

The Faith Afflicted

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When an older acquaintance of mine has a memory lapse, he laughs and says, "I'm having a senior moment." When I have a memory or reason blackout, I say I am having "an Assisi moment".

Assisi moments may be caused by a misfiring of the brain synapses, a short-circuit that causes one to forget common sense and reason, even the memory of past truth. A popular theory is that this is a form of temporary insanity. While occasional Assisi moments can be overcome by strong doses of reality, repeated Assisi moments wear out the brain and can result in an Assisi life. The only known cure for such a condition is to grab the sufferer by his itching ears, and plunge them (and the rest of his body) into a Catholic monastery, where grace, building on solitude and quiet, relieves the patient to the degree of his willingness to become sane.

Many Catholics experience Assisi moments in trying to reconcile the Assisi theology of Pope John Paul II with the Living Magisterium of the Church. The Living Magisterium, by the way, is not synonymous with post-Conciliar teaching. The Living Magisterium contains the infallible truths of the Church handed down from the apostles, truths which have not and cannot change.



Father Dormann became interested in John Paul II after the Pope hosted the first Assisi Event in 1986. Convinced that the pan-religious meeting at Assisi had no parallels in Church Tradition or teaching, Dormann began studying the thought of John Paul II to understand how Assisi fit into the Catholic religion. He began with an analysis of the Pope's pre-papal thinking, as evidenced in Cardinal Wojtyla's Lenten lectures of 1976.

The dilemma of trying to fit the square pegs of Vatican II theology into the round holes of Tradition has caused papal apologists numerous Assisi moments - convulsions of reason and sense that result in statements like: "The Holy Father didn't really mean it when he said he wasn't trying to convert anyone at Assisi; he only said that to make the non-Catholics feel welcome." Or, "The Buddha was only on top of the tabernacle for ten minutes; that's not very long." Or, "They weren't covering up Catholic statues and art to avoid offending the witch doctors; they just didn't want everything to get sooted by all the strange incense." My personal favorite is: "The earthquake that damaged the Basilica after the Assisi event was not divine retribution. Earthquakes happen there all the time; what are you, a weatherman?"

I don't often quote Bob Dylan, but regarding the Assisi theology of the present Pope, you

don't need a weatherman to know which way *that* wind blows. The Assisi moment of 1986 is the signature act of John Paul II's pontificate, which has manifested a masterful blend of patience and audacity. A progressive theologian accomplished in his craft, he routinely uses orthodox terminology to express unorthodox views, and what is omitted in his encyclicals is often as revealing as what is there. His public persona, his well orchestrated world travels, his knack for placing himself in the geopolitical spotlight, and his sheer longevity as Pope seems to have forced most Catholics into repeated Assisi moments in order to explain the Pope's Assisi life, which did not begin at his papal election.

Most prominent Catholic critics of Assisi theology have been either suspended, "excommunicated," or otherwise marginalized to the fringes of the Church. The Abbe de Nantes wrote a *Book of Accusation* against Vatican II and John Paul II, and requested the Pope make an infallible, ex cathedra pronouncement on his own theology. The salvo remains unanswered, and the Abbe remains suspended. More recently a German theologian, Father Johannes Dormann, wrote a multi-volume work entitled *Pope John Paul II's Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religions at Assisi*.¹ Dormann's thesis is that John Paul II is an adherent of universalism, or universal salvation, the belief that (virtually) everyone goes to heaven, whatever their religion. According to Dormann, Karol Wojtyla believed this prior to becoming Pope.

Background

Wojtyla's theological formation is unclear. He attended an underground seminary in Poland during World War II. After the war he wrote in favor of the worker-priest experiment in France.

The idea behind the experiment was to have priests do "outreach" work to the war-stunned populace. Instead, the worker-priests became left-wing political activists, engaged in violent demonstrations, and were arrested.

Future Pope Giovanni Montini (Paul VI) was also in favor of the worker-priests. So was future Pope Angelo Roncalli (John XXIII), who as Paris nuncio blocked Rome's attempts to rein in the worker-priests. Eventually Pope Pius XII fired Roncalli, and replaced him with another nuncio who ended the experiment.

