

The Oath Against Modernism Betrayed

by John Vennari

September 1, 2010, marks the 100th Anniversary of Pope St. Pius X's promulgation of the Oath Against Modernism.

Msgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, the eminent American theologian, called the Oath Against Modernism “the most important and most influential document issued by the Holy See during the course of the 20th Century. It is a magnificent statement of Catholic truth in the face of errors which were being disseminated within the Church by the cleverest enemies the Mystical Body of Christ has encountered in the course of its history.”¹

The Oath Against Modernism was abolished two years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, yet the men who took the Oath at ordination are still bound by it. Those who swore this sacred Oath and then promoted the modern program of Vatican II, including the Council's new ecumenism and religious liberty, have shown themselves unfaithful to the Oath they swore solemnly before God.

Stressing the seriousness of the matter, Msgr. Fenton noted in 1960 that a man who took the Oath Against Modernism, and who then promoted Modernism himself, or allowed it to be promoted, “would mark himself not only as a sinner against the Catholic Faith but also as a common perjurer.”²

He who takes the Oath Against Modernism swears solemnly: “I sincerely hold that the doctrine of Faith was handed down to us from the Apostles through the orthodox Fathers in exactly the same meaning and always in the same explanation (*eodem sensu eodemque sententia*). Therefore, I entirely reject the heretical misrepresentation that dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another, different from the one which the Church held previously.”

At the end of the Oath, he makes this solemn Promise before God Himself: “I promise that I shall keep all these articles faithfully, entirely, and sincerely, and guard them inviolate, in no way deviating from them in teaching or in any way in word or in writing. Thus I promise, this I swear, so help me God, and these holy Gospels of God which I touch with my hand.”³

It is hard to see how a person who holds to the *countersyllabus* of Vatican II can claim to have kept the Faith “in exactly the same meaning and always in the same explanation” as the Church always held. It is hard to see how someone who accepts the Council's new program of ecumenism and religious liberty can claim to have “guarded inviolate”, and “in no way deviated” from the clear teachings of the pre-Vatican II Popes regarding true Christian Unity and the Social Kingship of Christ.

Both Cardinal Ratzinger and Yves Congar stated openly, as if it's something to be proud of, that Vatican II is a *countersyllabus* – that it says *the opposite* of key teachings from pre-Vatican II Popes.⁴

The spirit of infidelity to traditional Catholic doctrine, the lust towards change and novelty that Pius X's anti-Modernist measures condemned, and the violation of a Sacred Oath against God by highly-placed Churchmen, is the true legacy of the Second Vatican Council and its

consequence reforms.

“In the very veins and heart of the Church”

To better appreciate the gravity of the Modernist heresy, the determination of Pope St. Pius X to eradicate it, and the subsequent rise of neo-Modernism in our time, let us go back to the beginning of the 20th Century when a crucial papal conclave took place.

On August 4, 1903 Giuseppe Sarto, Cardinal Archbishop of Venice, was elected the 257th Successor of Saint Peter. He took the name Pius X.

He had been elected Pope against his wishes. During the conclave, he pleaded with the Cardinals not to do this. He did not want to be Pope. He fully understood the immense burden of the Papal office, a responsibility before God that is colossal.

And Pius was afraid. It was a frightful time to be held responsible before God for the purity of the Catholic Faith throughout the world. For at the time he was elected Pope, the Church was suffering the outbreak of the deadliest error it had faced in its entire history: Modernism – rightly denounced by Pius X as the “synthesis of all heresies”. “The danger” Pius X said, is “in the very veins and heart of the Church.”⁵

Pius pledged in his inaugural Encyclical *E Supremi* that the program of his Pontificate would be to “restore all things in Christ”. Pius was as good as his word, as is evident when in 1907 the battle against Modernism was joined.

The “Synthesis of All Heresies”

The first skirmish between Catholic truth and Modernism occurred in the field of biblical studies. It was countered by Pope Leo XIII’s 1893 Encyclical on the study of sacred Scripture, *Providentissimus Deus*.

This encyclical did a certain amount of good, but not enough, and Pius X knew it.

Pope Saint Pius X launched his attack against Modernism with the Syllabus of Errors, *Lamentabile sane exitu*, issued on July 4, 1907. Here Pius X condemned Modernism’s principal errors listed as 65 “Condemned Propositions”.

