

Warsaw: Saturday February 8, 2014

THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH

Talk 1: 1878 - 1965

The turn towards renewal in the Catholic Church began in 1878 with the election of Leo XIII. Before this, the Catholic Church was in a strongly defensive mode, defending itself against Protestants, non-believers, hostile rulers, against everything seen as “modern” (Pius IX: Syllabus of Errors 1864; modernism in early 20th century).

Several openings began with Leo XIII (1878 - 1903):

- Encouraging biblical studies (Ecole Biblique 1890; encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* 1893);
- Making John Henry Newman a Cardinal (1879);
- Beginnings of Catholic Social Teaching (also in 1880s but especially encyclical *Rerum Novarum* 1891, when Church defends rights of workers, a major change from alliance of Church & Upper class);
- New Encouragement of Eastern Catholic Churches (a move away from unity as uniformity).

Pius X (1903 - 14): Reform of Psalter. Lowering of age of first communion; more frequent communion encouraged.

1908 Beginnings of liturgical movement and Bible studies for lay people

Benedict XV (1914 - 22): Strong efforts for peace. Encouragement of missions and greater indigenous inculturation.

Pius XI (1922 - 39): [Negative: After encouraging Benedictine monasteries to work for unity (seen as return to Roman obedience) a total rejection of ecumenical movement: *Mortalium Animos* 1928]

- Lay Apostolate and Catholic Action: mobilization of laity contra spread of Communism. Several new movements begin: Young Christian Workers; Legion of Mary; Opus Dei).

- Canonisation of St Therese of Lisieux (1925): her Little Way of holiness open to all.
- Strong on social teaching: *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).
- encyclical against Nazi racist ideology: *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937).

1920s - 1930s Beginnings of Catholic ecumenism: L. Beauduin (1926), P. Couturier (1932), Y. Congar (1937). *Una Sancta* Bewegung, Germany (M. Metzger 1930s).

1930s: Theology of the Body of Christ (E. Mersch).

Pius XII (1939 - 58): Important teaching papacy with 3 major encyclicals:

- On Bible: *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) Encourages biblical scholarship;
- On Church : *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943)
Moving from focus on Church-Institution to focus on Church-Body of Christ
- On Liturgy: *Mediator Dei* (1947)

Biblical and Liturgical Renewal Go Together

Both renewal currents of Bible and Liturgy combined scholarly studies of Christian origins and a clear pastoral sense for renewing the life of diocese and parish. These studies went hand in hand with new attention to the Fathers of the Church, whose writings were grounded in the Scriptures and which were strongly liturgical.

The Holy Spirit was forming the New Testament as part of the Scriptures in one process with the formation of the Church's liturgies. This is parallel to the formation of the Old Testament in relation to the life and worship of Israel. Biblical studies have revealed the strong mutual influence; for example, the inclusion in the Scriptures of many texts first formulated in worship: (1) the two texts of the Our Father; (2) the different accounts of the Last Supper (Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians); (3) the credal statements found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5,

1 Timothy 3:16; (4) the inclusion of hymns already existing as in Phil. 2: 5-11; possibly 1 Corinthians 13.

The Scriptures are the privileged record of the church community that confesses Jesus as Lord. But this community is a worshipping community. So the worship is full of biblical imagery and texts. The structure of the liturgy is always that of **Word and Sacrament**; that is, Word and enacted Word. The sacraments express in symbolic action that which the Word proclaims. Gospel: Jesus has died for your sins that you may rise to new life in Him. Sacrament : Jesus feeds us with His Body once offered and His Blood once poured out.

Bible and liturgy belong to the heart of the Church. So renewal of the Church means:

- Being founded anew on the Word of God, faith comes from hearing the Word (Rom. 10:17).
- The liturgy becoming the place where the people hear the Word of God and receive the Body and Blood of the Lord; and where we worship the Father in and through Jesus.
- Church being experienced and lived as communion in the Body of Christ.

During the years before Vatican Two, these currents of renewal were growing in the Catholic Church, in some countries more than others. Without them, Vatican Two would have been impossible. Most were growing from below (liturgical movement, biblical studies, ecumenical movement, new lay movements), with some encouragement and some restrictions from authority - but with growing encouragement in the time of Pius XII.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65)

John XXIII (1958-63) soon calls a Council. He speaks of one goal being Christian unity (a new note). The Council makes the biblical and liturgical renewal of the previous half-century its own, especially in two Constitutions: on the Liturgy (1963) and on Divine Revelation (1965).

Key concepts in Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1963):

- The Church is the worshipping community that gathers to hear the Word of God and celebrate the sacred mysteries;
- Multiple forms of presence of Christ in the liturgy (7);
- The people need to understand the Scriptures; they need to hear more of the Scriptures; they need biblical preaching that opens up the Scriptures (see 24, 35.1);
- Active participation of all (11, 14);
- Signs need to be simplified so that their meaning (signification) is clear without the need for detailed explanations (21, 34); opening up of chalice;
- Fullest expression of church is eucharist with bishops, priests, deacons and people together around one altar (41);
- Restoration of adult catechumenate; initiation as liturgical process (64).

A Renewed Vision of the Church (Constitution *Lumen Gentium* 1964)

Central concepts:

- Church is Mystery (Ch 1); one body, Christ as head and mediator; the one Church of Christ “subsists in the Catholic Church” (8);
- The People of God on pilgrimage through history; under the People of God are treated full members of the Church and catechumens (14); other Christians (15); the Jewish people, Moslems and others who worship the one God, and all sincere seekers after truth and goodness (16);
- Then after PoG (Ch 2) comes teaching on Hierarchy, on Primacy and Episcopate (Ch 3);
- Pope and Bishops like Peter and the Twelve; one college under one leader (cum Petro et sub Petro); primacy and collegiality go together;
- Restoration of permanent diaconate (29);

- All called to Holiness; Mission of Laity grounded in Baptism and Confirmation (33); no longer seen as laity helping priests but as priests helping laity;
- Religious life as intensification of Baptism in light of coming Kingdom; not a middle way between clergy and laity (43); manifests transcendence of kingdom of God (44);
- Eschatology & Pilgrim Church (expressed in structure of liturgy);
- Mary as most eminent member of Church; correlation of Mariology and ecclesiology.

Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum* 1965)

Central Concepts :

- Christ “is himself both the mediator and sum total of revelation” (2);
- “Tradition and Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God” (10);
- the New Testament is “hidden in the Old” and the Old Testament is “made manifest in the New” (16);
- the Gospels have a special place “because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Saviour” (18);
- “Access to Sacred Scripture ought to be widely available to the Christian faithful” (22).
- The study of Scripture should be “the very soul” of theology (24);
- Preachers should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by spiritual reading and study (24).

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965)

The one document where the thinking of Archbishop Wojtyla is clearly present.

Central Concepts:

- Church has deep interest in whole world and its history (preface);
- Church has to read “the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel” (4);
- Jesus Christ is the centre and measure (10, 22, 32, 38, 45 Christ “Alpha and Omega”;
- “Christ the new Adam, in the .. revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling” (22);
- New themes treated: dignity of conscience (16), excellence of freedom (17), mystery of death (18), kinds of atheism and its causes (19; see also 20 - 21);
- The Common Good (26) and “Respect for the Human Person” (27); “the Word Made Flesh and Human Solidarity (32).