

A SURVEY OF RELIGION TEXT BOOKS  
IN THE LIGHT OF A PASSAGE FROM THE VATICAN COUNCIL  
by Sister Mary Catherine of Bologna, C.S.C.

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## INTRODUCTION

Reason, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and moderately, can reach, by a gift from God, some understanding of mysteries, and that a most fruitful one, by comparing them with those things which it naturally knows, and by comparing them with one another and the last end of man.<sup>1</sup>

This statement taken from the first Vatican Council can be used as a basis for a highly satisfactory treatment of theology. Perfectly balanced, the work and fruit of many minds working under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is worth examination as an approach for obtaining a deeper understanding and indeed a most fruitful understanding of the mysteries of the faith. The considerable recognition that recent theologians have given to this statement indicates that it is both practical and timely. Father Joannes Beumer, S. J., in his scholarly work on this paragraph from the Vatican Council,<sup>2</sup> concludes one section by strongly advocating that this method be applied to the study

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<sup>1</sup>Ac ratio, quidem fide illustrata, cum sedulo, pie, et sobrie, quaerit aliquam Deo dante, mysteriorum intelligentiam eamque fructuosissimam assequitur, tum ex eorum quae naturaliter cognoscit analogia, tum e mysteriorum ipsorum nexu, inter se, et cum fine hominis ultimo." (Conc. Vaticanum Sess. III, c.4. D.1796)

<sup>2</sup>J. Beumer, S. J., Theologie Als Glaubensverststandnis (Wurzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953).

of theology. In the final section of the same work, Mathias Joseph Scheeben is singled out as a theologian who conspicuously followed the principles of the Vatican Council in his book, The Mysteries of Christianity. Father Bernard Lonergan, S. J., has made this book by Father Beumer the object of an extended article in Gregorianum.<sup>3</sup> He agrees that this teaching of the Council concerns theology, properly so called, and that it is fundamental for a fruitful understanding of the Catholic truths. Fr. Lonergan highlights the fact that Beumer has succeeded in hitting off a fundamental feature of theological thought. He sums up his conviction as follows:

One comes to appreciate Father Beumer's work in its real significance. He has appealed to an indisputable source. He has established solidly the meaning of the "intelligentia mysteriorum." He has provided evidence that the intention of the Vatican Council was to speak of the nature of theology.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant to note that in the Preface of his book, The Trinity and God the Creator, Fr. Garigou-Lagrange actually quotes this passage from the Vatican Council after saying, "I hope that in some degree at least we shall attain the goal envisaged by the Vatican Council!"<sup>5</sup> An awareness of the importance of this

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<sup>3</sup>B. Lonergan, S. J., "Theology and Understanding", Gregorianum, XXIV (1954), 630-648.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 648.

<sup>5</sup>The Trinity and God the Creator (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1952), p. iv.

statement is manifested by other outstanding theologians of our times. Reginald Masterson in his article, "The Nature of Sacred Theology," quotes it<sup>6</sup> and U. Voll, in his article, "The Objective of College Theology," also refers to it.<sup>7</sup>

That this is a practical approach is borne out by the fact that a noted contemporary textbook author, Theodore Hesburgh,<sup>8</sup> has made noticeable use of analogy in presenting theology. He too quotes the Vatican Council statement in the introduction of this book and definitely uses relationships in his presentation of the mysteries. This has prompted the writer to make a survey of current books of religious instruction published within the last twenty years. These books fall into three main categories: those written for high school students; those written for college students; and those written for adults. The adult books in turn are divided into those for catholic laymen and those for converts.

To exemplify the method suggested by the Vatican Council the writer will expound the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and Grace, as developed in Scheeben's Mysteries of Christianity. Then in the light of this study, current books of religious instruction will be examined to dis-

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<sup>6</sup> Theology in the Catholic College (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1961), p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> God and the World of Man (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1950), p. 13.

cover to what extent they adhere, in their treatment of the above mentioned mysteries, to the principles enunciated in the Council and applied by Scheeben, and therefore how they contribute to the most fruitful understanding of Christian truths spoken of in the Vatican Council.

## CHAPTER I

## EXPLANATION OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL STATEMENT

Whatever form theology may take its aim is basically the same, the crede ut intellegas, of Augustine. Just as in our intellect there exist ideas which animals without reason cannot penetrate because these ideas are of the intellectual order and consequently above the capacity of sense, so in the knowledge of God there are secrets impenetrable by creatures because they are secrets of the divine order which cannot be known by finite minds. Theology aims at achieving some understanding of these secrets of God, these divine mysteries, by applying reason to the truths of faith. The result of this meeting between faith and reason, this summit conference, sought by faith, is light engendered in the human mind, which dispels some of the darkness that surrounds the divine mysteries; a light that brings with it a warmth by which one can appreciate that which is considered.

Father Van Acheren distinguishes two kinds of theology: the one using philosophy, the other using analogy.

By strictly scientific knowledge theologians ordinarily mean the assimilation and understanding of truths of revelation through the use of insights and conclusions of philosophy, especially metaphysics. We have an example of this sort of knowledge in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas. Humanistic theological knowledge however means the assimilation and understanding of revealed truths through the insights and methods

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of the humanities. This mode of theological knowledge is exemplified in the many writings of the Fathers of the Church in some modern attempts at biblical theology and most recently in the remarkable work of Father M. Schmaus . . . Both are true theological wisdom. But they are not distinct theologies. They represent rather different degrees of assimilation of the human intellect to divine truth; different degrees of participation in the habit of sacred theology.<sup>1</sup>

In other words these two kinds of theology are two types of knowing the Catholic truths. The first springs from a mind that conceives and judges in the sphere of scholastic thought; the second, in the more spontaneous sphere of human experience. The Vatican Council's statement pertains to both types of theological knowledge with emphasis on the second. It most certainly speaks of the nature of theology because the goal in view is that of understanding, enlightened by faith. The truths of the faith are studied not merely for the purpose of assenting to their truth but as seeking a response in terms of life. The approach is that of comparing mysteries to nature, which is similar to the "humanistic theology" spoken of above. Then a deeper consideration is made by comparing the mysteries with one another

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<sup>1</sup>C. Van Acheren, "The Finality of the College Course in Sacred Doctrine in the Light of the Finality of Theology", Proceedings of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine. (Washington: Society of Dunbarton College of Holy Cross, 1956), p. 18. The method of M. Schmaus uses in his writings is characteristic of harmonizing the scientific aspect of theology with that of sincere Christian living. "His books are an example and a strong proof that theology can be made intelligible to the educated laity even philosophy may not be presupposed. Consequently his books are extremely useful for the

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and finally by relating the mysteries to man's last end.

A further explanation of the Vatican Council statement will be useful. Five points may be considered: (1) mysteries in general; (2) reason, enlightened by faith; (3) three conditions to arrive at fuller understanding; (4) threefold method; (5) most fruitful understanding.

(1) According to the Constitution Filius Dei, the nature of mysteries is threefold. First, they are supernatural: they are unattainable by natural reason; they are hidden in God, abscondita in Deo. Secondly, to be known by creatures these truths must be revealed by God. Thirdly, mysteries can never be fully understood or demonstrated by reason even once they have been revealed. By excluding two extremes; namely, that no understanding of the doctrines of faith is possible or that perfect insight into them is possible, the decree declares that some understanding, and quite a rich one at that, is possible. It teaches that this understanding of mysteries is not the same kind as insight into the natural truths, particularly that it is darker and more imperfect than these because of its supernatural

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teacher on College level and may serve as models rich in suggestions for the composition of textbooks still to be written." Book Review by C. Vollert, Theological Studies XVI (1955) p. 293.

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character. The mysteries are compared by examining the relationship among them. Their similarities and their differences are analysed and conclusions drawn which enable one to discern the wonderful coherence and harmony that exist among them. In this way it can be demonstrated that the over-all divine plan is but one unified organism.

(2) The first qualifying phrase of this conciliar definition is, "reason, enlightened by faith". Theology is essentially distinguished from other sciences by the fact that its object and the standpoint from which it has to proceed are furnished by revelation and not by the intellect itself. Reason must look to God's revelation for the principle of its certitude, and then rise above its own sphere to contemplate and analyze these revealed truths. For example, that there are inner productions in God is the principle of the Blessed Trinity. The truths issuing from this may be deduced with careful scientific precision, but the root itself, the first principle cannot be reached by man's own efforts but must be accepted by faith in God's word.

(3) After assigning to faith its specific place in the mysteries, this passage from the Vatican Council suggests three important conditions, sedulo, pie, and sobrie, in order to gain a fruitful understanding and at the same time to help one realize the limitations of the mind. By faith one accepts the word of God; by understanding one comprehends it. Comprehension of Christian mysteries can be attained only by the application of

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the intellect according to St. Anselm's expression, fides quaerens intellectum. Therefore the personal traits needed are zeal, reverence and moderation. The seeker of truth must inquire earnestly, sedulo, that is, he must apply himself assiduously to deepening the comparisons furnished by revelation. He must also seek religiously, pie, ever conscious that reason can only perceive mysteries from the outside, for it is the Holy Spirit that enlightens us as to their inner meaning. One cannot expect to taste the hidden fruit from the outer shell. In studying the divine truths he must do so moderately, sobrie. He will prudently limit himself to analogies indicated in revelation, tradition and the Fathers of the Church, weighing and grasping the precise point of the comparison without exaggerations.<sup>2</sup>

(4) We come now to the key section of this conciliar division in its threefold method: (a) comparing mysteries to nature; (b) comparing them to one another; (c) comparing them to man's last end.

(a) If St. Augustine and St. Thomas are regarded as being among the greatest doctors of the Church, it is in large part because they knew how to introduce to Sacred Science what was most profound and most just in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In this eminent way they illustrated how analogies

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<sup>2</sup>J. M. Vacant, Etudes théologiques sur les constitutions de Concile du Vatican, Vol. II (Paris: Delhomme et Briquet, 1895), p. 211-217.

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drawn from the natural order most certainly contribute to clarify man's conception of mysteries.

(b) However, the chief element of enlightenment in this method lies in the insight that results from linking the mysteries with one another, nexus mysteriorum inter se. The vital inter-relations of the individual truths can be organized into an organic whole, what Father Lonergan calls an "immanent systematic structure".<sup>3</sup> Concerning this, Father C. Journet writes that "the function of theology is to manifest the order that exists in the truths of revelation and to show how they mutually explain each other."<sup>4</sup> He adds:

In this confrontation of mysteries the resulting illumination is mutual. For if the higher mysteries by their own power and as it were from on high clarify the lower mysteries, still these latter frequently have a marvelous power to reveal to us, and as it were, from below, the profundities concealed in the higher mysteries.<sup>5</sup>

In the sacraments, for example, there is a continuation of the Redemption, for they are the saving acts of Christ. Each sacrament has its own exclusive relation to the mystery of the

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<sup>3</sup>Lonergan, p. 639.

<sup>4</sup>The Wisdom of Faith (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952), p. 54.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

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Redemption because all the sacraments are signs of the Passion but not equally nor to the same extent. Baptism and the Holy Eucharist have the closest relation to the Passion, yet neither of them is the Passion. They point to the past, present and future: the past, because it is through Christ's death and resurrection that the sacraments are efficacious; the present, in that they give grace; the future, because they are a pledge of our future glory.