Five months later, on December 8, 1907, Pius issued the blockbuster encyclical *Pascendi*. This masterful text unmasked Modernists; it exposed their seemingly elusive and impenetrable doctrine.

Saint Pius X explained the heresy so completely that the Modernists themselves would tell their initiates that if they wanted to fully understand the Modernist system, read *Pascendi*.⁶ A key tenet of Modernism is the belief in at least some transformation of the Church’s dogmatic message over the course of the centuries. Religion must change for the sake of changing times. There is always an “evolution of dogma”, a *continuous aggiornamento (continuous updating)*.⁷ Pius knew that the deadly system of Modernism destroyed not only all idea of religion but all idea of truth. He also knew, as he said in the opening of his Encyclical against Modernism, that his first duty was to protect the integrity of the Catholic Faith.

Here Pius stated that one of the “primary obligations assigned by Christ to the office divinely committed to Us of feeding the Lord’s flock is **that of guarding with the greatest vigilance the deposit of the faith** delivered to the saints, **rejecting the profane novelties of words** and the gainsay of knowledge falsely so called”. He explains that in the face of this Modernist heresy, “**We may no longer keep silence, lest We should seem to fail in Our most sacred duty ...**”⁸

In *Pascendi*, he laid bare the doctrine of Modernists, and also explained Modernism's causes: pride, curiosity and ignorance.

St. Pius X also pointed out that the Modernists aim not to simply corrupt and change this or that doctrine, but every aspect of Catholicism. He wrote of the Modernists, "**There is no part of Catholic truth which they leave untouched, none they do not strive to corrupt.**"

In the same encyclical, Pius established effective *remedies* to Modernism, which gave teeth to the document. For seminarians and all theological students, he ordered firm adherence to the philosophy and theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas. "We will and strictly order" said Pius X in *Pascendi*, "that scholasticism be made the basis of sacred sciences".⁹ Thomism is *the remedy* to Modernism.

Pius then ordered the bishops to implement the following:

- the exclusion from seminaries and universities of all directors and professors "found in any way imbued with Modernism";
- episcopal vigilance over all publications to detect any taint of Modernism in them, and to allow no books infected with Modernism sold in Catholic bookstores;
- the establishment in each diocese of "Vigilance Committees" composed of priests chosen by the bishops, who are to be on the watch for any evidence of Modernist tendencies.¹⁰

These were forceful measures, yet Pius X concluded they were not enough. His watchword was vigilance, vigilance and even more vigilance.

Three years later, to combat what he knew to be an enemy "inside the gates" who never quits, he promulgated the *Motu Proprio Sacrocrum Antistitum* that contained the famous Oath Against Modernism.

Though it is easy to find the Oath itself, the Introduction and Conclusion of *Sacrocrum Antistitum* are seldom found in English.

Thankfully, Msgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton¹¹ provided an English translation of these important passages. He produced the translation in a brilliant *American Ecclesiastical Review* article, "The *Sacrocrum Antistitum* and the Background to the Oath Against Modernism", which he wrote to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Anti-Modernist Oath.¹²

In October 1960, Fenton said that the Papal document containing this Oath "definitely deserves serious study by the present generation of theologians." He said the document contains some "badly needed lessons for the clergy of our day". Clearly, by 1960, there were growing numbers of priests and theologians who succumbed to the same errors that the anti-Modernist Oath sought to eradicate, and Msgr. Fenton knew it.

The Introduction

The *Motu Proprio*, issued on September 1, 1910, contained an Introduction in which Saint Pius X declares:

"We believe that no bishop is ignorant of the fact that the wily Modernists have not abandoned their plans for disturbing the peace of the Church since they were unmasked by the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*. For they have not ceased to seek out new recruits and to gather them into a secret alliance (*foedus clandestinu*)."¹³

Pius explains that these men are dangerous because they are so near to us, right inside of

the Church.

Pius X reiterates “it is the duty of all bishops to exert themselves in defense of the Catholic Faith and most diligently to see to it that the integrity of the divine deposit suffers no loss. Likewise, it is most definitely Our duty to obey the commands of Christ the Savior, Who gave to Peter, whose position of authority We, though unworthy, have succeeded, the order: ‘confirm thy Brethren’.”

