

Popes and Politics: Reform, Resentment, and the Holocaust. Justus George Lawler. New York: Continuum, 2002.

“... presenting evidence which cumulatively proves that a surprisingly large number of recent authors on the papacy have been guilty of obfuscations and distortions which result in a disastrously flawed view of Catholicism both in itself and in its relation to contemporary tragic events...” [9]

Whether out of devotion or antagonism to the papacy, “they do little to satisfy legitimate public need for genuine insight and understanding.” [9]

Carroll, Cornwell, Wills, et al. are “methodically scapegoating an imaginary enemy.” [9]

Twofold effect of this: [9]

1. “minimizes the impact of authentic reformers from the past to purge Catholicism of its historical deadweight.” [9]
2. Inhibits (by its vehemence) dedicated reformers presently from moving the church fully and effectively into the 21st century. [10]

John Paul II, e.g., has “strenuously sought to radically improve relations outside the church.” [10]

Three parts to the book:

1. Detailed analysis of the skewed research and conclusions of various denigrators of the modern papacy.
2. Affirmation of the principle of authentic reform found in earlier Catholicism.
3. Practical proposals for institutional and personal renovation of Catholicism.

“... the variety of graced thought, word, and deed that this book extols as illustrating the spirit of Catholicity.” [12]

Re: Lawler and his primatologist son: “... proving the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree of knowledge, as we share a mutual interest in chimpanzees and archbishops.” [12]

ONE: GAINING PERSPECTIVE -- “About a Little Book”

“... one of the themes of the present book on popes and politics is the dramatic shift in defining religious policy in exercising religious authority that frequently occurred with the election of a new successor to the ‘Chair of Peter.’” [13]

“The church is by definition an institution *in* history and *with* a history.” [13]

-I-

The only social/political relevance of Lawler’s previous books:

“... save in the highly restricted sense of Cardinal Newman’s commonplace that if you make people think in secular matters you will make them think in matters of religion – and conversely: which is merely to say that all areas in the cycle of learning are interrelated.” [14]

Traits in common to the books being criticized: “a strident tone, an ease about condemning.” [15]

Re: Garry Wills: “There remains the paradox that a reformist author remains as embittered after liturgical reforms as before them – which puts into question whether *any* improvements in Catholic life and worship would ever for him be adequate.” [17]

“... it was difficult to account for an attitude toward the heart of the liturgy, the mass, that treated it with the raillery of a stand-up comedian, not with the reverence owed something sacred, however falteringly and inadequately achieved.” [17]

- **Factual errors**, seemingly intended to glorify the author as a living, incontrovertible witness – lead a reader to doubt/question much of what is said. [18]

“Perhaps, one is tempted to suggest, someone should have coined the word, ‘vericide.’” [18]

Peter Matheson on anticlerical tirades as scapegoating: “People projected on the clergy their own unresolved personal problems as well as society’s structural crises.” (Context is a study of the Reformation). [19]

- **Errors in interpretation**: “... an unrestrained prejudice manifesting itself in almost automatic rhetorical twitches, or involuntary argumentative shudders, like a kind of out-of-control compulsion beyond the reasoned guidance of its author/victim.” [19]

‘Spin’ that “... when envisaged cumulatively it could tilt the scales of a reader’s judgment toward acceptance of what in the end was unmitigated deception.” [20]

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“the overall perspective of the book is one of cautious optimism.” [21]

“... the evils embodied in the church have been less apparent as each new age dawned.” [21]

Two areas where Lawler criticizes the contemporary church:

- A. “an almost ruthless preoccupation with conformity even on open and unresolved issues;” and
- B. Centrality of governance. [22]

Re: A – Newman: “There was true private judgment in the primitive and medieval schools, -- there are no schools now, no private judgment (in the religious sense of the phrase), no freedom, that is, of opinion. That is, no exercise of intellect. No, the system goes on by the tradition of the intellect of former times.” [22]

Re: B – Manning: curial/papal centralization reduced “the Episcopal college to only the pope’s vicariate.” [22]

“Spiral emerging out of the primordial planetary mass is an exception.” [23]

“What matters is that ‘salvation history’ is defined as nothing less than the history of exceptions. The existence of a kind of self-regulating principle, a homeostatic principle, which maintains an equilibrium between center and periphery is historically evident. There is in the institutional church, in this mystical/historical body, a kind of immune/suppressive mechanism (called ‘providence’) that comes into play when the equilibrium is threatened.” [23]

“One might think of the reign of Innocent III as the beginning of the infection known as the imperial papacy, and the counter-balance to that centralizing impetus in the emergence of the mendicant orders and the universities.” [23]

“This notion of a structure of equilibrium in salvation history is what warrants in the present age a cautious optimism about the future. It cannot be stressed enough that salvation history is the chronicle of ‘exceptions.’ And as Cardinal Newman has said: ‘Heretical questionings have been transmuted by the living power of the Church into salutary truths.’” [24]

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“... a study of the interplay of periphery and center, or responses and condemnations; condemnations by Rome, but also – and possibly even more so – condemnations of both periphery and center by authentic and would-be reformers.” [24]

“As every sacramental theologian from Peter Lombard to Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message. That being so, the question remains: what is the appeal, the hold, of an institution that one lives in while assaulting and demeaning it – indeed, that one makes one’s living by such assaulting and demeaning?” [27]

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Paolo Sarpi was virtually destroyed by the intensity of his rancor toward the papacy.

Two: SKEWING CATHOLIC SCHOLARSHIP -- The New Papaphobia

-I-

Since the Enlightenment, the papacy has generally been viewed as politically insignificant. So, why so many books on the papacy as a political force in the last forty years?

