

SENSUS FIDELIUM

by J. M. R. Tillard, O. P.

Spontaneous &  
unhindered perception of the faithful  
when summoned to signs of Good  
into Love 18

For the theologian, approaching the question of the sensus fidelium means entering a field of research of which many sectors are still unexplored. And yet, today, as at the time when Newman wrote his famous article On Consulting the Faithful <sup>(1)</sup> in The Rambler of July 1859, the problem counts among the most important ones, both at the level of theological research on the very nature of the Church and at the level of the concrete relationships between the hierarchy (with its function of "magisterium") and the body of the faithful. I shall give merely a few indications of this.

For anyone who reflects at all deeply on what has been called for some years the "crisis of ecclesial authority", it is clear that one of the chief anxieties concerns the value to be accorded to the insights of the faithful in the face of certain statements or attitudes of the ecclesiastical authorities. Let us think for example of the reaction of numerous Christians, among them professional theologians, to the declarations of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae. Was this to be explained solely by a refusal to face up fully the demands of the Christian life, or did it show a deeper awareness of the real elements of the situation under discussion? Again, we may reflect about what is being sought and what is being lived under our very eyes, in every place, in numerous small Christian cells which keep their distance with regard to official norms, without however going so far as to cut themselves off from the body of the People of God. One gets the impression of a sort of halo surrounding what is said and expressed at the hierarchical level, but going beyond it and modifying it. There is some mingling of the two levels, but not full concordance. Should one see in this something to be deplored, a grave lack of obedience throwing doubt on the healthiness of the Churches (for the phenomenon goes beyond the limits of the Roman Catholic Church), or should one see here a source of vitality, preparing the Church to meet the demands of future times and expressing the mysterious purpose of the Spirit? Is it not true to say that the liturgical renewal and the ecumenical movement, even, in a certain sense, the Church's openness to social problems with Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum <sup>(2)</sup>, have taken their direction from suggestions and initiatives of some of the faithful, thus revealing to the body of the Christian people (the hierarchy included) what today no-one hesitates any longer to recognize as the explicit will of the Lord? The same remark is valid for the reappearance of religious communities in the Anglican Communion <sup>(3)</sup>.

In the cases just mentioned it was the faithful who especially represented the element of progress, and the dividing line passed, broadly speaking, between the hierarchy and the body of faithful with the theologians. In other cases the division is different. Thus it often happens that the theologians, who represent what might be called "educated faith", find themselves confronted by a combination of the hierarchy and the faithful, closely united in its support of some practice of "popular faith" and resisting every attempt to criticize the latter. It would be easy, for example, to draw up a list of devotions that the hierarchy does not hesitate to accept or to honour with its patronage, without perhaps promoting them, while these devotions pose grave questions for the theologian. One sees bishops exhibiting Saint Januarius' blood, venerating in processions reliquaries, whose contents specialists know to be not genuine, giving approval to associations which stress secondary aspects of the Christian mystery

at the risk of spoiling the balance of the mystery itself, fervently affirming "truths" that the theologian treats only with great caution because he knows their limits. Which is to carry the day - popular faith or educated faith? We must not imagine that this question is something belonging to the past, and that in our secularized world there is no question about the triumph of educated faith, except perhaps in some rather superstitious part of the Latin world or in some corner of the backward countryside. Popular faith has solid roots. A very important study might well be made, under this aspect, of the present-day charismatic movement with its links with a number of manifestations of old popular Christianity - healings, the pouring out of gifts like glossolalia, and the felt experience of the presence of the Spirit. Is this a healthy reaction "in the face of the rationalism that is gaining ground in our Churches", or a spontaneous but unreflecting consent "to the ready inclination that lies dormant in man, the appeal to the marvellous"? The theologian, being a specialist in "educated faith", instinctively hesitates to commit himself. Now it happens that the hierarchy, delighted with this reaction against "questionings of the supernatural", gives its placet. Is it therefore right to say that in this need of the People of God there is something more than the simple manifestation of an ill-trained or at least insufficiently enlightened sensibility? In the various Churches, few dare to give a categorical answer to the question posed in this way <sup>(4)</sup>.

Moreover, since the renewal of the various Liturgies has purified the official texts, suppressed secondary appendages, reduced gestures to their purest expressions and paraliturgical activities to a short minimum, in short satisfied the demands of "educated faith" in this sphere, there is springing up everywhere the need for rites which people like to call "closer to real life", "less bound up with dogmatic affirmations", "more spontaneous". Now it is obvious that this instinctive reaction comes from the unease felt in most quarters - even monastic ones - in the face of the reduction of Christian worship to a standard of purity. The more conservative and elderly regret the passing of the old ritual forms "which had soul", though they often admit that those forms had defects; on the other hand the younger people and those more open to the modern world long for celebrations in which the "more positive and engaging" elements of the modern way of thinking would be clearly in evidence. The clean lines, without doctrinal ambiguities, of the official texts suffices neither for the one group nor the other. Is it therefore true to say that these revised rituals, which are true examples of a return to authentic sources, are no more than a stage, a more "learned" breathing space between one more "popular" version of liturgical life and another? The question must be faced. But at the same time this statement itself emphasizes, in its own way, the difficult problem posed by the relationship between "popular faith" and "educated faith".

There is a tension between official attitudes and the spontaneous awareness of the body of the faithful, and likewise a tension between the demands of "educated faith" and the needs of "popular faith"; to us these two tensions (and they are not the only ones) appear enlightening. In fact they enable one to grasp the sensus fidelium, in its most usual daily exercise, even before any attempt has been made to define it.

Now, for the Roman Catholic Church this exercise of the sensus fidelium has consequences going beyond the problems posed by the relationships of communion and complementarity to be maintained between the different groups that together make up the People of God. And on this point the Roman Catholic Church clearly differs from the Churches or Christian communities that have sprung from the Reform. For her, in fact, this sensus fidelium is, together with what she calls the unanimous consensus of the Fathers and Doctors, one of the major threads making up the fabric of Tradition. She even sees in it one of the privileged means of discovering

the content of Revelation. For this same sensus fidelium, which often expresses a certain dissatisfaction towards the attitudes or declarations of the hierarchical authorities (as in the case of the Arian crisis studied by Newman, or in the upheavals caused by Humanae Vitae), is also the element upon which the Roman Magisterium, subsequently appealing to pontifical infallibility, based itself in the only two dogmatic definitions that it has made: that of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (in 1854) through the Bull Ineffabilis Deus of Pius IX, and that of the Assumption of Mary (in 1950) through the Bull Munificentissimus Deus of Pius XII. This indicates that the sensus fidelium implies infinitely more, at least in the eyes of Roman Catholic tradition, than just a force of balance or positive criticism in the face of hierarchical decisions, as is imagined in certain Anglican circles. It is also in the strictest sense of the term, to use the vocabulary of Max Weber, the bearer of a conviction on which the Magisterium itself must draw when it feels the need to affirm, in the most solemn and authoritative manner at its disposal, the content of the faith.