Father Wojtyla went to the Angelicum in Rome to do his doctoral dissertation on the mystical theology of St. John of the Cross. The foremost expert on this topic was the renowned Dominican theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, who supervised Wojtyla's work. Although Wojtyla learned much from Garrigou-Lagrange, a biographer notes the Polish priest was "disturbed" by Garrigou-Lagrange's opposition to the worker-priest experiment, and to the New Theology that supported it.²

Father Wojtyla wrote articles that appeared in the "socialist-inclined" Catholic publication *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a newspaper that regularly infuriated Poland's Primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.³ The Primate's humor worsened when an Archbishop went behind his back to have Wojtyla appointed bishop. When Wyszyński later called Wojtyla "an opportunist," it was not a compliment.⁴

Poland's new bishop continued writing articles, and even poetry, and acquired a reputation as a progressive. His most notable writing accomplishment was the *book Love And Responsibility*, a primer and apologia for natural family planning that was translated into English

in 1960. The book contained a foreword by Wojtyla's friend, Father Henri de Lubac, a Jesuit neo-modernist whose theology was condemned by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*.

The two met again at the Second Vatican Council. De Lubac had been rehabilitated by Pope John XXIII, a rehabilitation that did not involve De Lubac modifying his neo-modernism. De Lubac and Bishop Wojtyla collaborated on the Council document *Gaudium et Spes*, a document repeatedly cited by Pope John Paul II. Recalling this experience, the Pope remarked:

"I am particularly indebted to Father Yves Congar⁵ and to Father Henri de Lubac. I still remember today the words with which the latter encouraged me to persevere in the line of thought that I had taken up during the discussion ... From that moment on I enjoyed a special friendship with Father de Lubac."⁶

The Pope does not elaborate on the line of thought De Lubac encouraged him on, but it is known that De Lubac's theology tended to supernaturalize the natural, and that he laid stress on two precepts. First, that by His Incarnation, Christ united Himself with every man. Second, that Revelation is "anthropocentric," that is man-centered: it consists of God "revealing man to himself". Karol Wojtyla has also stressed these precepts, both before and after becoming Pope John Paul II. Each precept can be understood in a traditional sense. Each precept can also be understood according to the thesis of universal salvation, whereby the union of Christ with every man is not merely a material union but a formal, supernatural one. In this understanding, God "revealing man to himself" means man realizing that he innately possesses a supernatural union of sanctifying grace with Christ, and is therefore already "saved".

In 1976 Cardinal Wojtyla gave a series of Lenten conferences to Paul VI and members of the Roman Curia. He stressed *Gaudium et Spes*, and the two precepts noted above. The conferences were later published as a book, *Sign of Contradiction*.⁷ Enter Father Dormann, who made Cardinal Wojtyla's conferences the subject of his first volume.⁸

Dormann's Thesis

Dormann became interested in John Paul II after the Pope hosted the first Assisi Event in 1986. Convinced that Assisi had no parallels in Church Tradition or teaching, Dormann began studying the thought of John Paul II to understand how Assisi fit into the Catholic religion. He began with an analysis of the Pope's pre-papal thinking, as evidenced in Cardinal Wojtyla's Lenten lectures of 1976.

Dormann asserted that Cardinal Wojtyla used several sections of *Gaudium et Spes* to covertly advance the thesis of universal salvation. According to Dormann, Cardinal Wojtyla accomplished this by a combination of what he said and what he didn't say. Concerning salvation, Dormann documented that Cardinal Wojtyla stressed the "objective redemption" of all men accomplished on the Cross, and omitted the key corollary of "subjective redemption," that is, that although Christ's death objectively opened Heaven for all men, each man had (and has) to, as St. Paul put it, work out his own salvation in fear and trembling.

"The act of applying the fruits of the Redemption to each man individually is called justification or sanctification, the fruit of Redemption being the grace of Christ ... The subjective redemption, however, is not only God's work but requires from men, who are endowed with intelligence and freedom,

their free will and voluntary cooperation. In the cooperation between divine grace and human freedom lies the unfathomable mystery of the teaching on grace.

"Along the way to subjective redemption God comes to man's aid not merely through an inner principle, the power of grace, but also through an outer principle, the efficacy of the Church in her teaching, governing, and sanctifying, by dispensing the grace of Christ in the sacraments. The end of subjective redemption is the eternal consummation in the beatific vision."⁹

Hence the necessity of the Church for salvation, a point Cardinal Wojtyla neglected to mention in his Lenten lectures. Instead he spoke very generally of man's transcendental nature, which allowed him direct access to God, and dwelled on the fact that Christ had redeemed all men, "whether the man knows this or not; whether he accepts it or not".¹⁰

Dormann concluded that "Cardinal Wojtyla speaks of universal salvation in various terms. For example: The Son of God united Himself with every man through His Incarnation. Or: the redeeming death of Christ was the (supernatural) birth of man, regardless of whether man knows it or accepts it or not: `At that moment, man's existence (according to Cardinal Wojtyla) acquired a new dimension, very simply expressed by St. Paul as in Christ'."