(c) The final procedure to achieve a fruitful understanding is to relate the mysteries to man's last end. God created man so that he might use his wonderful gift of intelligence to know more about the Creator. Then by his queen faculty, the will, man can choose only the good or what seems good. God's design for man's perfection is complete union of the intellect with the Source of Truth and perfect union of the will with the Source of Goodness. Such is the sublime happiness that awaits the just man in heaven. The last end of man is expressed in the words of the Creed, "resurrection of the body and life everlasting." In considering the sacrament of Matrimony, the union of the spouses as being primarily a spiritual one is more readily understood in the light of our knowledge of the union of the soul with God in the Beatific vision. An example illustrating man's final destiny can be taken from Mariology. Mary's glorious Assumption is a figure of what is to come for the whole Church. It is a fulfilling in advance of what is to take place

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for the whole Mystical Body of Christ. In the triumph of the Assumption, the final glory of Mary, we recognize the final glory of the Church and the final glory of each of its members, for Mary is the perfect exemplar of redeemed humanity.<sup>6</sup>

(5) In contrast to the analytic and deductive method which results in speculative knowledge, the use of analogy effects in the mind a more experimental knowledge of the truths under consideration. It is not so much the mind that receives the knowledge as the whole man. The mind is not only instructed but formed and prepared to stimulate the whole person to act. Thus, a most fruitful, fructuosissimam, understanding is obtained, which awakens a love and taste for divine truth, with a corresponding filial belief and piety. This manner of presenting theology is most fruitful in the sense that a deeper appreciation of the Christian life results therefrom.

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<sup>6</sup>K. Rahner, "The Fundamental Principle of Mariology", Theology Digest, IV (Winter, 1956), p. 72.

## CHAPTER II

## SCHEEBEN'S USE OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL METHOD

It is borne out by the general agreement of theologians that The Mysteries of Christianity, by Matthias Scheeben, is one of the most original, profound, and brilliant works which recent theology has produced. Johannes Beumer's book is a detailed commentary on the constitution Filius Dei of the conciliar statement which has been explained in the previous chapter. In one of the last sections he singles out Matthias Scheeben as being the theologian who carried out in a practical manner the Vatican Council method, both in his Mysterien and his Dogmatik. Beumer pays him this tribute:

Scheeben is the one who best grasped the meaning of the Council's definition concerning the intellectual comprehension of the faith, gave the best theoretical exposition of it and made the best practical application. His theory of theological knowledge surpasses probably all similar works of other theologians precisely because it is in its very core indebted to the Vatican Council.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will be an exposition of how Scheeben, in his book, The Mysteries of Christianity, conspicuously followed the principles of the Vatican Council. To exemplify this,

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<sup>1</sup>Theologie Als Glaubensverständnis. (Wurzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), p. 214. "Scheeben ist auch derjenige, welcher den Sinn der Kinzilsdefinition über das Glaubensverständnis am tiefsten begriffen und am besten theoretisch zur Dargestellung und praktisch zur Anwendung gebracht hat. Wahrscheinlich überragt seine theologische Erkenntnislehre gerade darum alle ähnlichen

the mystery of the Blessed Trinity will be expounded, as developed by Scheeben, by comparing it to nature, by relating it to the mysteries of the Incarnation and of Grace, and by relating it to man's last end.

At the close of the very first chapter of his book, Scheeben refers to the interrelations of the doctrines of faith thus setting the tone of what is to follow in subsequent chapters.

The light derived from consideration of each separate mystery spreads automatically far and wide over the inner relationship and the wonderful harmony pervading them all; thus the individual pictures take their places in an orderly gallery, which comprises everything magnificent and sublime, that theology possesses far<sub>2</sub> in excess of all other sciences, even philosophy.

Then in the last chapter entitled, "Theology as Science," he comes back on the same idea:

We must look upon the various mysteries as members of a great whole, in which the purpose of any one mystery is determined not only by its individual character, but also by its bearing on the whole... We must endeavor to appreciate the significance of the individual mystery in terms of its relationship with the whole, and the whole in its harmonious unity as resulting from the<sub>3</sub> proportion and correlation of the several parts.

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Werke anderer Theologen, weil sie dem innersten Kern nach dem Vatikanischen Konzil verpflichtet ist."

<sup>2</sup>Mysteries of Christianity (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1946), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 758.

Religion means life, supernatural life, grace. Grace in turn brings us into relationship with the Blessed Trinity, because it enables us to participate in the divine family by becoming adopted children of God the Father, brothers of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit, with the Church as our mother. The Blessed Trinity is not only a necessary truth, it is the necessary truth. St. Thomas stresses this necessity.

Knowledge of the Divine Persons was necessary, that we may think rightly concerning the salvation of the human race, accomplished by the Incarnation and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

It is the root, the core of God's very existence, and it is the key to everything else in God's plan. Since the Holy Trinity is a supernatural mystery revealed by God, and impenetrable as far as mere human reason is concerned, its significance is also supernatural. Scheeben regards the manifestation of this mystery as an act of tender love of God.

The revelation of the Trinity is an act of tenderest love and most loving generosity by which God is pleased to honor and gladden creatures in a supernatural manner<sup>5</sup> and to glorify Himself in a supernatural manner.

Christ Himself has said, "I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn. 15:15). When Christ teaches us about the Trinity

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<sup>4</sup>St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 32, art. 1, Translated by the Fathers of the English Cominican province, (New York, Benziger, 1947).

<sup>5</sup>Mysteries of Christianity, p. 12.

it is somewhat as if a man with good eyesight were explaining beautiful colours to a blind man. The explanation must be managed either through the sense of hearing or the sense of touch. Scarlet is described as vivid and startling like the blast of the bugle. Purple is said to be like the softness of a mossy bank. The blind man has no experience of colour and we have no experience of three persons in one nature. Our Lord in His wisdom draws something from human experience to attract us and help us understand better this sublime mystery. He uses filial love, the intimate relationship between father and son. Since we are admitted to this profound mystery, we as children of God, can share the same intimacy and love with God the Father as there exists between father and son. Such a favor engenders a grateful loving response on the part of the adopted child of God.

The Trinity is connected with other dogmas also and its significance emerges more impressively when viewed in this relationship, because it is the focal point to which all other mysteries in the organism of Christian revelation converge. But in spite of its sublimity it is not something remote; rather it has something to do with us vitally. Knowledge of the internal activity of the Blessed Trinity brings out the intimacy of our union with God through Grace. The Incarnation is the link between these two august mysteries. The Incarnation continues and prolongs the infinite communication of the Trinity. But it

does more. It also continues and prolongs the self-glorification of God. These two effects are wrought perfectly in the God-man and, in an imperfect manner, in all Christians, through Him. This interpenetration of life, which is the source of the entire order of supernatural truths, is clearly expressed by the ancient doxology which was used for centuries and to some extent has been lost sight of, "Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Ghost."

#### The Doctrine of the Trinity

A certain plurality of Persons in God is faintly suggested in the Old Testament, but this is a mere vestige of the actual truth. God lifted the veil completely and clearly in the New Testament. That there are three distinct Persons in God and that these three Persons are intimately related to one another was first revealed, with the mystery of the Incarnation, to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel:

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

A clear compact summary of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity is given to us by St. Augustine:

The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit constitute a divine unity of one and the same substance, in an indivisible equality. Therefore they are not three Gods but one God; although the Father has begotten the Son, and He Who is the

Father is not the Son; and the Son was begotten by the Father and He, Who is the Son, is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and He Himself is also co-equal to the unity of the Trinity.<sup>5</sup>

Comparison of the Blessed Trinity to Nature

The root principle in the Trinity is the internal productions of the Divine Persons. Now a person is an incommunicable substance with a rational nature. Nature is that through which a person acts. The three divine Persons are God not by the possession of equal and similar natures but by the possession of one nature. They know with the same intellect and love with the same will. They are not three Gods; they are one God. "I and the Father are one (Jn. 10:3). Only their manner of possessing the divine nature is different. The Father possesses this nature of Himself. The second Person possesses it from the Father by generation. The Father and the Son do not beget the Holy Ghost. They do not pour their life out into each other; they pour it out into a third Person in Whom their love is manifested.

St. Augustine compares this Trinitarian process to the activity which takes place in the psychological nature of man.

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<sup>5</sup>St. Augustine, The Holy Trinity, Vol. XLV: The Fathers of the Church, ed. R. J. Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955), p. 10.

He says there are three things in the soul of man; the mind (mens), love (amor), and knowledge (notitia). Each member of this trinity is co-equal with the other two and yet has its own distinct identity.

The mind cannot love itself, except also it know itself; for how can it love what it does not know? . . . There are two things, the mind and the love of it when it loves itself; so there are two things, the mind and its knowledge when it knows itself. Therefore the mind itself, its love and its knowledge are a kind of trinity; these three are one, when they are perfect they are equal.

St. Augustine then explains how these three things although one, still remain separate:

But in these three, when the mind knows itself and loves itself, a trinity remains: the mind, love, and knowledge, and there is no confusion through any commingling although they are each a substance in itself and all are found mutually in all, whether each one in each two, or each two in each one.

Thus when a mind knows a thing it gives birth to an internal word which is the knowledge constituting one member of the trinity. Love is not another offspring of the mind; it is the means by which the mind and its knowledge are joined together.

The true knowledge of things thence conceived, we bear with us as a word, and beget by speaking from within; nor does it depart from us by being born. . . . This word is conceived in love. But the word is born when that which is thought pleases

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

us, either for the purpose of committing sin or of acting rightly. Love, therefore, as a means, joins our word with the mind, from which it is born; and as a third it binds itself with them, in an incorporeal embrace, without any confusion.

The inner word of the human mind is somewhat like the divine Word that Wisdom of God which is called the Word in the gospel of St. John. The love which joins the mind and the word, resembles the Holy Ghost, by which the Father and the Son express their mutual love as a breath, in which the whole of their being is breathed. There is complete identity between the Divine Wisdom and Divine Essence. "All things that the Father has are mine" (Jn. 16:15). Such identity is lacking in man. Since man is composed of body and soul, the trinity just explained belongs to man but is not man. We do not embody our knowledge, but only a sign of it, in verbal expressions; nor do we give love itself, but only a symbol of it, in external signs. Whereas in the divine Nature, God's Being is the same as His Wisdom and His love and perfectly one with it.

No composition is conceivable between the expression and the knowledge; between the sigh and the love surging in it. The Word must really be the knowledge itself and the Sigh must really be the love itself.

The human word is only an accident of the mind, remaining very imperfect and limited; the Divine Word is something substantial,

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 281-282.

<sup>9</sup>Scheeben, p. 66.

perfectly expressing the divine nature and all it contains,  
"Light of Light, God of God, true God of true God".

When an artist paints his inner vision on canvas, it is a projection of himself and resembles him in some way. The artist loves that picture because it is part of himself; he produced something of his own; he is, so to speak, father of it. So the eternal Artist, knowing Himself, produces an image of Himself, God the Son. Because this self expression is a perfect resemblance of Himself, He necessarily loves it. The Father and the Son contemplate each other, unite in a love so strong, so perfect, that it forms between them a living bond; a Third Person, the Holy Spirit. Now the Word alone is begotten of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeds not by way of generation but by way of spiration. He is breathed out, as it were, from the Father and the Son together, as from a single principle. There are many expressions to designate this outpouring of divine love; aspiration, gift, self-donation, pledge, but the word "breath" seems to be the most appropriate because it is the most meaningful. It gives us the richest and fullest concept of the second production in the Trinity. In fact, our word spirit is but a transliteration of the Latin for breath. There is a close connection between breath and life. Whatever breathes has life. When we stop breathing, we stop living. In the natural life inhaling is a sign of inner life on the part of the one who inhales; exhaling indicates the outpouring of life that surges within that person.

