

Müller ends confusion

DUELING CARDINALS:
Müeller vs Cupich

DEVELOPMENT, OR
CORRUPTION?

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This is the third in a series of reflections by Cardinal Müller on questions of present importance in the life of the Church.

Can there be “paradigm shifts” in the interpretation of the deposit of faith?

In commenting on Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, some interpreters advance positions contrary to the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, by effectively denying that adultery is always a grave objective sin or by making the Church’s entire sacramental economy exclusively dependent on people’s subjective dispositions. They seek to justify their claims by insisting that through the ages there has been a development of doctrine under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a fact that the Church has always admitted. To substantiate their claims, they usually appeal to the writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman, and in particular to his famous *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). Newman’s arguments are indeed worth considering. They will help us understand the sort of development that is possible in the matters touched upon by *Amoris Laetitia*.

When Newman started writing the *Essay*, he was still an Anglican. And yet, prior to finishing it, he left the Church of England to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. As an Anglican, he had been one of the major protagonists of the Oxford Movement. The movement aimed at achieving Christian unity by summoning all Christian confessions to return to the

Church's earliest traditions as contained in Holy Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers. Newman was an expert in patristics, and he was at first suspicious of later teachings developed in the Middle Ages. It was these that for a long time kept him from converting to the Roman Church. They seemed to him incompatible with the basic principles of Christianity, or at least not derivable from Holy Scripture and the earliest tradition of the Fathers. For him the Catholic practice of venerating the Blessed Virgin and the saints appeared to contradict the idea that Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity. Other examples of teachings that Newman considered exclusive to Catholicism and not based on Scripture and the Fathers are the following: papal primacy, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the sacrificial character of Holy Mass, purgatory, indulgences, religious vows, and the sacrament of Holy Orders. These were the main issues causing controversy during the Reformation.

At first Newman considered Anglicanism as a middle way (the "*via media*") between the Reformer's complete denial of tradition and—as he then saw it—the Catholic absolutization of tradition. However, his patristic studies made Newman realize that there had already been a development of doctrine during the time when Christianity was not yet divided. The need for such a development results from the nature of historical revelation. It is a consequence of the presence of the divine Word in our human words and understanding. The councils of the first eight centuries formulated the Trinitarian dogma of the one God in three persons and the Christological dogma of

the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures in his divine person. These definitions were the outcome of a long and difficult development of doctrine. Likewise, the dogmas of original sin and the absolute gratuity of grace resulted from the Church Fathers' great intellectual work, by which they successfully defended the Church from destructive heresies such as Modalism, Arianism, Monophysitism, and Pelagianism. Had these heresies won the day, all of Christianity would have been destroyed. Now the way to combat them was precisely to find new formulations of doctrine, such as, for instance, the pronouncement against Apollinarianism concerning the Incarnation and the assumption of all of human nature by the eternal Logos: "What is not assumed is not saved."

Of course, to speak of a development of doctrine does not mean to interpret historical Christianity in terms of German idealism, historicism, and modernism. Proponents of these currents think of God, or the Absolute, as a so-called "transcendental a priori," that is, as the subjective necessary condition of our reason and experience, which is itself prior to our experience and can never be the object of experience. Inasmuch as the Absolute is the condition for our thought and language, it cannot itself be expressed in words and concepts. According to this approach, then, all the dogmas of the Catholic faith are only provisional conceptual formulas that give expression to the ever-changing religious sentiment found in the Church's collective consciousness. "Consequently, the formulae too, which we call dogmas, must be subject to these vicissitudes and are, therefore,

liable to change” (Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis*). Following this theory, doctrinal formulas aim at uniting the faithful to the Absolute in a wordless fashion, but they do not in themselves really represent revealed truths. Thus, we would not believe really in God, but in the phenomena of our imagination and their echoes in our language. By development of doctrine, however, Newman—and with him the whole Church—did not think of a development in terms of Idealist philosophy as we have just exposed them. Such an understanding of development contradicts the fullness of truth present in the historical person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God.

A fundamental problem of modern philosophy is the relation between truth and history. In its temporality, history seems to be the realm of the transient, the changeable, the contingent, whereas truth is beyond time, always valid, and found in the realm of divine ideas. As such, truth is never completely within the reach of finite human beings, who can approach it ever more closely but ultimately can never get ahold of it. Christian theology, in contrast, does not start with the question of how—under the conditions of historical existence—it is *possible* to know the truth. Rather, it begins with the *fact* of God’s self-revelation in time. The Incarnation is not an *idea* meant to help us grasp the temporal significance of Jesus in conceptual terms. Rather, the Incarnation is a *fact* of divine action in history. Reflecting on it, the Church becomes progressively conscious of all that this event implies and presupposes. The understanding of the faith—the *intellectus fidei*—presupposes and unfolds the hearing

of the faith—the *auditus fidei*. Jesus appears in the “fullness of time” (cf. Mk 1:15; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10). In the “fullness of time,” God sends his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, into the world and into history, to accomplish his salvific work, reconciling us once and for all to God and directing our thoughts and actions to the truth and goodness of God (cf. Gal 4:4).

As far as the substance of the articles of faith is concerned, it is impossible to add or subtract anything. In the Church’s efforts to combat heresies and to come to a deeper understanding of revealed truths, there can, however, be an increase in the articles of faith. The *filioque*, for example—that is, the definition of faith that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*—does not add anything to the Trinitarian faith. This formulation merely gives a clearer expression of a truth that is already known, namely that the Spirit is not the second Son of God. Development of doctrine in this sense refers to the process by which the Church, in her consciousness of the faith, comes to an ever deeper conceptual and intellectual understanding of God’s self-revelation. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, all the articles of faith “are contained implicitly in certain primary matters of faith, such as God’s existence and His providence” (*Summa theologiae*, II-II, 1, 7). Development of doctrine is possible because in the one truth of God all the revealed truths of faith are connected, and those that are more implicit can be made explicit. After all, the doctrinal formulas are not themselves the object of the act of faith. Rather, the believer’s faith refers to the very reality of God and God’s truth in Christ. As St.

