

*Company of Jesus and Mary*  
*Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery*

## The Danger of the Old Manuals

*Re: An Article on the Magisterium of the Church*

*Author: Father Angelo Citati (Pius X Society)*

*On the site of the District of Italy of the said Society*

*Date: December 25, 2017.*

The charity of a good friend is what brought the article in question to our knowledge. At first it piqued our interest, which dwindled and flickered out as we read.

The article belongs to a priest of the SSPX, published on their official Italian site and so we can imagine that it has the consent and approbation of the said Society. The article is divided into five points and in the last paragraph of the fifth one, as a conclusion, it proposes the charity which ought to govern theological discussions. This intention of the author is otherwise praiseworthy and, trying to correspond to it, we will allow ourselves a comment. Without a doubt the composition of the article took some effort on the part of the author, but even so he begins with a poorly applied distinction, affirms without sufficient proof or against the historic reality provided by contemporary witnesses, he asserts and defends the principle of non-contradiction so he can contradict itself later on and to defend his own arguments he quotes authors who clearly deny those same arguments in their works. We will try to demonstrate what we are saying.

The article begins by mentioning the insertion in the *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* of a letter by Francis to the bishops in the region of Buenos Aires, Argentina which definitively vindicates the teachings in his document "*Amoris Lætitia*" regarding the possibility of giving Communion to people to whom Holy Church had denied it until now. In the face of an official teaching, an act of the Magisterium, contrary to former Church teachings, the author tries to explain the true notion of Magisterium and its necessity and indicates two contrary errors according to his conclusion. To justify his solution, "a middle ground between two errors," he quotes Fr. Reginald Garrigou Lagrange in his book "The Three Ages of the Spiritual Life" and affirms "Truth is always found between two extremes."

### ***Ad Primum:***

Fr. Garrigou Lagrange knew too much philosophy to make a mistake in something so basic. The quote from his book "The Three Ages of the Spiritual Life" is the one indicated by the article's author but it does not refer to the truth which corresponds to the nature of something but to the truth of a moral attitude by which man is morally correct or incorrect (good or bad) opposed to the disorder caused by sin. Here is the complete quote from Fr. Garrigou Lagrange:

*Chapter II: Practical Naturalism and Mortification according to the Gospel*

After having given a general idea of the spiritual age of beginners, it is necessary to speak of the work imposed on them to avoid falling back into sin. . . . Firstly it is useful to note two extreme and erroneous tendencies, on one hand a very common practical naturalism, which the quietists fell into, and on the other the Jansenists' prideful austerity which does not come from the love of God. Truth rises as if on the summit of a mountain between those two extremes which represent the contrary deviations of error." (Cited work, p. 377 in *capite*, du Cerf Editors, 1938, Paris).

Truth regarding the Magisterium corresponds to the nature of that Magisterium, with the limits and extension which Jesus Christ Our Lord gave it and Holy Church explained, and not to the moral attitude with which passive individuals want to see it.

Let us propose a similar example: If we were speaking of the Royalty belonging to Jesus Christ Our Lord then the truth would not be between two extremes, one that would exalt it to the infinite and another that would lower and limit it. Our Lord's Royalty in fact has no limits and is infinite and it would be erroneous to lower it even an iota. He has His Royalty because of His Divine Nature which makes Him reign necessarily over everything that is not God; by His own right since being united to His Human Nature He is necessarily the Head of humanity, by His prerogative of being at the same time a Divine Person and by conquest as a result of His infinite merits.

Therefore truth is not always, as the article's author says, a middle ground elevated between two extreme errors.

Because the article is established on a false distinction, all of its content is wobbly.

### ***Ad Secundum:***

The first error, below and to the far right of the author's solution, would be the sedevacantist solution with its varied explanations and which would go against the "sense of the Church." Here the author quotes Pope Pius XII teaching that the Magisterium in the Church is the proximate rule of Faith.

It is clear the Magisterium is just that, but here the author concludes two affirmations which do not necessarily follow:

- Holy Church could not subsist too long a time without a reigning pope
- Nor could She subsist without the Magisterium (exercised "*in actu*," in act.)