Thus it is a symbol of the overflow, the communication of life that occurs in the procession of the Third Person. In the Nicene Creed the Holy Ghost is called the Giver of Life. Although it is true that in created nature exhalation never generates the life, it is nevertheless a convincing sign that such life exists. It is then conceivable that the uncreated nature of God can produce a living being by such a breathing out of His infinite love.

The nature is not communicated to Him (Holy Spirit) in order to be represented in Him. Rather, the first two Persons, the begetter and the begotten, in virtue of their mutual love, take their nature in order to deposit it in the Third Person as a pledge of their love, and thereby crown their union with each other.<sup>10</sup>

Even in Sacred Scripture we find this same figure used to signify the giving of life.

The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

Again in the writings of the prophet Ezechiel we read:

Behold I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin; and I will give you a spirit and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord (Ezech. 37:4).

Scheeben in an almost ecstatic way explains the procession of the Holy Ghost by the following passage:

In the production of the Holy Ghost, they (Father and the Son) move and live in each other. There is an eternal surrendering and accepting, in the most

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

literal sense, and infinitely powerful living breath which emanates from one to the other and from both, the mighty pulsation of an infinite heart which surges with the supreme ardor of affection,<sup>11</sup> the blazing flame of an infinite fire of love.

Thus far, we perceive that the essence of the doctrine of the Trinity is the internal divine processions. It consists in the infinite interflow of knowing and loving among Three, Who are God. The Son proceeds by the outpouring of divine life by the Father to the Son. The Holy Ghost proceeds through spiration from the Father and the Son as an outbreathing of their mutual love. Yet the three Divine Persons, though distinct, have but one nature, which is more easily apprehended, having considered the indwelling of the Persons reciprocally in one another. Christ Himself testifies, "Believe the works that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father." The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Father and in the Son is indicated in St. Paul, "For the Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). This intimacy of life as revealed by the mutual penetration of the Persons, this Trinitarian perichoresis, strongly emphasizes the unity of the Divine Essence.

#### The Trinity as Reflected by Related Mysteries

Scheeben treats the mystery of the Incarnation as a continuation on this earth of what is taking place in the Trinity.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

This section will demonstrate how Scheeben links the Incarnation and Grace with the Blessed Trinity and in this way unites the key mysteries of Christianity into one organic whole.

### Incarnation

In the Incarnation we find the most perfect prolongation and manifestation of the interior processions of the Trinity. God willed that the interior communication of His nature should be projected and continued outside Himself in all its infinity.

The Incarnation appears as a flower springing from a root buried in the Trinitarian process; as the unfolding of a kernel contained therein; as a surging forth of a boundless<sup>12</sup> stream that wells up in the Trinitarian process.

Although the human nature and the divine nature in Christ are distinct, they do not exist side by side, as the Nestorians taught, but in the closest union; a mutual intimate union and penetration of one nature by the other. This penetration of one nature by the other is designated by the term "Christological Perichoresis". Now the power which united the two natures and holds them together proceeds from the divine nature. It is therefore, a one-sided penetration, which results, however, in the mutual intimate union of the two natures. Karl Adam explains it in this way:

Christological circumincession can thus be defined as the inhabitation of Jesus' humanity by the Logos or as the presence of the Triune God in Jesus' humanity. But the characteristics of the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

human nature remain unimpaired by the permeation of the divinity, as glass through which the morning sun shines, remains glass without being transformed into the sun.<sup>13</sup>

In the taking of human nature, the latter was prepared by the Father, formed by the Holy Spirit, and assumed by the Son. The humanity of Christ was joined to God by the closest union possible so that it could never be strengthened nor dissolved. So much so that when Our Divine Lord acted and spoke, God became manifest to those who saw Him and heard Him, as He told Philip, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Christ is the perfect exemplar of the indwelling of the Trinity in the human race. Now the indwelling of the Persons reciprocally in one another is the essence of the doctrine of the Trinity and this reciprocity of life and love exists in its perfection only in the Blessed Trinity. However, the Christological Perichoresis is not merely a reflection of the Trinitarian Perichoresis but its complement and its counterpart. Karl Adam very clearly points out their difference and their resemblance:

Where the Trinitarian Perichoresis takes its starting point in the unity of nature, the Christological Perichoresis reverses the process and takes its starting point in the unity of persons. Just as in the life within the Trinity, the three divine Persons inhabit one self-same nature, just so in God Incarnate the two natures inhabit one person. But Perichoresis applies to both cases, because in each it is a question of reciprocal compenetration and the closest community of life.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>K. Adam, The Christ of Faith (London: Burns & Oates, 1957) p. 233.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

It was St. John, the Evangelist, above all, who described how real and close this interpenetration of God and man was in Christ and who taught us to understand that Jesus' humanity was the organ or instrument of the Word. Because He experienced Christ, he saw deep into His inner life and then described it with simple directness. "Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" (Jn. 14:10). "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). "No one who disowns the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also" (Jn. 2:23). John portrays Christ as the Son who has become man and in His human consciousness knows himself to be absolutely dependent upon the Father declaring, "The Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14:28).

Viewed in this manner we come to understand that the Incarnation is a mission of the Son; and the sending of this divine Person into the world becomes an external projection of the infinite communication and self-glorification that takes place in God. Trinitarian perichoresis is the basis for the Christological perichoresis.

### Grace

A knowledge of the Trinity is most closely bound up with our own supernatural state. The precious gift of grace puts us in a special intimate relationship with the divine Persons, because grace is a reflection of the Trinitarian productions. In order to enlighten us regarding our own supernatural relationship to Him, God has revealed the inner life of the Trinity. Whereas

the communication of His divine life to the Son proceeds by way of necessity, on us God bestows his own life gratuitously, by his infinite liberality, by way of gift. The Blessed Trinity is the root of the order of grace; the source that sheds the clearest light over the mystery of grace. Scheeben says:

The God of the Trinity is the God of the life of grace. It cannot develop in its brightness and fullness without knowledge of the Trinity. Thus under the new Covenant, in which the life of grace properly begins, man's relationship to God and His dealings with him are constantly referred to the different divine Persons.<sup>15</sup>

It is characteristic of love to give gifts; but the first gift, the gift par excellence, is love itself. The Holy Spirit is the love of God. Therefore He is the Gift of God. The early Fathers of the Church have called the Holy Ghost the "mutual love-gift" of the Father and the Son. That same Gift comes forth outside of God through the Son and overflows into our souls by means of sanctifying grace, whereby we become members of God's family.

Now the love of the Father, reaching us through Christ, is grace. God, the Father, wishing to share the love which He had for His eternal Son, adopts others who have no such filial status and shows them the same paternal affection that He has for His Son. God is our Father in somewhat the same way that He is

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<sup>15</sup> La Dogmatique, Vol. II, Translated by P. Belet (Paris: Palmé, 1877), p. 370.

Father to the God-man in His humanity. A child's association with his father is of the most intimate and trustful kind and a most affectionate friendship exists between them so that it withholds no secrets and admits no fears. God looks upon us no longer as belonging to the low level proper to our own persons, as mere human creatures. He sees us as members of His Son and He recognizes His Son in us. He beholds us substantially united to His Son and kin to Him. By this ineffable privilege God takes us into His intimacy and makes us share in his own thinking and in his own love. The soul in its inner recesses can converse and warm itself at the fire of divine love. In true friendship a friend reveals his secrets to his friend. They unite affectionately and the two have, as it were, one heart. But the kinship existing between friends does not fully explain the divine union by grace. The latter is even more intimate still. Human persons cannot interpenetrate one another but a Christian grows together in one spirit with God. Within a loving heart His spirit sinks into the soul, spreads itself, and steepens itself more and more by an intimate penetration. So much so that the soul in grace even thinks God's thoughts, resembling the Word, and loves with God's love, resembling the Holy Spirit. God gives and we possess. The Holy Spirit then is something of our own, for possession is proper to love. We perceive then how the child of God can enjoy a most profound intimacy with the three divine Persons.

Although grace is directly infused by God, it is increased as a consequence of our own acts. Thus our participation in the divine life depends primarily on God but in the divine economy, it depends on ourselves too, in our response to Him as a child responds to the loving advances of his father. The way is opened to us by Christ. He is, in fact, the Way. What we must do is enter into Him and abide in Him as the branches live and share dependently the life of the vine.

We come then to understand the indwelling of the Trinity not simply as God's action upon our souls but as a result of the soul's knowledge and love of Christ prompting a spontaneous response to the action of God. There is a two-way action, a reciprocity of life, an interpenetration, a true Christian Perichoresis, or "Perichoresis of Grace". Scheeben sums it up in this manner:

The twofold communication of the divine nature, in the Trinity and in grace, combines in the Incarnation to constitute one organic process. And the twofold supernatural glorification which God the Father wills to receive from His natural Son and His adopted children merges (in the Incarnation) into a single harmonious, divine hymn."<sup>16</sup>

#### The Blessed Trinity Compared to Man's Last End

The mystery of the Trinity is very closely related to man's last end. St. Thomas declares that every end is twofold.

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<sup>16</sup> Mysteries of Christianity, p. 398.

First, there is the thing itself which we desire to attain; then there is the possession, the use or enjoyment of the thing desired.

In the first sense, then, man's last end is the uncreated good, namely God, who alone by His infinite goodness can perfectly satisfy man's will. But in the second way, man's last end is created, existing in him and this is nothing else than the attainment or enjoyment of the last end. Now the last end is called happiness.<sup>17</sup>

God's design for man's perfection is complete union of the intellect with the Source of Truth and perfect union of the will with the Source of Goodness. Such a union will result in a happiness which, "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into man's heart to conceive, what God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9). The sublime enjoyment of the beatitude that awaits man in heaven is expressed by St. Paul, "But we all, beholding with open face are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:16). This, however, culminates in the attained perfection of the next life. In that state the soul is clothed with the splendour of the Godhead; transformed into a radiant likeness of the divinity. The Blessed Trinity, God, as possessed in the beatific vision, is man's last end.

Belief in the Trinity is a foretaste of the beatific vision of God; it builds a bridge between heaven for our souls, it lifts them up to God while

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<sup>17</sup>Summa, II, q. 3, art. 1.

they tarry still on earth, it introduces them into the joy of their God.<sup>18</sup>

The happiness of heaven can be acquired only as heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ. It is only as children of God and members of Christ, His only begotten Son, that man can know and love God as He knows and loves Himself. In order to bring this good to us, God's own Spirit must enter into man to enable him to participate in the glory of the Godhead. Our complete union with the Father in which we will behold Him face to face occurs only in eternity. But this is inaugurated by knowledge and belief in the inner activity of the Blessed Trinity, and our future heavenly bliss is anticipated by our present participation in this mystery. Man's sharing on earth, of the life of the Trinity is verily a sort of heaven; the difference being in degree but not in kind.

We have already put on Christ in baptism and in a sense have become Christ Himself as members of his body; He already dwells in our hearts by faith and has risen in us like the morning star; but He has not yet risen as the sun of beatitude and glory.<sup>19</sup>

While our souls remain here, they are raised towards God in their participation in the Trinity which introduces them into the joy of the Lord.

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<sup>18</sup> Mysteries of Christianity, p. 129

<sup>19</sup> M. J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1954), p. 143.

In this study of the Trinity we learn that the inner activity of the Blessed Trinity consists in communicating and glorifying the divine nature by the generation of the Son by the Father, and the spiration of the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son. The root of the whole supernatural life is the Blessed Trinity from which Christ came forth and to which He returns with all faithful Christians. By means of the personal mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are the temporal manifestations of the eternal processions, man is taken up into union with the divine Persons. First, by the Incarnation which is the highest and most intimate communication of God outside Himself; secondly, by the bestowal of sanctifying grace as the means of closest union of mankind with the God-man and through Him with God. Moreover, besides being the source of the supernatural life, the Trinity is also the crown, whereby man's intimacy with the Father, begun on earth, culminates in complete possession and enjoyment of Him in the Beatific Vision as his last end, as a son returning home to his father after a long perilous journey.