Regarding Christ's union with man, Dormann asserted that "Cardinal Wojtyla does not understand it the same way as the Church has traditionally expressed it, namely as a material union; he understands it in the context of his thesis of universal salvation, namely as a formal, supernatural union".¹² This would make the natural state of man one of sanctifying grace, and

it would apply to every man who had ever been born. This hitherto unknown aspect of human nature would explain why Cardinal Wojtyla placed such repeated emphasis on a point that, in traditional theology, is not all that exciting.

But as for Dormann's conviction that John Paul II is an adherent of universal salvation, and that he believed this prior to becoming Pope, I could not completely share his conviction based on reading his first volume. In a review I wrote¹³ of the first volume, I concluded that even if Dormann was right, he was talking about the pre-papal Wojtyla, and that it remained to be seen whether Dormann could prove his thesis from John Paul's papal statements.

Redemptor Hominis

Dormann's second volume was published in 1996. Entitled *The Trinitarian Trilogy*, it was a meticulous analysis of John Paul II's inaugural encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*. At the time I was not able to finish the book as I could not read it calmly. I have since returned to it, and conclude that Dormann makes a much better case for his thesis in his second volume than his first. There is also a significant shift in Dormann's point of view. In his first volume he expressed skepticism that Cardinal Wojtyla's interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes* was a valid interpretation of the Council document. In his second volume Dormann declares:

"The theological message of Vatican II is substantially identical with the Pope's New Theology expressed in the Encyclicals. For John Paul II, Vatican II is quite simply the voice of the Holy Ghost. By ascribing to the self-styled pastoral Council the highest conceivable teaching authority, which he directly links up to that of his apostolic office, the Pope accordingly raises his New Theology, which sets

forth the doctrine of the Council, to an absolute status."¹⁴

In other words, amidst the confusion and debate over the "spirit of the Council" and the Council documents themselves, John Paul's encyclicals are the definitive, true interpretation of the Council:

"The 'Trinitarian Trilogy' is an authentic interpretation of the Second Vatican Council by the Pope. It should put a stop to the theological dispute over the 'spirit of the Council' and the 'correct understanding of the Council'. With the authority ... of the Council and the office of Peter, the Pope indicates the general orientation for theological thought and for the life of the Church into the third millennium. And this orientation leads to Assisi!"¹⁵

This logical conclusion raises enormous questions about the Second Vatican Council. For Dormann, the problem with the Council is not simply ambiguous pastoral language but a decisive doctrinal swing away from the traditional Faith. He is convinced that the hinge of the swing is the doctrine of universal salvation. The problem with this conclusion about the Council is the usual question of interpretation. Many of the questionable passages in Council documents may also be interpreted in an orthodox fashion, which is most likely the interpretation given them by the majority - but not all - of the Council Fathers. Consequently, can a Council document really mean something other than what the Council Fathers think it means? If it can, does such an interpretation truly convey the mind of the Council?

This vexing ambiguity can cause problems in accepting Dormann's analysis of John Paul II's theology, for the ambiguity of the Council is also manifest in John Paul II's theology. As Dormann explains,

"The theology of John Paul II is not easy to recognize in its structure and entirety, because of the particularity of the language, the meditative character of the statements, the associative circular mode of thought, the different purposes of the pronouncements, the heterogeneous bulk of material and subjects discussed, but especially on account of the use of traditional language and concepts, which, however, in the context of the New Theology undergoes a total change of meaning."¹⁶

Dormann acknowledges that "the thesis of universal salvation easily goes unnoticed for the average reader of the Encyclicals," probably because there are enough familiar traditional words to latch on to. In fact, the familiar sounding language could cause some readers to conclude that Dormann is merely inserting his own interpretation of the Council and John Paul II in place of a true interpretation. Whatever conclusion one draws from reading his analysis, it is undeniable that no theologian has paid closer attention to the words and thought of the present Pope's encyclicals on each Person of the Blessed Trinity than Father Johannes Dormann.

For what its worth, I think he's on to something. For instance, in *Redemptor Hominis* the Pope speaks of "the dignity that each human being has reached and can continually reach in Christ, namely the dignity of both the grace of divine adoption and the inner truth of humanity..."¹⁷ The traditional teaching is that the grace of divine adoption is given to Catholics alone. Yet the Holy Father explicitly applies the

grace of divine adoption to a state that "each human being has reached". He also links the grace of divine adoption to "the inner truth of humanity," with the obvious implication that "inner truth" of "each human being" is that he has already received the grace of divine adoption.