It seems worth while to recall the more explicit documents. In 1849, in the Encyclical Letter Ubi Primum, at the moment when he feels that the moment to intervene has come, Pius IX calls upon the bishops to inform him of the devotion of the clergy and faithful and likewise the desire they have for the promulgation of a decree concerning the Immaculate Conception of Mary (5). In the Bull Ineffabilis of 8 December 1854, after long discussions, it is the perpetuus Ecclesiae sensus which will be found in the forefront. The Bull begins from what can be called a "practical tradition" (manifested by the attitude of the faithful and their pastors) in order to show that it rests upon a "doctrinal tradition" attested by numbers of Fathers and important ecclesiastical writers. The indications given by Scripture will be set against this backcloth (6), which will obviate the need to pass a categorical judgment upon the objective content of the biblical texts (7). The same procedure is set on foot in a still more explicit manner, in the case of the dogmatic definition of the Assumption. In the letter Deiparae Virginis of 1 May, 1946, Pius XII asks the bishops to tell him "what devotion the clergy and the people entrusted to their guidance show to the Assumption of the Sacred Virgin Mary each in proportion to his faith and piety" and above all what they themselves, in union with their clergy and people, feel about a dogmatic definition on this point. The Pope justifies his action by the requests coming to him from the whole Christian people (8). The allocution of 30 October 1950 at the Consistory is clearer still:

We have... addressed letters to all the bishops, asking them to tell us not only their own opinion but also the thought and the desire of their clergy and people. In an admirable and almost unanimous chorus, there has come to us from the entire world the voices of the clergy and people professing the same faith and asking the same thing as supremely desired by all... As the whole Catholic Church can neither make a mistake nor be deceived, since her divine Founder, who is Truth itself, said to his Apostles: Behold I am with you all days until the consummation of the world, it necessarily follows that the truth of the Assumption, firmly believed by the pastors and by their people, is divinely revealed and can be defined by our supreme authority (9).

The Bull Munificentissimus Deus of 1 November 1950 appeals constantly to this shared conviction of pastors and faithful, a conviction manifested by pressure from below in favour of a solemn definition:

This remarkable accord of the Catholic bishops and faithful (haec singularis catholicorum Antistitum et fidelium conspiratio), who consider that the bodily Assumption into heaven of the Mother of God can be defined as a dogma of faith, since it shows us both the concordant teaching of ordinary Magisterium of the Church and the concordant belief of the Christian people which this same Magisterium sustains and directs (cum concordem Nobis praebeat ordinarii Ecclesiae Magisterii doctrinam concordemque christiani populi fidem), manifests therefore of itself and in a manner quite certain and free of all error that this privilege is a truth revealed by God and contained in the deposit of faith entrusted by Christ to his Spouse, that she should guard it faithfully and make it known in an infallible manner <sup>(10)</sup>.

In these two cases of a dogmatic definition by the Roman Magisterium it is therefore clear that Pius IX and Pius XII have the explicit intention of doing nothing other than clarifying and in a sense fixing by means of an official expression a belief already living in the consciousness of the People of God. The Popes' intervention comes second, and is conditioned by the lived content of ecclesial faith. It is this lived content, this practical tradition that, with different nuances and emphases, is shown by the different expressions used in the texts: conspiratio Antistitum et fidelium, consensus christianorum, communis fides, universae Ecclesiae fides <sup>(11)</sup>. I think it is fair to say that, in spite of the nuances, all these formulas imply the meeting, the linking the convergence of two great forces, on the one hand the spontaneous attitude and instinctive perception of the faithful, and on the other hand the more and more explicit accord of the various leaders of the local Churches. And since it is essential to be perfectly clear in a field where vocabulary is still fluid, I shall use the expression sensus fidelium to translate the first of these forces, in reference that is to the ordinary faithful. This is moreover how Perrone and Newman understood it, along lines already indicated by Melchior Cano: the sensus fidelium is one of the essential elements of the sensus Ecclesiae, one of the principal threads that make up the fabric of the life of faith of the People of God as such <sup>(12)</sup>.

Pius IX's Bull Ineffabilis Deus and Pius XII's Bull Munificentissimus Deus speak of a singularis conspiratio of bishops and faithful. We shall have to return to this important expression, the place of which in Newman's view of the matter is well known. But it would be interesting to show how in the two dogmas in question the doctrine imposed itself thanks to the tenacity of popular faith and devotion, which had to struggle against the indifference and indeed the resistance of the specialists in "educated faith", and which exerted itself to bring the hierarchical authorities to a more sympathetic and more open attitude to the beliefs in question. The Syrian Fathers <sup>(13)</sup>, Augustine <sup>(14)</sup>, Cyril of Alexandria <sup>(15)</sup>, Thomas Aquinas and the theological tradition to which he gave rise <sup>(16)</sup> can scarcely be considered as sympathetic to the idea of an immaculate conception of Mary. And when a liturgical feast begins to appear, Rome contents itself with tolerating this initiative and not commenting <sup>(17)</sup>. Later on, in the disputes about the title Immaculata, at the moment when the Holy Office, losing patience, wishes to stem the "immaculist" tide and return to a healthy sobriety in this field, Pope Innocent X, though appealed to, refuses to commit himself in favour of the popular trend. And Alexander VII himself who, especially in the Bull Sollicitudo, shows greater openness, remains prudent, and this in the seventeenth century. We have to wait for Clement XIII (in 1767), then Pius VII and Gregory XVI before we see the breach definitely opened, though this is accompanied by the resistance of numbers of theologians, particularly Dominicans <sup>(18)</sup>. It is clear that, in the conspiratio, which Pius IX later speaks of, the most committed element was popular pious belief. As regards the Assumption, we find the same process. From the time of the first liturgical manifestations in the middle

of the sixth century right down to the Bull of Pius XII, we have the impression of a slow process taking place within a network of apocryphal texts, of questions (such as that of Epiphanius), of anonymous texts such as the famous letter Cogitis ne that Paschasius Radbertus about the year 845 ascribes to Jerome, while the interventions of historians such as Le Nain de Tillemont preach discretion <sup>(19)</sup>. The 1950 declaration is the fruit of what appears (to anyone who has the patience to read at least the main parts of the dossier) like a slow conquest of the sensus fidelium. The decision coming from above seems more called for from below than imposed. To say this is not however to deny that, especially in the case of Bull Ineffabilis of Pius IX, other factors may have played a part, in particular the desire to assert papal power <sup>(20)</sup>.

One must then ask oneself the question (and it is one that will have many consequences) whether in the two extra-conciliar dogmatic definitions the Magisterium bases itself on the conspiratio of bishops and faithful simply because of the absence of Scriptural and other ancient sources of absolute evidence. On the contrary, recourse to the sensus fidelium and to the witness of the pastors of the various local Churches seems to belong to the very nature of what is called "infallible definition". Not of course that the Magisterium should be content with giving its placet to the opinions prevailing among the faithful. But is it not true to say that its proper function is to judge, authenticate and then clearly declare, by giving its guarantee (coming from a special assistance of the Spirit), to what is being lived and expressed, more or less adequately, among the People of God taken as a whole? And this in such a way that its declarations, though carrying a mark that comes and can come only from itself, because of its proper charisma, would all be relative to what the faith and devotion of the faithful have themselves caused to spring up. The specific action of the Magisterium and the action native to the faithful would thus be complementary principles of the Church's faithful adhesion to a fact coming to her from the Holy Spirit. Cut off from this essential reference to a "lived truth" which in a certain way precedes and conditions it, the act of the Roman Magisterium involved in what is called "dogmatic definition" has no meaning any more: it is a decision without an object.

