

**REFUTATION OF THE TFP
TO A FRUSTRATED ONSLAUGHT**

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Note: Since the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), in whose de-fense this three-volume work titled *Refutation to a Frustrated Onslaught* was first published in 1984, continues to be divided into factions and counter-factions, A.S. Guimarães made the decision to post the first volume of this work online with the aim of defending the good names of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and Dona Lucilia Ribeiro dos Santos Corrêa de Oliveira. Indeed, the same old slanders that are rebutted in this work continue to be widely spread online in English-speaking countries by circles linked to the Society of St. Pius X.

To silence these defamations, Guimarães resolved to make public his refutation, which constitutes the preponderant part of Volume I. He hopes that the two other authors – Mr. Gustavo Antônio Solimeo and Mr. Antônio Borelli Machado – who collaborated in the first volume of this work will agree with his decision and permit their contributions to be online, thus allowing the public to know the truth about Prof. Plinio, his venerable Mother, Dona Lucilia, and what was the then-glorious TFP.

REFUTATION OF THE TFP TO A FRUSTRATED ONSLAUGHT

Part 1: Three Letters

Refutation by Atila Sinke Guimarães

Theological Opinion by
Fr. Victorino Rodriguez, O.P.
Professor of Theology and
Prior of the Convent of Santo Domingo el Real (Madrid)

Translated into English by
Marian T. Horvat, Ph.D.

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GUSTAVO ANTONIO SOLIMEO

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BY ANTONIO AUGUSTO BORELLI MACHADO

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OPINION

I have attentively reviewed the work referred to by Notary Act number one thousand four hundred and three from the Notary Office of Mr. Guillermo Barquin Sequin of this Capital, drawn up on the 22nd day of May of the present year and entitled *Investida frustrada contra a TFP (Frustrated onslaught against the TFP)* written by a Study Commission of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) composed by Mr. Antônio Augusto Borelli Machado, Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, Mr. Gustavo Antônio Solimeo and Mr. João Clá, in response to three letters from Mr. Orlando Fedeli to Mr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, in which he aspires to accuse the fore-mentioned Association of certain deviations of a religious order. The work is divided into two parts (I and II). The first part (I) contains 288 pages, and the second (II), 547 pages. All the pages of the first part (I) are signed by me and by Mr. João S. C. Dias, who represents the Brazilian TFP. Only the first two pages of the second part (II) are signed since the rest are citations from already published books.

With respect to this work, I consign here the following opinion:

The response, in my opinion, fully achieves its objective: It responds in an adequate way to the supposed accusations with crystal-clear and efficacious argumentation departing from well-assumed theological-canonical presuppositions and the reconstruction of subjective and objective circumstances that serve as pretext for the denunciations.

I found no theological error, moral or canonical, or from any other point of view, concerning the teachings and practices of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. I only noted errors of spelling and some incorrect usage in the Spanish vocabulary or composition. I suggested only two or three slight changes for precision in order to improve certain phrases, which, incidentally, were taken into account in the final copies that I signed.

Madrid, May 23, 1984
Fr. Victorino Rodriguez y Rodriguez, O.P.
Professor of Theology

* * *

SPANISH ORIGINAL



SANTO DOMINGO EL REAL
PP. DOMINICOS

CLAUDIO COELLO, 141
TELE. 262 87 00
261 49 73
MADRID - 6

P A R E C E R

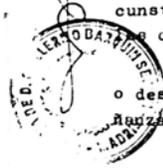
He revisado atentamente la obra a la que se refiere el Acta Notarial número mil cuatrocientos tres de la Notaría de D. Guillermo Barquín Seguí, de esta capital, levantada el día veintidós de mayo del presente año y titulada "Embustida frustrada contra la TFP", de la que es autora una Comisión de Estudios de la Sociedad Brasileña de Defensa de la Tradición, Familia y Propiedad (TFP) - compuesta por los Sres. Antonio Augusto Borelli Machado, Atila Sinke Guimaraes, Gustavo Antonio Solimeo y Joao Clá - en respuesta a tres cartas de D. Orlando Fedeli a D. Plinio Correa de Oliveira en las que pretendía inculpar a la referida Asociación de ciertas desviaciones de orden religioso. La obra está dividida en dos partes (I y II). La primera parte (I) contiene 288 páginas y la segunda (II), 547. Todas las páginas de la primera parte (I) están firmadas por mí y por el Sr. Joao S.C.Dias, representante de la TFP brasileña. De la segunda parte (II) solo han sido firmadas las dos primeras páginas, pues, las demás, son citas de libros ya publicados,

Fr. Victorino Rodriguez O.P.

Respecto de esa obra dejo consignada la siguiente opinión:

La respuesta cumple, a mi parecer, plenamente su cometido: responde adecuadamente a las presuntas inculpaciones, con razonamiento transparente y eficaz, a base de unos presupuestos teológico-canónicos bien asumidos y de la reconstrucción de circunstancias subjetivas y objetivas que sirvieron de pretexto a las denuncias.

No he encontrado error teológico, moral o canónico, o desde cualquier otro punto de vista concerniente a las enseñanzas y a las prácticas de la Santa Iglesia Católica, Apostólica



SANTO DOMINGO EL REAL
PP. DOMINICOS

CLAUDIO COELLO, 141
TELE. 262 87 00
261 49 73
MADRID - 6

2.

y Romana. Solamente he notado erratas de transcripción, alguna incorrección de vocabulario español o de redacción. Únicamente he sugerido dos o tres leves precisiones para mejorar ciertas frases que, además, se han tenido en cuenta en las copias definitivas que he firmado.

Madrid, 23 de mayo de 1984.

Fr. Victorino Rodriguez O.P.
Fr. Victorino Rodriguez Rodriguez, O.P.
Profesor de Teología

AUTHENTICATION

I, Guillermo Boarquin Seguin, Notary Republic of Madrid and of its illustrious College, CERTIFY that I consider the preceding signature and rubric to be that of Victorino Rodriguez Rodriguez, placed at the end of the prior document and in the left margin of the first sheet that it contains, being acknowledged by me, Notary Republic, rubricating and stamping the first signed page with the official seal of my Office. Madrid, 23 of May of 1984. (a) illegible, official stamped signature.

I, Guillermo Barquin Seguin, Notary Republic of Madrid and of its illustrious College, testify that the present photocopy conferred by me is the very same as the original. And, to settle this, I send this out in Madrid on the 23rd of May of 1984.

[Official signature]

In witness whereof, I sign the present translation.

São Paulo, June 5, 1984

Manoel Antonio Schmidt

Public Translator

* * *

SPANISH ORIGINAL



SANTO DOMINGO EL REAL
P.R. DOMINICOS

CLAUDIO COLLO, 141
TEL. 343 87 00
341 49 73
MADRID - 4

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Madrid, 23 de mayo de 1984.

V. Victorino Rodríguez Rodríguez
Fr. Victorino Rodríguez Rodríguez, O.P.
Profesor de Teología



LEGITIMACION.- Yo, GUILLERMO BARQUIN SEGUIN, Notario -
de Madrid y de su Ilustre Colegio.- -----



DOY FE: Que considero auténticas la firma y rubrica que anteceden de DON VICTORINO RODRIGUEZ RODRIGUEZ, puesta al final del precedente documento, y al margen izquierdo del primer folio de los dos de que consta, por ser conocida de mí, el Notario, rubricando y sellando con el - de mi Notaria, el primer folio reseñado. - -

Madrid, veintitres de Mayo de mil novecientos ochenta y cuatro.-

Guillermo Barquin Seguin

PREAMBLE

São Paulo, 25th of June to the 25th of July of 1983

Dear Doctor Plinio,

Salve Maria!

I have in my hands the three letters (of May 31, 1983, of March of 1982, and of September 14, 1981) of Prof. Orlando Fedeli to you, and a fourth (also of May 31, 1983) from him to Mr. Antônio Dumas, which make up the documents of his breaking with the TFP.

Kindly receive my amends for all that was said there against the truth and your honorability, as well as the grave disrespectfulness to Dona Lucilia, with the unjust questions raised concerning the homage that we so deservedly render to her.

I believe, Dr. Plinio that the conjunct of material does not deserve to be responded to by you, because certain insults, coming from certain persons, should receive no response.

I think that what could most satisfy you would be a serene analysis of the accusations contained in this material in order to show how the truth issues forth crystalline amid such a detraction.

Accept, therefore, the analysis that follows as a manifestation of redress to you, to the memory of Dona Lucilia and to the Truth.

*

Since the three letters of Mr. O.F. were delivered together to you by Mr. Valter de Oliveira on the 6th of June and you did not know of them before, they have the value of constituting only one, considering their intent. Moreover, they are brought up to date by a *post-scriptum*, whose date coincides with that of the letter of rupture (last May 31st). Because of this, I will consider all the letters as constituting only one whole, and in this way I will designate them briefly according to the year in which they were written, Letter 81, Letter 82, and Letter 83, or, that is, respectively the letters of September 14, 1981, March of 1982 and May 31, 1983.