The Holy Ghost takes us to Christ; through Christ we go to the Father, as St. Paul says when speaking of the order established by God, "All are yours and you are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:22). In this way the supernatural activity of the Christian life is explained by the interpenetration of the human nature and the divine nature of Christ, which in turn is explained by the mutual indwelling of the three Persons

in the Trinity. Briefly, what happens to us is like what happens to Christ which is like what happens in the Trinity.

So by studying the inner activity of the Trinitarian life and relating it to both the interaction of the human and divine powers in Christ, and to our own grace-life, we see exemplified, in revealing perspective, that the over-all divine plan with its many ramifications is but one unified organism. Scheeben highlights the understanding of the faith by designating God as a Father. Then he shows how the Father, out of His infinite goodness gives Himself to all men by sending His own Son into the world to manifest to them how much He loves them and wants to convey to them all the riches of his paternal heart. By contemplating the mysteries in this manner the effect is not so much that of fear, as a servant to his master, nor is it one of awe, as a creature to his Creator; the effect is rather one of trusting filial love as a son to his exceedingly generous Father.

Thus, by comparing the mysteries to nature, to one another and to man's last end, as the Vatican Council instructs us, we can gain some insight and a most fruitful one, into these profound doctrines of the faith.

## CHAPTER III

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE KERYGMATIC APPROACH  
AND THE VATICAN COUNCIL APPROACH

Kerygmatic presentation in teaching religious doctrine must be clearly distinguished from the Vatican Council viewpoint. These two approaches can help each other greatly but they are not identical. Therefore further explanation of the meaning underlying Kerygmatics is necessary. This chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first will consider the nature and elements of the Kerygma. The second will examine how the Kerygmatic approach and that of the Vatican Council are related and in what respects they are definitely distinct.

The Greek word kerygma means "publicly announced message." It refers to the core of apostolic preaching; that body of truths which make up the substance of the Christian Good News, the Gospel that God meant to be enthusiastically proclaimed. Certain words and expressions of Jesus, by dint of repetition, became current in the early Church. The communication of the glad tidings of salvation produced an oral tradition among the early Christians which came more and more to look like the life of Christ. This primitive teaching took on a set form that always included certain facts about Our Lord, His death, burial, resurrection, the apparitions and His second coming. But Kerygmatic teaching is not just an enumeration of facts, but facts with

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theological meaning. Christ died and arose according to the Scriptures. He died for our sins and hence introduced a new era, the messianic era. Thus the purpose of relating the events of the life of Christ is to show the salvific meaning which they contain. This is the essential note of the good news of the gospel.

The classic form of the kerygma is found in the catechesis of St. Peter in his two sermons on Pentecost and the one in the house of Cornelius the pagan (Acts 2:10). The same fundamental theme is developed by St. Paul (1 Cor. 15) and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>1</sup>

The Kerygmatic approach as it is known today is not something new in the Church. It is a revival of the method used in the primitive Church. Many today use the term "salvation history". With St. Paul they speak of the mystery of Christ which means that God has designed a redemptive plan for man with Christ as its centre. "I come that they may have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). This history embraces three phases: (1) Preparation in the Old Testament; (2) Achievement through the death and resurrection of Christ; (3) Consummation,

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<sup>1</sup>J. Hoginger, The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1957), pp. 85-183. See also, Shaping the Christian Message and Modern Catechetics, ed. G. Slyan (New York: Macmillan), and E. Carter's book, The Modern Challenge to Religious Education (New York: Sadlier).

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the return of Christ to glory. The Kerygma is not so much a body of doctrines as it is a Person. Christ is the Kerygma. He is the Good News, the gift of the Father to us and the Way by which we go to the Father. Christ is the central figure and the mystery of Christ is the central doctrine giving meaning to the whole of God's plan for the restoration of the divine life by grace.

The Kerygmatic program inculcates in the students a love for Holy Scripture. Another emphatic element is the fact that whenever the Church celebrates her liturgy, Christ is in the midst of the people and it aims at arousing in hearts a desire to take an active part in the prayer life of the Church. It seeks to deepen the meaning of the Christian message by systematic lessons which will draw men to a close union with Christ. This fourfold procedure consists in drawing our doctrine from biblical-liturgical context in which it was presented for centuries, organizing it in a systematic way and then showing its presence and power in the witness of Christian living in the world.

In addition to these four elements another important factor must be included. It is the teacher who is the herald, the instrument of God, the mouthpiece of Christ. Totally dedicated, the teacher is the witness, joyfully proclaiming the good news of salvation. The catechist announces the story of God's

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love so that those being taught will be gladdened and love the beauty and promise of the Kingdom of God and tries to awaken in them a genuine response to that love.

The word Kerygmatic applies as well to the content and the order in which religious doctrine is to be presented. In the present catechetical movement there is a shift of emphasis from method to content. Much effort has been expended in implementing the directives of the Eichstaett program regarding text books of religion:

They should not present the content of faith as a series of disconnected units, but as an organic whole, as an unfolding of God's great plan of salvation with Jesus Christ as its heart and Center.<sup>2</sup>

This restoration in content or this arrangement of doctrine was the special contribution of Father Jungmann, of Innsbruck, one of the leading authorities on catechetics. Whereas formerly we were taught what we must believe (Creed), what we must do (Commandments), and that God would give us the help we need to do what is right (Grace); now the arrangement according to Fr. Jungmann is as follows:

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<sup>2</sup>J. Hofinger, (ed.) Teaching All Nations, Translated by C. Howell, (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), p. 406.

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1. Dogma: God reveals Himself and gives Himself to us.

The Creed is taught as an outline of the history of salvation as well as a summary of truths.

2. Grace: Through the sacraments God gives Himself to us out of love just as He reveals Himself out of love.

3. Commandments: They are the daily occasions for making a response of love in gratitude for God's having first loved us. Thus we speak of the prayer of the heart and the prayer of action as our response of love for love.<sup>3</sup> The new catechism of the Strasburg diocese contains this threefold division. The three parts are called, "Belief in the Word of God," "Living the Life of God," and "Behaving as Children of God."<sup>4</sup>

In summary then, the Kerygmatic approach comprises the story of God's love for man and man's response to that love, as it was taught in apostolic times. The essence of the Christian message is well expressed by Fr. W. Conway when he writes:

If you asked Saint Paul or Saint Peter what this "good news" was, he would probably have said that Jesus Christ was God and that He died for love of us

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<sup>3</sup>J. A. Jungmann, Handing on the Faith, Translated by C. Howell (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), p. 406.

<sup>4</sup>J. Burckle, "The Catechism of the Strasburg Diocese," Lumen Vitae, V (October-December, 1950), p. 515.

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and that He is waiting to receive us into perfect happiness forever if only we will love Him back.<sup>5</sup>

A comparison of the Kerygmatic approach and the Vatican Council approach reveals some striking similarities and even more important differences. The same spirit pervades them both in that they stress the same organic unity of the faith but their method is different because their aim is different. The difference between these two approaches is as distinct as the difference between theology and catechetics. In his article on this subject P. Hitz tells us:

We see at once the formal difference and at the same time the internal unity of theology and catechism: theology studies the Word of God while catechism announces it. These are two distinct functions at the service of the same Word of God.<sup>6</sup>

Kerygmatics is the method of taking the initiative and proclaiming the truths for the first time, especially for the unbeliever. It is more basic, more elementary. The Vatican Council approach is a way of understanding, assimilating, deepening the knowledge of Catholic truths after they have been accepted. It is for the

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<sup>5</sup>W. Conway, "The Child and the Catechism," The Furrow, X (October, 1959), p. 626.

<sup>6</sup>P. Hitz, "Théologie et Catéchèse," Nouvelle Revue Théologique, LXXVII (November, 1955), p. 903. "On voit aussitôt la différence formelle en même temps que l'unité interne de la théologie et le catéchèse: la théologie étudie la Parole de Dieu que le catéchèse annonce. Ce sont deux fonctions distinctes au service de la même Parole de Dieu."

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believer. It is more advanced, more meditative, more thoughtful, a very good follow-up for Kerygmatic teaching. The Kerygmatic method ~~method~~ is "concrete, historical, narration,"<sup>7</sup> heralding the glad tidings. It pertains to catechetics. The Vatican Council method is that of analogy, chiefly of pondering the inter-relationship of mysteries. It pertains to theology. Father Jungmann makes a clear distinction between Kerygmatics and theology:

By the word Kerygma, we mean the Christian teaching in so far as it is intended to be proclaimed. . . . Kerygma is thus to be distinguished from Christian doctrine in so far as Christian doctrine is illuminated in all aspects by theology and presented as a logically coordinated system of knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

He further explains:

Whenever the renewal of the content of Christian message is mentioned nowadays, phrases such as "theology of the message," and "Kerygmatic theology" are used. What is meant by this? . . . The efforts to bring about such a renewal do not imply a special kind of theology but a clear and effective presentation of the Christian message itself. The message has to<sup>9</sup> be defined apart from theology and in its own right.

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<sup>7</sup> Hofinger, The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine, p. 99.

<sup>8</sup> Jungmann, p. 387.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 398.

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Kerygmatics is more psychological, prepares the soul for the divine gift. Vatican Council approach is more logical. It aims at making known the mysterious grandeur of God's gift of Himself by contemplation followed by admiration.

As the student develops this capacity of relating one truth to another and of discovering the interdependent elements of these truths, he will begin to see the internal unity of the whole in a much clearer light. Fr. B. M. Ashley makes this important distinction.

No one can deny that it (Kerygmatic emphasis) is fundamental to the mission of the Church, and that in the pulpit, in the catechizing of converts, and in the teaching of Christian doctrine in the high school it is the best method. Nevertheless those who propose that it be used also in the teaching of college theology seem indeed to be proposing both what is difficult and insufficient.<sup>10</sup>

It is significant to note another distinctive feature of these two approaches. Kerygmatic teaching is focused around the good news of Jesus Christ. All other doctrines are seen as emanating from Christ like spokes in a wheel or as rays of light pouring from a central source. Christ is the core of the message, the nucleus, the unifying principle of Kerygmatic instruction. Now the proper object of theology is God, as He is in Himself.

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<sup>10</sup>R. Masterson, "The Nature of Theology", Theology in the Catholic College, ed. Reginald Masterson (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1961), p. 139.

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Reginald Masterson says:

Any system of theology properly so called must begin with a consideration of the nature of God, his attributes and the Trinity of Persons within the Godhead. Christ, the sacraments, the Mystical Body all become theologically meaningful in relation to the Triune God.<sup>11</sup>

The Vatican Council approach is most conducive to beginning with the consideration of the nature of God, as has been illustrated in the previous chapter. Thus it can be said that the Kerygmatic approach is intended for catechetics and is therefore Christo-centric. The Vatican Council approach is intended for theology and is therefore theocentric as the name theology implies. The latter leans more towards the humanistic concept of theology. While it values both precise formulations of Christian doctrine, clear discernment of the meaning of revealed truths, it also gives the ability to pray, meditate, appreciate and live Christian doctrine.