The possible vacancy of the Holy See has never had a time limit defined by any official document of Holy Church and, in fact, during Western Schism in which there were three popes simultaneously (obliged to abdicate by the definitive Conclave which later elected a fourth pope who was recognized by the Universal Church), the vacancy (because of the uncertainty) lasted for forty years. The True Head of Holy Church which gives to Her vigor and perpetuity is Jesus Christ Our Lord and not His vicar and that Head is never absent nor ever will be.

The Magisterium is not limited to the current teachings of a specific pope. The author refers to the Magisterium as something which constitutes Holy Church, which is correct, but he applies it in the same way to the Magisterium of a specific person and in that respect it is not constitutive to Holy Church. I will explain: The papacy belongs to Peter and there is only one Peter perpetuated as Vicar in his successors so that the doctrine is not restricted to the here-and-now (*in actu*) but rather to everything taught ever which is a more than sufficient source to discern truth from error in matters regarding doctrine, at least enough until there be a true pope in the Church.

In the same no. 2 the author, in the fourth paragraph (p. 2 *in capite*), makes an affirmation which he will deny further on (p. 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs).

The First Affirmation (p. 2, paragraph 4):

*“So we’re not the ones who can judge a priori, based on a prefabricated thesis, what authority a text promulgated by the Pope has, it is the Pope who manifests his intention (his mind, according to the commonly-used term) and we ought to receive it as such.”*

The Contradiction (p. 3, paragraphs 2 and 3):

*“It follows that if [a Catholic] is asked to believe, at least [in theory], in the name of the magisterial Authority, a proposition which is in logical contradiction to a proposition already taught by the Magisterium . . . the Catholic not only is not obliged to adhere to such a proposition but also, in good conscience, in the measure in which he knows and proves the contradiction, he is obliged to reject it, whatever the authority which proposes it: Be it pastor, bishop or pope. . . . Doing this he does not commit any error against Catholic Doctrine (as would normally be the case when the authentic Magisterium is opposed) because in the strict sense these propositions cannot be accompanied by the obligatory character tied to the magisterial Authority (even if they were inscribed in the frame of the exercise of authority by he who claims to be the legitimate owner), in so far as the Magisterium which already condemned them cannot contradict itself.”*

<b>Magisterium:</b>	The author distinguishes thus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If it teaches the doctrine of always then it obliges.</li><li>• If it contradicts the previous doctrine it does not oblige.</li></ul>	We would distinguish like this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It obliges because it is the Magisterium and as such it always teaches the Truth.</li><li>• If it contradicts prior teaching it does not oblige because in this case either it is no longer Magisterium or it never was.</li></ul>
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What is the Magisterium? (Ref. Salaberri, De Ecclesia bk.2, th.12, no. 504 p.655 BAC)

Munus tradendi Doctrinam a legitima auctoritate. (The mission or function of the legitimate authority to transmit Doctrine.)

This supposes two things:

- The Teacher must have: The power and office of transmitting the Doctrine (and therefore the Truth.)
- The disciples must have: The obligation and the right to receive instruction. (Because what the authentic Teacher [whose office is to teach doctrine] teaches cannot be untrue.)

It is enough then that the one who claims to have the Magisterial Authority shows the will to teach by transmitting a doctrine for his disciples to be obliged to assent, otherwise we would never know when we should believe or what things.

It is not that the Magisterium does not err because it is right (although indeed it is) but because it *cannot* err since it would oblige others to err.

Pope Leo XIII says: **“If [the Magisterium] that teaches could be somehow fallacious, God Himself would be the Author of error in man, which is clearly contradictory.”** (*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 28, 721)

In the same no. 2, p. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, the author claims that Vatican II “will be remembered in the history of the Church as the one that proclaimed Mary Mother of the Church.” This is an affirmation completely opposed to an eyewitness (well-respected in the SSPX, at least they say he is), Fr. Berto, Archbishop Lefebvre’s theologian during the Council who states with great bitterness that the Council did not want to dedicate any schema to the Virgin so as not to bother the Protestants. Regarding this, it is enough to read the book by Prof. Roberto de Mattei, “Vatican II: A History to be Written.” Published by MULLER in French, 2013, pp. 194-198, from which we have taken a lengthy quote which can be found at the end of this article. If there has ever been a Council scarcely Marian in the history of Church it was none other than Vatican II. *Contra factum non fit argumentum*. (Against fact there can be no argument.) (In the note, we quote the text of Prof. de Mattei).