Msgr. Fenton praises Pope Saint Pius X for recognizing and acting on this duty. Fenton then reiterates the inescapable obligation of bishops to discipline clergy who are promoting Modernism, or any heretical doctrine. Fenton warns:

“No one has ever been as well placed to harm the true Church and to counteract its essential work as a priest in good standing. If such a man, by his preaching, his teaching, or his writing, actually sets forth the kind of teaching condemned in the anti-Modernist documents *Lamentabile sane exitu* and *Pascendi dominici gregis*, or if he works to discredit the loyal defenders of Catholic dogma without receiving any repudiation or reproof from those to whom the apostolic deposit of divine revelation has been entrusted, the Catholic people are in grave danger of being deceived.”¹⁴

If something un-Catholic is taught by a priest in good standing, and he is not corrected, then the Catholic people will say, “Well, the bishop never corrected him, the Pope never corrected him, so what he says must be alright.”

Pius X was well aware of his duty not to let this happen and acted accordingly.

In the Conclusion of the *Motu Proprio*, Saint Pius X further castigates the Modernists:

“They are men whose audacity against the wisdom that has come down from Heaven increases daily. They arrogate to themselves the right to correct this revealed wisdom as if it were something corrupt, to renew it as if it were something that had become obsolete, to improve it and to adapt it to the dictates, the progress, and the comforts of the age as if it had been opposed to the good of society and not merely opposed to the levity of a few men.”¹⁵

These words of Pope Saint Pius X seem to prophesy the program of *aggiornamento* that would follow the Second Vatican Council.

As noted, Pius did not simply write nice words, he backed them with effective action. In this *Motu Proprio*, Pius X orders:

- all seminary teachers must first present the teachings to the bishop to ensure that the courses contain nothing contrary to sound Catholic doctrine;
- if the courses are found tainted with modernism, the professor is to be immediately dismissed;
- all seminary teachers must make the Tridentine Profession of Faith;
- all seminary teachers take the Oath Against Modernism, and sign the Oath in his own name.

This Oath Against Modernism, Msgr. Fenton notes, should be taken every year at the beginning of the academic term.¹⁶

Pius says regarding seminary professors and teachers at Catholic Universities:

“Anyone who in any way is found to be tainted with Modernism is to be

excluded without compunction from these offices, whether of administration or of teaching, and those who already occupy such offices are to be removed. The same policy is to be followed with regard to those who openly or secretly lend support to Modernism, either by praising the Modernists and excusing their culpable conduct, or by carping at scholasticism and the Fathers, and the *magisterium* of the Church, or by refusing obedience to ecclesiastical authority in any of the **depositories**; and with regard to those who manifest a love of novelty in history, archeology, and biblical *exegesis*; and finally with regard to those who neglect the sacred sciences or appear to prefer the secular [sciences] to them. On this entire subject, Venerable Brethren, and especially with regard to the choice of teachers, **you cannot be too watchful or too careful**, for as a rule **the students are modeled according to the pattern of their teachers.** Strong in the consciousness of your duty, act always in this matter with prudence and vigor.”

As a true father, Pius X wants to ensure that students receive proper Catholic doctrine, as the Athanasian Creed commands, “integral and inviolate”, while in their precious years of formation, since the damage done in those crucial years is often irreparable. “The students are formed according to the pattern of their teachers.”

Pius then extends the same stern directives to those who aspire to the priesthood. No young man infected with Modernist errors was to be allowed to become or to remain a candidate for Holy Orders:

“Equal diligence and severity are to be used in examining and selecting candidates for Holy Orders. **Far, far from the clergy be the love of novelty!** God hates the proud and obstinate mind.”

Recapping the duty to study scholasticism, Pius commands “In the future the doctorate in theology or Canon Law must never be conferred on anyone who has not first of all made the regular course in scholastic [Thomistic] philosophy. **If such a doctorate is conferred, it is to be held as null and void.**”¹⁷

Pius then extended to all nations the rule that “Clerics and priests inscribed in a Catholic institute or university must not in the future follow in civil universities those courses for which there are chairs in Catholic institutes to which they belong.”