Both denigrators and consecrators of the papacy are ideologues. [37-38]

Marchione and McInerney are both dispensed with quickly as authors of non-scholarly, apologetic works. [38]

E.g., John F. Morley (*Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews*) wrote what is generally regarded as one of the finest, most balanced historical studies of Pius XII and World War II. Yet, Marchione and McInerney dismiss it as being biased against Pius, yet do so without argument. [38]

McInerney also moves in a non sequitur discussion of “‘the culture of death’ – now reified as a sociological category.” [40]

“... the startling phenomenon of slanted and bogus scholarship where one might least expect it; ... among the acknowledged professional exponents of candor, honesty, and rectitude.” [41]

“Unfortunately what is lost sight of by ideologues of both categories is the reduction of the greatest crime in history to the status of a mere tactical play in an intramural ecclesiastic wrangle over the office and function of the papacy.” [41]

-II-

In the 19th century, Coleridge resuscitated the term ‘papaphobia.’” [42]

Susan Zuccotti (*Under His Very Windows*) engages in factual and interpretive errors in her analyses of three encyclicals. [42-43]

In a book written ten years earlier, Zuccotti had concluded in a study of France that virtually no one knew the extent of the Holocaust prior to the end of the war. [49-53]

Yet in her second book, she presumes such knowledge on the part of the Vatican – without so much as acknowledging a change of position, much less explaining it. [53]

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Michael Phayer – *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*.

Phayer makes much of von Galen’s criticism of the Allied occupying forces and the Nuremburg trials. [61]

Lawler: “Von Galen was one of the few genuine and consistent opposition heroes of the Hitler period – albeit a man of conservative and patriotic bent.” [61]

Contra Phayer: “Pius spoke out against the destruction of civilian centers from the very beginning of hostilities.” [Several citations are given.] He condemned both German and Allied attacks. [62]

Lawler notes that “in 1943 alone the allies dropped 200,000 tons of bombs in Germany, whereas the Luftwaffe dropped 2,000 tons on England. So, once again the professional historians – to put it mildly – have distorted facts to support personal prejudices.” [62]

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Lawler initially gave Zuccotti and Phayer the benefit of the doubt, that they merely got caught up in the exhilaration of marshalling evidence toward the discovery of guilt – but finally concluded that there is no exoneration for their perpetuation of scholarly errors. [63]

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Zuccotti and Phayer failed because their goal has been to satisfy an *a priori* assumption, i.e., the dereliction of the Holy See. [66]

Henry Feingold notes a similar phenomenon in judgments of American Jewish leaders. Given the enormity of the Holocaust, known to the writer, “rescue becomes the indisputable expectation and the six million victims reinforce an intuitive ethical inclination to evaluate the results of the American Jewish leaders’ actions as a function of the sufferers’ needs and not of the bystander’s means.” [67]

Paradigm shift in historical studies from understanding to judgment. [68ff]

THREE: SQUINTING AT HISTORY -- The Rhetoric of Stigmatization

Focus is not on Wills' factual errors, "but on Wills' self-imposed blinders which lead to a historically distorted vision of Catholicism." [72]

"Nor, thankfully, has Wills exposed any conspiracies on the part of the Knights Templar – the sure sign, according to Umberto Eco, of an ideological fanatic." [74]

Lawler seeks "to illustrate Wills' own 'historical distortions' which take the form of obfuscations and dissimulations that run through his book, and which ultimately belie his seemingly scholarly perspective." [74]

-I-

Wills cites Charlotte Klein citing a Karl Rahner statement that appears to be anti-Semitic. But Lawler provides substantial context, which Wills as scholar should have understood. [75-77]

"it is difficult to explain Wills ignoring such a tessellation unless, consumed by the zeal of his papaphobist crusade, he now perchance subscribes to the tenets of that obscure Anabaptist sect – in fact known as the Abecedarians – which preached salvation through the rejection of reading." [77]

Lawler accuses Wills of "fudging" and speaks of his "confectionary scholarship" – "in the context of which I would personally recommend as prophylaxis against fudging, Margaret Rey's *Curious George Goes to a Chocolate Factory*." [78-79]

To explain Wills' defamation of Rahner (and Pierre Benoit) – "two of the noblest spirits in the history of contemporary scholarship) (in Rahner's case, "the most creative and respected Catholic theologian of at least the last four centuries") – Lawler posits "the anti-papal blinders and the hubristic overreaching that result in trying to prove a case by any and every means at hand." [79]

Re: Wills' minimizing the importance of *We Remember*: "... for Wills, even if the lying papacy should perchance appear to do what he vociferously professes to favor, then it would do so either too begrudgingly, or too inadequately, or too tardily..." [81]

"... the catch-as-catch-can redactor of *l'Improvvisatore Romano*." [81]

-II-

Wills' underlying concern seems to be with ethical issues relating to individual morality: "Stripped of the inflammatory language, a good part of Wills' agenda is simply to bring Catholic teaching more in line with Catholic practice, and Catholic practice more in line with the mainstream consensus of American society. In short, to bring 'official' teaching about personal morality in line with what might now be called 'moral commonsense,' and what in the past was called 'natural law.' [85]

"But on this issue of the very survival of the planet, it cannot be denied that these much maligned pontiffs have been the most unambiguous of all world leaders." [88]

Re: Wills' dependence on Rene Girard – "Wills might examine the implications of another vulpine deluder, Duns Scotus, who taught that the election of angels, or Adam and Eve, and *a fortiori*, of Mary was dependent on the merits of Christ but not on the suffering of Calvary." [90]