By comparing these two approaches then, it is apparent that the Kerygma is prior to theology. The Vatican Council approach builds on the Kerygmatic approach and makes it most fruitful.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

## CHAPTER IV

### REPORT ON THE SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION

This inquiry includes current religion texts for High School and College students as well as books of theology written for adults. The manner of presenting and developing the whole content of dogma was noted, with special attention being given to the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and Grace. The purpose of this survey is to discover to what extent the threefold procedure proposed by the Vatican Council is employed.<sup>1</sup> Question and answer form is used in order to pinpoint the observations as clearly as possible. Following the method recommended by the Vatican Council, the questions are divided into three categories, namely:

- A. Comparison of mysteries to nature
- B. Comparison of mysteries with one another
- C. Comparison of mysteries to man's last end

#### A. Comparison of Mysteries to Nature

1. Is there much elucidation of the truths by their similarity to what is known naturally?

All the books examined show consistency in this point. Some illustrate by examples from nature more frequently than others; some use more striking parallels. The doctrine of grace

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<sup>1</sup>Denz. 1796.

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for instance, is presented as a sharing in God's life and God's power. Fr. Gregory Stevens allots a special section of his book on grace to develop St. John's reflection of the Christian's participation in Christ who is light and love.

The theme of life is the most prominent one in John's thought about Christ and his work. It is in terms of John's teaching of life in Christ and Christ's in the individual Christian that his doctrine on grace will be developed (Jn. 10:10).<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate new life, one catechism for adults gives this example, "A man could not live underwater unless God added to his human life the life of a fish. A man cannot live in heaven unless God gives him the life of heaven which is grace."<sup>3</sup> Another gives this comparison, "To share in the happiness of another it is necessary to have the same kind of life. A dog, for example, cannot enjoy a book because man has a kind of life higher than a dog." Further on he explains that to share in God's happiness a new kind of life, the life of grace is needed.<sup>4</sup> A book written for adults makes use of this timely and forceful analogy to point out how grace gives us a share in God's power:

A great jet plane starts on a trip across the ocean. It is pushed toward its destination by the roaring powers of its motors. It is guided by magnetic controls and electronic eyes and its communication with various points of contact on land, sea,

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<sup>2</sup>The Life of Grace, ("Foundations of Catholic Theology Series"; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>M. W. Farrel, The Parish Catechism (Chicago: United Book Service, 1955), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>J. W. Cogan, A Catechism for Adults (Chicago: Acta Publications, 1958), p. 26.

and air . . . These instruments might be called the mechanical crew or the electronic crew. They magnify human powers of perception a thousand times and permit the crew to achieve objectives that are far beyond the range of unaided reason. Like the plane which sets off for distant shores we have an objective in life which exceeds the capabilities of our limited human powers. Our destination is heaven but our human powers cannot even get us airborne in the direction of heaven. God Himself must supply the power which will guide and protect us through the perils of flight. What the mechanical crew and the electronic crew are to the human pilot in his way across the ocean, actual graces are to the human soul on its way to heaven.<sup>5</sup>

2. How much is Christ's own comparison of the vine and the branches used to illustrate the doctrine of Grace and the Church?

All the texts without exception use Christ's classic example from nature. Most of them discuss at length the various aspects of this comparison, especially when dealing with the doctrine of Grace.

3. With special reference to the Blessed Trinity, is the example of the human faculties to explain the Trinitarian processions used extensively?

Approximately two thirds of the books which were examined develop this analogy at length. It is definitely found in the college texts; quite often in those written for the educated Catholic layman. Here is an example:

Our mind is fruitful. It continually forms interior thoughts and these thoughts reflect that which we know. Thoughts are, in effect, inwardly spoken words. . . . The Spirit of God is infinitely fruitful.

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<sup>5</sup>J. D. Conway, Facts of the Faith (New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 58.

The Father knows Himself, a concept which expresses all the wealth of His divine nature. He expresses Himself in that eternal thought: He speaks, interiorly, one Word which reflects Himself in complete perfection. . . . When the mind has created an ideal, which expresses all that is highest and dearest in itself, then that mind is enraptured, then it seeks to capture and to express this all-embracing intuition of the ideal. The result is love, and from this love flows action. . . . God expressed Himself in His Word, which was His Son, and in Him He encounters all the infinite goodness and beauty of His own divine being. In Him He finds perfect complacency. The Son, in turn, beholds in the Father the immeasurable treasures of infinite wealth; He is enraptured with this divine abundance. The fruit of this incommensurable bliss which unites Father and Son, the ever-blossoming flower of their mutual inclination, is the Holy Spirit. He proceeds from the pure love of Father and Son and this love of God, in God, must be infinitely perfect: God Himself.<sup>6</sup>

Rarely is this comparison found in those books written for converts. In the latter simpler examples are used.

4. To what extent are the concepts of "nature" and "person", as can be known from nature, applied to the mystery of the Trinity and the Incarnation, treated?

The meanings of these two terms are thoroughly explained for each mystery in itself only. Mr. Frank Sheed gives a detailed "who" and "what" explanation for a better understanding of these two concepts.<sup>7</sup> The same idea is taken up by Fr. Fergal McGrath in his text for secondary schools.<sup>8</sup> However, it was not found

<sup>6</sup> N. G. Van Doornik, A Handbook of the Catholic Faith (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 160-161.

<sup>7</sup> Theology and Sanity (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946), p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> Life in Christ (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1958), p. 23.

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that the difference and similarity of nature and persons in the mystery of the Trinity were compared to the natures and person in the Hypostatic Union of Christ.

5. To what extent is the Church shown to be a body or an organism made up of interdependent parts, sharing a common life?

Father Morrow gives this definition of the Church (Italics added):

The Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ, because its members are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ, their head, thus resembling the members and head of the living human body. . . Among the members there exists an interdependence so that although each one has his own individual function, yet he does not live for himself alone, but for the entire body. Every good he does perfects the body of which he is a part.<sup>9</sup>

This is typical of the manner in which a large majority of the newer books describe the Church.

B. Comparison of Mysteries With One Another

6. Is one particular mystery selected to connect all the dogmas of Catholicism as a unified organism?

Yes. In the book, The Handbook of the Catholic Faith, we read:

In such a conception of the Triune God there is no contradiction in terms, because the three and the one do not refer to the same noun. We speak of one being, and three Persons. This mystery is the most precious revelation bequeathed to us by Jesus Christ. All other dogmas depend upon this

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<sup>9</sup> My Catholic Faith (Kenosha, Wisconsin: Mission House, 1961), p. 158.

mystery and through it, God is revealed to us as a living God, in an endless perfect fellowship.<sup>10</sup>

Also the Catholic High School Religion Series states that the Trinity is the heart and center of history of salvation. The Blessed Trinity is not an isolated mystery but it is intimately joined with the mysteries of the Incarnation and grace:

By grace we are made partakers of the very life of God. We share in the life of the Blessed Trinity. Through the gift and virtue of faith infused into our souls at Baptism, we can know God as three Persons possessing the same divine nature.<sup>11</sup>

Then in the chapter dealing with the Incarnation we find:

God became man that we might become God-like . . . .  
Now those of us who are baptized are "christened".  
We are anointed, grafted on to the Anointed One  
Himself, and made, in a human way, sharers of the  
very divinity of God.<sup>12</sup>

In his text Fr. McGrath focuses attention on the coherence of the principle mysteries from the outset:

The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is the greatest doctrine of the faith. All the others follow from it . . . . To know his Fatherhood of man, we must know him as the Father. To know the meaning of the Incarnation, Redemption, the Mass, we must know

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<sup>10</sup>N. G. Van Doornik, p. 162.

<sup>11</sup>A. J. Flynn, A. J. et al. Faith in Action ("Catholic High School Religion Series"; New York: Sadlier, 1956), p. 230.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

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Him as the Son. To know the meaning of the life of grace given to us by the sacraments and the other sources of grace, we must know Him as the Holy Ghost.<sup>13</sup>

7. What treatment is given to the idea of the Incarnation being the external manifestation of the internal procession of the Holy Trinity?

The conventional-style books for college students include this as a proposition in the treatise on the Blessed Trinity. The same applies for the external mission of the Holy Spirit in the Christian soul by grace. This interrelationship of the three key mysteries of the faith is noticeably absent.

8. Is the filiation of God the Son by nature frequently compared to the filiation of Christians by grace?

Yes. There is a pronounced trend to speak of God as Father; of Christ as God's only-begotten Son; and of Christians as adopted sons of God. A good number of books develop in detail the difference between legal adoption and filial adoption thereby setting in relief the dignity and grandeur of belonging to the family of God and of being brothers of Christ. Here is an example:

The Son came to be the Saviour because our pattern for salvation is to be by adoption precisely what He is by nature, sons of God.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Life in Christ, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>T. Hesburgh, God and the World of Man (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1950), p. 98.

In another text, the same idea is expressed in this way:

Members of the long-awaited Kingdom of God established by Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God, were actually to be made "sons of God" by divine adoption. How? They were to share in the sonship of Jesus Christ Himself. It was precisely for this that the Son of God became man, that in and through Him sons of men might be made sons of God.<sup>15</sup>

9. Are the three mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Grace, compared to discover that there is a circum-incession or perichoresis in each of them?

The book entitled, The Idea of Catholicism, is an anthology made up of chapters taken from the writings of eminent theologians. On one of the first chapters, Fr. Bernard Häring expresses this as a basic principle. "Religion is a communion with the living God."<sup>16</sup> Then he makes a clear exposition of the mystery that Christ is the foundation of our capacity for dialogue with God in the intimacy of the "I-Thou" relationship. One of his concluding remarks is:

This communion with God should be the characteristic mark of Christian morality in its scientific presentation and in preaching . . . Our loving commitment to the following of Christ makes our lives an echo, an image, of sharing in the Trinitarian life.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sr. Jane Marie and T. Barrosse, Christ in the World, Vol. IV: The Christian Life Series (Indiana: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1960), p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> B. Haring, "The Master Idea of Christianity," The Idea of Catholicism, ed. W. J. Burghardt, W. F. Lynch (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960), p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

## REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION 47

This master idea of communion of life between God and the Christian sets the tone for the ensuing chapters. In this way it could be considered as the underlying theme of the book.

10. Is the doctrine of the Church presented as the Mystical Body of Christ?

In thirty-three out of forty books examined, the Church is considered as a continuation of Christ living in the world today and fully explained. Fr. Clifford Howell uses St. Augustine's expression, "the whole Christ" and elaborates upon this all-important idea.<sup>18</sup> In another book the Church is referred to as "Christ's other self."

The Church has taken the place of Christ not only in the way a company may be said to take the place of its founder, but in the sense that it is an organism living by the supernatural life of Christ. In a very real sense the Church is Christ's other self, in very truth and fulness, as by a new incarnation after His ascension . . . The Church will never fail simply because Christ can never fail. Her every Calvary will be followed by a fresh resurrection.<sup>19</sup>

The title of a new book intended for High School students is, Christ Lives Today. The author concludes the first chapter by summing up the doctrine of the Mystical Body thus, "The Church is Christ remaining on earth until the end of time."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The Work of Our Redemption (Oxford: The Catholic Guild, 1953), p. 33.

<sup>19</sup>F. J. Ripley, This Is The Faith (Billinge, La.: Birchley Hall Press, 1951), p. 196.

<sup>20</sup>M. Link, Christ Lives Today (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), p.

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11. Is the interrelationship of the principal mysteries of the faith, as an approach to the presentation of theology, notably present?

It is more the exception than the rule. The practice of comparing mystery with mystery as a method of teaching theology does not show up to any great extent in this survey. The large number of college texts are written in the conventional style as adaptations of the Summa of St. Thomas. However, the newer books written for the laity do follow a positive trend, mostly with a biblical or liturgical orientation. Father Higgins' book, Dogma for the Layman,<sup>21</sup> for instance, is one of exposition, not of argument. It is a brilliant, easy-to-read, narrative-style presentation of the whole content of dogmatic theology. He teaches revelation arising immediately out of Scripture. He states the mysteries but does not delve into their inner meaning. Where there could be included many comparisons of mysteries in this book, there actually are very few.