I will analyze if there is an **absence of passion** in the formulation of the accusations, if there is **intellectual credibility** in the argumentation, if there is **coherence in the Catholic position** of the accuser, and, finally, I will enter into the merit of the question, or, that is to say, if there is **truth in the accusations**. From this, I will draw out the three great blocks that constitute the central nucleus of his onslaught against you. Finally, I will analyze some scattered accusations.

These various parts of my analysis being thus considered, I believe that the conclusions can be drawn with probity and justice, as the Morals of the Holy Church command us and as you taught me to do.¹

* * *

¹ The present study was concluded on the date indicated above (July 25, 1983); various members and cooperators of the TFP presented numerous suggestions and documents that deserved to be incorporated in the work to make a more complete refutation of the accusation in focus. They are thus included in the definitive text of the present letter. To all I consign my sincere thanks for their valuable contribution.

PRIOR CONSIDERATIONS

1. IF THERE WAS A LACK OF PASSION IN THE ACCUSATIONS OF MR. O.F.

The absence of passion in a person upon addressing a determined issue manifests itself in the control of his temperamental state, in the absence of self-love, in the absence of inappropriate personal revenges, as well as in unpretentiousness and humility.

I begin by analyzing whether these characteristics exist in the letters of Mr. O.F.

A. If the temperamental state of Mr. O.F. permitted a lack of passion

It is basic good sense to say that any witness or any accuser should be in control of his temperamental state when he testifies or when he accuses. If such is not the case, the objective truth could easily become distorted by the influence of the passions in the description and appraisal of the facts that should contribute to the formation of the judgment.

- a. Analyzed as a whole, the letters of Mr. O.F. reveal, even from first glance, that whoever wrote them allowed himself to be gradually seized by the growing influence of his temperamental state.

For example:

- * “For 15 days I debated in an immense crisis” (Letter 81, p. 1);
 - * “When I learned of this, I felt myself to be **on the verge of madness**” (id. p. 4);²
 - * “I passed through great turmoil” (Letter 82, p. 12);
 - * “I passed nights without sleeping” (id., p. 16)
 - * “I set myself to studying the books of Anne Catherine Emmerick, and the discoveries and confirmations **gushed forth on each page, frightfully**” (id., p. 16);
 - * “Those who were boasting of having the monopoly on good spirit ... were swallowing Anne Catherine Emmerick with all her blasphemies. ... They were even swallowing the socialist egalitarianism of Anne Catherine Emmerick, twin sister to that which was advocated by D. Casaldaliga”
- b. Analyzing in particular the last letter of May 31, 1983, one notes that he passes from a temperamental turbulence to a petulance and insolence. For example:

² In all the quotes, the markings in bold are my own; the italics are from the quoted text itself.

- * “How could you (Dr. Plinio) have sent us this empty document? How could you have sent it to us without a line of explanation? Why didn’t you telephone us in order to excuse yourself for your mistake? How could you have sent us this ‘**check without doctrinary funds**?’” (p. 16).
- * “You defended an erroneous thesis by means of a sophism, basing yourself on an empty document” (p. 19).
- * “But is this what it is to sincerely open the doors? Is this our famous policy of truth? Is it thus that we show entirely that we are thinking?” (p. 19).
- * “And what greater proof of obscuring the gold than that of having to argue with Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in order to prove to him that it is erroneous to replace Our Lady with any saint, whosoever it might be?” (p. 26).
- * “*One should not say that we have apostated or that we are traitors. We will not tolerate this ultimate calumny*” (p. 26).

*

It is not difficult for whoever reads these letters, or simply these examples, to come to the conclusion that *the letter writer was not in control of his temperamental state*, and that, ceding way to passion, he had a clouded vision, which impeded him from making a clear and logical argumentation.

B. If there was an absence of self-love

It is understandable, and even proper, that an accuser do everything possible to prove his accusation. However, references to his personal situation, to his own sufferings, and to the injustices that the accuser deems himself the object as insistent as those which appear in the letters of Mr. O.F. indicate a hyper-sensitivity that can, in fact, affect the absence of passion.

I cite several passages where, intermixed with most grave accusations, the intense personal resentment of Mr. O. F. is apparent:

- * “Permit me ... to touch upon ... a delicate point that concerns me: How will my attack upon the books of Anne Catherine Emmerick be interpreted by members of the Group ? ³ I fear that it will be taken quite poorly” (Letter 82, p. 4).
- * “My studies seemed not only futile, but even prejudicial, because I was being increasingly misunderstood. And my isolation grew, much against my will” (*ibid.* p. 17).
- * “It was murmured – as it is still murmured – that I do not have and that I do not transmit your spirit” (*ibid.*, p. 18).

³ Before being legally constituted as a society with the foundation of the TFP, Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and his collaborators met together around the weekly newspaper *Legionario*, and later the monthly magazine *Catolicismo*. From this came the expressions the “Group of the *Legionário*” and the “Group of *Catolicismo*,” or, simply the “Group,” which is still used today at times in the TFP to designate the entity.

- * “Yet it seems that Our Lady wanted to show something that should surprise even those *enjolas*,⁴ and that will probably displease them” (*ibid.*, p. 19).
- * “The one who was held as not having your spirit was the one who had the Catholic sense, vigilance, logic and coherence to discover and denounce the heresy camouflaged in the pages of Anne Catherine Emmerick” (*ibid.*, p. 19).
- * “And such was the prejudice against my person and so attached were they to the defense of Anne Catherine Emmerick that they began to resist and spread lies about the report that I was making (*ibid.*, p. 20).
- * “(A campaign) against me exists with the group that prevents me from being given **the position to which I have a right** and that has been denied me for 20 years” (*ibid.*, p. 24).

*

One sees, by these examples, that the letter writer was not insensible to the stings of his wounded self-love.

C. If Mr. O.F.’s longing for honors was manifested within just limits

Mr. O.F. writes:

“In one of the last conversations, he (Dr. Plinio V. Xavier da Silveira) asked me what, in short, I wanted the Group to do.

“I thought of repeating the outcry of Jarnac: ‘*Rendez moi mon honneur.*’ [Render to me my honor.] My honor as a member of the Group. My honor as a *Professor* before my own students. My honor of being your son, your disciple” (Letter 82, p. 24).

Without entering into the merit of his anxiety for honors, in itself legitimate in any man although subject to deformation in view of human weakness, I will analyze a characteristic way in which this anxiety manifested itself. This is in respect to the claim that Mr. O.F. makes concerning the title of *professor*.

In order to have a proper understanding of this claim, an explanation should be presented here about the situation to which it refers.

Mr. O.F. is a high school professor, and he had as students a certain number of present day members and cooperators of the TFP. It stands to his merit to have brought them into the association. For some

⁴ This word was born from a contemporary fortuitous coincidence that has nothing in common with the person from the romance *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. In the TFP it is used to designate, in affectionate jest, the younger cooperators of the entity.

time, led by the admiration that they had for Mr. O.F., his old students would call him simply “professor,” without adding the name “professor Orlando” or “professor Fedeli.” With this, they expressed that they considered him, among all the professors that they had, the professor by antonomasia. It was a small homage that they rendered him, consigned in everyday language.

In the year 1962, a distance began to appear between Mr. O.F. and almost all of his old students, caused by disagreements to which there is no need to refer here. This caused his old students to no longer call him “professor,” but instead “professor Fedeli.” He was never, however, denied the title of “professor.” They only allowed him to see, by this small change in title, that they no longer considered him their master by antonomasia.

There was reason, moreover, for this modification, in view of another concrete situation: To designate someone as professor by antonomasia in a group where there were also other professors would cause a certain confusion impractical for everyday living.

According to Brazilian customs, little concerned about these titles of courtesy and preeminence, such a modification was absolutely irrelevant. Yet, during all these years, Mr. O.F. never ceased to complain, at times bitterly, whenever ex-students – and some who had never been his students! – would direct themselves to calling him “professor Fedeli.” Thus he demanded the position as master, and not simply as professor, which his old students no longer acknowledged to him. This made interacting with him even more difficult.

All this, to which Mr. O.F. should have showed himself superior, indicates well how ardent was his desire for honors and why he allowed himself to be bothered so easily by trifles.

How can one not fear that this had affected his state of mind to appraise and judge what was happening in the TFP, which was not at all fulfilling this craving for honors?

D. If there was the absence of presumption

Presumption, daughter of self-love, can also distort – and in this actual case it did distort – the clear exposition of the proofs and arguments, thus gravely prejudicing one of the essential attributes of any accuser.

- a. The letter writer says on page 19 of his letter of March 1982, referring to himself: “He who has passed close to 20 years in a *Eremo* amid indifference and even ... calumny – reading, studying, making notes – **was the one whom Our Lady permitted to discover** what was hidden for 150 years and what Dom Guéranger and Msgr. Delassus had eulogized.”

The letter writer presumes himself to be, therefore, the *discoverer* of the errors that are contained in the writings of Anne Catherine Emmerick.

However, even in 1901, Fr. George Schober, consulter of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites, issued a judgment at the request of this Congregation upon these writings, in which he came out severely against the errors existing in them. And, since then, various experts consulted by the aforementioned Congregation have pointed out errors in the works attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerick.