Msgr. Fenton, a staunch opponent of liberalism, observes that these anti-Modernist directives “went against the liberal Catholic spirit of which Modernism was the outstanding expression. All of them were likewise unpopular, as calculated to arouse the antagonism of the enemies who attacked the Church from the outside. All of them were duly denounced and regretted as obscurantist.”¹⁸

Today, however, these anti-Modernist directives are openly denounced by countless “priests in good standing”¹⁹ who receive no reproof from their bishops, or even from today’s Vatican. This is because, as we shall see, our highest Church leaders are imbued with the “liberal Catholic spirit of which Modernism was the outstanding expression”.

The Oath and the Second Commandment

All traditional Catholic catechisms and all traditional Catholic moral theology manuals explain that an oath is an act of religion. This teaching flows from the Second Commandment, “*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain.*” The Oath against Modernism is a solemn act that imposes grave obligations.

Fenton explains: “An oath is not something to be taken lightly. And the man who makes this

Oath against Modernism calls upon God to witness that he reverently submits and wholeheartedly assents ‘to all the condemnations, the declarations, and the commands which are contained in the encyclical *Pascendi* and the decree *Lamentabili*’ ...”

It would be careless and irreverent for any man who takes this Oath, notes Fenton, not to exert himself to find out exactly, and in detail, what he is promising before Almighty God.

Fenton’s words at this point should strike terror into the hearts of the vast majority of today’s neo-Modernist hierarchy who cooperate in the post-conciliar *aggiornamento*. “The man who taught or in any way aided in the dissemination or the protection of Modernist teaching in a seminary or in a Catholic university” after taking the Oath Against Modernism “**would mark himself, not only as a sinner against the Catholic Faith, but also as a common perjurer**”.²⁰

Abolished

Seven years after Msgr. Fenton wrote these words, Pope Paul VI abolished the Oath Against Modernism, in July of 1967.²¹

The abolition of the Oath Against Modernism was an act that Bishop Rudolph Graber described as “incomprehensible”.²² Yet in a way, it is not difficult to understand. The Oath Against Modernism was scrapped because it is, in the words of Msgr. Fenton, “not in accord with the taste of liberal Catholics”. And it was liberal Catholicism that triumphed at Vatican II.

Marcel Prelot, a senator of the Dobbs region of France, rejoiced after the Council: “We had struggled for a century and a half to bring our opinions to prevail within the Church and had not succeeded. **Finally there came Vatican II and we triumphed**. From then on, the propositions and principles of liberal Catholicism have been definitively and officially accepted by Holy Church.”²³

And Modernism is one of the main components of liberal Catholicism.

In fact, a total disregard for the anti-Modernist efforts of Pope St. Pius X is now the norm in the post-Conciliar Church. It has come to the point where priests such as Father Donald Cozzens, author of the pro-homosexual book *The Changing Face of the Catholic Priesthood*, openly denigrates the Oath Against Modernism. This happened in an October 24, 2002 *National Public Radio* interview, during which the Oath was briefly discussed. Father Cozzens, speaking of himself and his confreres, said on the air:

“We compromised and we signed the Oath. We who were to be preachers of the truth, men who were to be trusted, men whose word was all-important, **we began our priesthood with an Oath that we really didn’t believe.**”²⁴

This is sheer contempt for the Second Commandment, a complete disregard for a solemn Oath taken before God. Yet priests such as Father Cozzens who publicly mock their sacred oath receive no disciplinary censure from their bishops.

Modernism Resurfaces through the “New Theology”

Pope St. Pius X predicted the resurgence of Modernism.

It is reported that toward the end of Pope Saint Pius X’s reign, when he was congratulated for having eradicated Modernism, Pius X immediately responded that despite all his efforts, he had not succeeded in killing this beast, but had only driven it underground. He warned that if Church leaders were not vigilant, it would return in the future more virulent than ever.²⁵

Pius X’s successors kept up the opposition to Modernism, but not with the same vigor as did

Pius X himself. We also had two world wars that greatly distracted even the good bishops who were maintaining vigilance.