"The Anselmian doctrine ought not to be read as though Calvary represented Adam's surrogate, Jesus, satisfying the Father's demand for punishment. The crucifixion was certainly not something willed by God. It was the freely chosen act of evil men. The suffering, death, burial, and 'descent into Hell' of the Creed represented Christ's total humanness, and his solidarity with all of humanity throughout *all* of history." [90]

"As always with Wills, the reader is in danger of ignoring faulty argumentation simply to support noble goals." [92]

"... diversion by a whole school of red herring." [92]

Wills on Marian doctrine. [93-96]

Re: abortion – "For some Roman Catholics led by vociferous clerics of a fundamentalist orientation (who in an earlier era invoked 'mortal' sin for a host of trivial offenses, and spoke of 'the culture of contraception'), it has become what can only be called an ecclesiological issue." [97]

"Opposition to abortion is now the external *sphragis*, the seal stamping one as truly Catholic." [97]

"Then because such opposition is based on a communal taboo, it assumes a kind of sacramental power that functions entirely apart from its origins in maternal and fetal relations. And by the same totemic symbolism, it takes on a sacred character binding together the chosen which – again parodying the sacrament – liberates them from the *law* and its constraints. Only such an explanation clarifies the obsessive equation of the Holocaust with abortion, and the clerical denunciation of the latter in the most unexpected, indeed most incongruous situations – for one example, the feast of the nativity of Jesus. There is in ascending order a collective righteousness, a sacral purism, a Catholic tribalism abroad in the church, and it predictably can lead only to further exclusivism climaxing in doomsday fanaticism." [97]

"If there is anything predictable about this tinsel triumphalism it is that, unless checked, it will reduce the Church Catholic to the status of a fundamentalist cult, with an inevitable reduction of influence in the real world, and a greater and greater incapacity to read the signs of the times." [98]

"That great admirer of Newman, Muriel Spark, is alleged to have said that if you're going to join a religion, you might as well join the real one. That realness is becoming less evident to those looking over the barricades being erected by the new purists who, as Newman himself said, 'move in a groove, and will not tolerate anyone who does not move in the same.'" [98]

"... a fertilized egg is not a human person." [98]

Catholic tradition has posited "some temporal gap" before the infusion of the fully human soul into the developing fetus. [98]

"This was the relatively unambiguous tradition" at least until the 1917 Code of Canon Law. [99]

“... from roughly the thirteenth to the second decade of the twentieth century, penitential practice was based on the tradition of what was varyingly called the ‘ensoulment,’ ‘animation,’ ‘quickening’ of the fetus *as subsequent* to embryonic life.” [99]

“A candidate for the priesthood who concurred in an abortion could still be ordained if his involvement took place before ‘ensoulment.’” [99]

“For this to be abandoned now under the influence of a congeries of indirectly related issues – all under the blanket, ‘sacredness of life’ – is to abandon a basic hermeneutical principle, ‘interpretation in the tradition,’ for a loosely invoked and vaguely defined slogan. It is also to contradict the larger theological principle, which Newman defined in *Anglican Difficulties*, when writing of the Holy Spirit’s guardianship of the church: ‘He lodged the security of His truth in the very fact of its Catholicity.’ If there is one thing that can be said of various interpretations of the ‘Culture of Death,’ it is that they utterly lack Catholicity, whether in the tradition of the past, or in the body of the faithful in the present.” [99-100]

FOUR: THE POPE AND THE SHOAH -- Proclamation v. Reprisal

“... no issue has so riven the sensibilities of people of every and of no religion.” [104]

Pius XII as “an enigmatic figure who seems by any balanced judgment to have embodied and suffered the tension of *mystique* and *politique*, a tension that von Hügel would have viewed as the ‘functional’ factor intrinsic to the very nature of religion as a this-world/other-world phenomenon.” [105]

-I-

Since Hochhuth’s *The Deputy*, what is examined in Pius XII is not what he *did* or did not do, but what he *said* or did not say. Sought is a proclamation, a word. [105]

Lawler perceives a protestant focus here.

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Pius’ 1942 Christmas address.

“... the proven fatuity of mere ‘speaking out,’ when action was called for.” [116]

“So if there is a fault it may have been less with the pope than with the German bishops, and more particularly with Cardinal Adolf Bertram, president of the conference who had a history of anti-Semitism as well as of disagreement with the outspoken von Preysing.” [118]

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“Moreover, through all the messages delivered after the outbreak of hostilities was the refrain condemning weapons of mass destruction (a clarion taken up by Vatican II and by Paul VI at his address to the United Nations) along with the repeated denunciation of violators of the principle of noncombatant immunity.” [121]

Post-war estimates were that one-fifth of all German dwellings had been destroyed, and 7.5 million rendered homeless. [121]

If Pius XII's statements had no impact on Allied military leaders, why should we think they would have influenced the Nazis? [122]

Direct denunciation by Pius was feared to be likely to provoke even intensified violence on Hitler's part. [123]

To the question – 'what else would Hitler been provoked to do?' – Lawler offers several possibilities. [123]

Virtually no attention is today paid to Hochhuth's other play, *Der Soldaten*: "the subtitle to the play is loosely translated, 'Death Notice on the Geneva Conventions.' The central plot relates to opposition to the aerial destruction of civilian centers by Bishop Bell of Chichester – also an outspoken advocate of nuclear disarmament in the post-war period. [125]

Dresden had been a city "well known to the Allies as a refuge for the aged and infirm, for children and women, and absolutely no strategic significance." [125]

Re: Pius: "If his invocation of the traditional doctrine of noncombatant immunity from the very beginning and throughout the war was utterly ignored, even by the party of justice, it is surely uncertain that there would have been any different response to his condemnation of the initially almost inconceivable and historically unprecedented evil of the death camps." [126]

