

# Retrieval of the Christological Focus Of Trent's Decree on Justification<sup>1</sup>

James O. Englert

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A key element in the convergence achieved by the Lutheran and Roman Catholic dialogue concerning justification<sup>2</sup> was the retrieval of authentic dimensions within the two historical traditions which centuries of suspicion had obscured.<sup>3</sup> On the Catholic side of the conversation, this necessarily involved a return to the deliberation and decree of the Council of Trent, which constituted not only the Catholic attempt to respond to the challenge of the reformers but also the first official Catholic formulation of an explicit doctrine of justification.<sup>4</sup> The Tridentine formulation thus became both the foundation of further developments in Catholic reflection, and the dialectical position with regard to which the Lutheran tradition was to differentiate itself from Catholicism.

This latter fact is clear as early as the late 1560s in Martin Chemnitz's monumental *Examination of the Council of Trent* from a Lutheran perspective.<sup>5</sup> His "examination" of the various Conciliar decrees from Trent evidences an astute mind grappling with the ongoing development of the meaning of the reformation, and reflects as well the polemical atmosphere of the time. It seems clear that in both his

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2 The common statement of the United States Lutheran and Roman Catholic dialogue on justification is found in *Justification By Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), pp. 15-74. [Editor's note to the published version: See also the more recent published developments in this area: Lutheran World Federation and Catholic Church, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Joint Declaration on Justification to Be Signed Oct. 31," *Origins* 29 (24 June 1999): 85-92; and LWF and Pontifical Council, "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification," *Origins* 28 (16 July 1998): 120-127.]

3 I am using Paul Ricoeur's terms ("retrieval" and "suspicion") not to indicate technical matters of hermeneutical method, but rather to indicate hermeneutical attitudes. An attitude of retrieval looks to a past text/event with questions which attempt to locate authentic aspects of that past which have not exercised a significant role in shaping the tradition, but which offer resources needed by the tradition in its present moment.

4 At the beginning of the council's deliberations on justification, Cardinal Cervini acknowledged that the task was complicated by the fact that so few Catholic theologians had explicitly treated the questions, and when they did their treatments had been very brief.

5 It should be recalled that Chemnitz did not have access to the acts of the Conciliar debate; it is unavoidable that his understanding of the council, therefore, would lack familiarity with the motives and meanings which stand behind various formulations. Thus, the question can be raised as to how well Chemnitz understood Trent, just as the more fundamental questions can be raised as to how well Trent understood Luther, and how well Luther understood Thomas Aquinas, etc. The fact, however, is that whatever misunderstandings there may have been, these have entered into the very constitution of the subsequent traditions. The task of retrieval is the attempt to step 'behind' these misunderstandings to see what insight and truth can be recovered.

exposition of a Lutheran understanding of justification and his formulation of a critique of Tridentine doctrine, one issue is paramount: the centrality of Christ in the justification of sinners. Chemnitz's understanding of Trent on this issue is succinctly presented:

But this justification they define as being not only the imputation of the righteousness of Christ nor only the remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man. . . Without dissimulation, therefore, they take this away from Christ and ascribe it to our love, that we are justified by it, that is, that we are on account of it absolved before the judgment seat of God and received to life eternal. But what happens to Paul, who attributes our justification to the mercy of God and to the merit of the obedience, passion, and satisfaction of Christ? But hear how the Council of Trent frustrates those most comforting statements of Scripture. They say that Christ by His most holy passion has merited not that the mercy of God on account of that satisfaction and obedience should absolve us from the sentence of damnation. . . They say that this is the whole merit of Christ, that on account of it the mercy of God pours into us the new quality of inherent righteousness, which is love, that we may be justified by it. This means that we are absolved before the judgment of God. . . not because of the obedience of Christ, but on account of our love. . .<sup>6</sup>

The affirmation of Lutheran concern for the primacy of faith in the justifying action of Christ and the assurance of forgiveness which this affords those who believe, involves profound suspicion of Tridentine affirmations of an inherent righteousness which issues in good works. Subsequent interconfessional polemics involved both Lutheran accusations of Catholic Pelagian self-justification, and Catholic counter-charges of Lutheran antinomianism.<sup>7</sup>

The fruit of intervening developments<sup>8</sup> has made it possible to overcome much of this suspicion. The attitude necessitated by dialogue is an attempt to transform suspicion into authentic retrieval. While acknowledging real perspectival differences and the painful facts of historical conflict, is it nonetheless possible to recover genuine aspects of earlier foundational understandings which have been largely overlooked or at least minimized as the traditions have developed? Specifically, is it possible to understand the doctrinal affirmations of the Council of Trent in such a way as to be faithful to those affirmations, while also recognizing elements in them that coincide with Lutheran insistence on a Christological focus in understanding justification?

It is my judgment that precisely this retrieval is one key element making possible the Lutheran and Roman Catholic convergence expressed in *Justification By Faith*. In the paragraphs of this statement dealing with Trent (50-57), it seems evident that the texts receiving primary emphasis were those in which the Council specifically highlighted the essential role of Christ in the process of justification.<sup>9</sup> This Christological focus is also evident in the two background papers on Trent prepared for the dialogue by

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *An Examination of the Council of Trent: Part One* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), translated by Fred Kramer. Chemnitz first presents his own understanding of the doctrine of justification (pp. 465-504), and then proceeds to offer a critique of Trent (pp. 514-522).

<sup>7</sup> *Justification By Faith*, "Common Statement" #63, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> *Justification By Faith*, "Common Statement" #64-93, pp. 39-48.

Carl Peter and George Lindbeck. Peter treats four issues<sup>10</sup> that have been a source of dispute between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. In doing so, he consistently draws attention to Christological affirmations in the Tridentine decree of justification. With regard to traditional Lutheran suspicion of the notion of inherent righteousness, for example, he notes that for Trent

The sufficiency (of inherent justice) presupposes that the justified are anointed with the Holy Spirit and engrafted into Christ. Because the merciful God gives himself to the sinner, the sinner becomes just; this involves an internal renewal or change that is dependent on the presence of the Holy Spirit and on vital union with Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

His interpretation of the Tridentine understanding of merit is similar.

What accounts for the possibility and actuality of merit in the just is not an optimistic anthropology but rather a biblically based Christology. Jesus Christ exerts a continuous influence on the just as the head on its members and the vine on its branches.<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, George Lindbeck arrives at similar conclusions. He is specifically attentive to contemporary Catholic theological developments which withstand Lutheran suspicion. But he also notes that it is possible to understand these developments as being faithful to the doctrine of Trent.

Contemporary Roman Catholic theologians . . . employ in varying degrees patristic and Eastern notions of divinization or participation in the divine life in order to make the point that the created grace of inherent righteousness is totally and continuously dependent on uncreated grace, on God himself. Inherent righteousness is simply the effect in human beings of incorporation into Christ and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. . . There are texts in Trent which lend themselves to this interpretation. . . and when this reading is followed, Reformation *desiderata* are to some extent met. It is primarily Christ living within the justified who is their inherent righteousness (a thoroughly Lutheran thought) and Trent's insistence on infused created grace becomes a way of saying that union with Christ is genuinely transformative of the human person.<sup>13</sup>

It appears that Lutheran and Roman Catholic dialogue on the topic of justification has converged in a Christological reading of Catholic doctrine as expressed in Trent. The present essay is an attempt to engage in that reading. It begins with a schematic analysis of the final form of the Tridentine decree, attempting to identify those elements which can ground a Christological interpretation. The essay then

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9 The key points noted in the "Common Statement" are: Trent's affirmation of the unique role of Christ in justification (#52, p. 34); the positing of Christ's passion as the meritorious cause of justification (#53, p. 34); the understanding of the infusion of faith, hope, and charity as uniting one with Christ (#54, p. 35); and the council's exhortation to Christians to trust in the saving power of Christ (#55, p. 35).