How, then, can someone pretend to *discover* that which has been recorded in the official archives of the Holy See for 81 years?

- b. Presumption issuing from ignorance reveals, in addition to the vice of pride, superficiality of spirit. And when someone recognizes the groundlessness of his presumption (but does not admit it), he is lacking in good faith.

Now, in the letter of rupture (May 31 of 1983), Mr. O.F. states, referring to the documents of the Holy See pertaining to Anne Catherine Emmerick that he had heard I had in my possession: “We went to Rome, at great sacrifice, and we found there and in Dulmen documents that decided the question definitively” (p. 8). It seems, therefore, that the letter writer had access to the dossier of the Postulator of the Augustinian Order and to the archives of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites. In this case, why did he omit in his letter, obviously destined for eventual publication, that various judgments of consultants and specialists for the Sacred Congregation of the Rites (present day Sacred Congregation for the Cause of Saints) had already mentioned the errors that he was pretending to have discovered? If these errors were already discovered so many years before in documents that he was aware of, what, then, did his discovery consist of?

It is, then, the case to ask why Mr. O.F. attributed to himself the showy description of discoverer in such an ambiguous way. Was he the first human being to discern the errors of Anne Catherine Emmerick? Or does he presume himself to be a “discoverer” in some sense that he does not explain? And why doesn’t he explain it, putting an end to the impression that he is the “Columbus” of this mass of errors?

I refrain from responding to the question, noting, nonetheless, that he would have appropriated this role of “Columbus” to himself in an undeserved manner. And in case this were not his intention, the confusion that he allows to remain can only flatter his vanity.

- c. Throughout the letters, there are various passages in which the letter writer, citing his very serious studies, presents himself implicitly as the arbiter of orthodoxy. Consequently, he pictures himself, in a tragicomic manner, as a rooster who makes the truth rise from the darkness, like the sun at dawn:

“Je ne fais pas: ‘Cocorico!’ pour que l’echo [I don’t sing ‘cockle-doodle-doo’ so that the echo]
Repete un peu moins fort au loin: ‘Cocorico!’ [Is heard a little less loudly far away: ‘cockle-doodle-doo’]

“Je pense a la lumière et non pas a la gloire ... [I think on the light and not on the glory]
Et je chante clair afin qu’il fasse clair” (Letter 82, p. 8). [I sing clear so that it may be clearer]

- d. The letter writer moreover presumes himself gifted with various determined capacities of a theologian, philosopher and historian when he announces his intention to later realign the whole TFP according to his personal convictions on a series of heterogeneous subjects, announced with a broad and disconcerting vagueness: “Permit me, therefore, to add ... that there are yet other points that I judge need revision, among which I enumerate our position in the face of Joseph de Mais-tre, Donoso Cortes, Rohrbacher, Mary of Agreda, the German Romantics and the Ultramontanes of the last century” (Letter 72, p. 11).

And what had taken place in the TFP with respect to these matters? The books of these authors – with the exception of the German Romantics, who are little known outside their own country – circulated widely, until the time of the conciliar crisis, in broad Catholic sectors. And not only among the masses of the people, but among the faithful of notable piety and even among renowned theologians, who manifested not only their approval, but even their enthusiasm for them.

Given the confidence reigning in the Church in the pre-Conciliar period in relation to books well received in qualified Catholic milieus, such books could commonly be found in the best Catholic bookstores as well as libraries, nor did they receive any known censure from any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever. Thus many of them were read also in the TFP not only without pretentiousness, but also with confidence.

Moreover, these books present excellent pages, observations or historical truths that other authors, hostile to the Catholic cause, either do not divulge or pass over in silence. This explains the true enthusiasm that such works – many of which, moreover, are from cover to cover irreprehensible – awaken in most orthodox readers. Such a circumstance created among the faithful a presupposition quite favorable toward these authors.

However, it was never understood among us that this favorable presupposition should withstand proof to the contrary. Nor was it understood that an objection based on sound reasoning would not receive the time or opportunity to make itself heard. On the contrary, should it be well-founded, should it not leave the bitter aftertaste of the revolutionary critique but have the tone of a well-explained and well-clarified counter-revolutionary critique, it would immediately have the right of citizenship.

Moreover, if a painstaking study revealed the presence of errors on the part of these authors, it would be most important to declare them, because, protected by such a general enthusiasm and confidence, these errors could penetrate unperceived into the best ambiances. But to deduce from this that this confidence and this enthusiasm would exist also for the errors – this is just not true. The error entered covertly and inadvertently. Entering, it could grow roots (but not necessarily). At any rate, it would be absurd to pretend that the greater majority of people were infected by these errors and that their enthusiasm for the good parts is a proof of their adhesion to the bad parts.

It would be the case, therefore, for Mr. O.F. to ask that his studies be taken into consideration by well-read and cultured persons with the TFP, who would have the time and leisure to study them and form a personal opinion. After thus being studied and discussed by persons competent to form a judgment concerning them, a consensus could be reached that would lead the TFP to take a position in relation to the subject, as actually happened in relation to the works of Anne Catherine Emmerick, which I will shortly relate (cf. Chap. I). But it would not be a precipitate and immediate position, such as Mr. O.F. expressly desired – but a well-thought out and calm position that weighed the complexity of the matter with sufficient deliberateness to pass judgment on all that could be desired.

Asking with precipitous insistence for a “Revision” of “our position” in relation to these various themes, Mr. O.F. passes over all these conventions of intellectual convivium and immediately expects his personal convictions to prevail in such a manner as to be respected without any delay. In this, once again, there is a manifestation of presumption on his part.

Moreover, without denying that these errors could exist in some of the authors in question, the well-known propensity of Mr. O.F. to exaggerate and embellish almost endlessly in these matters led Dr. Plinio and all those who dealt with him to take an attitude of circumspection and caution in relation to what he was saying. This caution, however, did not exclude a certain receptivity, noting the validity of some of the facts that he affirmed.

On the other hand, although Mr. O.F. showed himself to be quite persuaded by his thesis about this series of subjects, it was always understood that his study was still *in fieri*, that the proof was yet to be finished, and that there would be time for it to be duly analyzed. His insistence on announcing his innermost persuasion caused in all of us not an absolute closing – which there never was – but a certain apprehension and reservation concerning his immoderation in his critique of these authors.

This reservation was evidently noticed by Mr. O.F., and it mortified his self-love. But what could be done?

In fact, there was, on our part, the fear that he was treating a subject without the rules of prudence that a Catholic should employ, especially in matters of this nature.

*

By analyzing this letter, or even simply the examples cited, it became patent that, in the exposition of motives, the letter writer ceded to the vice of presumption, thus prejudicing the objectivity of the truth as it appeared to him and, consequently, in the documents that he wrote.

E. First conclusion

Upon writing his letters, Mr. O.F. did not have a lack of passion, which vitiates his accusations.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, for the sake of the truth and the good name of Dr. Plinio, I will continue my analysis.

2. IF THERE WAS INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCE IN THE ACCUSATIONS OF MR. O.F.

The intellectual competence of an accusation is based on the merit of the proof and on the coherence of the reasoning. I will analyze both points in relation to the three letters of Mr. O.F.

A. Foundation for the accusations

- a. It should be pointed out that the letter writer, in his accusations, frequently evaded citing proofs. For example:

* “I cannot admit certain statements that seem to me ... irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine and that are being affirmed and practiced by a good number of persons in the Group, even for some time, and that, little by little, were infiltrating it” (Letter 81, p. 2). No proof is provided.

* “I knew of other similar cases her in São Paulo” (*ibid.*, p. 3). No proofs are given.

* “In the ensuing years, the signs multiplied on all sides that the extravagant and absurd devotions were continuing to increasingly overshadow true devotion to Our Lady” (Letter 83, p. 5). No proofs are cited.

* “More than 200 cases would make a voluminous and terrible dossier ... More than 200 facts is a lot, Dr. Plinio. Even if excuses or explanations could be found for half of them” (*ibid.*, p. 24).

This bloated threat also comes to nothing since it is not accompanied by any proofs.

He cites these “200 cases” or “200 facts” with self-assurance and even with insolence. But, in reality, he does not indicate how these “cases” or “facts” would constitute *proof*.

An accusation, in order to be *proved*, needs to show illegality of the action incriminated to someone. In the second place, it is necessary to prove that this incriminated act did, in fact, take place.

The “200 cases” or “facts” would be acts of cult to Dona Lucilia and to Dr. Plinio. But Mr. O.F. has such a primary notion of what cult is, and, on the other hand, he thinks it so obvious, that he never takes the trouble to analyze the concept of cult and to demonstrate how, based on Canon Law, this cult is illicit. He soars swiftly to the reality of the fact, exposing himself to the risk, into which he hurls headlong, of citing as imputable actions that are not illegal. At the same time, he cites actions that never even took place, as I will show further on in this study.

Such a system of “foundation” for accusations reveals an absolute lack of intellectual competence.

