the Scruples of St. Thomas) that the decalogue is a simple expression of the natural law.

Let us suppose, to simplify matters, that these comparisons are truly founded and do not constitute misinterpretations like those we have just pointed out. It remains to be asked whether these life directives or these values are presented in the same manner in Christian thought, in philosophy, and in the other humanities.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas certainly did not think so. On the national level, we have just said, they did not have great difficulty in going to the school of the pagans, for example, in the domain of virtues, but, on the existential level, they think that the moral situation of the pagans is totally different from that of the Christians. Long before them, St. Paul signalled a cesura between the pagans and the Jews on the one hand, Christians on the other, for example, with regard to the natural law.

St. Paul recognizes in the pagans a certain knowledge and practice of the natural law due to the exercise of their conscience (Romans 2, 14). The Jews know the will of God by the law. And yet, Jews like pagans, are sinners: "We have established that Jews and Greeks, all are subject to sin" (Rom. 3, 10), "all have sinned" (Rom. 3, 23). What is it that is lacking to them in order to be justified in the eyes of God? to recognize that salvation is in Christ to whom one adheres by faith and from whom one receives grace. "... They are justified by the favour of his grace in virtue of the redemption accomplished in Jesus Christ... We consider that man is justified by faith..." (Rom. 3, 24 and 28). When it is a question of the second part of the decalogue, we have previously said, with regard to the ancient law, the spirit of the precepts is changed for they are assumed into a will of fraternal love (Rom. 13, 8-10). Undoubtedly, some will cry out against the intolerance of extra Ecclesiam nulla salus, which can be translated in this case as "outside the Church there is no true morality allowing hope of salvation".

St. Thomas blasts the dilemma. Between sin properly so-called and the virtuous act worthy of the Christian life, by the influence of charity, he recognizes a third situation: that of natural acts which are certainly not worthy of Christ and so cannot prepare for salvation, but which are not for all that faults deserving of divine reprobation. On the existential plane, these purely natural virtues thus have a status totally different from their notional value.

At a recent time (especially in a letter of the Holy Office to Cardinal Cushing, dated 8th August 1949), one will see recognized the value of good faith and of good will, but interpreting them as an implicit and unconscious wish to adhere to Christ and to his Church. In one way or another, God manifests himself to each man as a pressing demand for the absolute, and as a will for salvation. Those who correspond by their good will enter into the domain of grace which is offered to them. "God also accepts an implicit desire, so-called because it is included in the good disposition of soul by which

man wishes to conform his will to the will of God". Even reduced to this minimum, this exigency will still seem exaggerated to some. We cannot, however, deny it or ignore it, if we wish to compare Christian activity to purely human practice. Without this minimal condition one can still wonder what remains of salvation by Christ and the necessity of grace,

Moreover, even outside of this "sacred metaphysics", it is very necessary to see that a morality of faith like that of Christianity is psychologically very different from a philosophical or sociological ethic. The first is received from a divine or ecclesial authority. The people of Israel did not think for an instant that the decalogue brought by Moses was a work of philosophical reflection. Even if one places under the heading of settings the revelation of Sinai, one is obliged to recognize that these ten words are an element of the Covenant by which God pledges himself to his people if they will maintain their fidelity and obedience. The first who spoke of philosophy and the natural law, in this matter, seems to have been Philo. To do this he had to conjure away two precepts, first of all. Then he said that the Greeks had received from God by philosophy what the Jews had received by direct revelation.

We are still far from a philosophical reflection, from a purely rational research. We are also on a plane totally different from sociology or politics in the manner of Hobbes or Spinoza. These two authors believe that they start from the observation of facts in saying that every man desires the most good possible for himself, and as a consequence, he enters into conflict with others from whom he takes their goods. War is born of this, with its sorrows, and mounting reprisals. Then one comes to an agreement on the principle of reciprocity: "You won't steal from me, and I won't steal from you". The civil law is thus conceived as deriving from the experience which shows that certain ways of acting are productive, and others generate disorder. Hobbes remains at this self-interested point of view, but Spinoza rejoices to see social peace filling man's need for sympathy.