12. Does any particular text show definite indications of using relationships for a better understanding of the Catholic truths?

In Father Hesburgh's book, God and the World of Man, we find a sincere attempt to do this. In the introduction he quotes the exact passage from the Vatican Council.<sup>22</sup> There is

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<sup>21</sup>T. J. Higgins, Dogma for the Layman (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1961).

<sup>22</sup>Hesburgh, p. 13.

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a section entitled, "Relationship of the Branches of Theology."<sup>23</sup> He quotes Scheeben often enough to detect that his general attitude has been influenced by Scheeben. As a follow-up on the study of the Trinity, there are two sections of interest. In the first part entitled, "The Trinitarian Plan of Christ Life," he develops the idea that the fundamental attitude to God is that of a Father and in the same line of thought he continues to elaborate on the great privilege of being his adopted children.<sup>24</sup> The second section, "The Holy Eucharist and the Trinity," sheds light on how Holy Communion is a most intimate contact with the Triune God:

This intimate connection of the Father and the Son and our union with them in sharing the life of God is especially promised in relation Holy Communion . . . When we receive Holy Communion we receive the glorified Christ as He is present in heaven, and with Him we receive the whole Trinity within us. The Trinity is present in us for it is present in Christ, and we possess Our Lord in Holy Communion.<sup>25</sup>

13. What other mysteries are compared enough to be noted?

In the book, Whereon to Stand, there is a chapter entitled, "The Meshing of Mysteries," in which there is much

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

interrelating done. "An unbreakable link connects the Last Supper, the Cross and the Mass."<sup>26</sup> John Brunini then gives a clear exposition of the relationship that exists between these mysteries. Also the connection between the sacrament of Baptism and the death and resurrection of Christ is made by several authors, following St. Paul's teaching (Rom. 6: 3-11). To illustrate, G. Doornik develops this comparison in the following way:

The ceremony of baptism represents redemption through Christ: His death and His resurrection. . . . Death and resurrection. The person receiving baptism goes down into the font and is immersed in that living stream; He shares the death of Jesus, and the old man, full of sin, is buried with Christ. As he comes out of the water, he rises again with the Saviour; a new man comes into being, and a new life commences.<sup>27</sup>

Clifford Howell also relates Baptism to the death and resurrection of Christ in this manner:

Let us now repeat just what baptism signifies and does. It signifies the death and resurrection of Christ. Hence, it effects, in the supernatural order, that Christ's death and resurrection

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<sup>26</sup> J. G. Brunini, Whereon We Stand: What Catholics Believe and Why (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1961), p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> A Handbook of the Catholic Faith, p. 258.

become our death and resurrection. Moreover baptism signifies cleansing. Hence it effects, in the supernatural order, a cleansing of our souls from sin. By rising with Christ we begin a new sort of life, are "born again". Our new life is not a direct, individual gift, but comes from Christ's Mystical Body, through which He is acting in this, as in all the sacraments. We are thus, incorporated into, made members of that Mystical Body.<sup>28</sup>

On the same subject of Baptism J. Higgins comments:

Because of our incorporation into Christ, the mysteries of Christ are mystically reproduced in us, namely, death to sin, resurrection and ascension and sitting at the right hand of the Father. The baptisteries of the ancient Church symbolized this summary of the Christian life. The candidate went down into the baptismal water by one set of steps which symbolized the descent into death, death to the world, the flesh, and Satan and he ascended from the saving waters by the opposite steps which represented his arising to a new life with Christ. Having been made one with Christ, the newly baptized is freed from the ancient dominion which Satan exercised over men and is dead to sin. Since he is also risen with Christ, he embraces a new life and seeks "the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).<sup>29</sup>

14. Does this survey show that comparison of mysteries with one another is used extensively?

No. Comparing mysteries for better understanding of the faith is not generally found in the texts examined. When the

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<sup>28</sup>Of Sacraments and Sacrifice. (Collegeville, Minn. The Liturgical Press, 1952, p. 49.

<sup>29</sup>Dogma for the Layman, p. 145.

writers do relate one mystery to another, even though by doing this they make the explanation clearer, it is in an incidental manner only.

### C. Comparison of Mysteries to Man's Last End

#### 15. How much reference to man's last end is found in the expositions of the important truths?

In every book examined, reference is made to man's last end. Very often it takes the form of a chapter at the close of the book. Although many authors averted to man's happiness in heaven, or complete union with God, throughout the different chapters, it was only in reference to man's final destiny without specific connection to the truth being explained.

#### 16. Is there any explicit relating of any mystery or mysteries to man's last end?

In John Brunini's book, when writing about grace he says, "However intimate may become the union of love between God and the soul on earth, it contains but a promise of the glory of that love fulfilled in heaven."<sup>30</sup> In another book, the section dealing with grace relates our correspondence to grace on earth to the reward that awaits us in heaven. He quotes St. Paul and St. James: "Let us then run for victory" (1 Cor. 9:24). "The price is that crown of life which God has promised

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<sup>30</sup> Whereon We Stand, p. 160.

## REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION 53

to those who love him" (James 1:12). In his own words (Italics mine):

Eternal life and happiness which are the complete fruition of His grace and love, remain purely an outcome of his mercy; nevertheless that very eternal life is the reward and crown which he promises us for all the acts which we have performed in a state of grace and with good intention.<sup>29</sup>

Then in the lesson on the Trinity of the Catholic High School Series, we read (Italics added):

The faith and charity by which we live the divine life now will grow and be transformed when we enter into eternal life. The faith will give way to light; we shall see God face to face.<sup>30</sup>

The mysteries of grace, Baptism and the Holy Eucharist are all related to the last end of man in the book The Life of Grace:

This communication of divine life, effected in the rebirth of Baptism through faith and constantly renewed in the Eucharist, is a real beginning here on earth of the life of glory to come. This life of glory will be but the flowering and the open manifestation of the inner transformation which has already taken place in the life of grace.<sup>31</sup>

17. Is the connection between our union with God in Holy Communion and our ultimate union with God in heaven, pointed out in any of the books examined?

This is done in various ways. When speaking of Holy Communion, Leo Trese makes the following distinctions:

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<sup>29</sup> Van Doornik, p. 220.

<sup>30</sup> Flynn, p. 230.

<sup>31</sup> Stevens, p. 18.

The marvelous blending of the soul with Jesus is a very special kind of union. Obviously we do not become "part of God". We are not united to Jesus by a hypostatic union, such as the union which exists between the sacred Humanity of Christ and His Divine nature. The union with Jesus which Holy Communion effects in us is however in a class by itself. It is much more than the "ordinary" union with God which the Holy Spirit establishes in us by sanctifying grace; yet it is less than the ultimate and most intimate union with God which will be ours in the beatific vision in heaven. It is neither hypostatic nor beatific; it is simply Communion.<sup>31</sup>

Another text highlights the fact that Holy Communion is a promise of perfect union with God or a pledge of future glory, by quoting the Fathers of the Church,

St. Ignatius of Antioch, one of the early Fathers of the Church, calls the Eucharist the "medicine of immortality." St. Irenaeus says, "Our bodies having received the Eucharist are no longer corruptible but have the hope of the resurrection." The Eucharist in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas is "a pledge of glory to come".<sup>32</sup>

Another author, J. Brunini states:

Through this incomparable boon to mankind, the members of the Church Militant share one of the greatest privileges of heaven, for the inhabitants of earth and heaven both possess Christ in his divinity and humanity; the degree of their bliss differing only in that the Church Triumphant enjoys fully the Beatific

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<sup>31</sup> Leo J. Trese, The Sacraments and Prayer (Indiana: Fides Inc. 1963), p. 168.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony J. Flynn et al. The Triumph of the Faith (New York: Sadlier, 1957), p. 141.

Vision, while those on earth partake through foreknowledge and experience the same joy when they receive Him Who declared, "My delights are to be with the children of men."<sup>33</sup>

18. Is the last end of man ever discussed in detail other than in the form of a chapter at the end of a book?

Not generally, although there are some instances where this is found. Frank Sheed's book, The Map of Life, orientates the reader from the outset. In the third chapter entitled, "Heaven", he illustrates the meaning of heaven not only as a reward of a good life, but also as the result of a good life:

If a student passes an examination he may be rewarded in one of two ways: he may either get a prize, a tennis racquet, or he may be admitted to a further course of study which his success in the examination has proved him fitted for. The tennis racquet has no real relation to the examination he has passed; but the further course in study has; it is a result of it. To an immense number of people heaven is rather like the tennis racquet and, as such, is not really understood at all. But think of it as a further course resulting from a life well-lived and instantly the connection is seen.<sup>34</sup>

Also the book, My Catholic Faith, begins by explaining man's destiny, which is to go to God. The author says that, "Through glorifying God, man is destined to share his happiness in heaven . . . Heaven, the Home of God, is our true country, our

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<sup>33</sup> Whereon We Stand, p. 185

<sup>34</sup> F. J. Sheed, Map of Life (London: Sheed and Ward, 1939), p. 42

true home."<sup>35</sup> One book treats man's last end as happiness which begins on this earth by the anticipation of what is to come.

The kind of happiness which Christ promises in this life comes from loving God and being loved by God, and from the expectation of eternal happiness in heaven.<sup>36</sup>

19. Is the idea of heaven or eternal happiness with God, used as an underlying theme in some books?

The High School Series entitled, Our Quest for Happiness, uses this theme. The first book sets the goal.

Heaven is a state of happiness. There we will enjoy beauty and truth and justice and love, unity and peace and all good things. The greatest happiness in heaven will be to possess God for eternity and to see Him face to face. . . . He made every good thing you can think of and in possessing Him you will possess all good things and infinitely more. Having Him you will have everything your heart could ever desire.<sup>37</sup>

20. Do trends in the newer books seem to indicate a more unified presentation of Christian doctrine?

Recent publications of books for religious instruction do contain more of the biblical historical approach, wherein the history of salvation is presented. God the Father's loving plan for mankind which is revealed as progressively unfolding in the history of Israel, is climaxed by the coming of Christ. This

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<sup>35</sup>Morrow, p. 10

<sup>36</sup>J. Killgallon and G. Weber Life in Christ (Chicago: Rosary Press, 1956), p. 13.

<sup>37</sup>Elwell, Clarence et al. Our Goal and Our Guides ("Our Quest for Happiness"; Chicago: Mentzer, Bush and Co., 1953), p.19.

divine plan will reach its complete fulfillment at Christ's second coming. The saving events of history, recorded in Scripture, are made present to everyone in Liturgy. Thus God's gifts and man's response are explored more fully through the liturgy of the Mass and the sacraments in the hope of attaining personal communion with Christ. In this respect a unified presentation is being employed to a greater extent than in former years.

To facilitate easy reference to the different divisions of this survey, the following is a list of all the questions as they appear in this report. They are grouped into three categories after the threefold procedure proposed by the Vatican Council.

A. Comparison of the Mysteries to Nature

1. Is there much elucidation of the truths by their similarity to what is known naturally?
2. How much is Christ's own comparison of the vine and the branches used to illustrate the doctrine of Grace, and the Church?
3. With special reference to the Blessed Trinity, is the example of the human faculties to explain the Trinitarian processions used extensively?
4. To what extent are the concepts of "nature" and "person", as can be known from nature, applied to the mystery of the Trinity and the Incarnation, treated?
5. To what extent is the Church shown to be a body or an organism made up of interdependent parts, sharing a common life?