- b. When he quotes witnesses, the letter-writer frequently refers only to the one who spoke and not to the one who heard him. For example:

* When you (Dr. Plinio) said in San Miguel auditorium in the presence of Father Tam ... that the aim of the TFP was to seek the glorification of Our Lady and Our Lord Jesus Christ, a hermit ⁵

⁵ In some TFP seats a regime of silence outside of the hours of assembly and leisure was introduced – at the request of members or cooperators who resided or worked in them – with the aim of achieving a climate of recollection propitious to work and study.

The one who first suggested that this system be adopted was Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, a member of the National Council of the TFP who died in 1971. Some years before his death, Dr. Fabio visited the famous *Eremo dell' Carcere* (Carcel Hermitage) a place of recollection perfumed by the supernatural presence of St. Francis of Assisi, who had constructed it. The memory of the *Eremo* of St. Francis enthused Dr. Fabio, and his vivid Brazilian imagination immediately transposed the Italian world to the seat of the sector of the TFP that he directed.

The name given by Dr. Favio was received with general warmth inside the TFP. And, in a natural way, other *Eremos* then surged. In this way, this regime of recollection, work and study in common came into being.

In reality, the *Eremos* are nothing more than seats of study or work that demand a greater concentration of mind, or simply have in view a better utilization of action, since the *Eremos* have shown themselves to be highly efficient as a faction of intellectual study and output in works. By extension, those who reside in the *Eremos* (*Hermitages*) are called *hermits*.

tugged at the cape of a cooperator and murmured: “Underscore this.” Underline, that is, interpreted ‘faithfully’ ... One will say to us that such a hermit (Mr. Saad) is an *enjolras*” (Letter 83, pp. 22-23). Without presently entering into the exegesis of the expression “Underscore this” (cf. Chap. XI, 9), I note that the person who supposedly said this is mentioned, but not the one who heard it.

* “But it was not an *enjolras* who said that combating Communism is the external reason of being of the TFP. The one who said this atrocity was not an “*enjolras*.” It was Mr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito Filho, a member of the National Council and in charge of the TFP Press Service” (Letter 83, p. 23). The witness who heard this is not mentioned (cf. Chap. XI, 10).

For the same reasons mentioned above, there is an intellectual inconsistency in these cases.

c. When the letter writer does reveal two witnesses, the one who spoke and the one who heard, he conceals the documents. The following example is expressive, referred to in two letters:

* “In these last two weeks, new accusations came to my knowledge: that of Mr. Ferrand de Almeida and that of Mr. Eliseu” (Letter 81, p. 1).⁶

* “In September of 1981, the *camaldulense*⁷ hermit Mr. Eliseu Garcia ‘opened the pot’ with Mr. Aramis Fazzioli, and showed him a new room in the basement of Jasna Gora” (Letter 83, p. 5).

* “I send you only the Xerox of the information that I received” (Letter 81, p. 4). See the following paragraph.

* “The Xerox sheets to which the text refers contain the account given by Mr. Aramis about the Eliseu case and the letter of Mr. Wagner Zucchi about the Ferrand de Almeida case. **I am not sending them now. I am holding them in reserve**” (*ibid.*, p. 8, post-script dated 5-31-83).

It is, to say the least, extraordinary to find someone who pretends to prove something by means of documents, and then arbitrarily withholds the presentation of those documents! The question whether this is appropriate in such a case provokes a smile...

*

The *Eremo Praesto Sum*, to which several references will be made in this work, is situated in a district of São Paulo, and the meetings for the formation of the younger cooperators of the TFP take place there on Sundays. The words “*praesto sum*” (which is to say, “I am at your orders”) are taken from the prophet Samuel, who responded in this way to the interpellations of the Supreme Pontiff Heli (I Kings 3:16). They indicate the disposition of the member or cooperator of the TFP to promptly dedicate himself to the cause of Christian Civilization.

⁶ According to a letter of Mr. Wagner Zucchi to Dr. Plinio, Mr. Ferrand de Almeida would have told Mr. Carlos Alberto Carvalho that he had taken certain steps (the closing of a room) in order to prevent Mr. O.F. from secretly taking notes in it of the Clippings Meetings of the TFP. Mr. Ferrand de Almeida categorically denies that he ever had this conversation making such a statement with whomsoever it might be.

As for the accusation that Mr. O.F. extracted from the supposed statements of Mr. Eliseu Garcia, I will deal with them further on in Chapter IX, topic 1.

⁷ Within the *Eremos*, a more intense regime of recollection, silence and study originated, called *camaldulense*, in memory of and in homage to the *Camaldulas* founded by St. Romuald.

Concerning the foundation for the accusations, the letters of Mr. O.F. suffer, as a whole, from a lack of intellectual competence, or, that is to say, the letter writer lacks seriousness, the accusations are not accompanied by proof, and the alleged facts do not have probative value, as the Law requires.

When discussing the merit of the matter, I will show that they do not have any real foundation.

*

Upon speaking here about the lack of proofs, it could be objected that, in a letter of rupture, Mr. O.F. was not under any obligation to present proofs. It sufficed for him to indicate the reasons that lead him to make the rupture.

In reality, by the language of the letter and its literary tone, one can clearly see that it was destined to be made public. A person who simply breaks off relations with another does not take the theatrical attitudes that abound in this letter. It was not, therefore, a simple letter of rupture. If he has not published it until now in the newspapers, he has nonetheless given many persons to amply understand *how it was a document that would demonstrate that he was right*.

In this document, which he utilized as possessing a demonstrative value, he did not present proofs. And thus it lends itself to the censures made here concerning the absence of proofs.

B. Of the coherence of the reasoning

Another factor indispensable for an accusation to be valid is that it be ballasted by coherent reasoning that obeys the laws of logic. When the deductive method is applied, these laws demand that there be a major premise – the general rule, a minor premise – the particular case, and the conclusion.

When the inductive method is applied, it goes from the fact to the principle. Then it is necessary that there be proportion between the antecedents – the facts of the question, and the consequence – the conclusion. Only reasoning like this proceeds logically and appropriately.

The three major lines of Mr. O.F.'s accusatory libel are, essentially, these:

1st - Dr. Plinio read and liked the books of Anne Catherine Emmerick; however, these books are heretical and gnostic. Since Dr. Plinio did not perceive these errors, this revealed a lack of acuity to detect heresy, which is disappointing in a person to whom a prophetic inerrancy is attributed, since one expects a person who has the prophetic charism to present a limpid doctrine and to have an acute perception of where heresy exists. Therefore, Dr. Plinio is not inerrant, nor is he a “prophet.”

2nd - In the TFP a cult to Dona Lucilia is practiced that, of itself, is illegal, since she is not canonized or even beatified. Moreover, this cult has become so excessive that it has thrust aside devotion to Our Lady. Thus, Our Lady is, in the TFP, a dethroned Queen. Worse still: devotion to Our Lady is used as a cover to screen the devotion to Dona Lucilia. Now, to place someone in this position above Our Lady – even if it were a canonized person (much less one who is not...) – is to go against the Faith, which places the Mother of God at the apex of all mere creatures.

3rd - Inculcating himself falsely as a “prophet,” Dr. Plinio is promoting a cult of *dulia* to himself, which is, in its turn, illicit and inadmissible, since he is still living.

Over these accusations hovers the major accusation, which Mr. O.F. does not see fit to commit to writing in his letters: that is, that the TFP has stopped being Catholic and has been transformed into a sect.

I will analyze the first and third points when treating of the merit of the matter, since the fault of the assertion lies in the actual foundation of the premises, and not in the coherence of the reasoning, as is principally the case in the second point. Therefore, I will analyze this second point now.

Since the method applied is inductive, that is, the letter writer goes from the facts to the principle, it should be asked what are the antecedents and the consequence in the reasoning that would prove the dethronement of Our Lady in the TFP.

Antecedents:

1. The letter writer learned of an alleged *Hail Mary*, adapted to Dona Lucilia in 1979 (Letter 83, pp. 2-3);
2. Some prayed a litany to Dona Lucilia (Letter 83, pp. 3-5);
3. The letter writer knew of a *Memorare* adapted to Dona Lucilia (Letter 83, p.2);
4. In a certain seat of the TFP the *Magnificat* was prayed to Dona Lucilia, and not to Our Lady (Letter 83, p. 21);
5. There was a ceremony where a photograph of Dona Lucilia was substituted for a statue of Our Lady, and afterwards returned to its initial place; in this ceremony, the photograph of Dona Lucilia was incensed (Letter 83, p. 19).
6. On another occasion, with the approval of Dr. Plinio, a picture of Our Lady was replaced by a picture of Dona Lucilia, and afterwards returned to its initial place (Letter 83, p. 18);
7. Some members or cooperators of the TFP speak of devotion to Our Lady of the Consolation,” referring by this to Dona Lucilia (Letter 83, p. 23);
8. In the TFP the title “Mother and our Lady” is given to Dona Lucilia, upon the indication of Dr. Plinio himself; however, this is a title that should belong exclusively to the Blessed Virgin (Letter 83, p. 27).