If the origins of religious, philosophical and sociological morality are different, the same is true for the manner in which they are lived. Let us not say that the philosopher renders an account to no one. This is an illusion from before the age of dialogue. The philosopher is always in confrontation with a tradition - even in order to break with it - with his colleagues, with his disciples. But we must indeed remark that this critique and this vigilance are situated on the plane of equality, at least in principle. The morality of a philosopher is measured by the force of these arguments: is cogent in his eyes but his contemporaries and successors rarely share this opinion, so that the history of philosophy appears like an immense game of shying at ^{aunt Sallys}. Let us say finally that very few philosophers place morality and especially practical morality in the foreground of their preoccupations. Ricoeur, Jankelevitch can bring some lights upon the manner of living. We do not expect of them that they should draw up phalansteries. Their most fervent disciples place free discussion or even contestation in the first level of their claims and of their style of life.

Perhaps it is not the same for a certain sociological morality. On the scientific plane, it will pose a certain number of

questions to the theologian . . . and without saying so explicitly, bring counter-propositions. In any case, that is the way some people will see things. The sociologist grows impatient before the idea of submission to the laws of "nature" in which he thinks he sees a fundamental idea of Catholic morality (Jean Remy, Questions de la sociologie à la théologie chrétienne dans Bilan de la théologie du XXe siècle, tome 2, p. 214). There he appeals to a very wide-spread "mentality". He notes that the notion of geographical milieu is replaced by communication which, thanks to mass-media, creates a new type of structuring (p.218). In this field, the ideas put forward on morality are much closer to those of theology than is the case with philosophy. This is because the "milieu", "community" aspect (vague as the term is) is taken into account. However, two important distinctions need emphasis. As we remarked regarding the "voice of the times", Catholic morality must remain related to revelation and authority. In the earlier stages, sociological morality and Catholic morality can keep pace, setting out as they do from facts and mentalities. Sooner or later, however, the two paths begin to cross according as to whether one remains at the level of sociological observation or takes up a critical stance on behalf of the Gospel. Moreover, even if the pressures are the same in both areas, the climate in which they are lived profoundly differentiates these two moral codes. The Christian lives in a sacral, or - better - a theological context. He hears morality propounded in the course of the liturgy of the word, he lives his union with Christ - as the source and primary meaning of his ethical life - in the liturgy of the eucharist. His metanoia goes below the level of personal regret to attain to a pardon at once ecclesial and divine.

To end, let us note that recourse to a magisterium makes possible the clarification of certain questions. The theologian will not agree with the sociologist's statement that the Catholic mentality may be characterized as submission to the natural law. Because, if he knows of a number of documents which follow this line of thought, he can also note a quite contrary tendency, that of Gaudium et Spes, which appeals from nature to culture and, in a general way, that of Vatican II, which, despite documents prepared along quite other lines, systematically abstained from making appeal to the natural law.

12.3. C. Possibilities of closing the gap between the moral teachings of divinization and humanization.

After so much demolition, construction must follow!

We want here to track down the cases in which both types of morality can collaborate and under which conditions such an effort will prove fruitful.

12.31. 1. First we must ask: what is the basic plan: divinization? or, humanization?

I fear that, in certain Catholic circles, this question has been too long postponed, partly out of an uneasy conscience regarding the past, partly out of embarrassment in the face of this new page in our works on theology: "earthly realities", "human values".

12.311. But it is no use to close one's eyes. In this area, there have been rejections on both sides. A certain plan of humanization, certain types of humanism stall at the very idea of divinization, both at the level of means as at the level of ends. Man must get on by

himself, as is the claim of the proud Fascist slogan: "L'Italia è come Dio, si farà da sè". This may be said aggressively and ponderously, as Nietzsche and Marx said it; this may also be the meaning of a religious indifference which is even on the increase. Catholic circles frequently denounce this tendency. They perhaps neglect to ask themselves whether this has not arisen from an apparent or genuine refusal on the part of Christians to recognize the world and human values.

I am convinced, from my knowledge of the history of Christianity, that the latter has never radically rejected human values. But has it always known how to integrate them?

Undoubtedly, one can show how the Church has, at all periods, condemned Encratists who objected to marriage. But one cannot overlook, either, the medieval monastic morality, which, following St. Jerome, presented marriage as a second best, a lesser evil, just about tolerable for the sake of the continuance of the race but a constant source of sin, at least of venial sin. I admit that I cannot understand the illogicality of medieval men who preserved for us the Latin classics by assiduously copying them while they vied with one another in their vituperation of the authors.