Thomas puts it: “The act of the believer does not terminate in a proposition, but in a thing” (*Summa theologiae*, II-II, 1, 2 ad 2). Contrary to modernism’s claims, however, the formulas of faith indeed refer to the knowledge of God. They are not just the fortuitous expressions of our subjective consciousness of God.

The deepest reason for the identity of Revelation in its ecclesial continuity is given in the hypostatic union, i.e., in the unity of the human and divine natures in the one divine person of Jesus Christ. The many words he spoke, revealing God’s plan to us through the medium of human language (cf. Joh 3:34; 6:68), are united in the hypostasis or person of the one Word that is God and has become flesh (cf. Joh 1:1, 14). The Word of God comes to us through the preaching of human beings (cf. 1 Thess 2:13); it is made present through human words, with their grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, it is possible and necessary to grow individually and communally in our understanding of the revelation that has been given to us once and for all in Christ. It is clear, then, that Catholic theology has always recognized the fact and necessity of the development of dogma. It is part of Christianity’s essence as the religion of the incarnate Word—the religion of God’s self-revelation in history—to affirm the identity of the doctrine of the faith along a continuous process by which the Church comes to an ever more differentiated conceptual comprehension of faith’s mysteries. This principle is inherent to revelation itself. As Cardinal Newman puts it: “The fact of the operation from first to last of that principle of development in the truths of

Revelation, is an argument in favour of the identity of Roman and Primitive Christianity.”

At this point we come to the principal question that Newman sought to answer in his famous *Essay*. Since revelation is the personal and dialogical self-communication of God in the medium of the historical existence of Christ and his Church, we need criteria in order to tell the difference between a real development of doctrine and what Newman calls a corruption. Development means a growth in the understanding of spiritual and theological realities, guided by the Holy Spirit (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 8). This growth does not occur from any kind of natural necessity, and it has nothing to do with the liberal belief in progress. In fact, as happens also in one’s personal spiritual life, it is possible to regress. A dangerous standstill can occur in the Church, for example, when gifted theologians and scientific institutions are not sufficiently promoted or when bishops are appointed who are ill-equipped for their eminent duty of teaching and preaching (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25). Bishops do not belong to the periphery, but to the center of orthodoxy.

The criteria that Newman unfolds are useful, then, to disclose how we should read Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. The first two criteria are “preservation of type” and “continuity of principles.” They are meant precisely to ensure the stability of the faith’s foundational structure. These principles and types prevent us from speaking of a “paradigm shift” regarding the form of the Church’s being and of her presence in the world.

Now chapter VIII of *Amoris Laetitia* has been the object of contradictory interpretations. When in this context some speak of a paradigm shift, this seems to be a relapse into a modernist and subjectivist way of interpreting the Catholic faith. It was in 1962 that Thomas Kuhn introduced his controversial and at the same time influential idea of “paradigm shifts” into the debate internal to the philosophy of science, where the expression received a precise, technical meaning. Apart from this context, however, this term also has an everyday use, referring to any form of fundamental change in theoretical forms of thought and social behavior. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8)—this is, in contrast, our paradigm, which we will not exchange for any other. “For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:11).

Countering the Gnostics, who tried to make themselves seem important by contriving ever new revelations and insights, Saint Irenaeus of Lyon wrote: “Know that He brought all novelty, by bringing Himself who had been announced.” In the second half of the second century, Irenaeus worked out the formal principles of the Catholic faith as he responded to the gnostic challenge. First of all, revelation needs to be accepted as a historical fact. This revelation is contained in the deposit of faith—that is, in the apostolic teaching—which in its truth and in its entirety has been entrusted to the Church to be faithfully preserved and interpreted. The proper method for interpreting revelation requires the joint workings of three principles, which are: Holy Scripture,

Apostolic Tradition, and the Apostolic Succession of Catholic bishops. The Roman Church in general and her bishops in particular should be the last to follow the Gnostic's suit by introducing a novel principle of interpretation by which to give a completely different direction to all of Church teaching. Irenaeus, in fact, compared Christian doctrine to a mosaic whose stones were arranged to reproduce the image of the King. In his view, the Gnostics had taken the same stones, but had changed their order. Now, instead of the likeness of the King, they have formed the image of a fox, the deceiver. One can in fact sin against the Catholic faith not only by denying some of its contents, but also by reformulating its formal principles of knowledge.

One may think here of the Protestant Reformation. Its new formal principle was *Scripture alone*. This new principle subjected the Catholic doctrine of the faith, as it had developed up to the sixteenth century, to a radical change. The fundamental understanding of Christianity turned into something completely different. Salvation was to be obtained by *faith alone*, so that the individual believer no longer required the help of ecclesial mediation. In consequence, the Reformers radically rejected the dogmas concerning the seven sacraments and the episcopal and papal constitution of the Church. If understood in this sense, there can be no paradigm shifts in the Catholic faith. Whoever speaks of a Copernican turn in moral theology, which turns a direct violation of God's commandments into a praiseworthy decision of conscience, quite evidently speaks against the Catholic

faith. Situation ethics remains a false ethical theory, even if some were to claim to find it in *Amoris Laetitia*.

Apart from the question of objective grave sin, proposals to reinterpret Catholic doctrine in the light of *Amoris Laetitia* also touch upon the sacramental economy, which is now said to receive its measure from the individual believer's subjective dispositions before God. Here one needs to recall that no ecclesiastical authority can disregard the order of the sacramental mediation of grace, which is based on the concrete relationships we live out in the flesh. Thus, it is impossible for a Catholic to receive the sacraments in a worthy manner, unless he or she resolves to abandon a way of life that is in opposition to the teachings of Christ. Indeed, for Newman the sacramental principle is among the central principles of Christianity, which cannot change.