10 Peter considers Trent's teaching on: (a) the need for justification; (b) human cooperation in its reception; (c) its nature and effects; and (d) merit.

11 Carl Peter, "The Decree on Justification in the Council of Trent," in *Justification By Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 226.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

13 George Lindbeck, "A Question of Compatibility: A Lutheran Reflects on Trent," in *Justification By Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 238.

turns from the final form of the decree to the beginning of Conciliar debate, where a curious fact is noted: the concern to affirm the centrality of Christ in the process of justification evident in the final decree is virtually absent from the initial questions which guided the opening of the council's debate. This raises a question which forms the hermeneutical key guiding the present investigation: what light can the Conciliar debate and the sequence of drafts shed on the meaning of the eventual Christocentric affirmations? But before turning to that question, we begin with the end.

## 2. THE FINAL FORM OF THE DECREE ON JUSTIFICATION

The context of the discussion on justification within the general situation of the council is significant. Most significantly, this discussion immediately followed that on original sin from which a clear assertion of the radical and pervasive nature of sin had resulted.<sup>14</sup> Consistent with this, the decree on justification unambiguously asserts the radical human need of God's grace<sup>15</sup> through Christ for attaining justification (DS 1521-23; 1551-53; 1560). The reception of God's prevenient grace (*vocatio*) is the initiating factor of any and all justification, and is received utterly without merit. Coupled with this grace, there is also the external hearing of the word of God which calls to faith. Human free will, however weakened, remains a reality (DS 1521; 1554-56) and is capable of rejecting the invitation of prevenient grace and God's word. It is not capable, however, without further divine assistance (*adjutorium*) of positively responding. But with the *adjutorium*, the human will is capable of cooperating with grace; in a marvelously minimalist assertion, Trent insists that "man does not do absolutely nothing" (DS 1525).

From this point, the decree offers what could be termed a brief phenomenology of the process<sup>16</sup> of justification. Initially there is a preparation for justification, which proceeds from the unmerited predisposing grace of God through Jesus Christ and with which the human person must freely cooperate (DS 1525; 1555-57). This process begins with faith (DS 1526), which is "the beginning, foundation and root of all justification" (DS 1532). In this faith, a sinner freely assents to the truth of God's revelation

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14 H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, S.I., *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (DS) (Freiburg im Briesgau: Herder, 1973), 1515-1516. Translations of Trent's *Decree on Justification* are taken from Karl Rahner, ed., *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (New York: Alba House, 1967), and referenced according to DS.

15 One aspect of the dialogue's "Common Statement" that may not have paid sufficient attention to this fact is note 96 (p. 324) which refers to Heiko Oberman's contention that Trent left open the possibility of some unaided congruous merit of justification. The note seems to accept the validity of Oberman's thesis; it refers to a favorable brief essay by Eduard Schillebeeckx, who does largely concur with Oberman, as a "Catholic response." A far more effective Catholic response, however, is found in Carl Peter's essay for the dialogue. He argues that the overall context of the decree's insistence on the gratuity of justification makes it highly improbable that Oberman's conjecture is on target. A more detailed Catholic response is given by Harry J. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* (New York: Newman Press, 1969), pp. 173-179. From the perspective of the present essay, a point of key significance noted by McSorley (p. 174) is the fact that Cardinal Seripando voted for maintaining the possibility of *meritum de congruo* prior to justification; as will be evident later in this essay, it is unthinkable that Seripando would have accepted any proposal which could be understood as positing salvific value to man's unaided actions. The dialogue statement's presentation of Trent would have been strengthened by adverting to this criticism of Oberman.

and promise of forgiveness. Proceeding from this faith assent are fear<sup>17</sup> of divine justice, hope, an initial love of God's justice, repentance of sin, and the desire for baptism (DS 1526; 1558-59).

Justification itself is posited as consisting in both the remission of sins and the sanctification of the inner person (DS 1528, 1561). In specifying the causes of forgiveness/sanctification, the decree carefully insists that all causation of justification is of divine origin.<sup>18</sup> Further, it specifies that the interior renewal of the person consists in the infusion of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity; it is precisely this which unites a person with Christ and makes one a member of Christ's body. Thus, membership in the body of Christ is presented as intrinsically bound up with the reality of justification. Subsequently, Christ continually infuses strength into the members of his body, enabling them to fulfill the commandments and perform works of charity (DS 1546). With this ongoing grace of Christ, and the firm foundation of faith, the justified sinner's works enable a real increase in justification (DS 1535-36, 1568-70). Only those who persevere, however, will be saved, and this is possible only by God's gift of perseverance (DS 1541, 1572); accordingly, presumption is to be avoided (DS 1540). The decree therefore holds that it is not necessary to attain to certitude in one's own justification; however, it also clearly insists that no one should doubt the mercy of God, the merit of Christ, or the efficacy of the sacraments (DS 1533-34, 1563-64). In the performance of good works, it is possible to speak of the justified sinner meriting reward; yet the very positing of those acts is explicitly placed not only in the context of God's initial grace and the ongoing influence of faith, but also in the context of the justified person's membership in the body of Christ. For this reason, the Christian should never trust in himself, but always in the Lord (DS 1548, 1583).

Thus, the basic schema of the process of justification is presented as unfolding from the divine initiative through a preparation founded in faith, to the reality of justification which consists in the

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16 George Tavard, *Justification: An Ecumenical Study* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 64, uses the expression "a phenomenology of conversion" to characterize Trent's concern; he further notes that this description of the process was simply not a concern to Luther. He concludes that the Tridentine phenomenology may not be incompatible with Luther's focus on the immediacy of the divine action in the soul. The notion of justification as a "process" is expressed in the decree by the Latin *translatio* which, as Peter notes (p. 222), conveys the notion of "a journey, a passage, a movement that takes place without being initiated by the one involved." Cf. the second appendix of the present essay for a diagram of the process of justification.

17 There was considerable discussion at Trent over the desirability of positing fear as preparatory for justification. Those who had negative reactions to its inclusion in the scheme of preparation were generally satisfied by its placement prior to hope; thus, the order of the preparatory moments is significant.

18 "The causes of justification are: the final cause is the glory of God and of Christ and life everlasting; the efficient cause is the merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, signing and anointing 'with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance;' the meritorious cause is his most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, 'when we were enemies' merited for us justification by his most holy Passion on the wood of the cross and made satisfaction for us to God the Father; the instrumental cause is baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which no man was ever justified; finally the single formal cause is the justice of God, not that by which he himself is just, that, namely, whereby being endowed with it by him, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and not only are we reputed but are truly called just, receiving justice within us." (DS 1529)

remission of sins and that interior renewal which unites one with the body of Christ, and which makes possible the realization of the fruits of justification in the concrete living of one's life.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. THE EARLY DEBATE ON JUSTIFICATION

#### 3.1 The Initial Questions

It is significant to note that these Christological assertions were not evident in the initial states of the council's deliberations. These discussions were guided by six questions, which were submitted to the Conciliar theologians for their responses. The origin of the questions is not known,<sup>20</sup> but the fact of their prominent role in the beginning of the debate gives a good indication of the manner in which the controversy over justification was understood in June, 1546. The questions submitted were the following:

1. What is meant by the name and thing 'justification'?
2. What are the causes of justification? What is God's part in the process and what is the human part?
3. How are we to understand the assertion that human beings are saved by faith?
4. Do works play a role in the process of justification – both before and after – and if so, how? What is the role of the sacraments in that process?
5. Describe the process of justification: what precedes, accompanies, and follows it?
6. By what proofs – from Scripture, the Fathers, the Councils, and the apostolic traditions – is the Catholic doctrine supported? [CT v, 261.27-35]<sup>21</sup>

In the formulation of the questions, there is evident concern for differentiating the divine and human dimensions of justification. However, it is equally evident that there is no manifest sensitivity to the Christocentric insistence of the Lutheran position on justification.