### ***Ad Tertium:***

In the third section of his article, the author talks about a solution proposed by the contrary extreme or “extreme left,” that is, magisterial absolutism. Briefly put, the author defines this extreme as the pretension that everything taught or affirmed as magisterial by today’s “Pope” ought to be accepted as indisputable. Let us remember that we said that the author quotes authors as relevant to this topic, the Treatise on the Church, Card. Billot, Zapelena, Salaberri and others. (See his notes, p. 7, note no. 18 *in fine*.)

Let us look at the judgment the author makes about this “extreme left” position compared with his “middle-peak between two errors”:

*“The Magisterial authority, therefore, should not be confused with the coercive authoritarianism of the Scribes and Pharisees (of yesterday and today) by which they, taking advantage of their office, want the faithful to adhere to any doctrine. Those who have magisterial power, therefore, cannot be satisfied for claiming to oblige adherence to a doctrine to promulgate an act of Magisterium. It is not enough to write “Authentic Magisterium” at the top of a text. It is necessary to teach with authority, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, showing the doctrine’s foundation in Church Tradition and its continuity with prior teachings of the Magisterium.”* (No. 3, p. 3, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph which continues from the bottom of the previous page.) It is worth noting that these characteristics are those of the Solemn, Extraordinary Magisterium and not of the Ordinary.

Let us see what Fr. Joaquín Salaverri, SJ says on the subject in his *De Ecclesia Christi*, BAC, *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, vol. I, p. 701, no. 647 and 648, Madrid 1962, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. This theologian is mentioned by Fr. Citati, SSPX, (author of the article) as knowledgeable in this subject. (Note no. 18 in the article.)

*“Moreover, the Supreme Pontiff has in the Church **all the fullness of the supreme power** (Denzinger 1831). Therefore he ought to have it in every way that the Church has it. The Church has it in two ways: Extraordinary (solemn) and ordinary. Therefore the Supreme Pontiff also has the power of infallibility in an ordinary manner.”* (No. 647, cited work.)

*“Furthermore the Roman Pontiff, in order to exercise his infallibility in matters of Faith and Customs, which no one questions, it is not necessary for him to use the extraordinary or solemn formulae, which are the **Ex Cathedra** judgments strictly speaking. It is enough for him to use any other common and ordinary formula of those used to teach the Universal Church, as long as his intention of teaching infallibly is expressed.”* (Ibid., No. 648, cited work). “This ordinary way of infallibly teaching is used by Roman Pontiff when he proposes in matters of Faith and Customs any Doctrine to be believed and absolutely held.” (Idem, following paragraph).

*“Therefore from the certain and manifest intention of obliging all the faithful to absolute assent, we can infer the exercise of the Infallible Ordinary Magisterium.”* (Ibid. last paragraph before no. 649, cited work.)

## ***The Old, Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology Manuals:***

At the end of no. 4 the author of the article makes an astounding affirmation referring to the books that mention the Magisterium and that he himself praised in the note no. 18: “[Sedevacantists and magisterial absolutists] have in common the defect of not wanting to see the differences (*nuances*, in French) in reality and seeing reality only in the light of the principles found in the old, pre-conciliar Ecclesiology manuals (praiseworthy for their era), from that standpoint partly outdated.”

Here there are two grotesque errors:

- The reality of the Magisterium changes.
- Therefore we should change the manuals.

The author affirmed the same thing on p. 2 of his article *in capite*: “*Certainly it is undeniable that the concept of Magisterium has suffered a profound change during the last few decades, (it is enough to consider, as external signs of this change, that the number of magisterial interventions has augmented enormously and their solemnity diminished proportionately and that other agencies, such as the different Pontifical and Theological Commissions, more and more numerous and whose authority is not completely clear, have been added on to the traditional ones).*”

We should note first of all that the profound changes to which the author alludes are: The number of interventions which augmented enormously, the reduced solemnity and the new commissions. The reader will admit that the quantity or greater or lesser solemnity of a thing does not change its nature at all, in this case the nature of the Ordinary Magisterium, and that the alluded Commissions are the ones belonging to the Conciliar Church, founded to consolidate the changes after Vatican II.