B. Comparison of Mysteries With One Another

6. Is one particular mystery selected to connect all the dogmas of Catholicism as a unified organism?
7. What treatment is given to the idea of the Incarnation being the external manifestation of the internal procession of the Holy Trinity?
8. Is the filiation of God the Son by nature frequently compared to the filiation of Christians by grace?

9. Are the three mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Grace, compared to discover that there is a circuminsession or perichoresis in each of them?
10. Is the doctrine of the Church presented as the Mystical Body of Christ?
11. Is the interrelationship of the principal mysteries of the faith, as an approach to the presentation of theology, notably present?
12. Does any particular text show definite indications of using relationships for a better understanding of the Catholic truths?
13. What other mysteries are compared enough to be noted?
14. Does this survey show that comparison of mysteries with one another is used extensively?

C. Comparison of Mysteries to Man's Last End

15. How much reference to man's last end is found in the expositions of the important truths?
16. Is there any explicit relating of any mystery or mysteries to man's last end?
17. Is the connection between our union with God in Holy Communion and the ultimate union with God in heaven, pointed out in any of the books examined?
18. Is the last end of man ever discussed in detail other than in the form of a chapter at the end of a book?
19. Is the idea of heaven or eternal happiness with God, used as an underlying theme in some books?
20. Do trends in the newer books seem to indicate a more unified presentation of Catholic doctrine?

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY

The purpose of this thesis is to discover to what extent the method of teaching theology by comparing mysteries is being used in current religion books of instruction. Careful scrutiny of a fair sampling of books proved that the hope of finding valuable foundation for this method of teaching theology has not been in vain. As a result of this survey the following conclusions have been drawn up.

Since World War II much progress has been made in new trends and newly evolving methods of presentation. A new and revitalized spirit is moving in the Church's religious instruction. This freshness of outlook has been brought about by three great movements emerging simultaneously in the Church, each having a beneficial influence on the other. In the first place, there is a return to the sources of theology, namely, the Bible and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The biblical revival restores a more concrete and less abstract notion to the Christian message. Further, the liturgical movement has given new life to the saving event of the death and resurrection of Christ. Then the catechetical renewal with its emphasis on the content of what is to be taught, is gaining momentum everywhere. All three movements interact and are forming a new surge of life in the Church. This is appearing in the new

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY

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religion books today.

In the religious text books used for elementary schools there is a definite breakthrough to the kerygmatic approach. We speak of it as a proclamation of the Good News of salvation brought about by God through the death and resurrection of Christ. The teacher joyfully announces God's intervention in this world by telling the story of salvation, always with Christ as the focal point.

On the secondary level, where the development would need to be more complete, there is some progress in new trends but it is moving more slowly. Here we find the biblical-historical approach more fully developed, with everything centered around Christ, His life, and His teachings. Also it is found that one of the chief aims, at this level, is to give our young people a deeper appreciation of the liturgical life. Among the newer high school texts, Father M. Link's book<sup>1</sup> aims at carrying through these ideas in each lesson. His technique is both thought-provoking and appealing to youth. It is one of the most promising books published at present. At this level some analogy is used but it consists for the most part in comparison of the truths to nature.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Christ Lives Today

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Regarding the situation of college texts up to 1950, Father Simonitch, in a survey of college theology, reports:

There is a general trend today which is moving away from presenting Christian doctrine to laymen through the medium and form to be found in textbooks which are adapted from the type of scholastic manual currently used in Seminaries.<sup>2</sup>

The theology teacher must not only proclaim but he must elucidate Catholic doctrine. In the newer books for college and in those for adults, new methods of presentation are being used, with greater emphasis on biblical themes. Father Hesburgh's book,<sup>3</sup> currently in use at Notre Dame University, is a valuable discovery. Here we find eloquent testimony of mysteries being explained by other mysteries. A more recent series, Foundations of Catholic Theology,<sup>4</sup> is worthy of special mention because of its non-technical language and its use of analogy. This series most certainly will appeal to the college student.

There is a particular highlight to be noted in this research which makes it positive, heartening and hopeful. Out of forty texts examined, more than two-thirds of them contain a section dealing with the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

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<sup>2</sup>R. G. Simonitsch, Religious Instruction in Catholic Colleges of Men (Washington: University of America Press, 1952,). p. 303.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. c. 4, footnote 14.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. c. 4, footnote 2, 31.

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Its members are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ their Head, thus resembling the members and head of the living body. The Church is Christ living in the world today. This is a prolongation of the Incarnation. The fact that Christ is mystically present with us on earth today is no less a reality than when He walked the earth as a human person. Is this not a comparison of two great mysteries?

As far as this limited survey could discover, the use of analogy as a better and more profitable means of understanding the mysteries of the faith by college students appears in some books. All the books examined are consistent to a greater or lesser degree, in relating the truths to the things known in nature. The large majority carry forward the principal doctrines to the final end of man; from grace to glory, from earth to heaven, from suffering to bliss, from belief to the Beatific Vision. Although some comparison of mysteries is done, on the whole, the authors are not consciously aware of doing this as a method of presentation. In this respect the present survey is rather negative in its findings.

We are now experiencing a period of transition in the manner of teaching theology. Many are alerted to the need of recasting our thought forms, of interpreting the meaning of Christian truths in terms of present cultural structures of the world, and in terms of present-day thinking. There is a wide-

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spread interest in the task of developing theology in a way fitted to the needs and situation of the layman in the Church. However, since the solution of this problem is still in the process of evolution, we find as many methods of presentation as there are new books of theology. Is this not perhaps due to the fact that present theological science needs a suitable basis on which to establish guiding principles to serve as a criterion in the preparation of future texts? While such diversity in religion books is indicative of much experimentation in the field of method, it also reveals the lack of scientific procedure to keep pace with the biblical, liturgical and catechetical movements. Father Davis expresses this point clearly in the following citation:

The first reaction to the modern renewal of Catholic thought is one of undiluted enthusiasm. One is simply overwhelmed by the riches that are set before one. As time goes on, there is no diminution in the appreciation of the new insights, but there is a gradual realization they exist in a cultural enclave. Wider reading outside theology makes abundantly clear the gap that exists between all the new data and the modern mind . . . We suffer from the absence of a sustained effort to bridge the gap. We ask ourselves: What is missing? It was the reflection on the relationship of dogmatic theology to biblical theology and the stimulus of Fr. Lonergan's book that brought me personally to the conviction of the role of speculative theology and the need that exists for its revival. Only with vigorous

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speculative theology behind us can we go forward to meet the modern world and interpret Christianity to it.<sup>5</sup>

The author of a recent study on the problem of giving an orientation to the theology of our time concludes:

The presentation of the mystery of salvation to the world should be in terms of the sacred history of the inspired word of God, but that this presentation will only be safeguarded and balanced when an understanding of the terms of the mysteries proclaimed has been provided by the labors of a genuine systematic theology.<sup>6</sup>

It is felt that the Vatican Council method is a means of responding to the need of interpreting Christianity to the world and of meeting the challenge of reorientating theology. This approach is timely, practical and fruitful. Timely, in the sense that it responds to a need. Practical, in that it can be taught to lay Catholics who are not theologians. Fruitful, in a twofold sense: First, it can give the student the habit of thinking theologically by developing a keen mental power to discern the deeper meaning in religious truths. Secondly, it is fruitful in the sense that it can infuse life and dynamism into religion courses without sacrificing the clarity and precision of theology.

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<sup>5</sup>Theology for Today (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>John Thornhill, "Toward an Integral Theology," Theological Studies (June, 1963), p. 264.

## CHAPTER VI

## APPLICATION OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL APPROACH:

## A TYPICAL INSTRUCTION UNIT (MARILOGY)

As the content for a typical instruction unit illustrating the presentation of theology proposed by the Vatican Council I, let us consider Mary's divine maternity in connection with her virginal motherhood.

This great prerogative of Mary's is a supernatural mystery. A supernatural mystery is a Catholic truth which cannot be known from reason, and which is communicated to us by revelation. It is a truth which we believe but which we cannot fully understand. Divine mysteries, by their nature, so excel the human intellect that even when they have been revealed and have been accepted by faith, they remain partially shrouded in darkness. This is so because human reason is blinded in face of their excessive brilliance and beauty. Nevertheless, in spite of such sublimity, some understanding is possible, as the Council teaches.

As we begin our investigation, it is helpful to keep in mind the dispositions suggested by the Vatican Council; that is, to do so, devoutly, pie; earnestly, assidue; and moderately, sobrie. Therefore, one should approach the consideration of any mystery with deep reverence, earnest study, and with an awareness that one can never penetrate it completely but only in so far as the grace of the Holy Spirit

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will grant enlightenment.

We shall assume that the mystery of the Incarnation has been thoroughly taught in a preceding unit and also that a previous lesson or lessons have been given to establish the significance of Mary's role in God's plan, that is, her role as Mother of God. In this unit the miraculous manner in which God intervened so that Mary, although Mother of Christ, still remained a virgin, is first explained. Then it is compared to two other mysteries, the Fatherhood of God in relation to His own Son, and also to the Fatherhood of God in relation to all Christians.

Virginal Motherhood of Mary

I. Introduction

II. Virginal Motherhood

1) Significance

2) Compared to other mysteries

a) Fatherhood of God in relation  
to His Son

b) Fatherhood of God in relation  
to all Christians

III. Fittingness

IV. Conclusion

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The divine maternity gives Mary a dignity and function which elevates her above all created persons. By this sublime privilege she enters into unique relations with the Persons of the Trinity. Mary, in her maternity, is the minister of the gift of Jesus. It was the role of Mary to make God human. This human nature of Christ has an essential part in salvation. It is the necessity of the humanity of Christ that permits us to see Mary in her glorious gift of Jesus. Just as the word of God is given to the world by human ministers, the priests, and by human signs, water and wine; so the life of Christ is given to the world by this human means, Mary. It is Mary and the Holy Spirit that procure Jesus for the world. Thus Mary is the sensible sign which began the era of salvation. Mary is not wanted for herself but for Jesus, who is for our salvation. Her role is to inscribe Jesus in the human race, to make Jesus our brother.

1. Significance of Virginal Motherhood

The expression virginal motherhood seems to be a contradiction, for procreation is impossible without the participation of man and woman. But virginal motherhood is an extraordinary favor granted to Mary alone. How then was this marvelous privilege of being the mother of God but still remaining a

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virgin effected in Mary? We find the answer in Holy Writ when the angel announced it to Mary herself, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:33). Thus God intervened in an unheard of fashion. It was the Holy Spirit who acted; what in the order of nature belongs to man, the Holy Spirit supplied. Abbé Laurentin makes this observation:

By this supernatural action, the Most High fulfilled in a single fulfillment, the two dearest longings of Mary's heart; her woman's desire for motherhood and her saintly desire to be wholly God's. It was a fulfillment in unity beyond anything she could possibly have imagined.<sup>1</sup>

Although physical integrity is ordinarily implied by the word virginal, early Christian thought has always recognized another condition deserving of this name. It is a symbolic word and symbolism had an important place in early christian writings. Bernard Lonergan describes symbolism thus:

It is an expression of the human subject which seeks to convey, to impart something

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<sup>1</sup> René Laurentin. Queen of Heaven. Translated by Gordon Smith (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1961), p. 62.

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that is to be reached not through science or philosophy, but through a participation, a reenactment of the artist's inspiration. It may strain for truth and value without defining them.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, among the Fathers of the Church, virginity is an image, which arises from complete human involvement and is an expression of faith that has been preserved intact. It is an attitude of mind which focuses on the spiritual.