Insofar as explicitly Christological concerns emerge in the subsequent discussion, they generally converge around two issues: (1) rejection of justification solely by the 'imputed justice' of Christ; and (2) affirmation of Christ's passion as 'meritorious cause' of justification.

The concern over "imputation" language is evident in the *summarius* of the early debate, which makes it evident that there was both concern to reject justification simply by non-imputation of sin and/or imputation of Christ's justice [279.20-22], and early assertions of the need to posit a real "renovation" of the sinner [279.12-14]. This concern was most clearly evident in the statement of the

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19 The decree also treats of the possibility of forfeiting justification through mortal sin, and regaining it through the sacrament of Penance; these issues, however, are not of immediate relevance to the concerns of the present essay.

20 Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, Volume Two (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1961), p. 176.

21 The acts of the council, as well as relevant diaries, letters, and tracts, are published in the twelve volume *Concilium Tridentinum* (Societas Görresiana, Freiburg im Breisgau: B. Herder, 1911). Numbers [bracketed] in the present essay refer to volume five, unless otherwise specified.

Jesuit Alphonse Salmeron, who presented a number of “errors” which he wished to see condemned; among them was the position that we “are not inherently just, but rather apprehend the imputed justice of Christ” [272.23-24].

This *summarium* also makes it clear that several theologians’ responses to the second question involved an affirmation of Christ’s passion as the “meritorious cause” of justification [279.33-34; 280.30-31; 280.38-40]. The clearest statement of this is found in the Dominican Gaspar a Regibus, who contends that the council should be explicitly concerned with what is required “on the part of Christ” as well as “on the part of God” and “on the part of man” as the question had been stated [273.24-26].<sup>22</sup>

In this early debate,<sup>23</sup> there were also (at least) two brief mentions of the fact of the justified becoming “members of Christ:” Salmeron [266.36-39], and Jerome of Oleastro [273.7-9]. At this point, these references form no part of any detailed argument for the importance of the “body of Christ” image; they are, however, the initial appearance of what was later to become a significant aspect of the discussion.

### 3.2 A Second Approximation

A revised schema of three stages or states [281.17-28] was introduced to initiate the debate among the bishops, which began on 30 June 1546. These involved a differentiation of three human situations in which justification could be conceived:

1. The conversion of an unbeliever to the faith.<sup>24</sup>
2. The maintenance of progress in justification toward eternal life.
3. The recovery of justification forfeited through sin.

A list of twenty-two “errors” was also appended to this schema. And while these played virtually no role in the subsequent debate, it is significant that the seventh “error” was directed against “imputed justice” [282.3-5].

The presentation of the first stage included the question: “How are the merits of Christ applied toward our salvation?” Thus, during the theologians’ discussions, Christ’s merits had frequently been posited as “causative” of justification; the question before the bishops concerned the ‘how’ of this. The *summarium* makes it clear that little specific attention was given to this question; rather, the bishops tended to simply reaffirm the fact of Christ’s passion as meritorious cause [337.19-338.5]. One

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22 Similar concern is found in the statements of the Dominican John de Utina [273.35-36] and the Franciscan Anthony Pinarola [274.40-275.1].

23 One of the complicating factors throughout the Conciliar discussions was the fact of differences between the ‘schools.’ At this point, for example, there is already evident divergence between Scotists and Thomists. The Scotist identification of justifying faith with the virtue of charity and insistence on the priority of forgiveness in justification facilitated an understanding of justice as an experience; it also made it rather difficult to simultaneously assert the fact of a preparation for justification and the utterly gratuitous character of justification. The Thomists posited justification as the sinner’s movement toward God followed logically (not chronologically) by remission of sin; they had a more difficult time dealing with justification-as-experience.

24 It was generally in the context of this first stage that the bishops considered the six questions which had been presented to the theologians.

specification of the manner of this causality was “through baptism.” Another added the further specification that this occurred “through baptism” because this is what makes one “a member of Christ” [322.43-44]. Also notable is the statement of Materanus [290.31f], who was the first to cite the Johannine metaphor (Jn 15.5) of “the vine and the branches” in this regard.<sup>25</sup>

Concerning the nature of justification itself, there remains also a recurring insistence on the reality of “inherent justice.” Significantly, the *summarium* [339.28-35] reflects the fact that reference

was commonly made to “inherent justice” without any connection of this to Christ.<sup>26</sup> There was, of course, no denial in these interventions of the connection between “inherent justice” and the justice of Christ; rather, the central importance of asserting this connection had not yet clearly arisen.

An important step in this direction came with the seminal intervention of Pieter Bertano [309.9-310.27], in which he distinguished a three-fold justice: (a) Christ’s justice; (b) Christ’s justice inherent in us; and (c) the justice of works. He insisted that only the second (*viz.*, Christ’s justice inherent in us) is truly justifying; further, this results only from faith united to hope and charity which joins us to Christ and enables the performance of meritorious works. Bertano clearly wants to insist on the importance of the “inhering” nature of justification; yet he also recognized the difficulty that this could seem to be asserting a justice separate from that of Christ.

This was precisely the issue that the General of the Augustinians, Girolamo Seripando, was to raise through the entire course of the council’s deliberations. He first addressed the question in his intervention of 13 July [332.35-326.27]. A keystone of his argument is that the justice of God by which we are made just can be identified with the justice of Christ [335.17-31]. To this effect, he quotes Augustine: “The justice of God is Christ” [335.27].

The background of Seripando’s position is found in a treatise entitled “On Justification” [CT xii, 613-636], which he wrote during the initial stages of the Conciliar discussion. In the treatise, he contends that when the sinner assents (after receiving prevenient grace and the *adjutorium*) he receives first the remission of sins and then the gifts of the Spirit, especially charity which enables him to fulfill the commandments; there follows a growth in justification. However, the justified sinner’s good works are inevitably defective; when standing before God’s judgment, these defects are evident and final justice is given (not merited) by the merciful God for the sake of Christ. The driving point of his argument is that the inherent justice, which results from our good works flowing from the gift of charity, is inevitably defective; it cannot be this justice that we ultimately rely on. But he continues the argument by quoting Cajetan three times<sup>27</sup> to the effect that a person becomes just and participates in the fruit of redemption precisely by being united to Christ. He also cites several Pauline texts<sup>28</sup> which

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25 This Johannine quotation eventually appeared in chapter sixteen of the final decree (DS 1546).

26 Cf., e.g., the interventions of Tommaso Compeggio [298.15] and John Salazar [316.32-34].

27 Seripando’s quotations of Cajetan: [619.39-41; 619.44-47; 635.36-42].

28 Rom 3.24 [619.31-32; 620.19-20; 624.4-5]; 1 Cor 1.30 [620.2-4]; and 2 Cor 5.20 [619.41].



emphasize the Christological focus of justification. Seripando's contention is that the imperfect justice which one is able to attain deserves to be rewarded with eternal life only when complemented by Christ's perfect justice.<sup>29</sup> It was this argument that crystallized the Christological question for the council's consideration.

### 3.2 The "July Draft"

The task of drafting a first attempt at a doctrinal statement for the council's consideration was entrusted to a four member elected commission.<sup>30</sup> Their efforts resulted in the "July Draft" which was submitted to the council on 23 July [384.23-391.50]; the draft had been written largely by the Franciscan Andrew de Vega. An obviously central concern of the drafters was rejection of any doctrine of a solely imputed justice [386.12-17], and of any exclusive emphasis on forgiveness in justification [386.25-33]. The meritorious character of Christ's passion is clearly affirmed [385.24-25, 42-45], but there is no direct effort to deal with the question as to how Christ's merits are applied.