What about the other notes that Newman enumerates to distinguish authentic development from corruption and decay? Some of them are most certainly worth reviewing to illuminate the present debate. We may consider the third note, which he calls "Power of Assimilation." According to Newman, a true development occurs when Christianity is able to assimilate the surrounding environment, informing and changing its culture, whereas corruption happens when it is instead the environment that assimilates Christianity to itself. Thus, a paradigm shift, by which the Church takes on the criteria of modern society to be assimilated by it, constitutes not a development, but a corruption.

In his fourth note, Newman speaks of the necessity of a “Logical Sequence” among the different steps of a development. For a development to be healthy, it must proceed in logical continuity with the teachings of the past. Is there any logical continuity between John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio* n. 84—which teaches that the divorced living in a new union must resolve to live in continence or else refrain from approaching the sacraments—and the change of this selfsame discipline that some are proposing? There are only two options. One could explicitly deny the validity of *Familiaris Consortio* n. 84, thus denying by the same token Newman’s sixth note, “Conservative Action upon the Past.” Or one could attempt to show that *Familiaris Consortio* n. 84 *implicitly* anticipated the reversal of the discipline that it *explicitly* set out to teach. On any honest reading of John Paul II’s text, however, such a procedure would have to violate the basic rules of logic, such as the principle of non-contradiction.

When “pastoral change” becomes a term by which some express their agenda to sweep aside the Church’s teaching as if doctrine were an obstacle to pastoral care, then speaking up in opposition is a duty of conscience. Hieronymus, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and other great Catholic authorities have attributed exemplary significance to the Antioch incident when Paul openly opposed Peter, who, on account of his ambiguous behavior, was “not straightforward about the truth of the gospel” (Gal 2:14). Above all it is important to recall that the pope, as a “private person” (*Lumen Gentium* n. 25) or brother among

brothers, cannot prescribe his personal theology and lifestyle or the spirituality of his religious order to the whole Church. Obedience as a religious vow is different from the obedience of faith that every Catholic owes to revelation and to its ecclesial mediation. The bishops are bound to obey the pope because of his judicial primacy and not on account of a personal vow they have taken. The papal and episcopal offices are at the service of preserving the unity of faith and communion. Therefore, it is among the pope's and bishops' first duties to prevent polarization and the rise of partisan mentalities.

All this means that in the exercise of its teaching ministry, it is not enough for the Church's Magisterium simply to appeal to its judicial or disciplinary power as if its teachings were nothing but a matter of legal and doctrinal positivism. Rather, the Magisterium must seek to present a convincing case, showing how its presentation of the faith is in itself coherent and in continuity with the rest of Tradition. The authority of the papal Magisterium rests on its continuity with the teachings of previous popes. In fact, if a pope had the power to abolish the binding teachings of his predecessors, or if he had the authority even to reinterpret Holy Scripture against its evident meaning, then all his doctrinal decisions could in turn be abolished by his successor, whose successor in turn could undo or redo everything as he pleased. In this case we would not be witnessing a development of doctrine, but the dire spectacle of the Bark of Peter stranded on a sandbank.

Recently groups of bishops or individual episcopal conferences have issued directives concerning the reception of the sacraments. For these statements to be orthodox, it is not enough that they declare their conformity with the pope's presumed intentions in *Amoris Laetitia*. They are orthodox only if they agree with the words of Christ preserved in the deposit of faith. Similarly, when cardinals, bishops, priests, and laity ask the pope for clarity on these matters, what they request is not a clarification of the pope's opinion. What they seek is clarity regarding the continuity of the pope's teaching in *Amoris Laetitia* with the rest of tradition.

Those who seek to accommodate the gospel message to the mentality of this world, invoking the authority of Cardinal Newman in their efforts, should consider what he says about the Church's continuity of type. According to Newman, the true Church can be identified by the unchanging way in which the world has perceived her through the centuries, even amidst many developments. As Newman says, in the world's eyes the Church is "a religious communion claiming a divine commission, and holding all other religious bodies around it heretical or infidel; it is a well-organized, well-disciplined body." This communion "is spread over the known world; it may be weak or insignificant locally, but it is strong on the whole from its continuity," and it is "a natural enemy to governments external to itself; it is intolerant and engrossing, and tends to a new modelling of society; it breaks laws, it divides families. It is a gross superstition; it is charged with the foulest crimes; it is despised by the

intellect of the day.” Newman concludes: “And there is but one communion such. Place this description before Pliny or Julian; place it before Frederick the Second or Guizot. . . . Each knows at once, without asking a question, who is meant by it.” Where would Newman find such a communion today?

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Cardinal Cupich Misreads Vatican II on Conscience

Richard A. Spinello



Just a few short weeks after the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, spoke about *Amoris Laetitia* as a paradigm shift for the Church, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago has reiterated the same portentous message. In a lengthy address given to the Von Hügel Institute of St. Edmund's College on February 9, Cupich describes Pope Francis' revolution of mercy as a "new paradigm of catholicity." In his speech, the Cardinal takes us down a sinuous path of new hermeneutical principles and paradigm shifts that will presumably allow the Church to confront the diverse challenges of contemporary culture, including the "complex realities" that families and married couples currently encounter. Family life has always been a challenge, and it's never really clear what makes the situation so overwhelmingly complex today that it demands a whole new moral synthesis or a radical revision of pastoral practice. While much of this rambling speech is plagued by oversimplification and ambiguity, I want to concentrate on one section that is especially problematic.

According to Cardinal Cupich, the synodal church envisioned by Pope Francis is called to “accompany” families and married couples through a dynamic balance between teaching and learning. The Church and its minister can no longer approach moral issues from a perch in the clouds. There is no room for paternalism or authoritarian intervention. When confronted with the acute challenges of marital life, the Church cannot simply refer to the law or provide general solutions for resolving “complex,” particular problems. Rather, each person must be invited to assume more responsibility for their own moral development and engage in sincere moral discernment. The primacy of universal moral law must be replaced by the primacy of conscience. Therefore, we cannot even begin to comprehend this process of delegating responsibility and accompaniment without also understanding the plenary role of conscience in the moral life. Cardinal Cupich declares that *Amoris Laetitia* gives us a new hermeneutic (or interpretation) of conscience, which traces its roots back to the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*.