Such a conclusion omits original sin and the necessity of the Church for salvation, and there is no other qualifying language to the contrary. In fact, the Pope ends this section by asserting that "the unsearchable riches of Christ" are "everyone's property"¹⁸

Elsewhere in *Redemptor Hominis* the Pope states:

"What is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude ... We are dealing with 'each man,' for each one is included in the mystery of Redemption and with each one Christ has united Himself forever through this mystery ... man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God Himself."¹⁹ (*Gen. 1:26*)

It is *De Fide* that our first parents enjoyed a state of sanctifying grace, a supernatural dignity that was destroyed by Eve's sin and Adam's complicity in it. Originally created in the image and likeness of God (*Gen. 1:26*), the Fall caused man to lose his likeness to God (the original state of sanctifying grace). Originally created in the image of God, the Fall wounded human nature, a wound known generally as "concupiscence". As a result, even after Baptism man has to struggle against the effects of Original Sin. Christ's redemption on the Cross paid the debt for our sins, and the Church He founded dispenses sanctifying grace, which can restore our likeness to our Creator.

In the passage of *Redemptor Hominis* quoted above, however, Pope John Paul II speaks of all men keeping "intact the image and likeness of God Himself." He is speaking in the present tense of a state of human nature that ended with the Fall. If mankind really is in a present state of sanctifying grace, the sacramental Church becomes obsolete. Obviously, the notion that mankind is already fully redeemed and justified supports a thesis of universal salvation.

Also complementary to universal salvation is the Pope's assertion that all religions contain "seeds of the Word, attesting that, though the routes may be different, there is but one single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit as expressed in its quest for God ..."²⁰ As authority for this statement, John Paul cites "Council Fathers" like St. Justin, and the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*. But *Nostra Aetate* does not contain the phrase "seeds of the Word," and Father Dormann explains that, contrary to the Pope's implication, St. Justin did not apply the term "seeds of the Word" wholesale to other religions:

"St. Justin, from whom the expression 'seeds of the Word' originates, was the very person who brand marks the heathen religions of his time as so many manifestations of the demonic. The rest of the Church Fathers shared this view ... an unqualified rejection of these religions as idolatry."²¹

Father Dormann also notes John Paul II's selective Scripture quotations, citing several examples in various volumes where the Pope's use of snippets tends to create a misrepresentation. For instance, in *Redemptor Hominis* 8,1, there is quoted: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." (*John*

3:16) The majority of the verse - "that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life" - is omitted. The omitted passage, with its requirement of belief in Christ, is evidently not conducive to the thesis of universal salvation.

Dormann's primary concern, however, is with John Paul's grand themes: that Vatican II has created a "full and universal awareness of the Church (*RH, 11,3*)," and that the Council has given to Christianity a "more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ (*RH 11,3*)," all of which is part of the "New Advent of the Church and humanity," a phrase the Pope uses several times. Father Dormann interprets these themes as follows: the universal awareness of the Church is its new awareness of the reality of universal salvation; the more complete awareness of Christ is the realization that by His Incarnation, or by His Cross,²² he has objectively and subjectively redeemed all men at all times; and that the New Advent is the awareness of universal salvation on a grand scale.

Dominum et Vivificantem

The most recent volume of Father Dormann to be translated into English²³ is an analysis of the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, issued in 1986 as a prelude to the first Assisi event. Here we learn that, according to Father Dormann, John Paul II doesn't believe that the sin of our first parents caused a loss of grace.

What is tricky with Dormann's argument is that John Paul, in a lengthy discourse about Original Sin, never comes right out and denies that man lost his supernatural dignity through the Fall. Yet, inexplicably, he never says they did. While this is 'only' an omission, it is a remarkable one. And the omission fits with his declaration in *Redemptor Hominis* that man has "intact the

image and likeness of God Himself".²⁴ The omission and declaration clearly complement a thesis of universal salvation, however. Regarding the Pope's treatment of Original Sin in *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Dormann asserts:

"In the various subtle analyses of Original Sin and its consequences in human history, the decisive point, the loss of *iustitia originalis*, is avoided in a plethora of words. That is no chance: Original Sin in the Encyclical is not the same as Original Sin in the Church's teaching. There is no mention of the loss of original justice and fellowship with God. The difference between nature and the supernatural is missing ...

"Since according to the Pope's teaching the Father's covenant of grace with man is indissoluble, the Redemption through Christ in the Encyclical can only mean satisfaction for sin which is nonetheless committed, and its forgiveness but not the giving of grace and the Holy Ghost since man already possesses this anyway since Creation."²⁵

Consequently, "Redemption," for John Paul II, means universal salvation.