This point seems to us important for a close study of the two "dogmatic definitions" we have mentioned. The process involved is very different from that which takes place when it is a question of a conciliar decision made by the whole assembly of the episcopate. For the sensus fidelium constitutes as it were the material which is taken up and refined in the "definition", and this to the extent that the definition is unintelligible unless it is taken as forming one whole with that which evoked it. It is impossible therefore to discover its true dogmatic import without having recourse to a serious analysis of the faith and devotion upon which it continues to be based. To put it in another way, the fact that the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Mary are "defined" and therefore fixed in precise, clear-cut formulas in no way alters the fact that we are concerned with an intervention of the Magisterium bearing upon two strong currents of popular faith and devotion. One does not therefore judge Pius XII's dogma in the same way as one judges that of Nicaea, nor does one give it the same bearing. We are here in two different registers. And one is not depreciating the value of the Roman Magisterium's action when one says that it is here exercised in regard to less essential aspects of the data of faith than when it is exercised in a decision of a Council. This perhaps helps one to understand more clearly why the two recent dogmas were motivated not by the need to defend the faith but by the need to fix popular fervour.

If what I have just stressed is correct, the conclusion must be that in what other Churches see as "her most autocratic pretension" to exer-

cise authority, the Roman Church in fact finds herself strictly dependent upon the body of the faithful. This shows the part played by the sensus fidelium, whose nature we propose to examine a little.

\*  
\* \*

It seems to me impossible to understand in depth the nature, function and therefore scope of the sensus fidelium without situating it within a global theology of the action of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the People of God. In fact only a theology centred upon the relation of the Spirit to the body of the Church as a whole makes it possible to pass beyond the dead-end into which one is led by a downward view which pictures the whole ecclesial reality as hanging upon a participation by the "simple faithful" in a knowledge of the Christian mystery which is first communicated to the hierarchy and given in its fullness only to the latter. The Holy Spirit himself, who gives each believer new life, leads him to a knowledge of the mystery of Christ in a fashion that is meant to benefit the whole body of believers. The whole of the ecclesial body; by a sort of interaction and complementarity of charismata and functions, must "enter into the truth". Indeed, even at the level of the understanding of the content of Revelation and of the rendering explicit of certain of its elements, those faithful who have no hierarchical responsibility cannot be seen as simply receiving what is determined by the heads of the Church enlightened by the researches of theologians or other specialists in "educated faith"; the faithful have a specific part to play in this understanding by the whole Church of the truth given in Jesus Christ (21).

To back up this statement, one could make reference to a series of texts from the Pauline corpus, texts which show how, on the basis of faith, the Holy Spirit brings Christians little by little to a progressive penetration of the mystery of Christ. This collection of texts has been studied at length by Dom Dupont and Mgr Cerfaux (22). For Paul, the wisdom spoken of in the first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 2:6-16) which has its source in the Spirit of God, leads to an intimate grasp of the mysteries of God. And this is meant to be the rule for all believers: understanding of the mystery of Christ goes hand-in-hand with growth in the life of faith and in charity.

But the Johannine texts are undoubtedly more explicit, and they deserve a more detailed examination. The Fourth Gospel presents the Spirit of truth, promised by Jesus, as him who must guide (ὁδηγέω) the disciples, not to a new revelation but to a deeper perception of the mystery of Jesus (thus Jn 14:26; 16:12-15). It seems clear that John is not thinking here merely of an intellectual understanding but of a more complete knowledge granted thanks to a life lived in conformity with what is manifest in the words and actions of Jesus (23). Now this knowledge is in no way divorced from the time factor: "when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come" (16:13). If one is to believe the best specialists in Johannine thought, this "telling" (ἀναγγέλλω) involves not so much an announcement of the future as "an interpretation", "a reading in depth", for each generation to come, of what Jesus and his work mean (24). Thus the Spirit brings an understanding, from within, in the light of faith, of the words, signs and actions of Jesus. He manifests the rich content and implications of those words, signs and actions. In short, he leads believers to the very heart of the truth of Jesus (25). And he affiliates them to this truth:

It is thus by the secret action of the Paraclete that the message of Jesus ceases to remain outside us and foreign to us. The

Holy Spirit interiorizes it in us, and helps us to penetrate it spiritually, in order that we may find therein a word of life. This word of Jesus, assimilated in faith through the action of the Spirit, is what John will call in his first letter "the anointing" that remains in us (1 Jn 2:27); the teaching of Jesus, present in the believer, gives him the intimate meaning of the truth (vv. 20-21), and instructs him in all things; the Christian is henceforth "born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). Having arrived at this degree of spiritual maturity, he has no more need to be taught (1 Jn 2:27): the only thing that still matters is that he should remain in Jesus and allow himself to be taught by God (cf. Jn 6:45).<sup>(26)</sup>

The verses of John's first epistle which have just been alluded to are themselves of central importance. Perhaps they ought to be read against the background of the passages of Jeremiah and Ezechiel on the new alliance: "I will put my spirit into you and make you conform to my statutes" (Ez 36:27); "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest..." (Jr 31: 33-34)<sup>(27)</sup>. The author explains to his readers:

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and have all received the knowledge.. But you have not lost the anointing he gave you, and you do not need anyone to teach you; the anointing he gave teaches you everything; you are anointed with truth, not with a lie, and as it has taught you, so you must stay in him (1 Jn 2: 20, 27) <sup>(28)</sup>.

In the context, which contrasts the Antichrists and the true Christians, this statement certainly intends to underline the fact that the faithful bear within themselves a sense of the truth, "a sure instinct that gives the ability to recognize it" <sup>(29)</sup>, for they remain in Christ. The anointing under discussion here is Christ's word, the truth which remains in the believers as a permanent source that does not cease to teach them all things. Hence the affirmation "you do not need anyone to teach you". We are concerned all the while with the Johannine concept of faith. The word of Jesus, proclaimed and received in the Church, becomes progressively interiorized in the hearts of the faithful through the action of the Spirit, an action completely directed towards full communion with God in which the barriers disappear little by little. We have here a dynamism consisting not in the addition of new truths but, on the contrary, in the full realization of belonging to Christ in the life of faith. When the word of God thus penetrates into the very heart of life, with intensity, it imprints ever more deeply in the believer himself the source of the truth that comes from God. External teaching and life in the Spirit are here joined together: the anointing that the letter speaks of is

the very word of Jesus, accepted in the Church, but progressively interiorized in the hearts of believers under the action of the Spirit. Henceforth, external teaching and internal teaching are no longer opposed: it is the external teaching itself, the word of Jesus, that has been interiorized in faith <sup>(30)</sup>.

But, as C.H. Dodd emphasizes, the Word of God in question here is quite other than "a mere collection of propositions that one must keep in one's mind": it is a living force that marks the thoughts, affections, will and therefore activity of the one who keeps it <sup>(31)</sup>.

Here, it seems to me, we are at the very centre of our enquiry. For what we call the sensus fidelium is rooted precisely in this lived margin, this space of truth that emerges between the Word received from its authorized witnesses or ministers instituted in the Church, and what it becomes through the power of the Spirit for the believer who tries loyally to conform himself to it. The Gospel truth is not identified with a purely intellectual content of truth. It is the truth that the Spirit means to imprint upon the hearts and upon the conduct of men. Thus life itself is a commentary which renders more or less amply explicit the Word that is received, and this unfolding adds to the understanding of the objective data themselves. So much so that a certain dissonance can appear between the Word proclaimed in all its purity and precision, sometimes affirmed with authority by the Magisterium basing itself on the knowledge of specialists, and the global perception of its meaning that the one who lives it can have. Experience of Christ lends the very content of the words overtones that reveal their meaning. It is in this perspective that B.F. Westcott interpreted the verses in John's first letter that we have mentioned (32). Certain more recent exegetes even use in their regard expressions such as Glaubensbewusstsein and sensus fidelium (33).