It was during and after the Second World War, that we saw the emergence of the “New Theology”, which is Modernism repackaged. The leaders of the New Theology were Father Henri de Lubac, Father Dominique Chenu, Father Yves Congar, Father Karl Rahner, and others. For simplicity sake, we can sum up a central point of the New Theology that “religion must change for the sake of changing times”, which is a key tenet of Modernism. Father Henri Boulliard, a proponent of the New Theology in the 1940s, wrote: “A theology which is not current [does not keep changing] will be a false theology.”²⁶

In 1946, Pope Pius XII denounced this New Theology by name:

“There is a good deal of talk (but without the necessary clarity of concept), about a ‘new theology,’ which must be in constant transformation, following the example of all other things in the world, which are in a constant state of flux and movement, without ever reaching their term. **If we were to accept such an opinion, what would become of the unchangeable dogmas of the Catholic Faith; and what would become of the unity and stability of that Faith?**”²⁷

The magnificent Thomist Father Garrigou-Lagrange rightly observed in his 1946 landmark article “Where is the New Theology Leading Us?” that the New Theology leads straight back to Modernism.²⁸ As Saint Pius X warned, the beast was not dead, and was now returning with a vengeance.

Pope John “Lifts the Ban”

Then came Pope John XXIII who ignored the warnings of Pius XII and encouraged the proponents of the New Theology to become expert theologians at the Second Vatican Council. These theologians and their bishops formed the liberal bloc that hijacked the Council and steered it on to the new progressivist path.

In his book *Vatican II Revisited*, Bishop Aloysius J. Wycislo, a rhapsodic advocate of the Vatican II revolution, declared with enthusiasm that “theologians and biblical scholars who had been ‘under a cloud’ surfaced as *periti* [theological experts advising the bishops at the Council], and their post-Vatican II books and commentaries became popular reading.”²⁹

He noted “Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Humani Generis* had ... a devastating effect on the work of a number of pre-conciliar theologians”³⁰ and explained that “during the early preparation of the Council, those theologians, (mainly French with some Germans) whose activities had been restricted by Pope Pius XII, were still under a cloud. Pope John [XXIII] quietly lifted the ban affecting some of the most influential ones.”³¹

Bishop Wycislo sings the praises of these triumphant progressivists such as Hans Küng, Karl Rahner, John Courtney Murray, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Edward Schillebeeckx and Gregory Baum, who had been either condemned or deemed theologically suspect before the Council, but who are now the leading lights of post-Vatican II theology.³²

Likewise Bishop Remi de Roo, one of Canada’s most progressivist bishops, who attended Vatican II, recently said he

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still gets “shivers up my spine” when he recalls “when Paul VI came out to celebrate the Eucharist ... there with him, all in red, were all the theologians who had been marginalized before the Council.”³³

These modernist theologians who became the driving force of Vatican II, and who give Bishop de Roo such happy shivers, deliberately inserted ambiguous language into the Council texts to knead into the documents their progressive ideas. After the Council Pope Paul VI gave these same liberal theologians the go-ahead to be the official exponents of Vatican II to the world.³⁴

The Jesuit Father Henrici, himself a disciple of the New Theology, boasted that the New Theology “**has become the official theology of Vatican II**”.³⁵ The neo-Modernist system, condemned under Pope Pius XII, won the day at the Council. The proponents of the New Theology have maintained control of the Church ever since.

The leaders of the New Theology, such as Fathers von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar, were made Cardinals by Pope John Paul II, even though these Modernist theologians never renounced their progressivist tenets. Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI were fervent disciples of de Lubac and von Balthasar, and were formed according to their precepts.³⁶

Thus it is no wonder that in 1967, two years after the close of the Council, when *change, change, change, change*, was the order of the day, Pope Paul VI abolished the Oath Against Modernism. The bulwark against the spread of Modernism was formally removed when these anti-Modernist measures were needed the most. Chaos reigns ever since.

Vatican II

We will take a quick look at an episode that demonstrates Modernism at work at the Second Vatican Council, and Modernism at work in those Churchmen for whom Vatican II is new center of the universe.

As is well-known, Pope John XXIII established a Central Preparatory Committee prior to the Council. This Committee spent two years preparing the schemas for the Council. These were to be the main drafts the bishops would discuss once Vatican II opened.