Consequence:

Therefore, in the TFP an illicit cult of *dulia* is being rendered to Dona Lucilia that has become so extensive as to “dethrone” Our Lady.

Analysis of the reasoning:

Analyzing the connection between the antecedents and the consequence in the reasoning of the letter writer (*datum non concessum*), one sees that:

1. The facts are not proven, but are only vague indications;
2. The facts given as antecedents are not of sufficient quantity to prove something so grave as the consequence drawn from them;
3. The actual extension of the alleged phenomenon does not appear in the facts;
4. The facts are not significant, because they do not prove “dethronement”;
5. The persons listed by the accuser are not sufficiently representative of the TFP;
6. Except for in the 6th and 7th antecedents, the letter writer does not indicate the approval of the President of the TFP for such attitudes;
7. Finally, the objectivity of the narration and interpretation of the facts is questionable, as will be demonstrated further on.

Therefore, there is not a sufficiently logical connection between the facts that the letter writer alleges (the antecedents) and the conclusion (the consequence). Thus, the conclusion is more – comprehensive than the facts of the matter permit, which is inconceivable. Or, that is, the reasoning is insufficient and, therefore, of no consequence.

As one sees by this example, which encompasses one of the most important points and, dialectically, a key point of his accusation, the letter writer does not present an internal consistency in his reasoning, which reveals a lack of intellectual competence.

C. Second conclusion

Mr. O.F. was not competent in establishing his accusations and was not consistent in his intellectual exposition. Either of the two characteristics would disqualify the testimony of a witness and the work of an accuser or a judge.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, Dr. Plinio, for the full exposition of the truth and for the defense of your good name, I continue with the analysis.

3. IF THERE WAS COHERENCE IN THE CATHOLIC POSITION OF MR. O.F.

As was shown above, (cf. topic 1, D) and as all the documents that Mr. O.F. sent to Dr. Plinio illustrate, he (Mr. O.F.) is assuming the role of judge, in the name of Catholic sense and of Catholic principles, which he lays claim to possess. Let us look at the coherence of this position.

A. Concerning the respect due to great Catholic men

- a. It is brave of the letter writer to launch himself against that whole generic entity: “the Ultramontanes of the last century,” whom he insinuates to be Gnostics (Letter 82, p. 11). Who are the “ultramontanes of the last century”? There are Catholics from all countries who could be included in this designation. Our dear and belated Prof. Fernando Furquim de Almeida wrote for some years under the Culture section in the monthly *Catolicismo* about the whole ultramontane Catholic movement of the 19th century. In his writings, we can read about Catholics of French, Italian, English, German, Spanish, Irish, etc. descent, all from the 19th century and all ultramontanes. Are they all, then, Gnostics?

According to what is insinuated in the letter, yes. Thus, would Cardinal Wiseman, restorer of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, Cardinal Manning, one of the protagonists of Vatican Council I, and Father Faber, translator and commentator on the *Treatise of True Devotion*, all participants in the English ultramontane movement of the 19th century – would they all be Gnostics? Would O’Connell be Gnostic, he who distinguished himself in defense of the rights of Irish Catholics? Would Cardinal Pie be Gnostic, he who was the leader of Ultramontanism in France, was consulted by Pius IX for the elaboration of his *Syllabus*, and played such a salient role in Vatican Council I? Would even Louis Veuillot be Gnostic, he who was always championed by Pius IX and who also contributed to the elaboration of the *Syllabus* (cf. *Catolicismo*, n. 52)? Who is an even more significant personage of the ultramontanes of the 19th century than Veuillot? Would Pius IX also be Gnostic, he who so often and so greatly championed this movement?

I ask: Where is the good sense in this? How can one implicate in such an all-inclusive affirmation these great Catholic names, and even that of Pius IX, under this most grave insinuation and accusation? Where is the Catholic spirit of the letter writer? Where is his due respect for the reputation of the Church?

- b. Dom Guéranger (1805-1875) and Msgr. Henri Delassus (1836-1921) also do not escape the same suspicion of being Gnostics (Letter 82, pp. 15 and 19 respectively). The first was a truly great religious, a monk of St. Benedict, founder of the famous Abbey of Solesmes, which for so long provided for Catholics the sacred chords of the Gregorian Chant and liturgical discipline, and author of the very famous *L’Année Liturgique* (*The Liturgical Year*); the second, Msgr. Henri Delassus, was a great apologist who brilliantly and astutely defended the Church against internal and external attacks, whose principal works are *La Conjuration Antichrétienne* (*The Anti-Christian Conspiracy*) and *L’Americanisme* (*Americanism*). Both have been eulogized by the most renowned Catholic critics, and, therefore, they cannot be considered to be sufficiently judged by a simple appraisal hastily made by Mr. O.F. This is another manifestation of how he burns the steps and seeks to impose his opinion without duly taking into account the complexity of all these problems.

Dom Guéranger and Msgr. Delassus received, moreover, strong praise from both Pius IX and St. Pius X:

In his brief *Dolendum profecto* of March 12, 1870, Pius IX eulogizes Dom Guéranger for his defense of pontifical infallibility in his essay *Défense de l'Église Romaine Contre les Accusations du P. Gratry* (Defense of the Roman Church against the Accusations of Fr. Gratry, Paris, 1870).

When Cardinal Pitra, who was then Librarian of the Holy Roman Church and had been one of the first disciples of Dom Guéranger, personally communicated the news of the death of the Abbot of Solesmes to Pius IX, the Pope became quite moved and said that he had lost a devoted friend, and the Church, a great servant (Declaration of Cardinal Pitra, *apud* Fernand Cabrol, *Histoire du Cardinal Pitra*, Paris: Victor Retaux et Fils, 1893, p. 290).

Immediately after the death of Dom Guéranger, Pius IX sent to the whole Catholic world the brief *Ecclesiasticis viris* of March 29, 187, in which he affirms that the Abbot of Solesmes “*had employed all the years of his long life in courageously defending, with publications of great valor, the doctrine of the Catholic Church and the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff.*”

As for Msgr. Henri Delassus, in a letter of October 23, 1910, Cardinal Merry del Val communicated to the author of *The Anti-Christian Conspiracy* the effusive congratulations and regards of St. Pius X for this “*beautiful effort,*” this “*important and suggestive work.*”

It is difficult to avoid concluding, based on what was said in his letters, that Mr. O.F. does not profess the respect that is owed to these great Catholic names.

B. Concerning respect for the name of God

On various occasions, the letter writer passionately expressed demands that issue from his own personal convictions:

- * “I do not think ... that a solemn condemnation of Anne Catherine Emmerick on the part of the Group would be dispensable” (Letter 82, p. 22).
- * “It is necessary to make this revision...” (*ibid.*).
- * “It is necessary to do this for the good of the Group, for the victory of the CR,⁸ for the triumph and glory of the Catholic Faith” (*ibid.*).
- * “It is incomprehensible that only some should desire this” (*ibid.*).
- * “It is necessary that the whole Group have this same ardent desire than an *auto-de-fe* be made of a heretical work” (*ibid.*).

⁸ Reference to the book by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, referred to by the acronym RCR within the circles of the TFP. The Counter-Revolution (CR) is the movement destined to restore Christian Civilization to its origins, according to the motto of the pontificate of St. Pius X: “*Omnia instaurare in Christo.*”

* “It is necessary that everyone execrate the heresies of Anne Catherine Emmerick from the depths of their heart; without this nothing can be agreed upon” (*ibid.*, p. 23).

* “Am I wrong in this desire? I do not think so. Am I wanting to impose my will on you? ... To condemn heresy was always a virtue of your soul” (*ibid.*).

The letter writer, therefore, senses the need to be impartial. And, imbued with this need, he exclaims, theatrically impetuous: “What do I want to be done? ... I want the will of God to be done. *Fiat voluntas Dei*” (Letter 82, pp. 24-25). And he adds: “And the will of God, for me, is expressed by what you (Dr. Plinio) will decide (*ibid.*, p. 25). But Dr. Plinio can only decide that which he (Mr. O.F.) thinks and wants, as proved by the subsequent facts. For, since Dr. Plinio did not condemn the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick at the precise moment and in the exact way that he desired, he saw in this a motive to break with him. The theatrical tirade of the letter writer about the will of God results, therefore, in the fact that for him this is *only expressed by his own thinking*, since he will only accept that Dr. Plinio agree with him.

Unless Mr. O.F. imagines a special bond between the will of God and his own will, it can only be understood that he invokes, in this delirium, the will of God as a pretext. In order not to admit that it is his own will he is doing, he refers to God.

Admitting this hypothesis – which is most severe – it would be the case to ask: Upon making such an affirmation, does he really take God seriously? Does he take the Second Commandment seriously?

C. *Third conclusion*

All that has been noted here gravely vitiates the testimony, the accusation and the judgment of Mr. O.F.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, which in itself would be superfluous for the analysis of the rest of the letters, I will continue this analysis for the sake of the truth and for the good name of Dr. Plinio. I will thus go on to examine the merit of the accusations. I will first make a study of the central nucleus of the accusations, and afterwards I will examine various miscellaneous accusations.