In that document, the Council Fathers addressed the theme of conscience in a single succinct paragraph called “The Dignity of Conscience.” Here we supposedly find a more nuanced and supple understanding of conscience that has been obscured in the post-Conciliar Church. Cardinal Cupich cites the work of moral theologians like Conor Kelly, who claim that *Gaudium et Spes* represents a new moment in the Church’s perception of conscience. Kelly finds warrant for this interpretation in one revealing line of paragraph 16 that describes conscience as “the most secret core and sanctuary of

man ... [where] he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.” This presentation of conscience as a sort of personal sanctuary, where humanity and divinity meet, demands that the Church take seriously the discernment of married couples and families, since, in Cupich’s words, conscience now represents God’s “personal guidance for the particularities of their lives.”

The new definition does not necessarily imply something unsatisfactory with the traditional view. The problem is that the traditional definition is insufficient because it underestimates the capacity of conscience. Conscience is far more than a judgement of reason concerning one’s moral choices, which should always conform to the objective norms of morality since they orient us to those basic human goods that promote human flourishing. Conscience has greater powers that must be brought to light and accommodated by the Church and its pastoral ministers. According to Pope Francis, “*conscience can do more* than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God Himself is asking” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 303; my emphasis).

Kelly argues that Pope Francis’s “personalist account” of conscience presupposes and builds on the revised definition articulated in *Gaudium et Spes*. Conscience is that sacred place of encounter with God who sheds light on the correct moral path amid the conflicting demands of daily life. And, as

Cardinal Cupich observes, that voice of God, echoing in one's conscience, "could very well affirm the necessity of living at some distance from the Church's understanding of the ideal," even if that "ideal" is one of the fundamental moral laws that forbids adultery. For Kelly and Cupich, by finally embracing this "conciliar understanding" of conscience, the Church begins to retrieve a tradition that has been present but subdued since Vatican II.

Cardinal Cupich's reflections on conscience, however, raise far more questions than they answer. Foremost among them is whether or not *Gaudium et Spes* really represents such a radical reformulation of the Church's conception of conscience rooted in the works of theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas. Conscience has always been regarded as an opening to the moral truth, including those true and fixed norms which allow for no exceptions. These norms which forbid the taking of innocent life, adultery, bearing false witness, and theft constitute the boundaries of morality, and their application in a particular context is not a matter for discernment. Is conscience now to be conceived as an opening to making exceptions to these and other moral laws, based on the concrete circumstances and contingencies of one's life? The voice of conscience cannot be the direct voice of God since, however it is understood, we apprehend its message only through the mediation of our fallible human reason which is shaped by our own personal development as well as by cultural conventions and prejudices. How then do we guard against subjective moral certitude and rationalization? Couldn't we be easily seduced into believing that God is

calling us to lighten the burden by finding that broad and easy way rather than the narrow path that Jesus talked about?

The fundamental problem with this misinterpretation offered by some moral theologians along with Cardinal Cupich is that they seize on this one theme from paragraph 16 of *Gaudium et Spes* while ignoring its broader context. To properly understand the doctrine of conscience we must examine what the Council is referring to in its depiction of the union of the human with the divine in the moral life. What precisely is the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* on the dignity of conscience?

When viewed objectively, it is surely hard to reconcile the conciliar doctrine on conscience presented in *Gaudium et Spes* with the novel teachings of Cardinal Cupich and Pope Francis. In the very first sentence of paragraph 16, the Council Fathers provide a description of moral conscience fully in line with the Catholic tradition: “In the depth of conscience man discovers a law which he does not impose upon himself but which ought to be obeyed; *the voice of this law* [my emphasis], always calling him to love and do the good and to avoid evil, proclaims when necessary in the ears of his heart: ‘do this, avoid that.’” Inscribed by God in the hearts of all men and women is this moral or natural law, “whose observance is their dignity.”

Quoting Pope Pius XII, the authors go on to describe conscience, which bears witness to that law, in more metaphorical terms as “the most intimate center and sanctuary of a person, where he or she is alone with God whose voice echoes within them.” In a footnote to this sentence they call

attention to the need for the proper formation of conscience by directing readers to Pope Pius XII's 1952 radio message, "*La Famiglia*." The pope explains that this "spiritual faculty" called conscience, where every person "takes refuge" as he "determines himself for good or evil," must be informed by the natural law along with the "commands of Christ," which reinforce that law. A person's conscience is the "faithful echo, a clear reflection of the divine rule for human actions." What resounds in conscience for Pius XII is the precepts of the divine or natural law through which God speaks to each person about what is right and wrong. There is no suggestion or hint that the role of conscience goes beyond beckoning each person to conform his or her actions to those objective moral norms. There is no intimation that "*conscience can do more*" than judge that this act is a good to be done or an evil to be avoided.

In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council Fathers go on to say that conscience unites all people in the "search for truth and in finding true solutions (*veritate solvenda*)" to moral problems. To the extent that a correct conscience prevails, a person turns away from capriciousness and blind passion and conforms his or her actions to "the objective norms of morality." Throughout the entire paragraph there is a continuous insistence upon the objective moral law and its imperative character.

Thus, a close inspection of paragraph 16 leads to an inescapable conclusion: it is simply inconceivable that the authors of *Gaudium et Spes* or Pope Pius XII had in mind a revolutionary conception of conscience as a privileged inner

sanctuary where we enjoy an immediate encounter with God, who sometimes temporarily dispenses us from a certain moral law (not “ideal” as Cupich says) like the prohibition of adultery until that law can be carried out more easily. When considered in its totality, the text of *Gaudium et Spes* offers no foundation for such a revisionist account that expands the role of human conscience into a locus of incessant moral discernment aimed at seeking ways to better approximate “the objective ideal” (*Amoris Laetitia* 303).