These first drafts were in splendid accord with the traditional teaching of the Church. Cardinal Ottaviani of the Holy Office oversaw the drafting of the documents, and the work was carried out with great care. If these documents had been followed at the Council, the discussions of the bishops and theologians would have been forced to proceed along traditional lines.

Of the original schemas on Vatican II, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre said: `s

“I was nominated a member of the Central Preparatory Commission by the Pope and I took an assiduous and enthusiastic part in its two years of work. The central Commission had the responsibility of checking and examining all the preparatory schemas which came from the specialist commissions ... This work was carried out very conscientiously and meticulously. I still possess the seventy-two preparatory schemas; in them the Church’s doctrine is absolutely orthodox. They were adapted in a certain manner to our times, but with great moderation and discretion.”³⁷

As is also well known, however, immediately after the Council opened, the liberal bishops from the Rhineland countries protested against the original documents. They complained that they had no input in them, and put forward other specious objections. The entire matter was

put to a vote, and the documents that had been two years in preparation were scrapped.

Archbishop Lefebvre recalls,

“Everything was ready for the date announced and on 11th October, 1962, the Fathers took their places in the nave of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. But then an occurrence took place which had not been foreseen by the Holy See. From the very first days, the Council was besieged by the progressive forces ... fifteen days after the opening sessions not one of the seventy-two schemas remained. **All had been sent back, rejected, thrown into the wastepaper basket.**”³⁸

This scrapping of the Council’s agenda left 2500 bishops in Rome with nothing to talk about. The original agenda had been trashed. The bishops then relied on the liberal theologians at the Council to draft new documents in order to steer the Council away from a traditional framework, and towards a more progressive, ecumenical orientation.³⁹

A Tale of Two Liberals

What follows are two brief commentaries on Cardinal Ottaviani’s original drafts that show how these traditional documents were hated – *hated* – by the liberals.

The quotes also demonstrate how the progressivists were determined to wrench power from the loyal sons of Pope Saint Pius X who recognized their first duty is to preserve the purity of Traditional Catholic Faith as it has always been taught and practiced. The approach of Saint Pius X was literally stamped out at Vatican II.

First there is the comment by Robert McAfee Brown, a Presbyterian who was a Protestant Observer at Vatican II. He writes:

“In light of the assumption on the part of many bishops that the Council would be no more than a rubber stamp for the decisions the curia had already made, it is clear that one of the most important events of the entire Council occurred within its opening minutes. A group of Cardinals realized that if the Council immediately proceeded to the election of members to the Commissions (the smaller working group designated to handle the bulk of the Council’s work) **the result could not help but give overwhelming power to the conservative faction that had prepared the preliminary Council documents**, and whose names had been distributed to the fathers as the session began. Thus, although the agenda called for immediate voting, **the cardinals in question were fully aware that such action would render the Council virtually powerless to act on its own behalf and make it a prisoner of a minority already committed to resist significant reform.**”⁴⁰

McAfee Brown goes on to tell of Cardinal Lienart’s objection, his move to recess the Council until over the weekend, the move being seconded by the liberal Cardinal Frings, and the weekend recess, which resulted in a new vote that put the most progressivist Cardinals at the levers of power at Vatican II. This was also when the original schemas were scrapped.

McAfee Brown continues, “[B]ecause the motion succeeded, the Council was able to become a genuine Council of the whole Church, rather than reflecting viewpoints regnant only in the Southern portion of the Italian peninsula”.⁴¹

These allegedly outdated viewpoints “regnant only in the Southern portion of the Italian peninsula” were actually the true doctrine and practice of the Church throughout the centuries. McAfee Brown rejoices that the liberals gained the upper hand during Vatican II, which assured that traditional doctrine and practice would be eclipsed by the new vapors of

modernist sentiment.

Next, we meet a young priest-theologian, a *peritus* at Vatican II, who was on the side of the progressivists from day one, and who was a close co-worker with the modernist Father Karl Rahner at the Council.