For several reasons, this draft did not play a significant role in the eventual direction taken by Trent with regard to resolving the question of the relationship between "inherent justice" and the justice of Christ.

First, the "July Draft" specifically rejected the possibility of attaining certitude of justification. This was a highly controverted issue at Trent,<sup>31</sup> with the Scotists and Thomists approaching the question from very different perspectives; the most significant debate generated by this draft revolved around this question and other issues were momentarily left in the background.

Secondly, the July discussion coincided with the outbreak of the Schmalkald War,<sup>32</sup> which seriously disrupted the Conciliar debate. On the one hand, the legates desired a transition of the council to another location, and much of their attention was directed toward possible negotiations with Paul III toward this end; this significantly affected the nature of the debate. Further, the 'imperial bishops' were highly sensitive to Charles V's desire that no decrees be promulgated by the council prior to the resolution of the war, because he still held out hope for a reconciliation with the German Protestants; some of these bishops used the debate on certitude as a 'stalling tactic' to delay any possible promulgation of the decree.

Thirdly, despite the fact that the "July Draft" had met with generally favorable response from the theologians, it was much less favorably received by the bishops.<sup>33</sup> On the day after it was presented,

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29 Hubert Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), pp. 326-336, gives an excellent summary of Seripando's treatise.

30 Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, p. 193.

31 Cf. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, pp. 247, 288-290.

32 For the impact of the Schmalkald War on the council, cf. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, pp. 197-238.

33 On 17 August, six bishops officially asked that the "July Draft" be withdrawn.

Cardinal Cervini privately asked Seripando to prepare an alternate draft. It was this step that brought the Christological question to the foreground of consideration.

### 3.3 Seripando's Drafts

On 11 August, Seripando gave his first draft ("A") [384.23-391.50] to Cervini, who shortly thereafter asked him to revise it in light of other documents that council fathers had presented to him; the revision ("B") [828.30-833.11] was prepared by 29 August. The basic changes were less in content than in form. "A" had followed the traditional form of presenting several (eight) canons, which stated positions that were rejected and offered brief doctrinal foundations for the rejection. "B", however, began with fifteen chapters expressing positive doctrinal content, followed by eight briefly stated canons. This form was to be maintained not only in the final decree of justification, but also in the remainder of the council's doctrinal statements.

Significant differences are noticeable between Seripando's Draft "B" and the official "July Draft." One specific difference, which is characteristic of the entire tone of the two documents, is that whereas "July" had quoted Augustine only twice, he is quoted twelve times in "B". And reflecting its Augustinian tone, "B", in a key section [829.7-12], simply states tersely that there is an active preparation for justification proceeding from the concurrence of grace and human will;<sup>34</sup> in contrast, "July" had delineated the role of human freedom at some length [387.4-39].

But the most significant innovation in "B" was chapter eight [829.40-48], which Seripando entitled "Concerning Twofold Justice." Here he presented the basic outline of the argument that he had made in his earlier treatise, namely, his insistence on our need for the explicit justice of Christ, beyond the justice of infused charity which enables good works. In two texts, Draft "B" posits the need for Christ's justice due to the inadequacy of any purely inherent justice:

... that most pure and perfect justice of Christ, our saviour and head, which is poured out on his whole body, that is on the whole church, is both communicated and applied to all his members [829.41-43].

Concerning this the holy fathers have said that it is the justice and grace of God through Jesus Christ by virtue of which whosoever is just is truly just [829.45-46].

Seripando's obvious concern in drafting this section was to state Catholic doctrine in such fashion that it could give rise to no suspicion of asserting the adequacy of any justice inherent in human persons apart from the perfect justice of Christ. At this point, he still clearly separates "inherent justice" and the "justice of Christ," arguing the need for the latter because of the inadequacy of the former; this separation is evident even in the title of chapter eight, "Concerning *Twofold* Justice." However, the seeds for bridging the total separation of the two justices are present in his assertion of Christ's justice being communicated and applied to the members of His body.

As shall be noted below, it was this notion of a need for a second, extrinsic justice of Christ that made Seripando's position unacceptable to the large majority at the council; in their minds it was

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34 Cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, pp. 76-78, for the way in which the Augustinian tradition tended to juxtapose assertions of (a) the necessity of grace and (b) free will, recognizing the dialectical tension without engaging in fully systematic discussion.

insufficiently differentiated from what they understood to be the Lutheran position of a purely imputed, extrinsic justice. Nonetheless, Seripando's argument had posed the question of how to maintain an adequately Christological focus while simultaneously asserting the reality and adequacy of that justice which inheres in the human person.

Draft "B" itself was not formally debated before the council. Rather, it was circulated among theologians and bishops for review and criticism; from the reactions which were received, the "September Draft" [420.28-427.49] resulted.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4. THE "SEPTEMBER DRAFT"

##### 4.1 "September" and Seripando

This draft embodied significant changes from Seripando's Draft "B". The description of the process of preparation for justification is extended, and the contribution of the human factor in this preparation is more positively assessed; in this, "September" involves something of a return to some elements of the initial "July Draft." Also, in terms of form, the number of anathemas (twenty-one) is almost tripled, giving a much more negative tone to the document's response to reformation concerns.

But the key differences are in chapter seven [423.13-424.29] of the "September Draft" which transposes the material of Seripando's Draft "B" ("Concerning Twofold Justification"). The revisions obviously attempt a compromise. The notion of a two-fold justice, founded upon the inadequacy of inherent justice, is explicitly rejected [423.34-36]. Yet there is also clearly developing a recognition of the necessity of uniting inherent justice explicitly to the justice of Christ if it is to be posited as adequate for salvation. This recognition is evident in several texts in chapter seven of "September." For example, Christ's merits are not only referred to as causative of God's infusion of inherent justice, but now those merits are themselves spoken of as "communicated" to those who are justified:

Though no one is able to be just, unless the merits of the justice of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated to him, yet by the merit of this same highest and most inviolate justice, grace or charity is poured forth in the hearts of the justified by the Holy Spirit [423.22-23].

This draft even uses the language of "imputation," indicating that the genuine concern is not to reject the imputation of Christ's justice but rather to argue that justice is not solely imputed, but

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<sup>35</sup> Jedin notes that this draft was received favorably – even by the 'imperial party,' who nonetheless still wanted to delay approval of any decree so as not to draw a final line of separation between the council and the German Protestants. Cf. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, pp. 246-247.

rather is also inherent in the justified. This latter insistence is expressed by asserting that the justice of God which inheres in us is, in fact, the justice of Christ:

We do not become just save by God's gift and the merit of Christ, because God bestows on us the very justice that Christ merited on our behalf. For it is from this that His justice is communicated and imputed to us when we are justified, as if it were ours and as if we had effected that which He effected on behalf of us. And therefore the justice which is in us is called the justice of God, because without merit we have accepted it from Him alone. It can also be called the justice of Christ, because in order that it might be given to us, he alone merited it [423.28-33].

This again raised the question as to how it could be possible to speak of one justice which both inheres in the justified and yet remains in a real sense the justice of Christ. It is in dealing with this question, that the assertion that sanctification constitutes one as a member of Christ's body first appears in a Conciliar draft:

For even if faith is first, wherefore it is also called the 'justice of faith,' still – unless hope and charity are added to it – it neither unites one internally with Christ nor makes one a living member of his body [423.40-42].

The compromise nature of this draft is evident in the responses that it elicited in the subsequent debate. From the *summarium* [400.1-509.47],<sup>36</sup> it is clear that by far the largest and most contested debate was occasioned by chapter seven. On the one hand, there was opposition to the explicit rejection of "two-fold justice" [504.20], and an expressed desire to relate inherent justice more explicitly to the justice of Christ by affirming the "dependence" of the former on the latter. But on the other hand, there was also criticism of the way in which the merits of Christ were referred to as "communicated and imputed" to the justified, as if this overly minimized the distinctness of inherent justice [438.15-18; 446.37-41; 464.10-13; 475.36-41].