As John Finnis has pointed out, the thrust of the Council’s concise teaching on conscience is that the dignity of human conscience consists in its capacity to make known to every moral subject the objective truth about what should be done; conscience reveals both the universal moral norms and how they are to be applied in a particular case. What we hear in our conscience *is* the voice God. But that voice speaks to us through our natural inclination to follow those moral laws, inscribed in our hearts by the Creator, that will lead to our personal fulfillment and ultimately to union with him. If properly formed, conscience admonishes us and commands us to act in accordance with the moral truth, which always supersedes the demands of subjective feeling or social conformity. The mature conscience described by Pope Pius XII is the guarantee against the arbitrariness of the purely subjective, not a gateway to escaping the exacting demands of morality or adapting those demands to one’s circumstances.

Of course, while everyone has a conscience and is capable of moral judgement the operation of conscience is enhanced for the baptized Christian who can take advantage

of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As Father Norris Clarke has explained, through this supernatural grace we come to appreciate that the obligation to follow the moral law is not an impersonal imperative but a personal call of God who bids us to unite our will with his by following his commands. We see more readily that by adhering to the law we grow in goodness and truth, and thereby become transformed into a closer likeness to the divine.

Cardinal Cupich and those theologians who are eagerly carrying the torch for *Amoris Laetitia* may want to revise and expand the role of conscience so that it becomes a more resilient power that allows people to flout the moral law as they adapt to those new social realities described by the cardinal. Such a heterodox view fits nicely with the paradigm shift that both Cupich and Parolin claim to find embedded in the text of *Amoris Laetitia*. But this is a dissonant vision that is alien to the Catholic tradition's ethical discourse. It is also a vision totally incompatible with *Gaudium et Spes's* eloquent but inadequate treatment of the dignity of conscience.

BLASE CUPICH*

Introduction

Thank you for the invitation to be with you this evening. I welcome this opportunity to contribute in some small way to the important work of this institute.

“...curiosity about Catholicism is at an all-time high in Pope Francis’ pontificate.” I did not write those words. They appear on the webpage introducing the goals of the Von Hügel Institute. That growing curiosity in Catholicism, the site explains, is spawned by a recognition that Pope Francis is tapping into a yearning the Institute is attempting to address, namely the need for a worldview of reality, a catholic - with small c - view, that connects all aspects of knowledge and practice in a differentiated unity, offering a needed corrective in an era when pressures of specialization and commodification have left work and knowledge so fragmented.

I was intrigued by how the aims of the Von Hügel Institute are so easily associated with those of Pope Francis. At the least that should signal to a wider audience beyond the Catholic Church that he just may have something to say to them, especially if they are seeking a more holistic worldview. But, this appreciation of Francis also serves as

an invitation to Catholics to take a fresh look at his agenda and come to see that he is introducing a more holistic approach to being church, one that more fully unites what we know and practice in our tradition in order to better respond to the realities people face in their daily lives.

In a recent interview with Cardinal Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, he was asked about the difficulties some seem to have in understanding the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. He responded that the Holy Father is offering a new paradigm in this document, one that calls us to embrace a new spirit, a change of direction in the way the Church carries out its ministry, especially ministry to families. At the heart of this shift is a fully incarnational approach, which the Cardinal explains, is a two-way street. On the one hand the Church embraces the family with the Gospel message. Yet, since the family is already itself a Gospel, the Gospel of the family, there is a reciprocity to this incarnational approach that recognizes the contribution that families make to the Church's understanding and proclamation of the Gospel. In other words, there has to be a holistic connection between our knowledge and our practice, our ideas and our experience have to inform each other.

With all that in mind, I am going to address two topics tonight. First, it is important to understand that Pope Francis is not offering this new approach, this new paradigm for family ministry in a vacuum. In Chapter 2 of *Amoris*, he makes the case that the complex realities that

couples and families face today are singularly different from those of the past. If that is true, then a Church that claims in the opening lines of *Gaudium et Spes* to be “truly linked with humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds,” cannot ignore this contemporary situation. A fresh approach is needed, one that is holistic and catholic. In fact, as I will note in my conclusion, I am convinced that some people misinterpret and misunderstand *Amoris* simply because they fail or refuse to take into account the present reality in all its complexity.

In the second half of my presentation I will build off of Cardinal Parolin’s observations, by pointing out where I believe a paradigm shift takes place in *Amoris*. The Pope does this, I will argue, on a number of levels through a set of interrelated interpretive principles. This allows him to offer a new and holistic response for family ministry. Following up on his appeal for a revolution of mercy, launched with the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis is both inviting and equipping the Church through this new hermeneutic to take up this mission in a new, imaginative, and, yes, holistic way, especially as it relates to her ministry to couples and families.

I. The Present Reality

Pope Francis is convinced of the need for a new ministerial approach to families as he looks at the challenges facing families in today’s world. His description of the present reality in chapter 2 of *Amoris* relies heavily on the worldwide consultation of the faithful and the

deliberations of the bishops at the 2014 and 2015 synods on marriage and family. He masterfully puts on full display the complex web of still developing social, cultural, and economic realities in which families live. This situation, so different from the past, has created uncertainty as people take up the challenges of marriage and raising a family. The fact that family life has changed so significantly, he notes, cannot be ignored.

While Pope Francis amply covers the many factors that have created this new reality for family life, it is sufficient to highlight here just one example. For instance, consider how many of the former social support systems families have relied on for transmitting values and traditions have all but evaporated.

Robert Putnam writes about the impoverishment of social capital in his groundbreaking work *Bowling Alone*. His research shows that there are many factors that have led to this impoverishment of social capital, leaving people increasingly disconnected from family, friends and neighbors. One of the factors is increased mobility, which Pope Francis emphasizes. Globally, people today are on the move, many forced to flee for their lives in the midst of violence and famine. Others relocate to find meaningful work that pays a living wage. Being detached from the support system that earlier sustained and nourished people personally, economically and socially puts significant stresses on all families, no matter their educational or income level. Both parents often feel forced

to work to provide adequate and affordable childcare, while also meeting basic family needs. Less time is available for family life, let alone community life. Wives and mothers are particularly impacted in this situation. In addition to the fact that they traditionally have lacked equal access to employment and are paid less than men for comparable work, the burden of domestic chores often falls to women, so they are doubly stressed.