Now this perception of the reality of faith, often more intuitive than reasoned, and coming from the Holy Spirit, cannot but manifest itself. And this in two different ways.

The first of these ways has always attracted the attention of theologians and pastors. It is that of certainty of adherence to the real content of faith, through a sort of spiritual sixth sense that causes the believer to discern instinctively the path of fidelity to the Gospel in the midst of many conflicting opinions. It is well known how Newman stressed the historical role played by this *σπουδή* of the faithful at the moment when, according to him, the Ecclesia docens was straying into an ill-considered flirting with error (34). In a quite different context, in the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, then a young professor, included among the effects of the gift of faith the power of discerning, even without instruction, the genuine teaching from the adulterated, rather as the virtuous man instinctively sees that a certain action is right while another is not. The passages are well known (35). We shall merely quote the following from an article in De Veritate which discusses the need for an explicit adherence to the articles of faith:

Obj. 2: Praeterea unusquisque tenetur ad vitandum omnes errores qui sunt contra fidem; Sed hoc facere non potest nisi explicite omnes articulos cognoscat contra quos sunt errores. Ergo oportet omnes explicite credere.

Ad 2: Dicendum quod ille qui non credit explicite omnes articulos potest omnes errores vitare quia ex habitu fidei retardatur ne consentiat contrariis articulorum quos solum implicite novit: ut scilicet cum illi proponuntur quasi insolita suspecta habeat et assensum differat quousque instruatur per eum cuius est dubia in fide determinare (De Ver., 14, 11).

This is **without** doubt a much too optimistic view. History suffices to show us that sometimes whole sections of the People of God allow themselves to be drawn into error. And the present state of our Churches, in which the simple faithful, troubled by incoherence and the differing positions adopted by the experts, say that they are disorientated and sometimes even violently torn from their faith, proves that the firmness of "instinctive and spontaneous adherence to the essential truths" admits many degrees and often passes through periods of crisis. Moreover, following



the logic of this view, one would have to conclude that every "tradition" widely held by the faithful is a priori genuine in its basic orientation, and that every widespread opinion in the Churches is almost certainly well-founded. Should we call this a victory for the faith of the simplices, or, as we would say today, of popular faith? Perhaps. But does this popular faith always correspond with the sensus that the Spirit gives to believers. Is the authentic sensus fidelium purely and simply identical with what the faithful think, say and do? One has a strong feeling that to give an unqualified affirmative answer to this question is to confuse the sensus fidelium with a somewhat simplistic subjectivism.

A dispassionate examination of the history of the Churches quickly reveals that if, very often, the more or less vain pretensions of scholars or pastors, or simply their limitations, have sown heresy and obscured the faith, in numerous other cases the ignorance or pretention of simplices, little aware of the objective demands of the revealed data, have led to impasses. We have only to think of the circumstances surrounding the action of Eutyches, of certain popular movements in the Middle Ages, or of certain crazes that engulf the Churches like a wave and breed confusion. Moreover, ignorance and intolerance often go hand-in-hand. It should be added that Thomas Aquinas himself seems to take proper account of this difficulty when he composes the treatise De fide of the Summa Theologiae. Here he qualifies the position which he inherited from William of Auxerre and William of Auvergne, and which he had followed previously (36). He no longer holds that the Spirit of God given with faith ensures that sincere and upright simplices do not err. He admits that all Christians with little instruction, like the vetula of the classical example, may follow the false doctrine propounded by some pastor or persuasive thinker. However, they do not break with the faith as such if they do not cling to their error pertinaciter; to say that a person is errans is not to say that he is necessarily haereticus. The instinct that comes from the Holy Spirit guarantees a radical attachment to Jesus, the fundamental tendency of the will of the upright Christian to adhere to the Gospel. This instinct also brings a connaturality, which gradually enables one to perceive through a sort of intuition that such and such an affirmation is out of tune. It does not however guarantee that, even if the individual is upright and sincere, God will intervene and prevent him from accepting some false doctrine or other, as was thought by William of Auvergne, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas in his early years of teaching. Even for the believer who is firmly attached to Christ the gateway to error remains open - errors of good faith, certainly, but errors nonetheless (37). Saint John's first letter, when it spoke of the impossibility of erring or even of sinning, moreover described the Christian life

as if each believer had already fully achieved the depth of being. This is why -(John) can say in 1 Jn 3:9 that the Christian cannot sin: to the extent of his docility to God's word, to the divine seed that he bears within him, he becomes really impeccable (38).

But the road from baptism to this profound communion is a long one.

This is a fact that obliges us to listen with great flexibility of mind to the questions asked by the theologians of the Churches springing from the Reform concerning the Catholic view of the sensus fidelium and, more widely, of Tradition, of which the sensus fidelium is one of the major elements. What is the guarantee of this sensus fidelium, even after the distinction between it and popular faith pure and simple has been clearly defined? Does it not necessarily imply that the stress should be placed upon an instinctus of which the basic tendency is certainly assured but of which the objects can be the wrong ones? Even for the Catholic thinkers who are most aware of and most faithful to their Church's mind, such as Thomas

Aquinas, the firmness of adherence to Jesus Christ which is brought by the Spirit together with the gift of faith<sup>(39)</sup>, far from serving to render objectively precise the content of belief, rather calls for such precision<sup>(40)</sup>.

This means that the sensus fidelium implies, at every level, submission to the objective data of faith. The more and more profound rooting in Christ, from which the sensus fidelium takes its origin, cannot be accomplished by a choice between Word and Spirit. The Spirit, in fact, causes the believer to enter into the experience of what the Word reveals. And this content is what the same Holy Spirit has caused to be understood by those who have transmitted, in the inspired Books, the Revelation of the Good News. The sensus fidelium is therefore not the same as a free personal interpretation of Scripture. On the contrary, it springs from the Word proclaimed by the Church, received in the Church and understood by the Church on the objective basis of what the Sacred Books say. The margin of experimental discovery which we spoke of above and to which we shall return stems from this objective truth. The latter therefore comes first today, even if it is clear that the revealed documents are themselves the expression of the experience of the apostolic group of the first generation of Christians. The situation of the "lived tradition" which finds expression in the inspired Books is not identical with the situation of the "living tradition" that followed it. The prevalent direction of the latter is from the Scripture data to life. One must also handle with great care the distinction between written tradition and oral tradition both going back to Apostolic times. The fixing of the Scriptural Canon, on the basis of the experience of the first generations and after a period of indecision, has in fact the real purpose of giving the texts an objective and normative priority. And it would be easy to show that it is to the texts quoted by the Fathers themselves, the privileged witnesses of Tradition, that the Liturgy - lex orandi lex credendi - constantly sends us back. To sum up: once the documents expressing the Apostolic faith have been put in writing and once a choice has been made of those documents in which the first generations recognize what truly comes from the authorized witnesses, Scripture has the value of a primary norm for faith.