As *prophet*, it can be argued that Pius should have proclaimed the truth more vigorously and publicly. But he also had responsibilities as *priest* and *servant*: "... precisely as priest and servant, one of those missions was not *proclamation* but certainly *action*, no matter how silently carried out – indeed, to avoid retribution, intentionally carried out *silently*." [127]

Kenneth Woodward: "... the Pope became the first figure of international stature to condemn what was turning into the holocaust." [127]

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Re: John Paul II's beatification of Pio Nono: "However, if indeed Paris was worth a mass, then who would question that the politic beatification of the sad figure of poor obsidian Pius – a bone for rightists to gnaw on – was worth getting down to the more serious business of, say, empaneling historians to investigate the inquisition, or cementing relations with Israel, or opening the door to church reunion, or denouncing the evils of capital punishment, even in the very capital of that mode of punishment, the United States – and all this at the cost of aggravating the pope's physically infirm condition." [134]

Parallel with recent historical scholarship on Lincoln's acquiescence in anti-black atrocities after the Emancipation Proclamation. Disregarding this, Wills wrote an utterly positive *Lincoln at Gettysburg*. [134-136]

John Paul II convened a commission to study the Holocaust. Is there any such openness on the part of American historians to study Lincoln? [136-137]

For Wills, Carroll, et al.: "... the papal icon can be gleefully smashed while the political icon is to be carefully burnished." [137]

For such Catholics: "... many evils of modern life, both communal and individual, are less the fault of the national ethos and heritage than of historic Catholicism and the papacy; lastly, in both the practical and the speculative order, patriotism trumps piety (precisely one of the fears alleged by a few of the defenders of Pius XII's 'silence') as Catholics settle comfortably into the 'non-lasting city' rather than seek 'the one which is to come.'" [138]

"... it should be noted that Pius XII's relation to the actual Holocaust during the war years – even if given the worst possible interpretation – is provably slight. This stands in sharp contrast to the glorification of Lincoln whose relation to the slave holocaust is provably causal during the last of the war years and before passage of the thirteenth amendment." [138]

FIVE: CONTEXTUALIZING PAPAL SINS -- A Cautionary Tract on Reform

"... arbitrary certitude... the methodology of mendacity" – "... how the forces of renewal and reaction have played off one another in the past and in our own time." [139]

-I-

Wills' polemic style can be characterized as "crotchety," recalling Hermes' definition of *odium theologicum*: "that degree of rancor which is most furious and most implacable." [140]

Papal Sin as a how-not-to-do-it book. [140]

"... in moving from papal sin to structures of deceit, we have also moved from the very concrete person of the pope to the very abstract notion of the church." [141]

"The danger in the use of such hypostatized abstractions is that they lead to the victory of historicism over history." [141]

"... when this leads to the attribution of interiority and self-direction to abstractions or artificial constructs, one is more likely to be chronicling the fictional than the factual." [141]

John Ireland: "Let there be individual action. Laymen need not wait for priest, not priest for bishop, nor bishop for pope. The timid more in crowds, the brave in single file." [142]

"... a sociological categorization that blurs the nature of perennially recurring vices and of attendant individual responsibility." [143]

"... the spectacle of vision through such a narrow lens may also reflect its source in a narrow mind." [144]

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Lawler focuses on "Wills' slant on the politics of authoritarian ecclesiastical decisions." [145]

Wills' "voodoo history." [146]

"Nor can one be sure what is worse, their arrogance or their ignorance." [148]

"... you can lead the worse to *hauteur* but you can't make 'em think." [148]

"... his daimonic heebie-jeebies." [149]

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John C. Ford's condemnation of obliteration bombing, and in the sixties of nuclear deterrence – "this when an assortment of cold warriors were embracing the doctrine of massive retaliation, and people like Wills were so obsessed with individual morality as to appear oblivious to social morality." [151]

In 1947 and at Vatican II, "the dantesquely demonized Cardinal Ottaviani "called for the condemnation of the instruments of total warfare." [151]

"If Wills in his conservative days as a contributor and supporter of *The National Review* could explicate in print the notion that the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* was an 'exercise in triviality,' why would it be surprising that a majority of Catholics could acknowledge change in the nature of their sexual relations, and view the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* as a relatively trivial intrusion into their personal lives?" [152]

"Herein lies a quandary that has perplexed, or rather bedeviled, political moralists from at least Aristotle to Burke to Niebuhr: the tendency of every social organization, every institution, every consortium to enlist its membership in the pursuit of controversial goals, however alien to the individual member's personal inclination." [152]

"... a voluntary subordination of the individual to the spirit de corps, a subordination of personal view to the supportive, collective, and cohesive ideology." [152-153]

While *Humanae Vitae* occasioned consternation and theological debate in other nations, "it never was the test of obedience to Catholicism that it became over the next decade in the United States – only to be supplanted by the abortion issue in the latter part of the century." [153-154]

Due partly to "the gradual enervation of the American episcopate... in the aftermath of the Americanist crisis with its attendant shift from public and social to personal and individual morality." [152]

Compare Gibbons on unions, Riordan on strikes, Ireland on racism, Spalding on the Spanish-American War – with "what seems the dominant concern of the present hierarchy, sexual ethics regardless of how broadly defined." [152]

Also due to "the significance of devotion to the papacy with concomitantly the exaltation of the magisterium in a society shaped by the cumulative experience of successive waves of immigration who found in such devotion the mark and seal that distinguished them in the face of a militantly antagonistic Protestant culture." [154-155]