The lack of a family support system particularly impacts young people, who, for a variety of reasons, often feel pressured to delay marriage and yet are deprived of a value system their family life provided. As a result, delaying marriage leads young persons to cohabit, sometimes without a firm commitment to marriage. This brings its own set of issues, particularly related to commitment and healthy interpersonal growth.

Similarly there is a breakdown of other community based support systems. For instance, adult children are left to fend for themselves as they struggle to care for elderly family members or those with special needs. Moreover, deprived of these societal resources, families are unable to access cultural activities and participate in the life of the broader community, both of which are important to living a full and rich life.

Of course, none of this even begins to take into consideration the harm brought about by the alienation and isolation created from this impoverishment of social

capital, such as drug abuse and violence. Nor have we even touched on the seismic shifts in society, whether that be secularism, technology, globalization and terrorism, which affect marriages and families.

But, this one example gives us a glimpse of how family life today is so dramatically different from the past, leaving many people disoriented and uncertain about their lives to the point that the Church must find a new way to minister to them. Yet, we also have to admit, that in spite of the loss of so much social capital, parents and married couples have developed new strategies to fill the gaps. They have assumed greater responsibility for their personal lives and the care and development of their families.

With all of this in view, Pope Francis proposes a new response for the Church's approach to families. It begins with a healthy dose of self-criticism, readily admitting where the Church has fallen short. But, he also makes clear that in view of the new challenges families face today, there must be significant shifts in the way we approach and think about our ministry to families. *Amoris* is nothing short of the Holy Father's call to action, in which he summons Church leaders, both lay and clergy, to enter into a serious dialogue about how best to minister to couples and families in a way that is faithful, honest and creative. All of this will involve thinking about marriage more holistically on a number of levels.

II. A New Hermeneutic

The new challenges of family life outlined above call for a new response from the Church. The bishops gathered at the synods on the family were united in this regard, in the end voting for all the proposals by over a 2/3 vote and in most cases nearly unanimously. In response to the bishops, Pope Francis offers in *Amoris Laetitia* a new way of relating to the lives of families today by introducing a set of hermeneutical principles. These principles are deeply rooted in Scripture and Tradition and yet are profoundly attentive to the dynamics of marriage and family life in the contemporary world. These principles of interpretation, six in all, force a paradigm shift, allowing us to re-envision the Church's engagement with couples and families and open a pathway for doing so. As I discuss each one of them, I will also make some observations about their implications for the Church's renewed ministry.

1. The Family is a Privileged Site of God's Self-Revelation

“The Gospel of the family spans the history of the world.”
Amoris Laetitia 64

With these words, Pope Francis draws attention to a truth that courses through the scriptures. God has chosen the family as a privileged place to reveal how God acts and relates to humanity and the world.

This insight has enormous consequences. If we are serious about fully appreciating that the concrete lives of families and couples are part of salvation history in which God

continues to engage and redeem humanity, then at the least it will mean moving away from presenting an abstract and idealized presentation of marriage. Instead, we should begin with a view that married life is “...a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems” (AL 38). Likewise, if we accept that families are a privileged place of God’s self-revelation and activity, then no family should be considered deprived of God’s grace. Our ministerial approach should begin with the understanding that families are not problems to solve. Rather, they are opportunities for the Church to discern with the aid of the Spirit how God is active in our time and what God is calling us to do here and now.

It is not solely in the glimpses of perfection that families may reveal the presence and action of Christ to the Church. Perhaps even more often they reveal Christ’s action in their imperfect attempts at love and compassion, which permeate ordinary life (AL 57, 113). “The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes,” the pope explains (AL 315). In fact, Pope Francis, relying on observations of the synod participants, affirms that the manifestation of God’s self-revelation is not restricted to those who meet the Church’s marital ideals. It can be found in “true natural marriage” and in “the forms of marriage found in other religious traditions, even if at times obscurely” (AL 77). He also admits the possibility of God’s grace working in those involved in second marriages: “... it can no longer simply be said that all those

in any ‘irregular’ situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace.” (AL 301).

In all these ways, Pope Francis reminds us that the family is such a privileged place for God’s self-revelation that nothing can stand in the way of God’s grace. The presupposition must always be that whenever there is a family striving to live together and to love one another, the Spirit is already present. The task of those who minister to families, then, is to open their eyes to see, and to help families discern where God is calling them. All of this represents an enormous change of approach, a paradigm shift holistically rooted in scripture, tradition and human experience.

2. The Synodal Church Accompanies Families by Balancing Teaching and Learning

The first interpretive principle leads directly to the second. Because families are a privileged place of God’s self-revelation and action in the world, there needs to be a shift in the way the Church’s ministers interact with families and married couples. It should be marked by a mutual respect for the movement of the Spirit. Ministers must accompany families in a process of discernment. They must always do so by maintaining a balance between teaching and listening, so that all remain open to the possibility of learning from one another in seeking to understand the mystery of God together.

Thus, in a genuinely synodal Church there is no hierarchical distinction between those with knowledge and those without. As such, the most important consequence of this call to accompaniment ought to be greater attention to the voices of the laity, especially on matters of marriage and family life, for they live this reality day to day. This is the way a synodal Church acts (1).

It goes without saying that this will also mean rejecting an authoritarian or paternalistic way of dealing with people that lays down the law, that pretends to have all the answers, or easy answers to complex problems, that suggests that general rules will seamlessly bring immediate clarity or that the teachings of our tradition can preemptively be applied to the particular challenges confronting couples and families. In its place a new direction will be required, one that envisions ministry as accompaniment, an accompaniment, which we will see, is marked by a deep respect for the conscience of the faithful.