The old manuals’ Ecclesiology is more than sufficient to explain what the Magisterium of the Church is and how much it obliges and when it is used since it merely reasons based on the dogmatic definitions of the Councils (particularly Vatican I) and the uninterrupted teaching of Pontiffs and Doctors like the texts we quoted above.

“The concept of Magisterium has suffered a profound change,” clearly it has but not in the mind of Holy Church. It has since the conciliar innovations. It would be the same to say “the concept of Holy Mass has suffered a profound change since the New Mass, in 1969, so the only manuals about the Holy Sacrifice are outdated from now on.” Just like Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci said that the New Mass deviated shockingly from Catholic Theology regarding the Mass, we could say the same about the new concept of Church Magisterium.

### ***What are the author’s motives?***

### ***What are his reasons for reasoning thus?***

Let us begin by saying that his intention escapes us even though the manifest intention of the article does not, that is:

- It is an error to say that the Magisterium teaches errors, even when it says that it is teaching and that the doctrine must be believed, it is an error to say that the Teacher is not there, that is, the Pope;
- It is an error to say that if they want to teach manifest errors and impose them that is Magisterium even if the Teacher, recognized as such (the Pope), says that it *is* Magisterium.

Holy Church defines the Magisterium clearly. Let us repeat the phrase by His Holiness Leo XIII: “If [the Magisterium] that teaches could be somehow fallacious, God Himself would be the Author of error in man, which is clearly contradictory.” (*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 28, 721)

For example, regarding the canonization of saints, Card. Próspero Lambertini (an eminent Thomist), in 1734, later elected Pope under the name Benedict XIV, ref. *Apologetic Dictionary of the Faith*, D’Alés, col. 1130ff.: “The Supreme Pontiff cannot put the Church in danger of error with relation to the rule of morals, by presenting a sinner as venerable by an act of full apostolic authority.”

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches the same thing: *Quodlibet IX*, q. 7, a. 16: “There can be no condemnable error in the Church, it would be a condemnable error to venerate as a Saint someone who was a sinner, because some, knowing their sins, would believe this to be false. . . . And if that happened they could be led into error (*possunt ad errorem perducere*).”

The Magisterium is what it is and functions as it functions. If it does not, then it is not, but not because we can decide what is teaching and what is not, (even though the supposed “Teacher” tells us that it is) but rather because it does fulfill the requisites to be Magisterium but it teaches and imposes error, therefore its author cannot have Universal Magisterial Authority.

Obviously if we deny that the mentioned Popes are Popes at all, it is ridiculous to go to Rome to ask for a place for Tradition next to the New Mass.

Proposing the solution of compromise, he is not proposing founding conclusions on the Doctrine of always (which is what we ought to do): He proposes diluting or changing the Doctrine affirming that the Proximate Rule of Faith can measure anything and in any way and that we, or, as the author says, “those who have the competence” (no. 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet *in fine*,) should decide what should be accepted and what should not out of what the Conciliar Church teaches.

This is pitiful. Either the author did not learn the Doctrine or learned what he received since his superiors in Italy published his article on the official page. This is doubly pitiful.

✠ Bp. Andrés Morello.

January 9, 2018

## **NOTE:**

Vatican II: A History to be Written. Robert de Matei, MULLER publishers, 2013, French edition, pp. 194-198:

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### ***The Antimaximalist Offense is Unleashed***

The sign of the antimaximalist offense was the publication, just before the Second Session, of the work of the same Laurentin, *The Marian Question*, in which the Marian movement was presented as a problem.—Surely the Marian movement is bountiful, fervent, prosperous, —wrote Laurentin—but isn’t its abundance excessive? Its intensity feverish? Its specialized development partly pathological? Contemporary Mariology, characterized by an “abundance of literature” presented, according to Laurentin, an aprioristic tendency because of its commitment to

unconditional exaltation of the Holy Virgin. It was necessary, then, to “purify” this tendency to make it more compatible with the demands of ecumenism and the new theology.