Father Dormann's conclusions just quoted are not made in isolation. He performs the same meticulous analysis on *Dominum et Vivificantem* that he did on the other encyclicals forming what the Pope called a "Trinitarian trilogy". In asserting the Pope is an adherent of universal salvation, Dormann claims to have penetrated the mind of the author of the encyclicals, in its grand sweeps and its little details - like another snippet from Scripture taken out of context, when John Paul, in defining the Holy Ghost, quotes Our Lord thusly:

"Whatever you ask in My name I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son ... I will pray of the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth ."26 (*John 14:13,16,cf*)

The Pope then goes on with his definition. However, Father Dormann notes:

"The Pope doesn't quote John 14:16ff completely but stops after the first words. The whole passage says: `And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him: but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.'"

Dormann concludes:

"If the Encyclical doesn't quote the full passage from John 14:16ff but stops after the first few words, even though there is still more said about the `Spirit of Truth' which is essential for the definition of the Paraclete, this can only be for the reason that precisely this important aspect of the definition of the Paraclete is deliberately omitted. The full passage from John 14:16ff is difficult to reconcile with the theory of universal salvation. The full passage shows clearly that the Father doesn't indiscriminately give the `Spirit of Truth' to all men, but only to the disciples because they know, love, and believe in Christ; but not to the whole world because it has no capability of receiving Him."²⁸

Another omission occurs when the Pope expounds on Christ's last discourse to the

apostles, before they began their mission to baptize all nations. John Paul does not mention the requirement of faith for salvation. Dormann does note, however, that, unlike the first two encyclicals in the "Trinitarian trilogy," in *Dominum et Vivificantem* the Pope finally mentions "sanctifying grace " .²⁹

There is much more of interest in Dormann's analysis, but space permits just a brief mention of two points. First, John Paul's theory that part of the Holy Ghost's "convincing the world of sin" (*John 16:8*) involves "revealing the pain, unimaginable and inexpressible" the Blessed Trinity suffers on account of man's sins. From this inexpressible (infinite?) pain proceeds the redeeming love of Christ.³⁰ Dormann notes: "The mythology of a suffering God comes from certain ancient mystery cults and gnostic heresies. It has nothing to do with the Christian Faith," which teaches that God "as the most perfect being knows neither pain nor suffering..."³¹

Second, Dormann notes that John Paul II uses both Catholic and Orthodox conceptions of the procession of the Divine Persons. Sometimes he uses the *Filioque*, that is, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. At other times he uses the Orthodox formulation, stating that the Holy Ghost proceeds solely from the Father.³² Regarding this age old dispute, Dormann quotes John Paul to the effect that there is "full harmony" between the Roman and Orthodox religions, and that the *Filioque* controversy is merely a "misunderstanding". Exactly why and how John Paul has concluded that the Catholic and Orthodox religions are in "full harmony," particularly when this harmony is sharply disputed by Orthodox Patriarchs, "remains," Dormann writes, "the Pope's secret".³³

"Enrichment of the Faith"

By now some readers may be wondering: Who's crazy? John Paul II or Father Dormann? Could a reigning Pope possibly have this many bad ideas? Or is Dormann guilty of a sophisticated theological character assassination?

You'll have to wade through the books yourself, and make up your own mind. But be warned. Reading Fr. Johannes Dormann's books on Pope John Paul II is like being immersed in a dream that gets more unsettling the more it is dreamt. The dream world is the world of ideas, specifically, ideas about God. One would think that the ideas a Pope has about God would be predictable, shadowless. Think again.

Dormann's work is a serious theological challenge to a reigning pontiff, and would seem to require some sort of response by the Holy See. To date there has been no response I am aware of. And it may be said that, whatever doubts one may have about Dormann's thesis, the present Pope has often acted as if he *does* believe in universal salvation: the Assisi events; kissing the Koran; asking St. John the Baptist to "bless Islam"; repeatedly asserting that the Old Covenant with the Jews was never revoked by God; his positive comments about Martin Luther and Jan Hus; his continuing apologies for the pre-Conciliar Church which, alas, was deprived of the "enrichment of faith" at the Second Vatican Council; and any other number of his other determined ecumenical forays are compatible with a thesis of universal salvation.

But, you may insist, surely the Pope realizes universal salvation is not a Catholic teaching. Even if he so believed, how could he reconcile universal salvation with the dogma: "Outside the Church there is no salvation," or the fact that there is no warrant for universal salvation either in Sacred Scripture or Tradition?