Certainly, the Church, ever faithful to the Great Commission of Matthew 28, will always need those who teach. This is why Pope Francis maintains, “In no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God’s plan in all its grandeur” (AL 307). After all, “the great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to a yearning that is part and parcel of human existence” (AL 57). The Church can, indeed must, be true to the teachings we have received, and so bishops,

ministers, and theologians should be ready to instruct, as those who accompany married couples and families.

But, it is always an accompaniment that involves a process of listening and learning, that “guides the faithful to an awareness of their situation before God” (AL 300). Accompaniment requires the sensitivity of a spiritual director or a close friend who can listen to the experiences of another humbly, not pretending to have all the answers, and always ready to help discern the movements of the Spirit in that particular moment.

But, the accompaniment also is an act of forming Church teaching. There is a continuum of accompaniment which undergirds this entire range of actions by the Church. And thus, as will be discussed below more fully, the core goal of formal teaching on marriage is accompaniment, not the pursuit of an abstract, isolated set of truths. This represents a major shift in our ministerial approach that is nothing short of revolutionary.

3.The Consciences of the Faithful are Essential in the Task of Discernment

The mutual respect in discerning the movement of the spirit in the process of accompaniment opens up a third shift, that provides a more complete understanding of the role of conscience. Rather than limiting the function of conscience to knowing moral truth about actions in the past and objective truth in the present, conscience also

discerns the future, asking: What is God asking of me now? This is how Pope Francis explains it:

Yet conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one's limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. In any event, let us recall that this discernment is dynamic; it must remain ever open to new stages of growth and to new decisions which can enable the ideal to be more fully realized. (AL 303).

The starting point for the role of conscience in the new hermeneutic is *Gaudium et Spes* 16 (2), which identifies conscience as “the most secret core and sanctuary of a man...(where) he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.” When taken seriously, this definition demands a profound respect for the discernment of married couples and families. Their decisions of conscience represent God's personal guidance for the particularities of their lives. In other words, the voice of conscience—the voice of God— or if I may be permitted to quote an Oxford man here at Cambridge, what Newman called “the aboriginal vicar of Christ”—could very well affirm the necessity of living at some distance from the Church's understanding of the ideal, while nevertheless calling a person “to new stages of

growth and to new decisions which can enable the ideal to be more fully realized” (AL 303).

In view of this, the Holy Father encourages pastors numerous times throughout the exhortation to exercise careful discernment. Pastors, properly trained and sufficiently familiar with the particular circumstances of those involved in this process of discernment are to take into account the complexity of various situations (AL 79).

It is hard to overstate the significance of this hermeneutical shift. By fully embracing the understanding of conscience found in *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Francis points not only to the possibility of accompaniment in the Church’s ministry with families but also to its necessity.

4.The Church’s Understanding of God’s Plan for Marriage Must Incorporate the Insights of the Faithful

A logical consequence of the first three paradigm shifts is the need for the Church to incorporate the insights of the faithful not just generally, but specifically into teachings about marriage and family. If, as the pope observes, the aim of Church teaching is “to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfillment than as a lifelong burden” (AL 37), then there can be no better teacher for the Church than the faithful who actively walk this path of personal development.

From their experience, we quickly learn that we have much work to do together. “Many people,” the pope acknowledges, “feel that the Church’s message on marriage and family does not clearly reflect the preaching and attitudes of Jesus, who set forth a demanding ideal yet never failed to show compassion and closeness to the frailty of individuals” (AL 38). Pope Francis calls us to listen to these concerns with a welcoming heart, and to take responsibility for the shortcomings that have led to these types of conclusions. As noted above, the pope himself reminds us, “At times we have also proposed a far too abstract and almost artificial theological ideal of marriage, far removed from the concrete situations and practical possibilities of real families” (AL 36).

The most appropriate remedy, of course, is to attend to the concrete situations of real families, inviting the lay faithful to help the whole Church understand and promote marriage and family life as a source of true fulfillment. We can no longer treat the Church’s vision for marriage as “dead stones to be hurled at others” (to use Pope Francis’s colorful terminology), but must instead see it as a living tradition that comes to its fullest expression through a dynamic process of reflection and development over time. With the insight of those who constantly navigate the tensions between the abstract ideal and its actual manifestation, we will have the resources necessary to articulate the divine plan for marriage and family in a way that inspires hope rather than despair at the awareness of what they currently are not (3).

5. Accompaniment that Attends to the Pastoral and Local while Upholding the Doctrinal and Universal Concerns

As a consequence of creating space for the work of prudence in the Church's ministry of accompaniment, a fifth paradigm shift is required on two levels. First, when dealing with particular cases, a pastoral – and not merely doctrinal approach - is needed. This approach must recognize that people “...can find themselves in a variety of situations, which should not be pigeonholed or fit into overly rigid classifications” (AL 298). Acknowledging “the immense variety of concrete situations,” the pope calls for “a responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases, one which would recognize that, since ‘the degree of responsibility is not equal in all cases,’ the consequences or effects of a rule need not necessarily always be the same” (AL 300). The result is not relativism, or an arbitrary application of the doctrinal law, but an authentic receptivity to God's self-revelation in the concrete realities of family life and to the work of the Holy Spirit in the consciences of the faithful. As pastoral discernment attends to the reality of a situation, the conscience based Christian moral life does not focus primarily on the automatic application of universal precepts. Rather, it is continually immersed in the concrete situations which give vital context to our moral choices. Here the Holy Father makes a unique

contribution to understanding the role of conscience in the discernment process.

In fact, the real shift towards a pastoral approach involves creating a culture of care, hospitality and tenderness in the parish community on behalf of those who have been wounded. In the particular case of those in second marriages, pastors must “allow them not only to realize that they belong to the Church as the body of Christ, but also to know that they can have a joyful and fruitful experience in it Such persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel” (AL 299).