Of course, they thought that they had a solution in lowering these values to the level of means: one studied the classics to know Latin well, and Latin is necessary for the Vulgate. One must not study the works of pagan philosophers but their logic and metaphysics may help in the construction of speculative theology. A few clearer-headed people among them could say that it was a case of secondary but authentic values which one could, and should, study for their own sake on condition that they should be subordinated to the supreme end. But these people did not establish a school of thought.

12.312.

Whether one likes the fact or not, a full reconciliation between "divinization" and "humanization" was not undertaken systematically until Vatican II and principally in Gaudium et Spes. There, the Catholic Church recognizes "the autonomy of terrestrial things", i. e., "the independence of men, of societies, of the sciences". "They enjoy their own laws and values which must gradually be deciphered, put to use, and regulated".

It is entirely right to demand such autonomy..., not merely required by modern man but it harmonizes also with the will of the Creator" (n. 36 § 1 and 2).

Here is indeed a welcome to the fundamental demands of the human sciences, even in regard to life-style at the level of psychology, sociology and political science.

It is not a case, however, of a simple juxtaposition, for the Church wishes to integrate into her work of divinization this work of humanization. She feels it her duty to collaborate in this task, even though for her it is less basic while she is aware that she will be enriched and extended by the human sciences. In this perspective, it is necessary to reread Chapter IV of the first part of Gaudium et Spes. We can only select a few of the more significant passages.

"Pursuing the saving purpose which is proper to her, the Church ^{not} only communicates divine life to men, but in some way casts the reflected light of that life over the entire earth. This she does most of all by her healing and elevating impact on the dignity of the person, by the way in which she strengthens the seams of human society and imbues the everyday activity of men with a deeper meaning and importance. Thus, through her individual members and her whole community, the Church believes she can contribute greatly toward making the family of man and its history more human" (no. 40 § 3).

In what concerns the help brought to the Church by the varied cultures, the teaching of Vatican II is no less rich even if a certain triumphalism has diminished its formulation (cf. no. 44).

"The Church herself knows how richly she has profited by the history and development of humanity" (§ 1).

"Thanks to the experience of past ages, the progress of the sciences, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, the nature of man himself is more clearly revealed and new roads to truth are opened. The benefits profit the Church, too... The Church... must rely on those who live in the world, are versed in different institutions and specialties, and grasp their innermost significance in the eyes of both believers and unbelievers" (§ 2).

"The Church... can and ought to be enriched by the development of human social life... For whoever promotes the human community at the family level, culturally, in its economic, social, and political dimensions, both nationally and internationally, such a one, according to God's design, is contributing greatly to the Church community as well, to the extent that it depends on things outside itself"...

By way of conclusion and synthesis, we shall recall these words taken from the chapter dedicated to culture (no. 57 § 1). "Christians on pilgrimage toward the heavenly city, should seek and savor the things which are above. This duty in no way decreases, but rather increases, the weight of their obligation to work with all men in constructing a more human world. In fact, the mystery of the Christian faith furnishes them with excellent incentives and helps towards discharging this duty more energetically and especially toward uncovering the full meaning of this activity, a meaning which gives human culture its eminent place in the integral vocation of man".

Hence one can say, it seems to me, that if each side were adequately understood and understanding, collaboration between humanistic and "divinistic" types of morality is both possible and necessary. What forms would this take?

12.32. 2. In regard to praxis, collaboration is particularly indicated for the "macro-moral" plane.

12.32.1 This paragraph takes cognizance, I think, of one aspect of the confrontation between the two relatively new types of morality, and for the following reasons:

- usually, confrontation is tested on the purely theoretical and literary level, If anyone finds a phrase in Seneca re-

sembling a phrase in St. Paul, he draws the conclusion that they are identical without asking whether, on the existential plane, these two teachings are inserted into identical settings nor whether Seneca had as many followers as had St. Paul.

up to now, the impact of the two moralities had relatively little in common for their emphases were on different things. Catholicism, especially since the 16th century, limited itself to micro-morality bounded by the individual's duties, while human morality has always had wider perspectives in the social, sociological and political domains. Now today, Catholic moral teaching is turning its back on individualistic morality and the moral teaching of the human sciences is taking more note of personal problems, notably on account of the progress made by psychology.

lastly, in religious moral teaching, despite a certain "chōsitation" which has begun, a little too much has been made of the intention. Where there is good will, effectiveness counts little, since "the external act adds nothing to moral worth". Some complex ascetics have even proposed recourse to particularly inefficient means in order to increase the merit.