The answer is: by two more novel concepts, "enrichment of the faith" and "reciprocal integration of the faith". These terms first appeared in Cardinal Wojtyla's *Sources of Renewal*, a manual for Conciliar reforms. Here the Cardinal declared:

"The process of Conciliar renewal *must* be based on the principle of the enrichment of faith ... The enrichment of faith is nothing else than increasingly full participation in divine truth ... the enrichment of faith which we regard as the *fundamental prerequisite* for the realization of Vatican II is to be understood in two ways: *as an enrichment of the content of faith in accordance with the Council's teaching*, but also ... an enrichment of the whole existence of the believing member of the Church ... constituting a new stage in the Church's advance towards the 'fullness of divine truth,' (and) an enrichment in the subjective, human, existential sense, and it is from the latter that the realization of the Council is most to be hoped for."³⁴

Note how Cardinal Wojtyla assumes Vatican II is dogmatic in nature, to the point that he assumes "the Council's teaching" will enrich "the content of faith," that is, pre-Conciliar faith. But if the Pope believes that Vatican II taught universal salvation, a question arises: does enrichment of the faith really mean replacement of the faith? Father Dormann comments:

"The 'enrichment of the faith' as a dogmatic principle means ... a new revelation of the Holy Ghost which was received by the Fathers at the Council, who announced it to the world 'in the teaching of the Council'. The enrichment of the faith itself came about then immediately through the word of the Holy Ghost. The 'teaching of the Council' is

thus essentially the traditional teaching of the Church plus the word of the Holy Ghost.

"When the Cardinal stresses that the 'enrichment of the faith as principle and requirement is identical to the fact and aim of the last Council,' this means: *it is the aim of Vatican II to 'enrich' and to replace the previous teaching of the Church which was the foundation of the faith of the pre-Conciliar Church by the 'teaching of the Council'*. Thus the dogmatic and pastoral nucleus of the phrase 'renewal of the Church through the Council' is exposed."³⁵

"Reciprocal Integration"

Ever wonder why some Catholics see Vatican II as a "super dogma"? They may well be relying on the assertions of Pope John Paul II, who has completely contradicted the numerous statements of his predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI, that the Council explicitly intended *not* to make dogmatic definitions. It is John Paul II who has repeatedly stated that Vatican II was a work of the Holy Ghost, and used this and the Council itself as authority for the words and deeds of his pontificate.

Really, though, what other authority could he use if in fact he believes in universal salvation? For he could site no authority in Scripture or Tradition for such a view. One could say he was almost forced into such assertions to legitimize the thrust of his pontificate, for the Church admits of no "new Revelation". And universal salvation is certainly new, even when the Pope insists on categorizing it as "Revelation" instead of "new Revelation".

Such a categorization is a variation on the usual neo-modernist pea in the shell game (i.e.,

find the modernist pea under the traditional shells). For the Pope believes that universal salvation is *already* part of the deposit of the Faith. This occurred through a process that Cardinal Wojtyla called "reciprocal integration of the faith" at the Second Vatican Council. According to Wojtyla, there is "a relationship of reciprocity between the deposit of revealed truth and the Conciliar awareness of the Church".³⁶ He states this is not a "mechanical addition" of Council teaching to the Deposit of Faith; nor is it a "juxtaposition":

"Integration means something more: an organic cohesion expressing itself simultaneously in the thought and action of the Church as a community of believers. It expresses itself in such a way that on the one hand we can rediscover and, as it were, re-read the Magisterium of the last Council (Vatican II) in the whole previous Magisterium of the Church, while on the other hand we can rediscover and reread the whole preceding Magisterium in that of the last Council."³⁷

In case Cardinal Wojtyla's "reciprocal integration of faith" is still unclear, Professor Dormann explains:

"The previous teaching is not abandoned. It is and remains 'truth,' but the new teaching is the 'more perfect' or the 'fullness of truth'. It contains the universal aspect of Redemption (universal salvation). The relationship of the two truths to one another is defined as a harmonizing 'reciprocal integration of faith'. This consists concretely in us integrating the teaching of the Council - and that is principally the teaching of universal salvation - into the whole of the pre-Conciliar teaching of the Church, i.e.,

`reading into it' for it is not actually present there.

"Through the principle of `reciprocal integration of faith' the new teaching is attached to the old and anchored in the tradition of the Magisterium. In this way the indispensable continuity and identity of the traditional faith of the Church is supposed to remain intact and the new 'teaching of the Council helped to break through'.

"In reality, `reciprocal integration of faith' means `transformation' of the old truth into the new truth of universal salvation with the aim of 'integrating the Church's whole heritage of the faith into the post-Conciliar process of transformation ...'"³⁸

Cardinal Wojtyla goes so far as to liken the "reciprocal integration of faith" between the Council and the Deposit of Faith to the transition from the Old Testament to the New; one supposes this would make the `integration' of universal salvation into the Deposit of Faith a "New New Testament".