* * *

CHAPTER I

THE ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICK ISSUE AND ITS CONTEXT WITHIN THE TFP

The *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick⁹ used to circulate freely within the ambiances of the TFP. Moreover, several excerpts from the book read by Dr. Plinio served as the theme for laudatory conferences. The same work also served as subject for numerous and ardently eulogizing expositions by Mr. O.F. It is asked how this could have occurred in an association presided over and made up of practicing Catholics, who proudly display their militancy in the hosts of the Holy Catholic Roman and Apostolic Church: Could one not see in this (groundlessly) a contradiction between the conduct of the entity and Catholic Doctrine, in whose teachings the TFP affirms it bases all its doctrinary action?

Mr. O.F. will certainly be one of the first to make this assertion.

1. A SECONDARY AND FLEETING ISSUE COMPARED WITH THE BROAD BUT DEFINED FIELD OF ACTION OF THE TFP

Above all, what should not be exaggerated is the actual importance that the Anne Catherine Emmerick issue had in the TFP during the decade of the '60s when it was most in focus.

The essential aim of the TFP is to combat the neopagan, naturalistic, liberal and egalitarian Revolution that surged and spread throughout Europe at the turn of the 15th century. This Revolution, ideological and psychological, gave rise to the religious explosion in the 16th century that was the Pseudo-Reformation. The same principles of the pseudo-Reformation, transposed to the temporal order, generated the French Revolution in the 18th century. From the political sphere, they went on to the socio-economic sphere, giving rise to the political, social and economic orientation that became integral with the doctrine of Marx in the middle of the 19th century, and the implantation of the communist regime in Russia in the second decade of the 20th century.

Through a series of developments, some obviously logical, others apparently contradictory, the germs of a particularly lively and contagious anarchism were being disseminated in a certain sector of the international communist movement. Whence came, for example, the expansion of philosophical schools

⁹ Anne Catherine Emmerick was born in Flamcken, near Coesfeld, in Westphalia (Germany) in September of 1774 in to a poor but fervent Catholic family.

At 16 years of age, she felt called to the religious life, but she could not immediately realize her desire because of her father's opposition and the lack of a dowry. Finally, in 1902, at 28 years of age, she was received into the convent of the Sisters of St. Augustine in Dulmen, where, the following year, she made her religious vows. In 1811, the convent was closed by civil authorities, and, like the rest of the sisters, she had to find refuge with a benefactor.

The civil as well as the ecclesiastical authorities submitted her to various prolonged and inconsiderate interrogations with regard to the singular mystical phenomena that were attributed to the Servant of God. She died in the odor of sanctity on February 9, 1824 at the age of 49.

such as those of Sartre and Marcuse, the Revolution of the Sorbonne, and so many other offensive tendencies affecting culture and the psychology of contemporary man. The most recent is self-managing Socialism, promulgated by various socialist parties of the West, and markedly by the French Socialist Party during the electoral campaign that brought François Mitterrand to the presidency of the French Republic.

The TFP sees in these long cycles of revolutions that succeed each other like large tidal waves, leading behind important vestiges in the contemporary world, only one great Revolution, turned against Christian Civilization and, in final analysis, against the Catholic Church.¹⁰

The TFP's special field of action is to act in the temporal plane, setting up barriers to the Revolution and creating conditions favorable to a new era of the splendor of Christianity. It is this that is called the Counter-Revolution (cf. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, part II). This has been the mediate or immediate aim of all the campaigns carried out by the entity in our Country and continent throughout the five decades of its existence.¹¹ And, analogously, it is the aim of the other autonomous sister TFPs in their respective countries.

To give the broadest scope possible to a task so difficult, and to conquer ground from the Revolution, which has in its hands all or almost all the control levers of temporal society, the members and co-operators of the TFP dedicate to this noble ideal all their available time. And a large number of them even dedicate all their time.

All this gives those in the TFP innumerable occasions for coming together for work and in some measure for prayer, as well as for study and even for leisure. And during these gatherings, as is natural, their attention turns with emphatic frequency to themes concerning Revolution and Counter-Revolution.

And, as is also natural in an association where all are practicing and fervent Catholics, attention often turns to religious themes. The choice and diversity of these topics, as well as others, is made in the TFP with the type of normal irregularity that rises spontaneously. One can with thus understand how the progressivist crisis that was pervading in the post-conciliar crisis would constitute a subject for conversation under a variety of aspects. This goes as well for other issues related more or less closely and in varying degrees to the Revolution in the temporal sphere.

As one can easily understand, the notoriety of the authors and the books discussed were generally in proportion to how closely they related to the primary and specific aim of the association.

All of this helps to evaluate the episodic and transitory role that the Anne Catherine Emmerick matter had among the vast conjunct of themes under continual study and reflection in the internal life of the TFP.

The letters of Mr. O.F., however, present the Anne Catherine Emmerick matter outside the context of these facts, thus giving the impression, even quite extravagantly, that it would have constituted

¹⁰ Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, New York: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1980.

¹¹ *Half a Century of Epic Anti-Communism*, New York: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1981.

(and still would constitute!) a central topic in the thinking of the TFP and in the formation of its cooperators.

In reality, Dr. Plinio, I am not analyzing this matter so attentively because it has proportional importance in the history, the thinking and method of acting of the TFP. I do this only because Mr. O.F. transforms the subject into the major argument in his letter. And the present analysis is a refutation of these letters.

2. WHAT TOOK PLACE IN THE TFP IS IN COMPLETE CONFORMITY TO THE GENERAL CUSTOMS IN BRAZILIAN CATHOLIC CIRCLES

Accordingly, it should also be remembered that, as already said, at the time when this matter was in focus in the TFP, a confident tranquility inherent to what is generally called the pre-conciliar Church reigned in Catholic ambiances. As previously mentioned (cf. Prior Considerations, 1, D), at that time an *Imprimatur* gave to any book free and unsuspecting circulation in Catholic bookstores, libraries of religious institutions and among the multitude of the faithful. Moreover, complaints among Catholics, instigated by modernists and progressivists in other continents, were little known among the large Catholic public in South America.

Thus did the book *Complete Visions and Revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerick* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guadalupe, 1952-1954, 4 vols., 2354 pp.) circulate fairly widely in Brazilian Catholic circles – of which the TFP is an active part – before the conciliar crisis made such subjects “out of style.”

For the diffusion of such a work, the ecclesiastical approbations that it carried in abundance were more than sufficient.

Moreover, then Bishop of Campos D. Antônio de Castro Mayer, the then Archbishop of Diamantina D. Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, S.V.D., and Friar Jeronimo Van Hinten, O. C. (who died in 1972) at this time were all frequently at our seats and heard the cordial conversations that took place (between various persons) concerning the writings attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerick. Yet none of them judged it necessary to take any measure in this matter. Nor did it cross the mind of anyone to ask these Prelates or this Friar to pass judgment on the matter. And Dr. Plinio proceeded in perfect harmony with the example of these ecclesiastics. It was considered a free and open subject in the TFP until the day the Holy Church should pronounce her opinion on the matter.

And both the Bishops and Friar Jeronimo acted quite correctly. For the opponents of the Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerick within the TFP, as well as its proponents, had never read the entire 2,354 pages of the four volumes (15x22 cm. in actual size) of the Argentine edition of the copious work, which was then circulating in the ranks of the Society.

Considering our tormentuous times, it could not be demanded, from the point of view of Natural Law, that a Catholic not read or have any book that might contain some error, whatsoever type it might be. This is for the simple reason that all men gifted with a certain intellectual development would end by finding errors in the immense majority of books in current publication. The principle by which “a man can only read books completely free of errors” would be unfeasible.

Accordingly, it falls to the judgment of the common sense of the faithful to discern and stay away from erroneous books not explicitly condemned by the Church since it would not be possible to act in any other way.

3. INNOCUOUSNESS OF THE ERRORS OF ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICK IN AN AMBIENCE PERMEATED BY FIDELITY TO THE IMMUTABLE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

The proof of the correctness of your conduct, Dr. Plinio, is that these errors did not cause any harm or even the least crisis among the members and cooperators of the TFP. Among us, there were no adherents to the errors of Anne Catherine Emmerick. Some were simply enthused with what they found of good in the excerpts that they had read, while others noticed certain errors in the work, which were generally attributed to the romantic writer Clemente Brentano, who had recorded the Visions. Never at any moment was there anyone who, recognizing the existence of these incriminating points, affirmed solidarity with them. Not even the opponents of the *Visions* ever considered it necessary to organize a methodical exposition of the incriminating theses and the supporting arguments against them.

On the contrary, everything took place in the *brouhaha* of everyday conversations, animated by exuberant warmth, both polemical and cordial, that is characteristic of the convivium among South Americans. And one who participated greatly in the discussions at this time as an enthusiastic defender of the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick was Mr. O.F. himself, with his distinctive temperament. Not even he noted at the time the errors that the work contained.

And, just as the matter came into the limelight, so also did it exist, without any of us ever becoming adherents to the errors in the *Visions*.