In his 1966 book about Vatican II, the young theologian sneers with contempt against the original Council schema, composed under the direction of Cardinal Ottaviani, concerning the Sources of Revelation:

“The text was, if one may use the label, utterly the product of the ‘anti-Modernist’ mentality that had taken shape about the turn of the century. The text was written in a spirit of condemnation and negation, which ... had a frigid and even offensive tone to many of the Fathers. **And this despite the fact that the content of the text was new to no one. It was exactly like dozens of text-books familiar to the bishops from their seminary days: and in some cases, their former professors were actually responsible for the texts now presented to them.**”⁴²

The theologian is appalled at the prospect that the Council would actually reiterate the consistent teaching of the Church of all time; appalled that the Council would have an anti-Modernist tone in fidelity to Pope St. Pius X.

Who is the theologian sneering at the anti-Modernist approach? It is a young Father Joseph Ratzinger.

Father Ratzinger continues in the same vein:

“The real question behind the discussion can be put this way: Was the intellectual position of anti-Modernism – the old policy of exclusiveness, condemnation and defense leading to an almost neurotic denial of all that was new – to be continued? Or would the Church, after it had taken all the necessary precautions to defend the Faith, turn over a new leaf and move on into a new and positive encounter with its own origins, with its brothers and with the world today?”⁴³

After this gross caricaturization of the anti-Modernist position, he goes on to say that the majority opted for the second alternative – a kind of *anti*-anti-Modernist approach. He rejoices that it is a “new beginning” and says that the two main arguments used to defend the new position “rested on the intention of Pope John that the texts should be pastoral and their theology ecumenical.”⁴⁴

Thus, both the liberal Protestant McAfee Brown, and Father Joseph Ratzinger, are thrilled that the traditional approach and the anti-Modernist bulwarks against heresy were torn down to make way for the new Radiant City of Vatican II.

The Council would go on to rip down even more safeguards, such as the precision of scholastic language and St. Robert Bellarmine’s definition of the Catholic Church, in order to clear the ground for its new ecumenical program. Father Joseph Ratzinger was delighted that these safeguards were demolished, as will be detailed next month from Father Ratzinger’s own words.⁴⁵

Notes:

1. "*Sacrorum Antistitum* and the Background of the Oath Against Modernism," Msgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, October, 1960, p. 260.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
3. See full Oath Against Modernism on page 2 of this issue.
4. Council theologian Father Yves Congar admitted openly: "It cannot be denied that the affirmation of religious liberty by Vatican II says materially something other than what the *Syllabus* of 1864 said, and even just about the opposite of propositions 16, 17 and 19 of this document." (Yves Congar, O.P. quoted by Father George de Nantes, *CRC*, no. 113, p.3.) Likewise Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that he sees the Vatican II text *Gaudium et spes* as a "counter-Syllabus": "If it is desirable to offer a diagnosis of the text (*Gaudium et spes*) as a whole, we might say that (in conjunction with the texts on religious liberty, and world religions,) it is a revision of the *Syllabus* of Pius IX, a kind of counter-syllabus ... Let us be content to say here that the text serves as a counter-syllabus and, as such, represents on the part of the Church, an attempt at an official reconciliation with the new era inaugurated in 1789." He speaks of the "one-sidedness of the position adopted by the Church under Pius IX and Pius X" and claims the *Syllabus* represents "*an obsolete Church-state relationship*." (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987], pp. 381-382.). In other words, Cardinal Ratzinger called two of the greatest Popes in Church history "one-sided" in their efforts to protect the Church from the errors of liberalism and modernism.
5. *Pascendi*, Pope Saint Pius X, translation from *The Popes Against Modern Errors*, [Rockford: Tan Books, 1999], p. 181.
6. According to Canon Barthod, who taught at the Seminary at Ecône in the 1970s.
7. The three main principles of Modernism are: Agnosticism, Vital Imminence, and the Evolution of Dogma. For the best explanation, study St. Pius X's *Pascendi*.
8. *Pascendi*, Pope Saint Pius X, par. 1. Translation from *The Popes Against Modern Errors*, p. 180. Emphasis added.
9. Cited from *Saint Pius X, Restorer of the Church*, Yves Chiron [Kansas City, Angelus Press, 2002], pp. 209-210.
10. *Symposium on the Life and Work of Pope Pius X*; entry by Father James E. Egan, O.P, S.T.D., "Pius X and the Integrity of Doctrine" [Washington: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1946], p. 63.
11. Msgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton was a professor of dogmatic theology at Catholic University of America. He was trained at the Angelicum in Rome, and wrote his doctoral thesis under the direction of the renowned Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. From 1944 to 1963, he was editor of the prestigious theological journal, the *American Ecclesiastical Review*. Among his many writings, Fenton especially defended Catholicism against the progressives' "new broader definition of the Church" then gaining adherents among many theologians. He also defended staunchly the traditional papal position regarding Church and State at a time when it was increasingly unpopular to do so.
12. "*Sacrorum Antistitum* and the Background of the Oath Against Modernism," Msgr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, October, 1960, pp. 239-260.
13. From original Latin *Motu Proprio Sacrorum Antistitum* published in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, November, 1910, p. 366.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 246. Emphasis added.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 253-4.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
19. For example, see the quote by Father Donald Cozzens later in the article.
20. "The *Sacrorum Antistitum* and the Oath Against Modernism", p. 259.
21. See "Oath Against Modernism" in *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, p. 926.
22. *Athanasius and the Church of Our Time*, Bishop Rudolph Graber, (Palmdale: Christian Book Club, 1974), p. 54.
23. *Le Catholicisme Liberal*, 1969. Quoted in Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, *An Open Letter to Confused Catholics*. (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1992), p. 89. Emphasis added.
24. Father Donald Cozzens discusses his life as a priest, his latest book and the recent crises in the Church, "WHYY", Fresh Air with Terry Gross, October 24, 2002. Emphasis added.
25. Father Vincent Micelli, "The Antichrist" (cassette lecture), Keep the Faith, Inc.
26. "Where is the New Theology Leading Us?", Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, English Translation of 1946 *Angelicum* article, *Catholic Family News*, August, 1998. On line at: www.cfnews.org/gg-newtheo.htm (reprint #309 available from CFN for \$2.50 postpaid)