The minimalist line that he suggested following was that typically hypocritical Mariology of the “third party:” Not a Christianity *of the Virgin* in which St. Paul wouldn’t even be recognized, or Christianity without the Virgin which would not be Catholic anymore. This configuration was smiled upon by the moderate and above all the supported by the middle-line whose cords were well known by the theologian and news writer Laurentin.

Laurentin’s book was refuted in detail by the great Mariologist Fr. De Aldama at Fr. Balic and Fr. Roschini’s request. This last also intervened in the discussion with a booklet “The So-Called Marian Question.” . . . The minimalists enjoyed the support of John XXIII who, in 1954, that is six months before Pius XII’s Encyclical *Ad Cœli Reginam* which instituted the feast of the Queenship of Mary, manifested the irresolute character of his spirit in the face of the new feast and the Queenship of Mary, “fearing a great harm to the efficacy of the apostolate developed for the purpose of attracting toward unity in the Holy Catholic Church in the world.” This explains why the Pope Roncalli was open to receive the contentions of the minimalists who accused the maximalists of harming their ecumenism. Paul VI will share this minimalist line. His last intervention during the Preparatory Commission was on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1962 (John XXIII was pope) when he joined Card. Lienart against the proposition of conferring on the Virgin the title of Mediatrix which he called “inconvenient and even dangerous.” Fr. Bevilacqua confided to Bishop Helder Cámara: “I always point it out to the Pope when there’s a good book like René Laurentin’s *The Marian Question* or other books on the Council written by Hans Küng. He likes Rahner and Häring a lot. I do too.”

In January of 1963, after the First Session closed, the Council’s coordination commission decided that the schema on the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church should be treated separately from the proposal *De Ecclesia*.

### ***The Triumph of the Minimalists***

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1963, the day the debate opened, the minimalists immediately asked, through Card. Frings, to unite everything concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary into the schema about the Church to facilitate ecumenical dialogue with separated brothers. The next day Card. Silva Henríquez on his part sustained that in Latin America devotion to the Virgin Mary outstripped the limits of Christian devotion and the approbation of any schema on the Virgin Mary would make the situation worse. He therefore sustained the Card. Frings’ proposition in the name of 44 bishops from Latin American countries. Throughout that morning the same declaration was made by Archbishop Garrone, of Toulouse, in the name of “many French bishops,” by Archbishops Elchinger and Méndez Arceo.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> the hierarchies of England and Wales intervened in favor of Frings’ proposition. Meanwhile, the same day, a text was written by the Servite Fathers and distributed to the conciliar fathers in which suggested that regarding the title of Mediatrix for Mary the title Corredemptrix should be used as well. Fr. Balic, an expert of the theological commission, was distributing for his part a document in which he exposed the reasons for which it was necessary to keep a separate schema apart from that of the Church for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Card. Arriba y Castro, Archbishop of Tarragon, in the name of 60 Spanish bishops, declared that considering the importance of the Mother of God in the Economy of Redemption contrary to what had been said up until that moment, it would be preferable to adopt a separate schema on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The discussion continued . . . on October 24<sup>th</sup> the moderate cardinals announced that considering the great number of fathers that had asked for the inclusion of the proposal on the Blessed Virgin Mary in that of the Church, the Holy Father had asked the Commission to select two of its members to put forth the different positions. The Commission designated Card. Rufino Santos of Manila, as the advocate of the separate schema and Card. König of

Viena as the author of the incorporation. On October 24<sup>th</sup> the two fathers presented their opposed theses in the auditory. . . . On the 29<sup>th</sup> the following poll was taken: "Does it please the conciliar fathers that the schema on the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, be revised to constitute the sixth chapter of the schema on the Church? The results were 1114 votes in favor and 1074 against. The assembly found itself for the first time divided and with a difference of only 40 votes. The division corresponded to the two opposed theological visions and marked, although with only a slight margin, the victory of the minimalists.