Since the new teaching of the Council is "already" integrated into the Deposit of Faith,

"All objections against the teaching of the Council and against its post-Conciliar putting into practice from the point of view of an untouchable *depositum fidei* are rejected out of hand. They lack the necessary 'respect' for the `teaching of the Council'. The critics of the Conciliar renewal who are attached to traditional dogma have obviously still not understood either the `principle of the enrichment of the faith' nor the `principle of the integration of faith'." ³⁹

If one of these benighted critics is permitted comment, here it is: Deo Gratias.

The Afflictions

Of course, the "reciprocal integration of faith" can only attempt to disguise the contradiction between the old and new faith; it cannot resolve it. That the present Pope denies any contradiction between the two sheds new light on his remark that Archbishop Lefebvre possessed "an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition".⁴⁰ It may be asked here, respectfully, how many orthodox Catholics share the Holy Father's view of Tradition, at least as exposed by Father Dormann's analyses.⁴¹

In *Ecclesia Dei* Pope John Paul II spoke of the Church being in - "great affliction" due to the actions of Archbishop Lefebvre. Yet for the past four decades a far greater affliction has occurred: an affliction of the faith by the novel teachings of the Second Vatican Council. In the past twenty-five years, the present Pope has, if Professor Dormann is correct, visited on the Catholic Faith the theological affliction of universal salvation. He has spread this in his encyclicals and in his grand gestures; in what he protects, and in what he disregards.

It is a distinct irony that our Pontiff, a master of many languages and hailed by all as a great communicator, may himself be the major stumbling block to the dissemination of his ideas. An almost instinctive reaction to John Paul's writings is for eyes to glaze over and minds to wander. For his encyclicals are very long, replete with repetition and circular thought, and seemingly obscure expressions and references. They are difficult to read, and more difficult to understand. His references to universal salvation are generally so well coded that they escape the attention of the uninitiated; and this may be

considered a mercy to the "People of God" - a traditional term for Catholics that the Pope has invested with an entirely new meaning. According to John Paul, the People of God are "every man and every woman of good will".⁴² Good will apparently trumps not being baptized, professing the Catholic Faith, or being a member of the Catholic Church.

Catholics around the world are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of John Paul II's election to the papacy. It is certainly a landmark, but what does it signify? The Holy Ghost's solicitude for the welfare of the Church? Or God's abiding anger at His people? A certain parable comes to mind.

Our Lord was walking with His disciples. From a distance He spied a leafy fig tree. When He came to the tree He discovered it had no fruit, and Our Lord cursed it with these words: "May no more fruit grow on thee henceforward forever." And the tree withered from the roots.

Adapting this parable to the present day, the attractive foliage of the fig tree is the "star appeal" of the present Pope: his status as a worldwide celebrity, religious figure, and statesman; his popular world travels; the World Youth Days; his writings, his speeches, his poetry, his calendars, his CDs, and so on. But what sort of fruit lies behind the foliage?

The Church he heads continues its decline in religious orders, vocations, liturgy, education, marriages and baptisms, and nearly every other area that is statistically verifiable. When I consider the state of the Church under this pontificate, I am drawn to reflect on the physical state of the Pope. Once a rugged, hale and hearty man, he is now confined to a wheelchair. His body, his limbs, and his facial muscles are deformed and misshapen. His arms and hands

are given to almost uncontrollable shaking. It is said that even his mind, at times, is not his own.

The remarkable physical transformation is explained on the natural level by Parkinson's disease. Might there be a supernatural explanation as well? Could it be that no one, especially the Pope, may afflict the Faith without suffering an affliction, or even a curse, in return?

Father Dormann's books available on page 17.

Notes:

1. Translated into English and published by Angelus Press.
2. Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, *The Biography*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1995, p. 155.
3. Jonathan Kwitny, *Man of the Century, The Life and Times of John Paul II*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997, p. 158.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
5. Another theologian condemned by Pius XII, and rehabilitated by John XXIII without having to forsake his censured ideas.
6. His Holiness John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher, 1994, p. 159. So indebted was Bishop Wojtyla that upon becoming Pope he made both Congar and De Lubac Cardinals.
7. Published by The Seabury Press, 1979.
8. Father Johannes Dormann, *Pope John Paul II's Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religions In Assisi, Part I, From the Second Vatican Council to the Papal Elections*, Angelus Press, 1994.
9. *Ibid.*, p.62.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 66. Of course, Christ's passion *did* objectively redeem all men; what Fr. Dormann notes is that Cardinal Wojtyla makes no distinction between objective redemption, which opened the gates of Heaven, and subjective redemption, whereby man works out his unique, individual salvation by cooperating with God's grace as administered through the Catholic Church.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
12. Father Johannes Dormann, *Pope John Paul II's Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religious at Assisi, Part II, Volume I, The "Trinitarian Trilogy"*; Angelus Press, 1996, p. 18.