12.32.2. Today, a large area of moral activity is common ground between Catholics and other men. Dialogue is proclaimed with all Christians, all believers, all men of good will even if these be atheists (Gaudium et Spes, no. 92). For the work of humanization, and even for that, it would seem, of divinization, the Catholic Church "gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian Churches or ecclesial Communities have done or are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal" (no. 40 § 3). Likewise, "she can be abundantly and variously helped by the world... from the talents and industry of individuals and from human society as a whole" (no. 40 § 4).

The values of human culture correspond to the divine plan and contribute to the elevation of man (no. 57 § 3). The Church should collaborate in this work which will be enriching both for the Church herself and for the various cultures too (no. 58 § 3).

On the national and existential plane, socio-economic activity surpasses the frontiers of Catholicism: "... In the course of centuries and with the light of the Gospel, the Church has worked out principles of justice and equity as right reason demanded as they apply to individuals, societies and international relations. In modern times especially, the Church has enlarged upon them (cf. no. 63 § 5).

In their relations among peoples and nations, the international organizations have done valuable work; Catholics ought to give their collaboration (n. 84, § 3; n. 88, § 1).

12.32.3. A hurried reading of these and many other similar texts might lead some to suppose that Catholic moral teaching is "secularizing" and "desacralizing" itself. This is far from true.

Vatican II, indeed, vigorously defends the idea that the moral

life of the Christian can only be lived at the level of agapé. There is here a parallel between the twofold mission to divinize and to humanize which belongs to the Church and which devolves upon the Christian. Lumen Gentium (no. 40) recalls that the justification of Christians is a work of grace normally accomplished in baptism which makes them participants in the divine life. "... By God's gifts they must hold onto and complete in their lives this holiness which they have received... Thus it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in this earthly society" (no. 40).

The divine and theological aspect of the Christian's most trivial actions is underlined in regard to the priesthood of the faithful. Through this, all Christians offer to God "the spiritual sacrifice which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God" (1 Peter 2, 5). More precisely "as worshippers whose every deed is holy, the laity consecrate the world itself to God" (Lumen Gentium, no. 34).

This is not the place to comment on these texts. They are too rich. Two remarks are, however, necessary.

- Formerly, one might have said: Christians add to their everyday actions an intention of faith and charity. Today, many theologians, in the wake of Teilhard de Chardin (cf. Complete Works, Book IV) would see in this intention an intrinsic orientation of these acts. In the light of faith and charity, the faithful see that the work of humanization, the actions of daily life, possess an intrinsic orientation towards God. All genuine human progress is a first stage toward divinization. And, reciprocally, the work of God in man does not tend to alienate him but to make him more of a man still.

- If we add what we have just said about the double density of human action to what we have recalled about all men of good will belonging to the order of grace, we will understand that, in a comparison of the Catholic ethos with that of other life styles, it is not a question of a radical difference (and, therefore, of an exclusivism to which we have too often succumbed) but rather a matter of the implicit and the explicit in varying degrees. It is not a case of surreptitiously "baptizing" all right acts but of bearing witness to the unique sanctity which Christ communicates to men, ideally through the Church, but in fact through many another channel.

12.33. c) At the level of ideas and of pedagogy different degrees of collaboration between divine and human moral teaching are both conceivable and desirable.

12.33.1. With this in view, an inventory of what human morality can add to divine morality should doubtless be drawn up. We can only sketch an outline of this here.

Catholic moral teaching must first of all make its basic foundations clear: divinization, obedience to the divine law, the following of Christ. If one does not wish to fall into angelism or heteronomy, one must show how human values can be assumed onto this plane of divinization while remaining their authentic selves and that moral obligation corresponds to an interior sense found within

man (a desire for happiness, a sense of shame, of sympathy, and so on).