4. THE STUDES OF MR. O.F. – THE POSITION OF THE HOLY SEE IN RELATION TO THE WRITINGS IN QUESTION – THE STATEMENT OF DR. PLINIO

During the time all this took place, Mr. O.F. was the mentor and dynamic recruiter of a whole sector of youths of the TFP, a task to which he devoted himself brilliantly.

Because of discontentment that legitimately surged among some of the young cooperators in relation to the matter of proceeding of Mr. O.F., a separation occurred between him and this young sector, which left him more free time (cf. Prior Considerations, 1, c). He availed himself of this time for his studies, and, among the subjects that he addressed was a full reading and analysis of the *Complete Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, as well as of the works and personality of Clemente Brentano, who was believed to be the editor of the revelations written by the visionary. In this way, he came to find the gnostic thread in the Visions and Revelations, as well as in the thinking of Brentano. This, consequently, led him to draw up a full picture of the erroneous propositions in the work attributed to the German mystic.

Responding to a request by Mr. O.F., Dr. Plinio had six meetings with him, which in all lasted for approximately 15 hours in January and February of 1983. Mr. Plinio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira also participated in these meetings.

During the meetings, Mr. O.F. was given all the time that he deemed necessary to explain his theses. And, after having listened with the indispensable spirit of analysis to the expositions of Mr. O.F., Dr. Plinio reached the conclusion that the *Complete Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick did, in fact, contain numerous and grave errors of doctrine, and even heretical or immoral affirmations, all related to gnosis.

The existence of these errors in the writings attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerick explains why the work has presented difficulties in the process of beatification of the German mystic. The position of competent organs of the Holy See concerning these writings had been not to take them into account in the process of canonization. The preliminary reason for this, unanimously accepted by the experts called upon to pronounce their judgments upon the writings, is that it has become clear that Clement Brentano extensively manipulated the *Visions and Revelations*, published after the death of Anne Catherine Emmerick. Moreover, she did not review what Brentano recorded in his diary, which served as the basis for these publications. Thus, it becomes impossible to distinguish, in order to make a judgment upon the orthodoxy of the Servant of God, that which was said by her and that which was interpolated by the writer.

Because of this, the Sacred Congregation of the Rites decided in a decree of 1927, under the terms of canon 2042 of the *Code of Canon Law* of 1917, not to consider the writings of Brentano honored with the name of the Servant of God as being those of the visionary. And the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in a decree introducing her cause of beatification dated May 3, 1981, adopted an analogous position.

As a consequence of two meetings with Mr. O.F., even though the subject had lost its former interest among us, on June 24, 1983, Dr. Plinio, before the full assembly of the TFP meeting together in St. Michael's Auditorium, communicated to all the tenor of the aforementioned conversations with Mr. O.F. and the conclusions they had reached. And, manifesting his categorical repudiation of the errors found in the *Complete Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, he ordered that all the libraries of the TFP should remove all the works that contained the name of the Servant of God within a maximum limit of five days. He moreover ordered that, from that moment forward, neither *Catolicismo* nor any other publication of the TFP should eulogize or quote from any of the works in question.

All of this was heard, accepted and executed with placid and serene acquiescence by all the members and cooperators of the TFP.

5. AN OBSOLETE THEME TRANSFORMED INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF ATTACK

At the time that Mr. O.F. was conducting his studies, he was becoming increasingly upset over the obvious success that the TFP youth sector was achieving in other hands (manifested by attributes and signs that showed in many of his conversations). From this arose an ardent desire in him to see the dismissal of the new director of this sector, presumably so that he might reacquire the position that would thus be vacated. Not finding support from Dr. Plinio for these designs, the bitterness of Mr. O.F. turned against Dr. Plinio.

The studies of Mr. O.F., coinciding chronologically with the unfolding of this emotional and temperamental process of embitterment, were fused and merged toward only one result: to utilize these stu-

dies to try to discredit Dr. Plinio and see his dismissal, as well as that of Mr. O.F.'s successor in the direction of the youth sector.

Toward this effect, Mr. O.F. launched the already mentioned reproof (cf. Prior Considerations, 2, B) that Dr. Plinio did not see the errors of the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, and, therefore, he was not inerrant nor did he deserve the esteem with which he is held in the TFP.

The emptiness and want of justification of this accusation leaps to the eyes in face of the facts that have just been described, as well as in consideration of what is yet to be exposed in the subsequent chapters.

* * *

CHAPTER II

INERRANCY AND INFALLIBILITY: A PLAY OF WORDS IN THE DIATRIBE OF MR. O.F.

In his onslaught against Dr. Plinio and against the TFP, Mr. O.F. raises against us the concept of inerrancy in regard to Dr. Plinio as commonly used in the TFP. Of this concept, he presents a deformed version: “I would very much like to explain to him,” he writes to Mr. Dumas, “all that I discovered about Anne Catherine Emmerick – and it is much, much indeed. ... But it would be necessary for him to divest himself of the dogma of *prophetic inerrancy* so that he can reason logically” (Letter of May 31, 1983, pp. 4, 5).

Concerning the same matter, Mr. O.F. states in his letter to Dr. Plinio: “(Mr. Dumas) confirms that the second volume of the *Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerick* is ‘inundated’ with heresy, even though it does not seem to him that the totality of the visions are heretical. A contradiction that cries out to the heavens. A contradiction by him (Mr. Dumas) in order to try to save your (Dr. Plinio’s) *inerrancy*” (Letter 83, p. 10).

Later, he says: “It is inerrancy, it is your prestige as a prophet that makes it difficult (for you) to condemn Anne Catherine Emmerick (*ibid.*, p. 11).

1. THE CONCEPT OF INERRANCY IN THE DEFORMED VISION OF MR. O.F.

As one can see by the examples above, taken (among others) from Letter 83, pp. 10 and 11, Mr. O.F. insinuates that Dr. Plinio would not condemn Anne Catherine Emmerick through fear of jolting the concept of his inerrancy in the TFP. In the same letter, on pages 3 to 17, Mr. O.F. returns to the matter of inerrancy. His thinking expressed in these two excerpts from Letter 83 is the following:

* Having made a series of expositions to Dr. Plinio about the errors existing in the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, he affirms that Dr. Plinio had stated that these expositions had made the most disagreeable impression possible on him and that this needed “to be told before the group *as soon as possible*. It cannot be *left to be resolved in a undefined time. It has to be immediately*” (Letter 83, p. 9 - original emphasis). Mr. O.F. presents these words as “yours verbatim.” “We made notes of your words as soon as we arrived home,” he adds (*ibid.*).

And right before this, the letter writer ardently and insolently interpolates Dr. Plinio: “Three months passed after those meetings and Anne Catherine still was not condemned. What do you mean by “it has to be immediately?” (*Ibid.*)

* He had raised the problem with Dr. Plinio for the first time in March of 1981, and, after a fruitless debate with Mr. Dumas about the matter, he was received again by Dr. Plinio only in January of 1983, after a series of delays. Then, after receiving him, three months had passed without Dr. Plinio doing anything in relation to Anne Catherine Emmerick; for him this provided a sufficient reason to raise this gravely defaming suspicion:

“Why such a delay? Why such reluctance to condemn the gnostic and cabalistic visions of Anne Catherine Emmerick?”

“You yourself told us: ‘We will bring these things to light and follow the policy of truth: The great problem will be to explain how I did not see this (the errors of Anne Catherine Emmerick) and how you did.’ These were your words” (*ibid.*, p. 11).

From this came his conclusion, already cited: “It is inerrancy, it is your prestige as a prophet that makes it difficult (for you) to condemn Anne Catherine Emmerick” (*ibid.*, p. 11).

Completely engulfed by this matter, he returns to charge:

* “During the first meeting that we had regarding Anne Catherine Emmerick (1-11-1983), you yourself raised the question of prophetism and of inerrancy. ‘Someone should ask how this leaves the question of prophetism’ (having in view that you had eulogized Anne Catherine innumerable times, and **without making restrictions**)” (*ibid.*, p. 13).

* During the first meeting about Anne Catherine Emmerick, Dr. Plinio explained to him that his prophetic charism “has no relation to historical or theological cognizance,” but “to political facts and their predictions. So many years of predictions without errors cannot be explained by natural talent.” (*ibid.*)

* Mr. O.F. responded that “this was not the concept that prevailed in the group about your infallibility” (*ibid.*).

* Dr. Plinio insisted that he had never spoken of infallibility, and that he could say this to others (*ibid.*).

* In the final meeting of the series about Anne Catherine Emmerick, Mr. O.F. returned to the subject, saying that the concept of inerrancy involved a sophism, since a person who has great wisdom is one who hopes that he does not err and not one who is inerrant (*ibid.*).

* According to Mr. O.F., Dr. Plinio had agreed with his reasoning, saying that “he thought that the word **inerrant** was used conventionally by theologians in the sense of the moral certainty that someone would not err,” and that he (Dr. Plinio) employed it “in this sense, and not in its entomological sense” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

* According to Mr. O.F., Dr. Plinio had told him that the only text that provided a basis for the theory of inerrancy was an excerpt from Cornelius a Lapide, which he asked Dr. Plinio to provide him with (*ibid.*).