13. *The Remnant*, January, 1995.

14. Dormann, Part II, Volume I, *op. cit.*, p. 12, emphasis in original.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 12, emphasis in original.

16. Dormann, Part II, Volume I, *op. cit.*, p. 8, emphasis supplied.

17. His Holiness John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (The Redeemer of Man), Vatican translation, published by The Daughters of St. Paul, p. 21 (Sec. II, Par 4).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26 (Sec. 13, Par. 3).

20. *Redemptor Hominis*, p. 20 (Sec. II, Par. 2).

21. Dormann, Part II, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Dormann notes that the Vatican II document *Ad Gentes* also contradicts John Paul's buoyant view of other religions as "seeds of the Word".

22. According to Father Dormann, at times John Paul has credited both events with bestowing universal salvation on all men.

23. Father Johannes Dormann, *Pope John Paul II's Theological Journey to the Prayer Meeting of Religious at Assisi, Part II, Volume III, The "Trinitarian Trilogy"*, published by Angelus Press, 2003.

24. *Redemptor Hominis*, pp. 25-26 (Sec. 13, Par. 3).

25. Dormann, Part II, Volume III, pp. 181-182.

26. *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Sec. 3, Par. I.

27. Dormann, Part II, Volume III, p. 73.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

30. See DeV 39.2, Dormann, *op. cit.*, Part 2, Vol. 3, pp. 183-189. In this section of the encyclical, the Pope speaks of "Pain, unimaginable and inexpressible;" in "the depths of God". Then he notes that, of course, "The concept of God as the necessarily most perfect being certainly excludes from God any pain deriving from deficiencies or wounds; **but...**" and the Pope resumes his theory about "inscrutable and indescribable fatherly 'pain'" (DeV 39.2)

31. Dormann, *op. cit.*, Part 2, Vol. 3, pp. 187-188.

32. DeV 8.1, as one example.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-97. Perhaps its not such a secret. Ecumenism drives dogma these days, and Dormann gives an interesting aside into the ecumenical skull-duggery used to forge an "agreement" on the *Filioque* by the Papal Council for promotion of the unity of Christians. Dormann concludes: "One can consider the Pope's thesis 'the Father alone' as an *hors d'oeuvre*

to the dialogue with the Orthodox ... Significant for the relationship of John Paul II to the dogmatic truth and for his thought aimed at harmony and unity is the fact that in the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* Photius' teaching (the Orthodox formulation) and the *Filioque* of the Roman Church sit happily next to one another (e.g. DeV 10.1;34)" (p. 94).

34. *Sources of Renewal*, pp. 15, 18, as quoted in Dormann, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 3, pp. 5-6, my emphasis.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 8. My emphasis.

36. By "conciliar awareness of the Church," Cardinal Wojtyla is referring to Vatican II's teaching. According to Dormann, Cardinal and now Pope Wojtyla believe the Council taught universal salvation of all men.

37. From *Sources of Renewal*, as quoted in Dormann, *op. cit.*, Part II, Volume 3, p. 33.

38. *Ibid.*; p. 34, 57.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

40. Apostolic Letter of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei*, July 2, 1988.

41. It would seem to extend to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). Dormann notes: "The new 'knowledge about the Church' is not only to be found in JPII's `Trinitarian trilogy,' but also in the document from the CDF concerning the `Church as a communion' formulated as follows: The concept 'communion' is found in `the heart of the Church's self knowledge' and signifies the mystery of the personal union of every (sic!) man with the divine Trinity and with other men and has its origin in the faith being aimed at the eschatological fulfillment in the heavenly Church which at the same time, however, is also partially and temporarily realized in the Church on earth. (Dormann *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 3, p.16.)

42. *The Wanderer*, August 21, 2003. In this address John Paul II compares the pontificates of St. Pius X and Paul VI. Pius X was mentioned in two paragraphs - the word 'modernism' was not - and the remaining eight paragraphs were a glowing eulogy of Paul VI, of whom John Paul said: "Twenty-five years after his passing, his lofty stature as a teacher and defender of the faith appear ever more resplendent to us at this dramatic time in the history of the Church and the world:"