Note 6 on Cardinal Spellman's Americanist militarism. [155]

Many of JFK's policies were highly questionable in terms of Catholic moral teaching: "All that was of little moment to Catholics growing accustomed to ignore social evils and to concentrate mainly on the personal." [155]

"... when discussing *Humanae Vitae* the tone reaches an almost hysterical pitch." [156]

Newman at Vatican I re: supporters of the *Syllabus of Errors*: “They have not come into contact with the intellectual mind of the time.” [156]

“... all thinking Catholics past their nonage know that popes, bishops, and even pontifical commissions are prone to errors and misjudgments – all of which in the rational order of things are subject to correction by individual conscience.” [157]

John Noonan demonstrated the substantial development from Augustine’s rejection of the use of the sterile period to avoid contraception to Pius XII’s sanction of such use. “The substantial split between sexual intercourse and procreation, already achieved by the rejection of Augustinian theory, was confirmed in practice.” [157]

“What was not further developed *doctrinally* by Paul VI’s encyclical was developed *practically* by the laity.” [157]

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“After all, as Cardinal Newman affirmed, councils come and go, and what one pope has done another can undo – and frequently does.” [157]

The life of Pius II: “In sum, a life of remarkable reversals that illustrate historically and personally the principle of homeostatic equilibrium.” [158]

“Is this not what is meant by living in history?” [158]

“As to remedies for those struggling through any attendant painful period, perhaps a touch of realism would be mitigative.” [158]

Msgr. Duchesne: “lamentable spectacle of an episcopate composed of imbeciles... a mitred sacristan.” Newman, of three zealous partisans of infallibility: “the three tailors of Tooley Street.” [158]

“Curial pragmatism” ... “exemplified by Archbishop Robert Seton, for a while America’s most decorative prelate in Rome: ‘theologians make difficulties and canonists get around them.’” [158]

Von Hügel: “Never ask for an *imprimatur*, it is the first step to the *Index*.” [158]

Newman: In the Church ‘militant,’ the ‘commander’ will be despotic (as commander of any army) – “and therefore *in its idea* the Pope’s jurisdiction can hardly be limited” – but in execution it will invariably be limited “by the pressure of what Karl Rahner called ‘free speech in the church.’” [159]

“... the kind of conscientious resistance which translates into a *consensus fidelium* – as when the great mass of faithful Catholics simply ignored Vatican views on contraception.” [159]

Newman: “this is a way of things which, in God’s own time, will work its own cure, of necessity.” [159]

Lawler: “So to a sense of history, we must add a sense of providence, a sense that ‘truth defends itself, a falsehood refutes itself,’ as Newman concluded.” [159]

“... the reign of John Paul II is a benign despotism with occasional but significant glimmers of enlightenment.” [159]

John Paul II's "rehabilitation of past Catholic thinkers like Rosmini and Newman as well as the more recent victims of the hoopla over *NouvelleTheologie* – the latter being the prelude to Vatican II and the final flare of the Modernist comet." [159-160]

As Newman "once ironically observed about religious debate that one's own doxy is orthodoxy, one's opponent's is heterodoxy." [160]

Re: Wills' account of the Syllabus and papal infallibility: "So many curial villains, so many papal sins, so much toadyism by papal lackeys, so many Vatican conspirators crowd the stage that one loses sight of the actual events in the salvos of derogatory expletives and epithets that Wills fires." [160]

Matthew Scheeben (in 1873) affirmed much of what Newman wrote in "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine": "It follows that the public profession of doctrine by the body of the faithful, being a witnessing of the Holy Spirit relatively independent, ought logically and briefly to precede the precise declaration of the teaching body, and in such conscientious influence, as a means of orientation, its future judgment." [161]

In 1965, Continuum published a declaration regarding bombing policy in Vietnam signed by 18 bishops, and a background article entitled "On Consulting the Episcopate in Matters of Practice"! [161]

Newman had published his article in the Rambler, of which he had assumed editorship. Rome subsequently criticized Newman, who handed the editorship to Lord Acton, who was also subsequently the object of Roman attack and the journal folded. [161]

Newman: "Now Rome classifies out duties and their reward, the things to believe, the things to do, the modes of pleasing God, the penalties and remedies of sin, with such exactness that an individual knows (so to speak) just where he is upon his journey heavenward, how far he has got, how much he has to pass, and his duties become a matter of calculation." [162-163]

Lawler: "The *Syllabus* was "a transitory epiphenomenon of no lasting historical significance." [163]

"... de Lamennais was not only a theological innovator but a social reformer whose pleas went unheard in Rome for six decades, until the successor of Pius – the innominable Leo XIII – addressed issues relating to the working poor." [164]

-V-

Pastor Aeternus "would render almost impossible" reunion with Orthodox, Anglicans, and Lutherans. [166]

Since one of the three negative votes on *Pastor Aeternus* was cast by a bishop from Arkansas, headlines noted that "Little Rock had opposed Big Rock." [166]

"... three post-conciliar transforming reversals of view:

1. Pius X refused to condemn *Action Française*; Pius XI condemned it; Pius XII lifted the condemnation in a placatory gesture to Franco (which Maritain opposed) – "verification of Newman's 'do/undo' dictum." [169]

2. Cardinal Manning led the support for *Pastor Aeternus*, but ,after the council , criticized its effects of reducing the significance of the Episcopal college.
3. Cardinal Pecci had been the initial impetus for the *Syllabus*, but “his views were radically revised when as Leo XIII he... made peace with the Enlightenment and with post-revolutionary France, and wrote an encyclical on social reform whose very title would have made Pius IX shudder: ‘Concerning the New Things.’” [169]