Now it is obvious that in the search for the genuine meaning of these normative data the faith of the simplices is not enough. Both faithful and pastors have to subject themselves to the schooling of those to whom the Spirit gives the mission of guiding the whole People of God in the understanding of the content of Revelation. Experts (lay just as much as clerical), specialists in "educated faith", have an important part to play here. It is their task to uncover, with the help of the scientific means at their disposal, the literal meaning of the Biblical texts, the genuine extent of the conciliar definitions that have passed judgment on these texts in the past, the limits and ambiguities of the affirmations that have become current, the spheres in which cultural conditions have left their mark on the affirmations of the data, the questions that present-day scholarship poses (in making them relative) regarding several traditional points of doctrine, the areas in which a wide margin of freedom is open to interpretation and practice, the points on which it is appropriate to review previous positions, and so on. The absence of such research and of such questions (which are often uncomfortable ones) would be for the Church a condemnation to a gradual process of stifling. Faith demands understanding, and understanding cannot disregard the inalienable demands of the human mind. Fundamentalism of every sort is just as damaging to the truth of the life of faith as subjectivism set up in opposition to the objective norms. One of the main functions of those who exercise episkopé in the Churches (including the bishops but other ministers as well) is precisely to maintain the life of the data of faith not simply by recalling immutable doctrines but also by an effort to open the faith and practice of their people to the conclusions verified by "educated faith".

Their grace of "pastoral prudence" finds scope for exercise here. The Magisterium is not in effect primarily a mere repeater of defined truths; it is essentially a guide, with the aim of leading the common faith of the People of God towards a truth which answers to its nature.

It might be thought perhaps that this appeal to scientific rigour is the equivalent of a negative verdict on "popular faith" and a reduction of the sensus fidelium to its lofty intellectual dimension - and this as a confirmation of the "power" of the specialists, especially clerical ones. And if we reply by stressing the fact that the Scriptural data themselves (which we make the primary norm) include a quantity of popular traditions, of primitive religiosity and related reactions, the objection will doubtless be made that the effort of exegesis and source-study is aimed precisely at pinpointing the essential elements of the data by separating them from the secondary ones. These latter attract attention only in order that they may be put aside. Now it seems to us that by reasoning in this way about the relationship of "educated faith" to the sensus fidelium one is making a grave mistake.

Following the line laid down by Newman, Perrone and in general the theologians of the time of the definition of the first Marian dogma, we have placed the sensus fidelium parallel to and in "conspiratio" with the feeling of the hierarchy, by situating it in the same sphere as popular faith. But it is necessary to be quite clear about the meaning of the word "popular" in this expression. The simple fact that, at many levels, this faith is that of numerous clerics, and is not only encouraged by them but really taken as their own, suffices to demonstrate that in this context "popular" is opposed neither to clerical nor to something recognized as valid. We have an example of this in the case of Marian faith and devotion. Clerics, bishops, even popes (see for example the Journal of John XXIII) in their private devotion, indeed in some of their official acts, associate themselves from within with movements of popular faith, and even declare that they nourish their own faith thereby. One sees them pray to Mary in words that manifest a belief that exegetical and theological experts regard as suspect - and this not in order to set an example or exercise pressure on the faithful. We may think of the discussions on Mary's Co-redemption. The same is sometimes true of certain points of Eucharistic doctrine. Well-educated Christians and members of the hierarchy practise in their private lives, in a more or less wholehearted manner, devotions that betray attitudes whose profound roots they could not justify theologically or in a way that would satisfy themselves.

Are these cases of duplicity or of a serious lack of logic? No. They are quite simply the consequences of the nature of faith. Faith, even when received in the most crystal-clear manner as regards the precise determination of its content, is meant for living. Its purpose is not simply to give man a certain type of truth about God, himself, mankind and the world. It is meant to bring the whole man into a particular sort of relationship with God. The reality embraced within the life of faith goes far beyond the essential content delineated by dogmatic formulas. It overlaps the carefully-drawn design of the essentials. Now in the mystery of the Christian life it is not true that only the essential counts, and that the rest is to be considered as trifles deserving merely an indulgent smile, as the share of the minores and the uneducated. For the non-essential is necessary. It is the element in and through which is made manifest and accomplished the very mystery of the catholicity and universality of a faith meant for the whole man, and therefore meant to take concrete form in the whole human "humus". This incarnation is itself an essential demand of the faith that is in man. It is of course possible that it will take on aspects that are very limited and ephemeral, strictly linked to such and such a time and place and conditioned by what a more

enlightened view would regard as secondary. It is equally possible that it will lead to the acceptance of points of doctrine which lack the absolute assurance of the great articles of the Creed and in face of which specialists in "educated faith" feel disquieted. It is part of the law of the life of faith that it has dim areas which are rendered largely relative by the full light of the life which carries them along. Theology, especially in the ecumenical context, has not taken sufficiently seriously the fact that the life of faith, by its very law, demands the assumption of values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour and indeed criteria that are purely temporary, valid merely for one period and one culture. In other words, the life of faith demands, man being what he is, "popular faith". Tradition does not develop simply by additions, growth towards something better, in the line so deeply perceived by Newman. It also progresses by suppressions, abandonments, steps backward, by recognising and declaring the relative character of things which were long held but which depended on cultural patterns that have now become part of the past. One may even wonder whether, when it is a question of "defined" dogmatic points, a subsequent declaration on the same level of hierarchical authority might not place in a new and less important light what another age had expressed according to its own categories: dogmatic progress does not primarily mean the addition of truths but the clarification of the truth. This would hold good particularly for dogmatic definitions based principally on the sensus fidelium.

Further, the problem of "popular faith" here meets the problem of "popular religion". Certainly, "popular faith" and "popular religion" are not synonymous. This is so quite simply because faith and religion are clearly distinct. But while giving due recognition to the liberating effect of reflection on this distinction between faith and religion, along the lines of Barth and his followers, one must react against excessive simplifications. Faith necessarily evokes certain religious reactions in the believer, if only that his belief expresses the fundamental attitude of man in face of God whom the believer then discovers as the source of Agapé. The Christian from certain centres of secularized Christianity is too cerebral and cold to be human and therefore Christian. Barth in his later years has understood this well. It is also very significant that the apostle of the Secular City should have changed into the bandmaster of the Feast of Fools - rather quickly to be sure. The problem has been greatly debated in recent years and there is no need to linger over it. It must suffice to recall the fact that faith, because it has to take hold of man as he is, with all the demands of his being and all the roots that tie him to the world, cannot do without religion. Now religion, as we know all too well today, can be mixed up with feelings or needs of varying purity. It also happens that some of its instinctive manifestations smack of naivety and appear to the specialist as pre-rational, simplistic, indeed, to quote the somewhat bitter expression of a polemical writer, "nearer to the customs of the tribe than to those of mankind refined by twenty centuries of culture". One can regret this and wish for an education of these "religious customs". But it remains true that to wish to cut off faith from man's religious dimension is to condemn faith to extinction: it means taking it out of the element that gives it life. This indicates that the "popular" elements that faith takes from its links with religion, in its varying degrees of purity, cannot be purely and simply written off as negative. This apparent corruption, with occasional superficial misinterpretations, belongs to the very logic of the relationship of faith to man. Lived faith knows how to get along happily with a broad fringe of the "popular".

This register which goes from the data of faith to faith lived, in a movement from the objectivity of the content of faith to the forms that manifest its translation into concrete life, finds itself in osmosis with another register which works in the opposite direction. This time one goes from the lived to the believed.