Seripando himself [485.36-490.26] was quite critical of the "September Draft." His argument is essentially a matter of spirituality, in that he criticized the draft insofar as it could not adequately deal with this issue: when one appears before God's judgment, must not Christ's perfect justice make up for the imperfections of one's own achievement? He offered other criticisms. For instance, noting that the position he had espoused was essentially that of many Catholic theologians (most notably Cajetan), he asked whether such a position should be explicitly rejected by the council. He also objected to dogmatizing the category of "inherent justice," judging it to be dependent on the Aristotelian notion of form; his point was not to deny real sanctification resultant from the infusion of faith, hope and charity, but rather to state his preference for more traditional and biblical/Augustinian language [489.25-26]. But despite these later issues, the evident central concern is for the status of the person standing before the judgment of God; does not our hope, Seripando asked, ultimately depend on our ability to rely, not on ourselves, but on the justice of Christ?

Thus, a general consensus is clear in the discussion to the effect that justification consists in a real supernatural elevation of the justified person which inheres in him through the infused virtues of

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36 In Massarelli's chapter-by-chapter and canon-by-canon summary of the debate, the space needed to summarize the debate on chapter seven [504.16-506.3] is double that needed for any other single chapter.

faith, hope, and charity, and the subsequent performance of good works enabled by those virtues. The unresolved question remains that of formulating the relationship of this inherent justice to the justice of Christ.

#### 4.2 The Unresolved Question

The question was formulated and submitted for discussion among the theologians as follows:<sup>37</sup>

If a person has performed good works with the help of grace derived from the merits of Christ and thus preserving inherent justice, has he satisfied divine justice before the tribunal of Christ so that he receives eternal life by virtue of his own merits, or does he need, besides inhering justice, the mercy and justice of Christ, that is, the merits of Christ's passion to complement inhering justice in the sense that the justice of Christ is bestowed by God according to the measure of faith and love that he possesses? [523.11-16]

In response to the question as formulated, it was clear that there was virtually no support for Seripando's two-fold justice doctrine; thirty-three theologians opted for the adequacy of inherent justice, while only five opted for the necessity of an extrinsic justice of Christ to complement inherent justice.

Nevertheless, those who supported the two-fold justice made a significant impact on the council with their argument from spirituality.<sup>38</sup> Especially notable was the statement of the Augustinian Stephen de Sestino:

There is in those who have been justified, however good they are, however much they exist in grace, a continuous struggle against wickedness; and would that the victory were frequent rather than rare! . . . I beg you, fathers, you know our infirmity; therefore, we should not set up this man cured in every way, justified in every respect; but rather one who is infirm as well and carnal, until this mortal shall put on incorruption, and this corruptible immortality. Let us not speak of transcendent things; let us not square the circle with logic. Let us speak instead of that which each of us experiences within himself. [609.14-20]

The Servite Lorenzo Masocchi had made a similar appeal:

I beg that you hear Paul speaking to you: Having been justified and adorned with good works, stand before God with all confidence, not because of your good works – which you have performed through God's goodness – but because of faith through Christ, relying on faith through Christ. [585.39-42]

The heart of this appeal was to refrain from speaking of inherent righteousness/justice in any way that could seem to posit human justice apart from Christ. They were arguing from profound

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<sup>37</sup> This issue had also been formulated by Seripando, who stated the question in much less of an either/or fashion [CT ii, 431.23-27]; Cervini's selection of Del Monte's formulation of the issue for presentation to the council largely determined the outcome before the discussion.

<sup>38</sup> For a perceptive analysis of different strains of piety within Catholicism and within Lutheranism and their bearing on understanding the doctrine of justification, both in the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, cf. James McCue, "Ecumenical Reflection on Justification," *The Ecumenist* Vol. 18, No. 4 (May-June, 1980), pp. 49-53.

religious experience of the inadequacy of the best of human efforts, and thus were sensitive to the authentic concerns of the Lutheran critique.

Even among those who opposed any doctrine of two-fold justice, it is evident that they became progressively more sensitive to the need to take these concerns into account. The Dominican Bartholomew Miranda, for example, opposed the idea of any extrinsic application of Christ's justice at the judgment; yet he insisted that inherent justice must be understood as related to the justice of Christ, just "as branch to vine, as river to source, as the light of the air to the light of the sun." Thus, when the justified appears for judgment, he presents his own justice precisely insofar as it is a participation in the justice of Christ [550.36-45]. Making a similar point, Gregory of Padua cited a text from the canon of the Mass to indicate that in facing judgment, our reliance is on God's mercy rather than on our own inherent justice [580.44-48].

The debate shows two fundamental truths in dialectical tension. Seripando's opponents firmly insisted that the truth of the sinner's real interior transformation can only be upheld by positing an equally real justice that is one's own. Less in opposition than in tension with this position, the Augustinian insistence was that the heart of the Gospel was the gift of Christ's justice which enables us to trust despite the inevitable inadequacy of our own justice, however real that might be.

#### 4.3 Divergent Understandings

Part of the difficulty in the debate seems to have stemmed from divergent understandings of "inherent justice." Seripando clearly identified "inherent justice" with the "justice of works." This led him to conclude that since human works are inevitably defective insofar as self-interest is never absolutely transcended, so too must "inherent justice" be judged defective. The majority, however, seems to have operated out of a rather different understanding. For them, "inherent justice" consists in the very grace of justification which leads to good works, among other things, but is not identical with them. Thus, for example, Gregory of Padua [557.2-19] clearly distinguishes "inherent justice" from the "justice of works." From this perspective, "inherent justice" is a more fundamental reality than the "justice of works;" even though one's works are indeed defective, this does not preclude the possibility that the "inherent justice" from which those works flowed may itself enable one to stand with confidence before God's judgment.

But it became more and more evident that this assertion would only be possible if that "inherent justice," which was *truly* one's own, was *not exclusively* one's own but also Christ's. Throughout the debate, accordingly, there were consistent attempts on the part of those who opposed Seripando's doctrine to demonstrate that inherent justice was derived from and dependent on the justice of Christ. The most explicit argument to this effect was that of Gaspar a Regibus, who argued simply that the inherent justice with which he would stand before God's judgment "is mine and Christ's" [596.33; cf. also 596.26-32]. Others who made similar arguments included: Vincent de Leons [527.10ff]; Bonaventura

Costacciaro [553.35f]; Andreas Navarra [558.35ff]; John de Salazar [574.37ff]; and Sebastian de Castello [576.24f].<sup>39</sup>

Seripando's specific formulation of his concern was judged inadequate by the vast majority of council fathers; but the concern itself had obviously gained a hearing.

## 5. THE CULMINATION OF THE DEBATE

### 5.1 The "October Draft"

The continuing impact of Seripando is especially evident in that, despite the fact of the council's having rejected his previous formulation, he was once again entrusted with the task of preparing a revision for further debate; his "October Draft" [510.1-517.22] was submitted on 31 October.

The major innovation in the section on the nature of justification in this draft (chapter six) was the explicit enumeration of the "causes"<sup>40</sup> of justification. The notion of two-fold justice was not explicitly rejected in this draft, as it had been in "September;" however, the notion of any "new" extrinsic application of Christ's justice at judgment is rejected. But this rejection is immediately followed by renewed emphasis on the intimate connection between the inherent justice by which we become just and the justice of Christ.

Man, through Jesus Christ in whom he is engrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time: faith, hope and charity. For faith – unless hope and charity are added to it – neither unites one interiorly with Christ, no makes one a living member of his body.