27. Quoted from "Thomism and the New Theology", Father David Greenstock, *The Thomist*, October 1950, p. 568. Emphasis added.
28. "Where is the New Theology Leading Us?", Father Garrigou-Lagrange.
29. Most Rev. Aloysius Wycislo, *Vatican II Revisited: Reflections by One Who Was There* [Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1987], p. x.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-34.
33. Rosemary Ganley, "Remi de Roo at CTN ..." *Catholic New Times*, July 4, 2004, p. 12.
34. This is explained in detail in Michael Davies *Pope John's Council*.
35. Father Henrici's full quote reads, "Our allegiance is to that tradition in the line of the 'new theology' of Lyon [cradle of de Lubac's theology] which insists on the non-opposition between nature and super-nature, that is, nature and super-nature are really identical things (and consequently) between faith and culture, and which has become the official theology of Vatican II." Fr. Henrici in his interview with *30 Days* of December 1991, quoted from "The Think They Have Won," Part VIII, see footnote 8.
36. For a magnificent treatment of the New Theology and its "conquest" of the post-Conciliar Church, see the *Si Si No No* Series "They Think They Have Won," Ten-part series. Index on line at www.oltyn.org/thinkwon.htm
37. *Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, [Kansas City: Angelus, 1992], p. 102.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
39. Two of the finest books on this subject are *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* by Father Ralph Wiltgen, SVD, and *Pope John's Council* by Michael Davies. Also, for even more information that shows that the progressivist takeover of Vatican II was effectively planned prior to the Council, see "The Tiber Flows into the Tiber: Who Was Responsible for the Liberal Hijacking of Vatican II?", J. Vennari. Two part series, June & July, 2008. (Reprint RP0807-12 available from *CFN* post-paid for \$4.00).
40. *The Ecumenical Revolution*, Robert McAfee Brown [New York: Doubleday, 1969], pp. 161-2. Emphasis added.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
42. *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, Father Joseph Ratzinger [New York: Paulist Press, 1966], p. 20. Emphasis added.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 23. More on "Pastoral language" next month.
45. Comment: I find that some people get rather emotional when these documented facts about Father Ratzinger's liberalism are pointed out, and sometimes send angry letters that I am "attacking" him. Such an emotional response precludes rational thinking. My main purpose in focusing on these statements is not to "condemn" the person of Joseph Ratzinger, but to show that the entire Vatican II program, starting with the documents themselves, is the product of a calculated *anti-anti-Modernist* approach, in defiance of Pope St. Pius X's measures against Modernism.