“Leo’s papacy was called an ‘interregnum’ by Baron von Hügel not as a pejorative but rather as descriptive of a period of sanity, a reprieve between the ruthless infallibilist ambitions of Pius IX and the equally ruthless anti-Modernist crusade of Pius X. [170]

Leo had refused to excommunicate Loisy; Pius X did so. [170]

“Leo XIII succeeding Pius IX, like John XXIII succeeding Pius XII, illustrates the fact that there are no unalterable structures of deceit or of candor, though the latter as history shows ultimately triumphs.” [170]

Newman, on some aspects of Marian piety: “not acceptable to every part of the Catholic world.” [171]

Newman, on the prospects of a Catholic magazine: “nothing would be better than a historical review, but who would bear it: Unless one doctored all one’s facts one would be thought a bad Catholic.” [172]

-VI-

Invocation of structural sin/deceit “removes the church from its historic reality as a temporal institution undeniably progressing, by fits and starts like any other institution, over two millennia of growth.” [173]

“... the seed of self-consciousness, the seed of an awareness of the uniqueness of the individual ego and its transcendent value – which by empathetic acculturation (or spiritual contagion) led to the acknowledgment of that transcendent value in one’s fellow human beings. At that point personal virtue and personal sin, personal self-determination and personal culpability are present in any given society. In medieval and modern Europe one would certainly say this meant that burnings at the stake, torture or persecution for religious, racial, or cultural reasons were sins for those persons who supported, colluded in, or enforced such acts.

“So, too, for modern America. When the founders accepted the notion of self-evident truths about human rights, they did not mean truths that were ‘obvious’ of ‘unarguable’; they meant truths that came to conscious awareness when one considered the nature of one’s own self, or its aspirations and destiny. The tragedy which still besets American society is that the founders didn’t look, or didn’t let themselves look, deeply enough to recognize those aspirations and that destiny in chattel slaves. Thus political expediency, resulting in the perpetuation of evil, trumped human experience. In moral terms, one would have to say that those founding fathers were guilty of a sin that can not be mitigated by subsequently viewing the peculiar institution – another distancing bit of sociological jargon – of slavery as a mere ‘structural’ affliction of the American body politic.” [176]

"If there are any enduring social structures, their names are sin and virtue – as banal as that." [178]

"... taking a stand against that erosion of social morality which is the real ethical blight on the contemporary state, not the erosion of personal morality, much less the erosion of what are mistakenly – and for political purposes – called 'family values.'" [184]

"*But whatever* is the result of sin and deceit depends on the individual agent, subject to the only structure history knows – original sin and the grace to transcend it – and not subject to some autonomous mythic entity independent of that agent and his relation to that sin." [187]

"What one can imagine is a pilgrim church composed of people *in via*, people by definition seeking a goal not yet attained. A people of God faithfully, but falteringly, going toward their promised land." [187]

Newman: "She advances, retires, goes to and fro, passes to the right or left, bides her time, by a spontaneous, and not a deliberate action. It is the divinely-intended method of her coping with the world's power." [187]

SIX: BEYOND THE POLITICS OF RANCOR I – The Varieties of Personal Renovation

"The historical upshot is simply that the ultramontanists of the nineteenth century begot in the twentieth, the new-Montanists, who in turn have spawned querulous twins – like Girardian rivals. On the right the sanctimonious 'First Things,' e.g., McInerney and Neuhaus, and on the left, the vehement 'last enders,' e.g., Wills and Carroll: both extremes vehemently impatient with the center." [189]

"... a church of patent griseldas is preferable to a Potemkin church of papaloters (made up of anathematizing orthodox radicals) or a kronos church of papaphobists (made up of sappers cannibalizing the ranks in the name of 'honesty')." [189]

Lonergan on "a perhaps not numerous center..." [190]

-I-

"For if a doctrine of collegiality, such as that which Vatican II adumbrated, had been proclaimed in 1870 there would have been no 'defection' by Döllinger. If the principle of freedom of conscience proclaimed at the Council had been tolerated by churchmen in the early nineteenth century, there would have been no tragedy of de Lamennais." [191]

De Lamennais's vision was "too tied to his own historical era and circumstances." [192]

"There is more to the renovation of European and North American society than any mere ecclesiastical system can proffer, and more to the degradation of that society than can be laid at the door of the churches." [193]

Re: Newman – "... the conviction that once had borne his witness as vigorously as possible it was not for him to force circumstances, to attempt to bend the times to his own will..." [194]

"... having had my say, time will decide for me, without my trouble, how far it was true, and how far not true." [194]

Re: the cardinalate – “... there remains a place for an institution that honors the highest order of Catholic temporal achievement – particularly if that institution were open to lay persons (as it once was) as well as clerics of both genders (as it will no doubt be in the future).” [194]

It is also a way of “repairing bruised reputations” (de Lubac, Congar, von Balthasar, Dulles) – and “an effective means for submerging eminence abused.” [195]

“... creative tension between ecclesiastical authority and its critics and occasional victims.” [196]

Congar’s dual fidelity: (1) to the present; and (2) to the future. [196]

And von Hügel’s notion of “friction” between these that tends toward resolution. [196]

-II-

These words of de Lamennais are the direct antecedent of *Gaudium et Spes* and liberation theology: “Our cause is that of Catholicism, that of the Church, inseparable in itself from the cause of society. To defend the Church and work to revivify its antiquated character, for too long a time enervated, is therefore to defend society and work for the salvation of people who everywhere today are so suffering... It is therefore the Church that is necessary to scrutinize first, it is for its evils that it is necessary to strive to find a remedy for there are no evils that do not derive from hers.” [198]