And the fundamental motivation for this insistence is evident in the very conclusion of this draft which asserts that, in facing judgment, the Christian should not look to his own works, but should "implore divine mercy and trust in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ" [515.21-22]. The heart of Seripando's concern is again manifest: our hope lies in the gift of being able to trust beyond ourselves in the justice of Christ which is given to us.

In itself, the "October Draft" did not play a direct role in the debate, because Cervini asked Del Monte to prepare a further revision to guide the final stages of the debate.<sup>41</sup> Much of Seripando's draft, however, was retained by Del Monte and eventually in the final form of the decree; further, certain elements deleted in Del Monte's revision framed significant elements of the closing stages of the debate.

### 5.2 The "November Draft"

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noted, however, that there were also explicit attempts – most notably that of the Jesuit Diego Laynez [612-629] – to reject this position which held inherent justice to be an effect of Christ's justice.

<sup>40</sup> The causes as explained in this draft were preserved in the final decree; cf. note 18 (p. 5) above.

<sup>41</sup> Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent*, p. 379.

The revisions embodied in the “November Draft” [634.22-641-45] basically regarded the manner in which the role of faith would be expressed, and the manner in which the question of certitude would be handled. Accordingly, the presentation of the nature of justification itself and the relationship of inherent justice to the justice of Christ remains essentially that of “October.” There is, however, one very noticeable change. Whereas Seripando’s draft had concluded by urging the faithful to trust in Christ, Del Monte concludes as follows:

Nothing may be said to be lacking in the just to enable them to fully satisfy the divine law and merit eternal life inasmuch as they act with that affection of love which is required in this mortal life. [639.33-35]

This does not necessarily affirm the adequacy of works, though it would certainly have sounded that way to those who identified inherent justice with the justice of works.<sup>42</sup> But perhaps more important than whatever this passage affirmed was the deletion of the exhortation to the faithful to trust in Christ; this occasioned considerable discussion in the subsequent debate.

Seripando himself reacted angrily to this draft. But it must be noted that there were personal factors involved in this as well as theological; Cervini had asked Del Monte to revise Seripando’s “October Draft” without Seripando’s knowledge. In a note to Cervini, Seripando wrote: “[This] has greatly distressed my stomach!” [663, note 2]. But Seripando also had real theological concerns as became manifest in his later intervention.

By this point in the debate it had already become evident that the notion of a two-fold justice understood as implying a second application of Christ’s justice in the final justification, had little support. Nevertheless, Giacomo Giacomelli’s proposal [649.10-11] for an explicit rejection of the notion (as in “September”) had no support either. The debate continued to involve an effort to incorporate the concerns of the proponents of two-fold justice, even while rejecting their formulation.

Bertano again made a significant statement [651.5-17] in this regard. He expressly rejected any extrinsic application of Christ’s justice at judgment; nonetheless, he raised the issue of the object of man’s trust, arguing that the just man can rely on both inherent justice and Christ’s justice – but he can only rely on the former because of the latter. It is clear in his intervention that he wants the council to distinguish clearly its teaching from any doctrine of a solely “imputed justice,” while at the same time embracing the authentic Augustinian insistence that ultimately our trust can only be in Christ; accordingly, the justice which inheres in us must be not simply ours, but in some way Christ’s. Subsequently, several bishops echoed Bertano’s concern.<sup>43</sup>

The Franciscan Cornelio Musso offered a complementary position. He argued [648.16-24] that God demands justice from man in a dual sense: a perfect justice from the human race as a whole, which Christ vicariously offers to God, and the imperfect justice of individuals. It is Christ’s perfect justice which obtains God’s satisfaction with the imperfect justice of individuals; although the acts of the

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42 Cf. p. 14 of the present essay.

43 E.g., the Bishop of Terracina [653.34ff]; the Servite General [665.29ff]; the Bishop of Milo [654.19f]; and the Bishop of Alife [655.20].



individual do not meet the strict demands of God's justice, He rewards them because of Christ's perfect justice. To this proposal, Seripando remarked: "The proponents of two-fold justice ask no more than this" [648, note 8]. This remark would seem to substantiate the contention that his insistence was less on a specific formulation of doctrine than it was on the necessity of grounding the believer's trust in the justifying mercy of God through Christ.

This is even more evident in Seripando's final intervention on 26 November. He no longer spoke of a final application of Christ's justice to satisfy for the inadequacies of the sinner's own works. He attempted, rather, to posit an intrinsic connection between inherent justice and the justice of Christ. He proposed that the two are "distinct," and thus inherent justice is real. Nevertheless, it is truly dependent on the justice of Christ "in its origin and continuance." Therefore, "whoever relies on inherent justice must rely also on the justice of Christ" [663.15-21]. He proposes that the just man is a member of the body of Christ, and thus has a continuing, vital relationship with Christ-the-head. Because of Christ's intercession for the members of His body, God appears to them as a merciful judge [667.40ff].

Seripando's theological formulation has shifted considerably. Initially, he had argued that our inherent justice is separate from the justice of Christ; given that our justice (of works) is inevitably deficient, we will stand in need of an "application" of Christ's separate justice to us as we stand before God's judgment. The position has shifted to positing an essential connection between our justice and that of Christ, from the moment of justification to that of judgment. We continue to stand in need of Christ's justice; this is no longer an extrinsic reality to be applied in judgment, however, but a reality in which the justified participate and by means of which they are just. The shift is from the vocabulary of "application" to that of "participation."

Constant through this development of formulation was an abiding fundamental concern: the Gospel must be announced as freeing us from despairing in the inevitable inadequacy of works, and enabling us to trust in the mercy of God through Christ.

### 5.3 The Final Decree

The final form of Trent's Decree on Justification [CT v, 799.1-799.50; DS 1520-1583]<sup>44</sup> attempts to embrace both poles of the dialectic that had surfaced throughout the council's deliberations. The formal cause of justification is asserted to be God's justice which inheres in the justified and makes them truly just (DS 1529); correlative to this, the doctrine of justification solely by the imputed justice of Christ is clearly rejected (DS 1557). However, both this assertion and rejection are contextualized in a very different fashion than had been the case in the "July Draft" which had initially guided the discussions. There is now far more evident concern to express the relationship of that inherent justice which formally justifies to real participation in Christ.<sup>45</sup>

This concern is apparent in several texts from chapter seven of the decree:

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44 On the overall structure of the decree itself, cf. section 2 and appendix 2 of the present essay.

45 In his paper for ARCIC-II, Henry Chadwick comments that the decree incorporated Seripando's concern "by insisting that there is no merit for the good work of the believer apart from the intimate union with Christ." "Justification By Faith: A Perspective," *One in Christ* Vol. XX, No. 2 (1984), p. 204. A similar point is made by Michael Schmaus, *Dogma, 6: Justification and the Last Things* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1977), p. 50.

For though no one can be just except him to whom the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this takes place in that justification of the sinner when, by the merit of the most holy Passion, 'the charity of God is poured forth by the Holy Spirit in the hearts' of those who are justified, and inheres in them. (DS 1530)

From this, man, through Jesus Christ in whom he is engrafted, received in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time, namely, faith, hope and charity. (DS 1530)

For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites one perfectly with Christ nor makes one a living member of his body. (DS 1531)

Each of these texts had appeared in Seripando's "October Draft" and reflects his fundamental concern. This concern is further stated in the first half of canon ten in the decree, which had appeared in no previous draft:

If anyone should say that men are justified without the justice of Christ whereby he merited for us, or by that justice are formally just, *anathema sit*. (DS 1560)

This canon is the council's most succinct statement of the issues considered in the present essay. On the one hand, it clearly asserts that there is a formal justice inhering in each justified sinner by virtue of which he is truly just; but on the other hand, this justice cannot be considered in isolation from the justice of Christ.