Likewise, there has to be a balance between universal and local concerns. The pope stresses the importance of local variation in our global Church. “Not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by the interventions of the magisterium” (AL 3), the pope states. Indeed, as pastors attend to the distinct needs of the persons in front of them with all the complex matters of family life, “Different communities will have to devise more practical and effective initiatives that respect both the Church’s teaching and local problems and needs” (AL 199). But, while admitting that different cultural realities call for different pastoral conclusions, this is not to suggest that the existence of widely varying teachings among

regions (or dioceses) is a positive element in Church life. This is still a dilemma that needs further attention and study lest we end up with opposing magisterial directives even within regions that share a similar culture and realities in family life.

In this regard, Pope Francis has now offered a pathway forward with the publication in *Acta Apostolica Sedes* of his letter to the bishops of Buenos Aires and their pastoral, which confirms that their interpretation of *Amoris* authentically reflects his mind as being official Church teaching. It will now be up to all in the Church, particularly the hierarchy, to respond in a spirit of affective and effective collegiality with the Successor of Peter, ever keeping in mind paragraph 25 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (4).

6. The Doctrinal Can Develop through the Pastoral as the Gospel of Mercy Informs the Ministry of the Church

This final shift is the result of resituating mercy at the heart of the Gospel to the point that “we should always consider ‘inadequate any theological conception which in the end puts in doubt the omnipotence of God and, especially, his mercy’” (AL 311). From the earliest days of the Church there have been two approaches “casting off and reinstating. The Church’s way, from the time of the Council of Jerusalem,” the Holy Father insists, “has always been the way of Jesus, the way of mercy and reinstatement” (AL 296).

In fact, the Church's pastoral practice of accompanying others in mercy should inform and shape doctrinal development. "The teaching of moral theology should not fail to incorporate these considerations" (AL 311), Pope Francis urges, as they "emphasize and encourage the highest and most central values of the Gospel." In other words, doctrinal development is about remaining open to the invitation to see our moral teachings on marriage and family life through the lens of God's omnipotent mercy. This proper relationship between the Church's experiences of pastoral accompaniment and doctrinal development is the linchpin that holds together the other hermeneutical principles. Doctrine can develop as a result of the Church's merciful accompaniment of families because God has chosen the family as a privileged place to reveal all that the God of mercy is doing in our time. To deny this, the Holy Father warns, would make us guilty of the "worst way of watering down the Gospel" (AL 311).

Conclusion

As I said at the outset, the project of the Von Hügel Institute has given me a chance to take a second look at what Pope Francis is offering in *Amoris*, for which I thank you. Without a holistic approach to examining the questions of the day, one that connects knowing and practice, we end up with a fragmented and partial way of understanding and knowledge, which limits our practice. What emerges from this re-reading of *Amoris* is that the Holy Father is offering a revived hermeneutic that

involves a paradigm shift on a number of levels. He does that by connecting tradition and experience, teaching and practice in a way that better responds to the realities people face in their daily lives. I say “revivified,” since the word “new” is not quite accurate. In reality, Pope Francis is retrieving a way of thinking about Church teaching and practice that has its root in our tradition.

This study also convinces me that the failure to take a holistic approach in the examination of questions related to marriage and family life has led some critics to misinterpret and misunderstand *Amoris*. Instead of actually attending to the present reality of people’s lives today in all of its complexity, they limit their scope to an idealistic understanding of marriage and family. They also fail to see how the various issues related to marriage and family life are connected to each other, treating them instead as discrete questions. As a result, they narrow their options when it comes to responding to the lived realities of people’s lives, since their knowledge is fragmented and incomplete.

Pope Francis presents these interpretive principles specifically as a means to enable ministers in the Church to decipher more reliably and realistically the experiences of people in modern family life. Yet, I believe they give further evidence of the importance of “thinking in the round, seeing all of reality through its underlying unity, in the etymological sense of catholic...”, that “enables fresh

conversations and new directions, all geared towards the common good.”

Again, not my words, but those of your institute. Thank you.

as a New Paradigm of Catholicity

*Cardinal, archbishop of Chicago

1) Pope Francis develops this understanding of ministry in a synodal Church in his Address marking the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops. As all the baptized are anointed, he states, the proclamation of the Gospel is not something “to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The *sensus fidei* prevents a rigid separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, (a teaching Church and a learning Church) since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church.

2) Conor Kelly situates this understanding of conscience in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, particularly in *Gaudium et Spes* 16. He writes, “By taking this conciliar idea seriously, *Amoris Laetitia* significantly advances the magisterial understanding of conscience, representing another step in an ongoing process of development and reclamation of the tradition that has been active in the Church since Vatican

II". Conor M. Kelly, "The Role of the Moral Theologian in the Church: A Proposal in Light of Amoris Laetitia," Theological Studies 77 (2016) 922–48. Kelly refers to David DeCosse, "The Primacy of Conscience, Vatican II, and Pope Francis: The Opportunity to Renew Tradition," in From Vatican II to Pope Francis: Creating a Catholic Future, ed. Paul Crowley (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014) 156–69

3) It is worth noting that St. Pope John Paul II shared this conviction about the need for the hierarchical Church to be unafraid of learning from the members as a means of fostering within the Church a spirituality of communion. In calling for spirituality of communion within the Church he noted that "...we need to make our own the ancient pastoral wisdom which, without prejudice to their authority, encouraged Pastors to listen more widely to the entire People of God....(As) Saint Paulinus of Nola urges: "Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes". While the wisdom of the law, by providing precise rules for participation, attests to the hierarchical structure of the Church and averts any temptation to arbitrariness or unjustified claims, the spirituality of communion, by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of

**God, supplies institutional reality with a soul.”
Novo millennio ineunte, 45. Pope Francis is now suggesting that a similar involvement by the laity is needed in supplying the institutional reality of our teaching with a soul.**

4) Among the principal duties of bishops the preaching of the Gospel occupies an eminent place. For bishops are preachers of the faith, who lead new disciples to Christ, and they are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach to the people committed to them the faith they must believe and put into practice, and by the light of the Holy Spirit illustrate that faith. They bring forth from the treasury of Revelation new things and old, making it bear fruit and vigilantly warding off any errors that threaten their flock. Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are

sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 25