I have just emphasized, in fact, that faith does not stop at the intellectual acceptance of what is enunciated as objective propositions, but that it is meant to lead to a life lived in communion with the God revealed in the Word. When I quoted the verses from the first letter of John on the certainty of the sensus of faith, I was speaking of an experience going beyond the clear-cut limits of the concepts in which the content of Revelation is formulated. Does not the believer reach the very reality that the data proclaim and express (41)? Now this margin, this going beyond through what is lived, this "more than what is enunciated" in written or verbal form, also bear an authentic truth concerning the God who is accepted through faith. In its most concrete manifestations, through the fabric of its various incarnations, in the forms more or less answering to the great blueprints of "educated faith", the sensus fidelium attains a knowledge of God which itself depends upon faith. It is a knowledge of a special type, however, and Blondel of course has subtly analyzed its nature (42).

We do not have to examine in depth here the particular nature of this knowledge of God springing from communion in friendship, from the intuition which the experience of the Spirit arouses. It will suffice for us to evoke, following the example of many writers (43), the two main paths by which this knowledge is transmitted in a communal fashion, at a level thus going beyond the personal experience of each believer. The best known of these paths is that of the lex orandi lex credendi. And when the Anglican Church, for example, places the Prayer Book at the centre of its rule of faith, it is in the direct line of the great Tradition. For the latter, prayer "speaks faith", but in a way that can only be poorly expressed in concepts, and which represents much more than an objective addition or a particular refinement to be attached to the Creed. It is a matter of an affirmation sui generis of the certainty of faith, in and through a collective way of behaving shot through and through with signs, formed by certain sentiments and not disdaining the language of poetry and music. The act of worship, even when it consists more of gestures than of words, concerns the same truth as the confession of the baptismal creed. It proclaims it however by a language different from that of concepts which have a carefully refined content. And this goes very far. For example, it is admitted by many specialists in Christian origins that the lived experience of the first communities accounts for the formulae of the institution of the Eucharist passed down to us by the Gospel traditions (44). Certainty conveyed by acts and attitudes has so to speak preceded the certainty transmitted by the text. The truth has sprung forth by "making itself". This moreover is why the Church's Eucharistic faith cannot, all the more so today, bind itself to a shortsighted interpretation of the texts.

The other path of transmission of this mysterious knowledge of God, acquired other than by conceptual teaching, is the osmosis that takes place between the "Christian background" (with its attitudes, loyalties, spontaneous reactions, "characteristic genius" and customs) and each believer (45). Through a sort of contagion, the background marks and impregnates individuals, thus passing on to them the values upon which it depends. The sensus fidelium does far more here than merely give a doctrinal flair; it creates a climate, a collective instinct, which will be as it were the lived data to which each believer will feel himself more or less consciously linked from the very fact that he means not to break with his original background. If the Church could not thus possess the Gospel truth, thanks to the reality lived in community, she would be merely a school of thought. She would no longer be the Body of Christ in the sense that Paul speaks of her.

However, it can happen that, for different reasons, the Magisterium feels the need to express for the whole People of God, in a conceptual manner, the content of this lived reality. We have already noted that the Marian dogmas - dogmas based above all on the sensus fidelium and "defined" not in order to combat a heresy but to fix a devotion and contribute to Mary's glory - originated in this desire. Again it seems to me that what we have been presenting enables us to grasp more clearly how these dogmas belong to a different category from the great Christological or Trinitarian dogmas. The current of the life and devotion of faithful people goes beyond rigorous concepts, for it carries along with it a whole wave of feelings and attitudes of the heart that locutiones formales cannot succeed in fixing. The Magisterium can draw from this combination of elements "some particles of the ingot of truth that can never be completely minted" (46). It will also happen that a more favourable cultural context makes it possible to grasp better what was contained in the implicit content of lived faith. But in my opinion it is of capital importance to stress that there would be grave risk of misinterpretations if care was not taken always to construe these "particles" in the light of the devotion that has brought them: even if they are "defined", they cannot be isolated from the sands from which they have been extracted and they are made to remain in those sands. What we have developed hitherto shows that saying this in no way comes down to depreciating their value: they are the "truths" of the sensus fidelium, genuine truths, but deriving from a particular register of "knowledge of God" through faith.

If therefore there is a movement from life to the Word, in this collection of elements particular attention must be paid to certain dynamisms no longer simply of discovery but of progress, arising from action itself and preceding theological reflection. This must be in the line of what was the attitude of the People of God in the Old Testament and the attitude of the first Christian generation: what we know about God through Scripture is based essentially upon what he accomplished for his own people, and the Word explains a reality at work. Our age moreover shows itself very sensitive to this truth of praxis leading to a clearer and more articulated grasp of what is implied by rectum facere. In a Christian climate certain acts make it possible to open theological thought to new perspectives. So it is that "educated faith", if it means to remain faithful to its function in the life of the Church taken as a whole, must undertake a study of this truth-in-gestation in order to evaluate, judge and express in the clearest possible way what is being done and what is being looked for in the instinctive conduct of a People of God faithful at the same time to its fundamental Christian conviction and to the demands of life. Theological reflection does not have the simple purpose of giving the exact meaning of the Word which precedes and guides the commitment of the Christian or his effort to live out logically his belonging to Jesus Christ. It must also aim at discerning the Word that emerges, that germinates little by little. Now this emergence takes place most often in the crucible of ordinary life, in the struggles of Christians of the most simple kind, therefore at the level at which the sensus fidelium responds to the aspirations of "popular faith".

It seems to me that in today's Church this is especially valid of moral activity. The New Testament does of course give us norms of Christian ethics, but it is in relation to a concept of man that is often that of the cultural environment of the time. In this sphere, the spontaneous desire of "popular faith" and the researches of "educated faith" examining the sources are surely called upon to meet. We have here a datum of the praxis that the whole Church, in the conspiratio spoken of by Newman, ought to accept and gradually make explicit. It is a difficult and delicate field, as has been shown by the debates concerning Humanae Vitae. But what Christian today does not have the conviction that the very current of

life impels one to go beyond the old frameworks, not in order to play tricks with the Gospel but on the contrary to maintain at full pitch loyalty to the Gospel?

Just as the truth of a "definition" of faith based upon a profound current of devotion is not of the same type as the truth of a conciliar "definition" seeking to stop a heresy which is questioning a substantial point of the data of faith, so the truth of the Church's official declarations on moral conduct is of a special order. And therefore one does not judge this truth according to the same schemes. For such a judgment necessarily implies recourse to a philosophy of man that remains fundamentally open to the investigations of science and scientific progress. Here an affirmation made in the name of belonging to the Christian mystery bears upon a matter the knowledge of which in depth does not depend solely upon the outlook of faith. The human sciences have their word to say in this matter: there is a clear difference here from confessions of faith in the Trinity or in the one Person of Christ. This is becoming more and more clearly seen in theological circles. Who would take the risk of a new trial of Galileo? And yet, in the sphere of norms for sexual life, for example, what serious moralist does not occasionally ask himself whether the rigid maintenance of this or that classical position, contradicted by the daily experiences of researchers, does not lead implicitly to a trial of this sort? The sensus fidelium has an intuition that this is so. It even inspires certain concrete attitudes leading the way to criteria of fidelity to the law of the Gospel other than those conveyed by a culture that is disappearing. And it is not only the sphere of sexual life that is being questioned here. The problems of collective justice and questions relating to property are no longer viewed today, even in the documents of the Roman Magisterium, in the same way as half a century ago. Do we have here a relativization of the truth of moral conduct? It is much rather an evolution in full conformity with the nature of this truth.