Finally, the Decree embraces Seripando's fundamental concern in two further texts, neither of which had appeared in earlier drafts. These texts admonish the faithful to trust in the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, in a manner similar to that of Seripando's "October Draft:"

As no pious person ought to doubt the mercy of God and the merit of Christ and the virtue and efficacy of the sacraments, so each one, when he considers himself and his own weakness and indisposition may have fear and apprehension concerning his own grace, since no one can know with certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God. (DS 1534)

Far be it that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself and not in the Lord, whose bounty towards all is so great that he wishes the things that are his gifts to be their merits. (DS 1548)

The first text obviously also expresses the council's desire to speak hesitatingly about the controverted question of certitude; nonetheless, both also clearly address the question of trust. Whatever has been said about the impossibility of absolute certainty and about the reality of inherent justice, the council makes it very clear that it had attempted to make Seripando's fundamental concern its own: namely, the grounding of our confidence in the gratuitous and perfect justice of Jesus Christ.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The central conclusions that follow from the foregoing considerations are twofold: (1) a retrieval of Christocentric elements in the Tridentine decree on justification is a key element enabling a convergence of Lutherans and Roman Catholics concerning this doctrine; (2) this retrieval is faithful to authentic concerns of the council fathers at Trent.

This Christocentric dimension first surfaced in the Conciliar deliberations as an unambiguous affirmation of the fact that the passion of Christ is the meritorious cause of justification. There followed considerable debate in the subsequent attempts to formulate the manner in which this fact could be best expressed. This debate reveals a dialectical tension at the heart of the council's understanding. On the one hand, there was a desire to differentiate clearly Catholic doctrine from any position that would posit justification as consisting solely in the imputation of Christ's justice or solely in the non-imputation of sin. On the other hand, there was a recognized need to embrace an authentic insistence on the centrality of Christ in the process of justification. The impetus of this latter insistence stemmed from an Augustinian spirituality which felt deeply the insufficiency of human works and recognized the need for believers to be able to trust in the merits of Christ.

Emergent from this dialectic was a key insistence that the sanctification of the person engrafts one in the body of Christ in a vital union; from this union, the fruits of justification follow. Accordingly, sanctification is a reality which inheres in the justified person; yet that reality is not separate from the justice of Christ but rather is a real participation in the justice of Christ. It follows from this that the believer's trust is never simply in his own justice; nor, however, is one's trust to be placed in any solely extrinsic justice. Rather, we trust through faith in our own participation in the body of Christ, which grounds our faith in hope and charity.

There is, accordingly, an emphatic insistence on the essential centrality of Christ in the justification of sinners. The language preferred by Trent is that of participation, in distinction from that of imputation. There is in this a clear attempt to differentiate a Catholic position from Reformation doctrine as understood by the council. There is also, however, a real grappling with central issues posed by the Reformation.

Thus, by allowing the Conciliar concern to relate inherent justice explicitly to the justice of Christ to serve as a hermeneutical key in understanding the Tridentine doctrine, it is possible to understand that – while it obviously cannot be simply identified with Reformation perspectives – Catholic doctrine as expressed at Trent does share central Reformation concerns.

It is precisely this recognition that contributes to the possibility of Lutheran and Roman Catholic consensus on the doctrine of justification. It is possible for Lutheran and Catholic believers to remain faithful to the unique perspectives of their respective traditions, and yet also to affirm with one voice their common faith in God's definitive saving action in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

## 7. APPENDICES

### 7.1 Translations of Pertinent Sections of the Drafts

#### SERIPANDO'S "DRAFT B"

##### Chapter 8

But concerning the justice by which the justified are called just and not only reputed to be, but also really are such, the church has always understood that besides that most pure and perfect justice of Christ, our redeemer and head, which is poured out on his whole body, that is on the whole church, it is

both communicated and applied to all his members through faith and the sacraments: by the merits of this same redeemer of ours grace or charity is poured into the hearts of those who are justified by the Holy Spirit who is given to them. Concerning this the holy fathers have said that it is the justice and grace of God through Jesus Christ by virtue of which whosoever is just is truly just. They also said: those who have charity have been born of God, and those who have not are not born of God; with charity it is the faith of Christians, but without charity it is the faith of devils who believe yet tremble.

## Chapter 9

And the Church has taught that in order to have perfect understanding of justifying faith, that, since nothing pertains to this except believing, that is to be called justifying faith which believes all those things handed down by the Church, namely eternal matters, which cannot yet be understood by men of flesh, and temporal things – both past and future – which the eternity of divine providence undertook and will yet undertake on behalf of our salvation. Among which matters there is this: that man is justified, that is, made just, freely through the grace of God through Jesus Christ, not solely by the remission of sins, but by the grace of charity which is poured into the hearts of believers. Moreover, this indeed is justice divinely given, and does not fall into the realm of merit, nor is it acquired by human virtue.

## “SEPTEMBER DRAFT:” Chapter Seven

Justification itself follows upon this disposition or preparation, which justification the Apostle teaches is brought about freely through faith and not by works according to the law, nor even by good works, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. And this indeed must be interpreted in that sense which the constant consent of the Catholic Church has held and expressed, namely, that from justification itself all good works, preceding faith and those also which after the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit are done with some kind of faith before the grace of justification, may be excluded as if they were properly speaking ‘merits.’ Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. . . For this is as it were its foundation and the beginning of man’s salvation. For without faith it is impossible to please God and to arrive at the fellowship of the sons of God. Nevertheless, though no one is able to be just unless the merits of the justice of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated to him, yet by the merit of this same highest and most inviolate justice, grace or charity is poured forth in the hearts of those who are justified and inheres in them through the Holy Spirit who is given to them. For as the Apostle says, “It is God who has anointed us and marked us and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts.” And again: And in which you have been marked as believers in the promise of the Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance.” For we do not become just save by God’s gift and the merit of Christ, because God bestows on us the very justice that Christ merited on our behalf. For it is thence that His justice is communicated and imputed to us when we are justified, as if it were ours and we might have effected that which he effected on behalf of us. And therefore the justice which is in us is called the justice of God, because without merit we have accepted it from him alone. It can also be called the justice of Christ, because in order that it might be given to us, he alone merited it, while on the cross, which did not take away those things by discharging the debt for them, but for which he satisfied God the Father on our behalf. Thus, there are not two justices which are given to us – God’s and Christ’s – but the one justice of God through Jesus Christ (this is charity itself or grace), by which the justified are not simply reputed to be just, but truly are called just and are just.

Concerning this charity, the holy fathers have said that it is by the justice and grace of God that whoever is just is truly just. It is also said: Whoever has charity has been born of God, whoever does not have charity has not been born of God. For even if faith is first, wherefore it is also called the 'justice of faith,' still unless hope and charity are added to it neither unites one internally with Christ nor makes one a living member of his body. For which reason it is very truly said that faith without works is dead. The apostle Paul concisely indicated this when, defining salutary and evangelical faith, he said: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith which works through charity," which constitutes a new creation, "a new man who has been created according to God in the justice and holiness of truth." All confess this faith before receiving the sacrament of baptism, when they ask the church for the faith which gives eternal life, which faith is not able to do without hope. As when they are commanded immediately upon being reborn, to preserve it pure and spotless as the first robe lost through Adam's sin and now restored through Christ Jesus with other gifts, and to present themselves with it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whence in this justification, man accepts – with the remission of sins – all these at the same time through Christ Jesus: faith, hope, and charity. Truly although sins are remitted freely through divine mercy because of Jesus Christ: for it must be said that sins are not remitted to all those who boast of their trust and certitude that they have received remission of their sins, and who repose in this alone, since among heretics and schismatics this is the trust which is vain and void of all piety and which is able to be preached, and indeed in our times is preached, and not without great contention against the Catholic Church. Truly indeed the faithful say with the outstanding psalmist: Who understands sins? Cleanse me Lord from my hidden sins. And they fear greatly their hidden sins which they themselves do not see, but which are manifest to the eyes of God.