The Church: “... a community so full and so polyvalent that any right-minded person can find ‘places’ in it that are comforting and comfortable.” [200]

-III-

The profound spirituality of these Catholic critics seems, to Lamennais, to set them apart from non-Catholic counterparts. [207]

“... the astonishing depths (particularly among the Modernists, their predecessors, and their heirs) of what can simply be defined – and one wants to be very plain here – as a living core of interiority, a core one discerns in the writings of such speculative thinkers and spiritual masters as Blondel, von Hügel, and Newman.” [209]

-IV-

Aquinas associating the gift of knowledge with the Beatitude ‘Blessed are they that weep’ – “... this gift empowers one to see more deeply the traces of being in the universe and awakens, unreflectively and unintendedly, a longing for wholeness through union with the ultimate.” [210]

“... avoiding the over-intellectualizing of all aspects of personal existence.” [212]

“... to emphasize how their spiritual life was sustained and fostered not by other insular theoreticians, but by people whose roots were steeped in the universal heritage and life of the ecclesia.” [213]

“... that prayer life and the reforms it engenders, will achieve most for humankind when they stem not from an abstract idea of the church, but from a notion of the church as mere object of historical research, but as Congar says from ‘the concrete reality and given situation of the church in the here and now.’” [213]

Seven: beyond the politics of rancor ii – The Vagaries of Institutional Renovation

Rosmini's five wounds of the church "may be translated into today's terms as clericalism, ignorance, Episcopal rivalry, secularism, and wealth." [215]

Lawler perceives theological ignorance as the gravest wound of our day. [215]

-I-

"In a period of intense centralization in the church, and of friction between that centralizing impulse and the American theological community, it is still possible to take Newman's long view..." [217]

Newman: "... authoritative pronouncements may tease and irritate, but they have no bearing whatever upon the exercise of reason." [218]

Newman: "It is individuals, and not the Holy See, that have taken the initiative, and given the lead to the Catholic mind in theological inquiries." [218]

This will most readily occur if the theologian is free to express his ideas, open to criticism, and reasonably responds to it. [218]

But, argues Newman, "He would not dare do this, if he knew an authority, which was supreme and final, was watching every word he said." [218]

Newman also argues that the independence of widely varying national episcopates is a protection against narrowness in the church. [219]

Newman's "final swipe at the curialists" in the *Apologia*: "... I trust that all European races will ever have a place in the Church, and assuredly I think that the loss of the English not to say the German element, in its composition has been a most serious misfortune.'" [220]

"... a defense of the freedom of scholars from the needless constraints of authority..." [220]

"The issue for 'civilization' in Catholic America today is whether the bishops will assert their own native heritage of independence, and thereby make a contribution to the church Catholic." [220]

John Ireland: "The supernatural rests on the natural, which it purifies and ennobles, adding to it supernatural gifts of grace and glory. Where the natural is most carefully cultivated, there will be found the best results from the union of nature and grace. It is a time of novelties and the religious action, to accord with the age, must take new forms and new directions." [221]

"Americanism was merely a local variant of Modernism." [221]

"... the theologically best trained American prelates at Vatican I were on the side of the 'inopportunists,' the opponents of the decree on infallibility." [221]

"The issue before the current episcopate is whether it will be true not only to its office as teacher but as successor to those bishops who up until the 1970s asserted their rightful place in the Episcopal college as Americans and Catholics." [221]

"The present episcopate has inherited a noble tradition that, under the pressure of increased conformity and centralization, now is in danger of being abandoned." [221-222]

The mandatum and “*esprit de guillotine theologique*.” [222]

-II-

As for ‘structural deceit’ – structures are by definition social fabrications “and as such subject to construction, reconstruction, deconstruction, etc. – depending of course on one’s choice of prepositions, suppositions, compositions, or just plain, positions.” [224]

“But the pursuit of sinners not only goes against Catholic training, it is the path of sterility.” [224]

As for Vatican politicking (e.g., withholding marriage annulments to pressure bishops to support infallibility at Vatican I): “... the Roman authorities employed methods akin to those of a successful political machine. We live in time, and through temporal instruments, salvation comes. What else would redeeming the time mean?” [224]

Reformers must take into account the human element in their targets. [225]

‘Fortiter in res; suaviter in modo’ is both a dictate of common sense and a sign of authentic reform. [225]

Vehement attacks that are “condescending, strident, or hectoring” ...will result in reinforcement of the original decisions, as well as further proliferation by ‘public relations’ hacks of those ludicrous rants about ‘contraception and the culture of death’ already emanating from epigonal curialists.” [226]

On matters of personal morality, ‘dissent’ is registered by ‘voting with one’s feet.’ “At some point... the message will get across to the episcopate which will then convey it to the ‘legislators’ at the center who often have no idea of what is going on at the periphery. All of this is a twenty-first century response to an age-old problem of redressing imbalances.” [226]

Apostolic succession: “a continuum residing in the people of God and exercised among them by their chosen leaders in union with their chief bishop.” [227]

“It should go without saying that we shall have institutions as long as we live in society, that is, in habitats of order, organization, distinctions of roles, and separation of functions. The present advocacy of blurring everything into one indistinguishable ungranulated mass, however flattering to the ambitious or the rootless, can only be regarded as signifying how transitional a stage we are in. Whether we call bishops or popes chief clerks, presiding officers, or chairpersons of the board, and whether we determine them by selection of a delegated few, by election of the many, or by acclamation – all that matters little. What matters is fidelity among those who inhabit this penumbral world – this lengthened shadow – to the Spirit who was sent to preserve it.” [228-229]