This patristic point of view is well explained by

.. Dettloff:

When the Fathers of the Church teach the virginal motherhood of Mary, they are not so much concerned with the physical integrity although this aspect is always included. Their use of words and images was more symbolic than it is today. Their first interest is the theological reality that is realized in the symbol. In the present order woman loses her virginity in attaining to motherhood. When the Fathers speak of the perpetual virginity and the motherhood of Mary, they are thinking to some extent of Mary's physical virginity, but they are primarily concerned with expressing the fact that Mary is a symbol of integrity. In her being and in her relation to God, Mary is absolutely intact, absolutely whole, absolutely integral. To say this biblically is to say that Mary is a virgin.

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<sup>2</sup>Bernard Lonergan, Insight (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1957), p. 185.

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The fact that she is mother does not alter her total integrity. This was the view of the Fathers. This is what they wanted chiefly to express in their symbolism of Mary as Virgin and Mother.<sup>3</sup>

The Fathers of the Church use comparisons to illustrate this point. Just as the ray of the sun penetrates the crystal without any injury to the crystal, so Jesus came forth from his mother's womb, her virginity unimpaired. As a star gives its light and loses none of its brilliance, so Mary is fruitful and retains her integrity. God could have created the body of Christ ex nihilo but God wanted it otherwise. In the conception of Jesus the paternal function of generation was filled by the act of the most Blessed Trinity which was appropriate to the Holy Spirit.

## 2. Compared to Other Mysteries

### a) Fatherhood of God in relation to His own Son.

In order to understand Mary's virginal motherhood better, we must see it in relation to other mysteries. To bring out its different aspects we might compare this mystery to the Fatherhood of God in the Trinity, because it follows

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<sup>3</sup>"The Virgin Birth", Theology Digest, VII (Winter, 1959), p. 53. The original article is: "Virgo Mater" wissenschaft und Weisheit, XX (1957), p. 221-26.

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the same pattern. L. Suenens makes a noteworthy observation on this point:

Why did God will that the mother of his Son should be so privileged? But must not the birth of the word according to the flesh recall his divine birth before all ages? Should not the Virgin's womb be in some way assimilated to the bosom of the Father and the temporal generation reflect the unspeakable purity of the eternal generation?<sup>4</sup>

Scheeben in comparing these two mysteries says:

As the Son of God of Himself is brought forth as "light of light", here His bodily production must also be actualized not through the mixing of material elements but through a heavenly influence on the earthly element.<sup>5</sup>

God made the human sonship of the Word an image of His divine Sonship. Although Mary's holiness resembles the Father's, it does not equal it, because He is holiness itself. The Trinitarian procession is explained by the analogy of intellectual generation. When the mind knows a thing it gives birth to an internal word. This inner word of the human mind is somewhat like the divine Word, that wisdom of God which

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<sup>4</sup>Mary, the Mother of God. "Faith and Fact Books"; (London: Burns and Oates, 1959), p. 50.

<sup>5</sup>Mariology, Translated by C. Vollert (St. Louis: Herder, 1946), p. 71.

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is called the Word in the gospel of St. John. Now Christ had no physical father; his body came completely from Mary's. This virginal begetting resembles the Father's because He alone begets the Son.

The nobility of her motherhood is so elevated that she not only, like other mothers, cooperates with God's creative power, but she cooperates with the very power of the Father whereby He eternally begets His Son within Himself.<sup>6</sup>

Mary's motherhood was the fruit of faith, her loving consent to God's action. Her fiat was a spiritual act. The virtue which is ordered to her virginity is not chastity, as might be expected, but obedience. St. Augustine writes that Mary first conceived Christ spiritually by faith, in her mind, before she conceived Christ physically in her body.

Mary was more blessed in accepting the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ . . . Even her material relationship would have done Mary no good unless she had borne Christ more happily in her heart than in her flesh.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Athanasius Van Noenen, "The Unforgettable Welcome," Cross and Crown, XIII (June, 1961), p. 157.

<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine, "Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects." of The Fathers of the Church, Vol. XXVII, ed. R. J. Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955), p. 146.

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However, the difference between the Motherhood of Mary and the Fatherhood of God point up to the fact that in the Trinity the intellectual act and the generative act is but one single act; whereas in Mary it is two distinct acts. Hence, although the Fatherhood of God is infinitely higher than Mary's virginal motherhood, from these considerations we can gain a deeper insight and a greater appreciation of Mary's dignity and holiness.

## b) Fatherhood of God in relation to all Christians.

Mary's virginal motherhood is also analogous to the baptismal character by which we become sons of God. The manner in which God's son was united to human nature corresponds to the manner in which God wishes to be united to man in grace. In both the manner of generation is spiritual or virginal. In both what is apparently opposite, infinite and finite, heaven and earth, is joined in a most intimate union. Father R. Laurentin very clearly points this out:

Like the divine motherhood, the baptismal character is an ineffaceable gift, incorporates us in Christ, establishes us in a family relationship with God, and guarantees us his favour and his grace, if we place no obstacle in the way.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Laurentin, p. 142.

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Still there are many differences in this comparison, all to the advantage of Mary. Baptism is sometimes called a new creation for the Christian, because of the glorious life that becomes his by his rebirth in Christ. This does not destroy his human nature but completely transforms it, raises it to the dignity of adopted sons of God. The newly baptized becomes a participant in the divine nature and enters into an intimate union with God. So much so that his relations with God are like those of a son to his father. Mary's fullness of grace enables her to say from the depths of her soul, "Abba, Father," Likewise by the grace of baptism the Christian is able to say, "Abba, Father." Now a new grace enabled her to say to Him she bore and brought up, "My Son". A relationship which exalted her above all other Christians.

Mary conceived the Word by faith. Just as those who are baptized are born again, not from the flesh nor from the will of man, but by faith and the Holy Spirit, so Christ, the exemplar of our adoption, was born in Mary.<sup>9</sup>

By her virginal motherhood Mary's fullness of grace now became not only a filial plenitude but also a maternal plenitude.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

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Fittingness

The supernatural and purely spiritual manner of Christ's birth was indeed so fitting that the natural way would have been inappropriate. It was altogether fitting that he who was begotten by the Father alone, be born in time in a virginal manner. Michael Schmaus puts forth several reasons to illustrate why Mary's virginal motherhood is reasonable. Here are some of them:

1) The new mode of birth should prefigure the newness of what He will operate. The human being cannot take the initiative in this realm, but he has rather to wait for the grace and mercy of God. Redemption is only the effect of divine grace and not of one's own activity. The only attitude possible to man is to accept the heavenly gift and even this acceptance can only be given by divine grace.

2) The virginal conception was an indication of the unicity of the Messiah conceived and born in this manner. Although He lives in the history of mankind and even in such a way that Humanity became His destiny, but nevertheless in Him forces and powers are alive which do not arise from the stream of generations and from this earth, but from a heavenly world inaccessible to man and reserved to God. The redemption is brought about by the fact that heaven descends to earth and

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penetrates and transforms it by its celestial forces.

3) Another reason for the virginal character of the conception of Christ stems from eschatology. All mankind is advancing towards that final state which is characterized by the word of Holy Scripture that they do not marry any more and are no longer married. This happens when the order of pilgrimage reaches its end and a new mode of existence commences. Human beings will live in that state like the angels of heaven. By Christ the germ of this new form of existence which takes its beginning at the end of the world by the transformation of the universe is implanted in all creatures. It is therefore reasonable that He did not enter into human history by the same way as other human beings. The coming transformation is thus prefigured in His virginal conception and birth.

4) Another reason for the virginity of Mary is that she was separated from the world for the fulfillment of the vocation of becoming the mother of the Messiah. She was destined by God in a decisive way to cooperate in the salvation of mankind. She belongs therefore totally to God. She is consecrated to God as the mother of the child who will execute God's plan to redeem the world.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Michael Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik, Vol. VII (Verlag-Munchen: Heuber, 1955), p. 138-142.

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Mary, the virgin mother, is very frequently used as a type of the Church. This analogy is particularly evident in contemporary literature in its effort to place Marian theology in the whole body of Catholic dogma. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy clearly and precisely honors Mary as the illustrious figure of the Church.

In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, holy Church honors with especial love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.<sup>11</sup>

In her life the Virgin Mother Mary experienced in advance what the Virgin Mother Church is experiencing now and what she will realize in the most perfect fashion at the Parousia. The Church continues the communion with Christ, that communion which began between Mary and Christ. In so far as the Church is a spiritual society, being mystically united with Christ, it has its perfect realization in Mary.

A comparison of these two mysteries could be developed by using the Vatican Council approach. Although the possibility of this further consideration is not within the scope of

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<sup>11</sup>Pope Paul VI The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Glen Rock, N. J.; Paulist Press, 1964), p. 63.

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this chapter, it serves to indicate that analogy, for better understanding of mysteries, has many facets yet to be explored.

On the natural plane it is not difficult to see how it is reasonable and fitting that the manner of the Son of God's natural birth and the manner of man's rebirth by baptism are both modelled on that of the generation of the Son in the Blessed Trinity. To some extent these two mysteries can be linked to the eternal procession in the Trinity in manner if not in measure for they are on three different levels. The Trinity and Grace throw light upon the virginal birth of Christ which in turn illuminates the other two. They are similar in so far as they follow the same pattern and are effected by the power of the Most High.

However, fittingness is not synonymous with understanding. Fittingness remains on the plane of reason, whereas understanding goes beyond the natural and reaches into the supernatural. In order to attain to some understanding of this mystery, or any other mystery, the help of God, Deo dante, is necessary. Not by his own power but by grace does one become receptive, when God graciously and mercifully bends down and favors him with some light on the mysteries under consideration. Supernatural illumination is the reward of prayerful study of the wonderful things of God.

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A noted author brilliantly expresses this thought in the following manner: "Pondering the mysteries of faith in the spirit of adoration, we are able to catch a glimpse of eternity, the aurora of dawn presaging the clear bright sun of midday."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Bernard Haring, The Law of Christ, Translated by Edwin G. Kaiser (Cork: Mercier Press, 1960), p. 19.

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ABSTRACT OF A THESIS  
ON A SURVEY OF RELIGION TEXT BOOKS

Speaking of reason and faith, Vatican Council I, enunciated what reason can and cannot achieve in understanding the mysteries of faith. This thesis was undertaken for the purpose of discovering to what extent the principles of Vatican Council I are being used in current books of religious instruction.

Chapter One explains in detail this statement which teaches that, with God's help, some understanding, and a very fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith, can be obtained by comparing the mysteries, (1) with things known in nature, (2) with one another and, (3) with man's last end.

To exemplify this method of comparing mysteries, Chapter Two traces the development of the mystery of the Trinity, and its relation to the Incarnation and to Grace, as it is found in the work of Matthias Joseph Scheeben, The Mysteries of Christianity.

Lest the Vatican Council approach be confused with kerygmatic teaching, Chapter Three deals with the distinction between these two approaches. Kerygmatics proclaims the Word of God and is intended for catechetics; whereas the method of comparing mysteries is intended for theology. It presupposes and builds on the kerygmatic approach and makes it most

fruitful.

Forty books of instruction were examined in this survey. These fell into three categories: high school texts, college texts, and those written for adults.

The survey showed that all the books make use of analogy with the things we know naturally. In all the books some reference is made in particular lessons to man's last end. However, it was found that only a small number compare mysteries, with one another. The newer books show a definite trend to the concrete, biblical presentation which is in accord with the present spirit of renewal. It is in this framework that comparison of mysteries would be helpful for deeper understanding of the faith. The hope is expressed that there will be more of this in future books of religious instruction.

Chapter Six gives the content of a typical instruction unit for college students. This unit develops one aspect of Mariology using the method of comparing mysteries proposed by Vatican Council I.