Corresponding to God's call, there is man's response. Side by side with the typically Christian elements in this event (theological orientation of acts, the necessity of grace), there is place here for an anthropology. The data which we can establish are most enlightening, but they will in no way eliminate the need for elements supplied by philosophy, psychology and sociology.

The same will be true of the treatise on conscience where scriptural, particularly Pauline teaching, should be studied in relation to the authentic findings of modern psychology. The ethics of marriage should also hold a place of privilege in regard to confrontation.

Together with this complementary study it should be clear that rational reflection, whether systematic or not, is important, even necessary. Even where the questions are based on revealed data, one must not fail to give the matter personal reflection, to interpret it, and bring it into a system. Yet there is all the difference between reason at the service of faith, and reason imposing its own categories and certitudes upon the faith.

12.33.2. In fact, if one has the habit of saying how much the faith has need of philosophy (in both the wide and narrow meanings of the term), one may perhaps forget to think of the usurpations of philosophy in regard to Christian moral teaching.

The treatise on the last end of man and on beatitude will try in vain to find in Plato and Aristotle a vision of the definitive "plan" on human life. This will mean omitting divinization and substituting the primacy of knowledge over that of charity.

It would be pointless to repeat what has been said above about the undue laicization of the treatise of human acts. Liberty there is studied outside the evangelical horizons of the fall and the redemption.

In the treatise on the virtues, the definition of these dispositions has been taken from the pagan philosophers as regards the habitus, the thesis of the happy mean, their acquisition by repeated effort, their precise classification. All of this has little to do with the Christian moral virtues as described in the Gospel (mortification and virginity are not sub-species of temperance). Yet these theories do real violence to their theological counterparts. These are gifts of God, not personal acquisitions, they are tied to divinization not to humanization, they know nothing of the happy mean. One may, therefore, question whether the theology of these divine gifts has gained by being interpreted in Aristotelian terms. Going to Aristotle to ask for a definition of hope when the Old and New Testaments give it a special meaning, is obviously a step in the wrong direction.

One could doubtless say as much regarding the treatise on law where one attempts - vainly on the doctrinal, and catastrophically on the pastoral plane - to give juridical categories to "the law of faith", "the law of Christ". Truly, when it is a case of the obligations of the civil law, this is another matter, but why must we try to put everything on the same footing?

One could continue this list of philosophico-theological compromises; let us see rather whether there is not another problem.

12.33.3. Up to our time, it has seemed quite normal for the clergy to be asked to teach a practical rule of life during their courses of philosophy and moral theology. This coexistence has been unfortunate. Because, while one cannot easily see the use of a morality on the hypothetical plane of pure nature, one cannot see, either, how a theologian as the interpreter of Revelation can give the rules to be observed regarding succession or the property of married couples according to diverse matrimonial systems. God alone knows, however, if we have not wasted precious time in the attempt. And this is true of written articles as it is of teaching.

It cannot be a question of forbidding a philosopher to deepen his reflection by the faith, or for faith (and charity) not to be prolonged by philosophical, psychological, or sociological thinking. Would we not, however, give greater value to these experiences by indicating from which source we draw our ethics, by which method (that of faith, or of reason) we arrive at the conclusions which we propose? Without being able to evoke the key-problem of the natural law, we might think whether it is less complicated to try and pass for revealed or theological truth what is simply the product of the human brain, if not a sociological reflex belonging to a particular epoch. Careful attention to sources and to method is essential here.

In regard to pedagogy, we should not a priori exclude the suggestion put forward by some that a twofold teaching of ethics should be made, not at two parallel levels, but be made specific in character. Instead of aiming at solving all problems and studying all subjects both in moral philosophy and in moral theology, we might envisage another method of division while, of course, leaving certain matters as common ground to both. Philosophical moral teaching would have to make new efforts because too often, in Catholic circles, it has relied too heavily on theology. As for the latter, this would constitute in some way a study of what in morality is specifically Christian, i. e., the offer made to man of divinization, his response both in his general disposition and in his characteristic traits - faith, hope, charity, in certain aspects of the sacramental life of penance, marriage, etc. In this way, "the point of view of faith" in moral teaching would no longer be a literary theme. It would be a re-reading of the moral life in the light of Christ.

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