-III-

Lawler posits that “one has to look to the major situational reform envisioned by the opposition party at Vatican I” (and recognized at Vatican II): “unfinished elaboration of the theology” of the episcopate. [229]

Newman looked forward to the day when “redtapism will go out of Rome, and a better spirit come in.” [229]

"If the problem is with the Roman curia, the answer can only come from the universal episcopate." [230]

During World War II, tragically, "some national hierarchies passively waited for word from Rome before acting." [230]

"... one is compelled to repeat the truism that over the long run there is more wisdom in the collective judgment of many prudent persons than in the individual judgment of only one." [232]

The bishop of Rome is not "some utterly detached and objective observer without any national, racial, or personal prejudices." He is "a being in history." Though the papacy may have a "wider range of sentiment and information available to it." [232]

A widely used commentary on canon law (Abbo & Hannan) holds that a bishop should be more skillful in canon law than theology. General acceptance of this position "is a result of that denigration of the episcopate which Newman and Manning decried." [233]

"The bishop becomes in that misconception not a teacher in his own right, but merely the representative of the pope." [233]

"... it has been this notion of the bishop as an interpreter of the law rather than as a teacher of doctrine which accounts for the not infrequent silence of some bishops on pressing social and ethical issues." [233]

"... if he is regarded as an interpreter of the law, his proper domain is jurisprudence, not testimony to truth." [233]

"Certainly the end of the cold war, while obscuring the great powers' continued reliance on a massive nuclear deterrent, has not done away with the central moral crux of that military posture: the effective nullification of the principle of noncombatant immunity, of which few bishops, except the bishop of Rome, Pius XII, spoke as often and as passionately." [234]

Yet in this period of adoption of international strategy of 'mutually assured destruction,' "it was the shadow of *Humanae Vitae* – a document that confronted only individuals – that persisted in hovering over the Catholic laity like an incurable case of Jansenist mumps." [234]

"... the scandalous treatment by John Paul II of that noble figure, Archbishop Hunthausen – while his brother bishops, excepting only Weakland and Bernardin, stood by as models of *neutrality*." [235]

In 1950, the Archbishop of Quebec, because of "his heroic support of striking asbestos workers," was forced by Rome to resign – due to pressure exerted by the Premier of Quebec. [235]

A Dominican who wrote a play about this was censured by his superiors. [235]

The episcopate binds the papacy and the laity together. [236]

"... papal prestige is a datum of current history. It is an incontestable phenomenon of the beginning of the twenty-first century, and as such must be viewed in the light of salvation history as significant for the church in the modern world." [237]

-IV-

“... two paradoxes...: first, natural law morality is commonsense morality; second, commonsense morality guides personal individual moral action far more effectively, wisely, and prudently than does ‘official’ Christian morality.” [238]

“... is it not strange that for most Catholic ethicists individual and personal morality should trump socio-political morality, particularly when it is precisely personal morality that has proved most intractable to official ethical ‘guidance’? [238]

Merton declines to discuss contraception, noting that such matters work themselves out over time – which they have. [238]

Focus on individual morality “is what has kept the Catholic community both in a permanent state of moral tutelage, and in a condition of relative indifference to the larger ethical issues confronting a global society.” [238-239]

Catholic church as “the only truly global religious institution in history.” [239]

Yet while the church is “adamant and undeviating on issues of personal morality,” it is “entirely open to historical and geographical influences – those would be denounced as ‘relativistic’ in sexual matters – on issues of social morality.” [239]

Yet ‘social morality’ is constituted by “precisely all the fields that only a world church has the ‘prestige’ to address.” [239]

Blondel: “... it is by the present that we must return to the past; it is by the last link of the divine chain that we are able to grasp the whole.” [240]

“It can take the lead as only a world organization can in vigorously and wholeheartedly fighting for real disarmament of nuclear weapons, fostering environmental protection, defending human rights, helping the helpless and the homeless; in short, for exercising its duet, and yet, ‘flexing’ its muscle, as only a worldwide power can.” [240]

“But the absolutely fundamental environmental issue now almost lost sight of in the aftermath of the cold war remains the astronomical number of nuclear weapons still in place.” [240]

“America alone could reduce its numbers from six thousand to six hundred and still be far outside any justifiable moral limit.” [240]

“Nuclear ‘disarmament’ is one of the forces of the twenty-first century. And only one figure of international stature, John Paul II, seems to recognize that fact.” [241]

“In short, the record is utterly deplorable when this church – now in the twenty-first century – lets its secondary mission regarding personal morality encroach on its primary mission regarding social morality.” [241]

“We need a new global ecclesiology for a new global church, a church that welcomes the struggle against the real forces of darkness: greed that throughout the developing world makes for petty tyrants supporting death squads, and ignorance that makes for overpopulation and disease.” [241]

-V-

"The coinage, 'culture of death,' is truly a dysphemistic masterstroke; it makes the diabolic fetishizing of condoms almost something the gates of heaven could not prevail against." [242]

Casual acceptance of 'welfare reform' is another masterstroke. "At the height of the 'reformatory' crisis when the already helpless and homeless were being shed of their remnants, the newly appointed archbishop of a major see announced the official appointment of an exorcist. Thus the possessed trump the dispossessed." [242]

"... the bishops abdicate their apostolic responsibility and display all the sign of group hysteria in denouncing this or that gender or sexually rooted individual practice." [243]

"Hope resides in papacy, episcopate, people of God together, focusing not on individual behavior – which grace and what used to be called 'synderesis' can take care of – but engaged in what Teilhard described as 'constructing the earth.'" [243]

Re: Congar – "It is no small thing to be a teacher of popes." [245]