#### "OCTOBER DRAFT:" Chapter Six

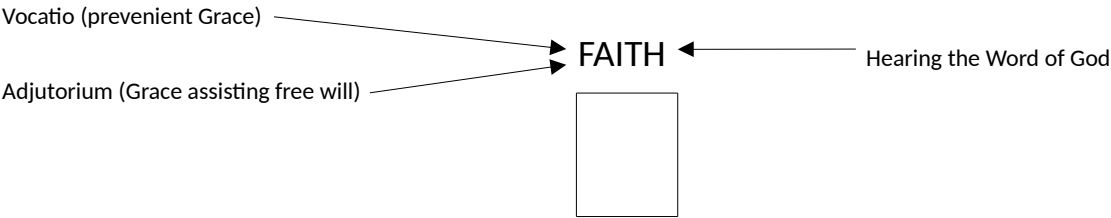
Moreover, the causes of the justification of the sinner – which consists simultaneously in the forgiveness of sins and in sanctification and the infusion of gifts – are: The final cause is truly the glory of God and eternal life; the meritorious cause is truly the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ who on the wood of the cross, which did not take these things away, made satisfaction for us to God the Father, loosening the bonds; moreover, the efficient cause is the merciful God, who – accepting the satisfaction of His Son for us as if we ourselves had made satisfaction for our sins – washes and sanctifies us, signing and anointing with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance; the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism; the formal cause is the one justice of God, by which we are spiritually renewed in our minds, and are not simply reputed to be just, but truly are called just and are just. For though no one can be just except him to whom the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, nevertheless that then truly happens when, by the merit of his same most sacred passion the love of God has been poured out by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the justified, and inheres in them. Whence man, through Jesus Christ in whom he is engrafted, received in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time: faith, hope, and charity. For faith – unless hope and charity are added to it – neither unites one interiorly with Christ, nor makes one a living member of his body. For which reason it is truly said that "faith without works is dead" and of no profit, and "In Christ, circumcision

does not avail anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that works through charity.” For this constitutes a new creature, “a new man who has been created according to God in the justice and holiness of truth.” According to the tradition of the apostles, they then ask the church for the faith that gives eternal life, which faith is not able to do without hope. And they hear the word of Christ: “If you would enter into life, keep the commandments” – which are not able to be properly kept without charity. Christian justice consists in all these things – as when they are commanded, immediately upon being reborn, to preserve it pure and spotless as the first robe, given to them through Christ Jesus for that which Adam lost by sinning, so that they might be able to present themselves with it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### “NOVEMBER DRAFT:” Chapter Eight

Moreover, this justification of the sinner is not merely the remission of sins, but also sanctification and the infusion of gifts. The causes of this justification are: The final cause is truly the glory of God and Christ, and eternal life; the efficient cause is the merciful God, who – accepting the satisfaction of his most beloved only-begotten Son for us, just as if we ourselves had made satisfaction for our sins – cleanses and sanctifies us, signing and anointing “with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance;” the meritorious cause is the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loosening the bonds, made satisfaction for us on the wood of the cross, which did not take away these things; the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism; the formal cause is the one justice of God, whereby endowed with it by him we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and are not only reputed just, but are truly called just and are just – receiving justification in us, everyone according to his proper virtue and measure, as the Holy Spirit distributes to each as he wills. For no one can be just except him to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated: yet this is exactly what happens when, by the merit of this same sacred passion, the love of God is poured out through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who are justified, and inheres in them. Whence man, through Jesus Christ in whom he is engrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time: faith, hope, and charity. For faith – unless hope and charity are added to it – neither unites one interiorly with Christ, nor makes one a living member of his body. For which reason it is most truly said that “faith without works is dead” and of no profit. And in Christ Jesus circumcision does not avail anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by charity. For this constitutes “a new creature, a new man, who has been created according to God in the justice and holiness of truth.” According to the tradition of the apostles, this is asked for by catechumens before the sacrament of baptism, when they ask the Church for the faith that gives eternal life, which faith is not able to do without hope. And they hear the word of Christ: “If you would enter into life, keep the commandments” – which are not able to be kept without charity. Christian justice consists in all these things – as when they are commanded, immediately upon being reborn, to preserve it pure and spotless as the first robe, given to them through Christ Jesus for that which Adam lost by sinning, so that they might be able to carry it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ and have eternal life.

7.2 Diagram of the Process of Justification



- Fear
- Hope
- Love
- Repentance
- Baptism



CAUSES:

Final = God's Glory  
Efficient = God

REMISSION of SINS

SANCTIFICATION by

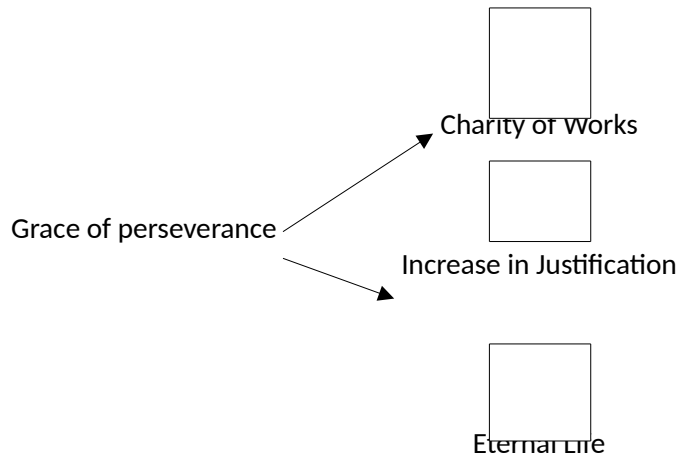
Infusion of:      Faith      Membership

Hope      in

Charity      CHRIST'S BODY

Meritorious = Christ's passion

Formal = God's justice



### 7.3 Timetable of the Conciliar Discussions

22 June: Presentation of the six questions  
[CT v, 261.27-35.]

30 June: The three 'stages' presented  
[CT v, 281.16-30]

23 July: "July Draft" presented [CT v, 384-391]

11 August: Seripando gives Draft "A" to Cervini  
[CT v, 821-828]

29 August: Seripando gives draft "B" to Cervini  
[CT v, 828-833]

23 September: "September Draft" presented  
[CT v, 420-426]

22-28 June: congregations of theologians discuss the six questions

5 July: Discussion of the three 'stages'

5-14 July: Seripando writes treatise on justification  
[CT xii, 613-636]

15 July: Deputies elected to draft decree

24 July: Cervini asks Seripando to prepare an Alternate draft

13 August: Debate begins on "July"

20 August: Cervini circulates "A" for review

26 August: Cervini asks Seripando to rewrite "A"

4 September: Seripando finishes "September Draft;" Cervini circulates it for review

27-29 September: Theologians debate "September"

1-12 October: Council fathers debate "September"

15 October: "Two questions" are submitted to theologians



31 October: "October Draft" (Seripando's revision)  
is submitted [CT v, 510-517]

5 November: " November Draft" (Del Monte's revision)  
Is submitted [CT v, 634-641]

13 January: Final decree presented and unanimously  
approved [CT v, 791-799]

20 October: Seripando is asked to revise draft

1 November: Cervini asks Del Monte to revise  
"October Draft"

9 November – 7 December: General congregations  
Discuss "November" and the "two questions"

3 December: Drafting commission presents nine  
Questions for consideration

7-17 December: Chapter-by-chapter and  
Canon-by-canon review

17-21 December: Discussion of faith (Rom 3.28)