In these very varied domains, where practice precedes the norm and where the law of Christian action must be ceaselessly reconsidered, theological reflection fulfils an important function. It has to isolate and verify the fidelity to the Gospel of this impulse of experience towards new criteria. This will be done above all by looking for the harmony of the point in question with the other points of Christian doctrine. The absence of explicit texts of Scripture increases the difficulty of the task. It is impossible purely and simply to repeat the "traditional" themes which precisely are the cause of the problem. But it is equally impossible to follow blindly the consensus of researchers in human sciences without asking questions and above all without comparing their answers with the image of man presented by Scripture. The intimate interaction between the initiatives provoked by the sensus fidelium and theology's efforts to scrutinize and assess this praxis thus ensures the progress of the People of God in truth.

\*  
\* \*  
\*

Sensus fidelium and Magisterium, popular faith and educated faith: it is through the conspiratio of these two forms of the action of the Holy Spirit in the People of God that the latter can live in a fidelity to the Word of God that remains distinct from a sterile fundamentalism. It seems to me that, placed against this vast backcloth, the problem of the Magisterium takes on its proper dimensions. For then the Magisterium appears, not as an authority added on to that of the Word of God, but rather as a service which throws light on what is being lived within the people of God on the very basis of acceptance of the Word, in the power of the Spirit. In other words, it is matter of guiding the Church in an incarnation in the heart

of the world and of history which yet remains radically faithful to the primary authority of the Word revealed in Jesus and passed on by the apostolic generation. The instinctus, the spiritual discernment, the religious needs, the true sense of direction of the body of the faithful carry the dynamism of the faith where the Spirit wills: into the turbulent stream of human problems and searchings, on to the floor of the workshops where mankind is building its future. For faith is for man as he is, and it is "catholic". Helped by the reflection of those whose task it is to study as profoundly as possible the data of Revelation, the Magisterium (at its different levels) places all this work and all these initiatives under the light of the Word of God. And in this light the Magisterium distinguishes - by the charisma proper to it - the paths that it judges genuine from those which lead either nowhere at all or to more or less implicit betrayal of the Gospel. It also has to undertake the task of declaring solemnly that such and such a devotion which is firmly rooted in the life of the People of God is based upon a genuine insight; and then it has the task of "defining" the objective content of that insight. But in all this the Magisterium only acts "in osmosis" with the sensus fidelium. Not that it therefore trails behind popular faith, contenting itself with ratifying what the latter perceives. It exercises a function of its own, a function that the Spirit has not entrusted to others. But this function requires that the Magisterium should draw from the very life of the People of God the reality to be discerned, judged, and promulgated or "defined". For it has to exercise all its activity upon the Word as received and lived in the Church. So it is not in competition with the Word as transmitted through the texts of Scripture; on the contrary, its sole aim is to serve the purpose of the Word, that purpose being to enable men to enter into communion with God. The conspiratio (i. e. the complementarity in seeking one same goal through one same fidelity) of the sensus fidelium and of the hierarchy exercising its Magisterium thus enables the Church to live in genuine faith, while at the same time not ceasing to manifest that faith in communion with the progress of mankind. Is not this communion one of the essential paths to the accomplishment of the Lordship of Christ?

Our Christian brethren, belonging to a tradition that regards with suspicion anything that seems to add to the absolute authority of the Word of God but that at the same time is careful to respect the work of the Spirit in the new People - do they see in a Magisterium conceived in this manner an insurmountable contradiction of their profound conviction?

-:-:-:-



## NOTES.

- (1) On Consulting the Faithful, in The Rambler 1859, 198-230. The text was reissued in 1961 by John COULSON, with an introduction. A good French translation is to be found in John Henry Cardinal NEWMAN, Pensées sur l'Eglise, transl. by A. ROUCOU-BATHELEMY, coll. Unam Sanctam 30, Paris 1956, 402-439. There is a cursory presentation of the text in S. D. FEMIANO, Infallibility of the Laity, New York 1967.
- (2) See the article by H. ROLLET, Les origines de Rerum Novarum, in La Vie intellectuelle, June 1951, 4-21.
- (3) Very significant is the text of Resolution 5 of the 1968 Lambeth Conference.
- (4) As is shown, in French Catholicism, by the reactions provoked by the little book by S. BONNET, A hue et à dia, Paris 1974. See too the interview with Père Yvan DANIEL, in La Croix, 23 March 1974.
- (5) Latin text in V. SARDI, La solenne definizione del dogma dell'immacolato concepimento di Maria Santissima. Atti e documenti pubblicati nel cinquantesimo anniversario della stessa definizione, Vol. I, Rome 1854, 138- ( ). For the history of the text see P. CRISOSTOMO DE PAMPLONA, Elaboraciòn de la Definiciòn Dogmàtica de la Inmaculada Concepciòn, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. II, Rome 1956, 174-200.
- (6) As is well shown by P. BONNETAIN, Immaculée Conception, in DBS 4, Paris 1949, 233-240.
- (7) See the judgment of the Bishop of Amiens: "The texts of Scripture would only gain greater force by being quoted last: since they hint at obscurely and through distant conclusions the doctrine in question, it is from the known doctrine that they draw their true interpretation and thus serve admirably to confirm it" (text in V. SARDI, op. cit., II, 233, quoted by P. BONNETAIN, loc. cit., 237).
- (8) Latin text in AAS 42, series II, vol. 17, 1950, 782-783.
- (9) Latin text ibid., 774-777.
- (10) Ibid., 756; see also 758.
- (11) See ibid., 766 (consensus christianorum), 767 (communi hac fide; universae Ecclesiae communi... fide), 769 (prope unanima consensione).
- (12) For P. PERRONE see especially De Immaculato B. V. Conceptu (I have only been able to consult the Avignon edition, 1848); there is a French translation in Théologie dogmatique du R. P. Perrone, translated according to the Migne edition, augmented by the Traité sur l'Immaculée Conception, T. VII, Paris 1871. For Melchior CANO see particularly Melchioris Cani Episcopi Canariensium ex Ordine Praedicatorum Opera, Rome 1890, Vol. I Lib. IV, cap. 6, no. 26, pp. 250-251.
- (13) Ephrem included. See P. KRUGER, Die Immaculata-Frage bei den Syrischen Kirchenvätern, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. IV, Rome 1955,

10-27. For Tradition as a whole see G. JOUASSARD, The Fathers of the Church and the Immaculate Conception, in W. O'CONNOR, The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, History and Significance, Notre Dame 1958, 51-86.

- (14) See C. BOYER, La controverse sur l'opinion de saint Augustin touchant la Conception de la Vierge, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. IV, 48-60; I. M. DIETZ, Ist die Jungfrau nach Augustinus 'immaculata ab initio'?, ibid., 61-112.
- (15) See G. JOUASSARD, L'interprétation par saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie de la scène de Marie au pied de la Croix, ibid., 28-47.
- (16) See the series of studies collected under the title De Immaculata Conceptione in Ordine S. Dominici, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. VI, Rome 1955. Up to the moment of the "definition" the Dominican tradition is a centre of opposition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It takes an intervention of Pius IX himself for the Order to agree to include the adjective immaculata in the Preface of Our Lady, after et te in Conceptione (see R. LAURENTIN, L'action du Saint Siège par rapport au problème de l'Immaculée Conception, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. II, 1-98 (53-54)).
- (17) Thomas Aquinas writes: "licet quod Romana Ecclesia Conceptionem B. Virginis non celebret, tolerat tamen consuetudinem aliquarum Ecclesiarum illum festum celebrantium", S. TH. IIIa, 27, 2, ad 3.
- (18) See R. LAURENTIN, op. cit.
- (19) See the excellent series of historical studies grouped under the title L'Assomption de Marie, in the Bulletin de la Société française d'études mariales, 1943, 1949, 1950. The text of Pseudo-Jerome (Paschasius Radbertus) is studied in M. JUGIE, La Mort et l'Assomption de Marie, étude historico-doctrinale, Vatican 1944, 276-284 and C. LAMBOT, in Rev. Ben. 1934, 265-282.
- (20) As is suggested by the dispatch of the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires, which is quoted by R. AUBERT, L'épiscopat belge et la proclamation du dogme de l'Immaculée en 1854, in Virgo Immaculata, Vol. II, 276-309 (301-302): "It seems that the Holy See has two aims in decreeing the Immaculate Conception: the first is to show rationalism that all the theories developed up to this day do not make it modify its opinions in any way, and the second is to demonstrate that the Pope can make a pronouncement as supreme Doctor and give a decision ex cathedra without having recourse to a council, a fact that is scarcely admitted by the Gallican Church, whose liberties often irk the Holy See".
- (21) "It is one thing to say: the believing and loving Church is only infallible when it listens to the teaching Church and thereby receives the communication of infallibility from the latter; it is another thing to say: the believing and loving Church is infallible through the animation which it receives from the Holy Spirit in its quality as the believing and loving Church, a quality which involves an organic reference and submission to the Magisterium. In the first case, the Holy Spirit gives infallibility to the hierarchy which, in subjecting the faithful to itself, communicates to them the benefit of its infallibility; in the second case, the Holy Spirit gives infallibility to the whole Church as such and, in it, each organic part according to what it is: the whole body, in order to believe and

live, the hierarchical apostolate or Magisterium, in order to transmit to the body the apostolic deposit and to declare the authentic meaning of this deposit" (Y. M. J. CONGAR, Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat, Coll. Unam Sanctam 23, Paris 1954, 402. See also Y. M. J. CONGAR, La Tradition et les traditions, II Essai théologique, Paris 1963, 86-88.

- (22) J. DUPONT, Gnosis, la connaissance religieuse dans les Epîtres de saint Paul, Louvain 1949; L. CERFAUX, Le chrétien dans la théologie paulinienne, Coll. Lectio Divina 33, Paris 1962, especially 431-469.
- (23) See R. E. BROWN, The Gospel according to John XIII-XXI, New York 1970, 714-717: "The Paraclete's guidance along the way of all truth involves more than a deeper theological understanding of what Jesus has said - it involves a way of life in conformity with Jesus' teaching and thus is not so far removed from the OT notion of guidance as might first seem" (715).
- (24) "To cause to be discovered in all things the traces of the divine plan (Acts 20:27), to cast upon every event, in every age, the bright light of revelation: such is the mission of the Spirit in the disciples" H. VAN DEN BUSSCHE, Les discours d'adieu de Jésus, Tournai-Paris 1959, 126. See also R. E. BROWN, op. cit., 716: "The best Christian preparation for what is coming to pass is not an exact foreknowledge of the future but a deep understanding of what Jesus means for one's own time".
- (25) See I. DE LA POTTERIE, Le Paraclet, in I. DE LA POTTERIE, S. LYONNET, La vie selon l'Esprit, Coll. Unam Sanctam 55, 1965, 85-105 (94). Father DE LA POTTERIE, opting for the reading  $\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu\ \tau\tilde{\eta}\ \kappa\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\tilde{\eta}\tilde{\theta}\tilde{\epsilon}\tilde{\iota}\alpha\ \pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\ \nu$  in Jn. 16:12, stresses that the Spirit must make us penetrate "to the heart of this truth and make us discover it in its plenitude: these are all the treasures of life, all the hidden virtualities of the word of Jesus" that the Spirit unveils to the faith of believers. But C. K. BARRETT, The Gospel according to John, London 1962, 407-408, thinks that one should opt for  $\epsilon\tilde{\nu}\ \tau\tilde{\eta}\ \kappa\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\tilde{\eta}\tilde{\theta}\tilde{\epsilon}\tilde{\iota}\alpha\ \pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\ \nu$ .
- (26) I. DE LA POTTERIE, op. cit., 92-93.
- (27) See M. E. BOISMARD, La connaissance dans l'Alliance nouvelle d'après la première lettre de S. Jean, in RB 56, 1949, 364-391; ID., Je ferai avec vous une Alliance nouvelle, in Lumière et Vie 8, 1953, 94-109.
- (28) On this text see I. DE LA POTTERIE, L'onction du chrétien par la foi, in I. DE LA POTTERIE and S. LYONNET, La vie selon l'Esprit, 107-167 (126-144). See also C. H. DODD, The Johannine Epistles, London 1953, 47-65.
- (29) I. DE LA POTTERIE, op. cit., 137.
- (30) Ibid., 141.
- (31) op. cit., 63.

- (32) B. F. WESTCOTT, The Epistles of St John, London 1909, 80.
- (33) See I. DE LA POTTERIE, op. cit., 139 and note 4.
- (34) On Consulting the Faithful, original edition p.211; ed. J. COULSON, 73.
- (35) They have been grouped and analyzed in particular by G. H. JOYCE, La foi qui discerne d'après saint Thomas, in RSR 6, 1916, 433-455; S. HARENT, Note sur l'article précédent, ibid., 455-467; J. DE GUIBERT, A propos des textes de saint Thomas sur la foi qui discerne, in RSR 9, 1919, 30-44.
- (36) This is emphasized by J. DE GUIBERT, art. cit., especially 36-44.
- (37) See S. Th. IIa-IIae, 2, 6, ad 2, ad 3.
- (38) I. DE LA POTTERIE, op. cit., 140.
- (39) THOMAS AQUINAS links faith with the gifts of understanding and knowledge and also with the gift of wisdom. See G. H. JOYCE, art. cit., 437-488; S. HARENT, art. cit.
- (40) For the problem raised by Newman's affirmations on a disagreement between popular faith and the position of the teaching Church, especially the Arian crisis, see J. LEBRETON, Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Eglise chrétienne du troisième siècle, in RHE 19, 1923, 481-506; 20, 1924, 5-37.
- (41) See the position of THOMAS AQUINAS: "actum autem credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile sed ad rem" IIa-IIae, 1, 2, ad 2.
- (42) See the penetrating presentation of the thought of Blondel given by Y. M. J. CONGAR, La Tradition et les traditions, II Essai théologique, 123-136.
- (43) See those referred to by Y. M. J. CONGAR, loc. cit.
- (44) Well illustrated by P. BENOIT, Le récit de la Cène dans Lc XXII, 15-20, in Exégèse et Théologie, T. I., Paris 1961, 163-203; ID., Les récits de l'institution et leur portée, ibid., 210-239.
- (45) See Y. M. J. CONGAR, loc. cit., 131.
- (46) M. BLONDEL, text quoted by Y. M. J. CONGAR, ibid., 123.