* Mr. O.F. then commented upon “the harm that the theory of inerrancy causes in the group. Some outspokenly affirm your infallibility. Others do not say this, but in practice they act as if you were infallible. No one dares to say that you erred” (*ibid.*).

After a series of delays in furnishing Mr. O.F. with the text by Cornelius a Lapide, which he describes indignantly and to which he attributes hidden intentions, he writes:

* “On the following day the famous and much-delayed text of Cornelius a Lapide reached our hands.

“What a tremendous deception! What a strepitous fiasco! Even the title of the texts that you had sent us was quite indicative: ‘*Wisdom and infallibility. Complete texts.*’

“*Infallibility*, and not inerrancy. This explains, then, the origin of the thesis prevailing in the group of your *infallibility*.

“We read with interest these ‘complete texts.’ We read with special attention the famous text of Cornelius a Lapide upon which you based the thesis of your inerrancy, and we found nothing, nothing, that provided any basis for the sophistic reasoning that you had used to justify it.

“How could you have sent us this empty document? How could you have sent it to us without a line of explanation? Why hadn’t you telephoned us in order to excuse yourself for your mistake? How could you send us this ‘check with doctrinary funds’?” (*Ibid.*, p. 16)

* After mentioning a conversation of Dr. Plinio with Mr. V.O. in which Dr. Plinio explained that there had been an oversight since the text to which he was referring was by St. Thomas and not by Cornelius a Lapide, Mr. O.F. triumphantly concludes: “Thus did you defend an incorrect thesis (that of your inerrancy), by means of a sophism (you admitted it) basing yourself upon an empty document (you admitted it)” (*ibid.*).

These, then, are the facts, according to Mr. O.F.

Before entering into the merit of the question, it is necessary to establish the objective truth of the facts as they actually took place, rather than according to the distorted version of Mr. O.F.

2. MR. O.F.’s ANXIETY TO CONDEMN ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICK

In the first place, despite the good memory of Mr. O.F. and the fact that he had taken notes “as soon as he reached home,” it is not absolutely true that Dr. Plinio had said to him that he would communicate in the full assembly of the TFP the results of these conversations about Anne Catherine Emmerick “*as soon as possible*,” and that this “*has to be immediately*.” On the contrary, he told him that he needed to think about how to do this, and that he would perhaps discuss this conversation with Prof. Martini and Mr. Dumas (supposed defenders of Anne Catherine Emmerick) and eventually with me, who would also make some studies in this respect. To this proposition, Mr. O.F. then stated categorically that what he had wanted to hear from Dr. Plinio, for his own peace of mind, was one word of condemnation of Anne Catherine Emmerick, and having already heard this, he left the manner of *modus faciendi* in his hands, adding as well that this might be done whenever desired – “one year, two years, or ten years from now!”

Dr. Plinio restricted himself by clarifying that he also did not want to leave this for a undefined time.

But Mr. O.F., who declared himself disposed to wait “one year, two years, or ten years,” did not have the patience to wait three months, and, abandoning any hope of clarification and explanation, he broke off abruptly with Dr. Plinio.

In face of these facts, his aforementioned tirade against Dr. Plinio rings with a particularly ludicrous note: “Three months had gone by after this meeting, and Anne Catherine still was not condemned. What did you mean by ‘it has to be immediately’? What did you mean by as soon as possible?” (Letter 83, p. 9). That is to say, he was so anxious to condemn Anne Catherine that he attributed to Dr. Plinio what was actually in his own subconscious (“it has to be immediately” and “as soon as possible”)! As I just pointed out, Dr. Plinio had in some way said this within the real context of the solution that he had just pointed out to Mr. O.F.

While these memory lapses are understandable and of themselves do not merit greater attention, it becomes the case to rectify them quite precisely in order to show how Mr. O.F. framed his libel based on untruthful facts that germinated incandescently in his mind.

3. MR. O.F.’s INTERIOR CRISIS PROBLEM CONCERNING ANNE CATHERINE EMMER- RICK AND THE NOTION OF INNERANCY

Of more gravity and importance, because it does not deal with a simple lapse of memory, is the connection that Mr. O.F. establishes between the Anne Catherine Emmerick case and innerancy. If one were to believe the exposition of facts that Mr. O.F. makes, Dr. Plinio himself would have become perplexed in face of the problem and would have said to him: “We will bring things to light and follow the policy of truth: The great problem will be to explain how I did not see this (the errors of Anne Catherine Emmerick) and how you did” (Letter 83, p. 11).

This would have taken place on February 22 of 1983 at the end of the series of meetings between Dr. Plinio and Mr. O.F. concerning Anne Catherine Emmerick.

However, in reality, the facts took place in a quite different manner. The perplexity in face of the problem did not belong to Dr. Plinio, but to Mr. O.F. In fact, Dr. Plinio had told him that not only did he not have the least degree of affinity with the errors that Mr. O.F. had just pointed out in the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, but, on the contrary, he felt a most complete repulsion for such errors and he considered the work strongly condemnable. After this, Mr. O.F. showed himself to be very relieved, explaining that this resolved a serious problem of conscience that he had. He then explained to Dr. Plinio that he had passed nights without sleeping, that he had felt an enormous dismay, that he had passed hours of anguish, and that he had almost gone mad (*sic*) because he could not understand how Dr. Plinio could have praised something that he was accusing of being heretical. Moreover, this panorama of his interior crisis is amply described in his letter of March of 1982 (pp. 12-14) and coincides with what he exposed even more extensively at the forecited meeting of February 22, 1983.

Dr. Plinio then kindly explained to him that this would have been easy for him to understand, since he himself – Mr. O.F. – had eulogized and spread the work of Anne Catherine Emmerick much more profusely than he (Dr. Plinio) had done. To this, Mr. O.F. emphatically agreed: “Without comparison! Without comparison!”

Yet, Mr. O.F. continued to insist that, since Dr. Plinio had eulogized the work, some would see a manifestation of bad spirit on his part in denouncing the errors of Catherine Emmerick. Thus, Dr. Plinio, attempting to explicate Mr. O.F.'s interior crisis that he had presented to him, said that he was not aware that anyone had raised such a problem, but that it would be natural if it should be raised: "How is it that I read and did not notice it, while you read and noticed?" This was the context of his question. Moreover, he added that we should not flee from any problem: "We should leap with both feet into each problem. This is the policy of truth."

Within this context, Dr. Plinio then went on to paternally explain that infallibility is a privilege that belongs only to the Church, who has not only the right to say that a determined opinion is wrong, but also whether a determined error is professed in this or that work. On the contrary, inerrancy, as understood in the TFP, is only a moral certainty that someone – due to a special vocation or the liberal exercise of the virtue of wisdom – in fact will not err in the indication of a direction to follow.

As one sees, Mr. O.F. inverted the phrases of the dialogue: In his conversation with Dr. Plinio where he emphatically presented his own problem of conscience (repeating three or four times that he felt as if he were going mad!...), he now goes on to attribute the same to Dr. Plinio, saying that it was Dr. Plinio who had posed the problem: "You yourself told us: We will bring things to light and follow the policy of truth: The **great problem** will be to explain how I did not see this ... and how you did. These words were your words" (Letter 83, p. 11). Yet Dr. Plinio at no time spoke of a "*great problem*," a problem, moreover, that belonged to Mr. O.F. – and not to Dr. Plinio or to anyone in the TFP.

Mr. O.F.'s good memory once again fails him in objectively relating the conversation that he had with Dr. Plinio. And, significantly, this memory lapse led him to present Dr. Plinio as corralled by a problem that he himself admittedly was struggling with.

Although the object of the present refutation is secondary, it is important to note once again here this distortion, in order to show the "technique" by which Mr. O.F. sought to present Dr. Plinio in an unfavorable light in his insolent and outrageous letter of May 31, 1983.

4. INERRANCY AND PROPHETISM IN RELATION TO ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICK

The account he makes of the end of the first meeting about the same subject does not escape the same censure. Dr. Plinio saw that Mr. O.F. was drawing very hasty conclusions from the texts of the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick that he was reading and thus did not categorically accept what he was saying, Mr. O.F. expressed his perplexity in face of such an attitude (which is, let it be said in passing, a reaction of elementary wisdom). He argued that he had the right to be believed, after so many years of study and of dedication to Our Lady, to the Church and to him (Dr. Plinio).

Dr. Plinio then resolved this perplexity, pointing out that it is one thing to believe in the honorableness, the good faith and even the intellectual credibility of a person, and another thing to accept the opinions of this person without presenting objections.

Mr. O.F. explained that it was only to save time that he was simplifying the presentation of his proofs and that in his 700-page study, he had replied to all these objections, as Dr. Plinio could verify for

himself. And he declared himself to be so convinced of the heresy of Anne Catherine Emmerick that he would leave the TFP if Dr. Plinio did not condemn it.

Since Dr. Plinio had already been alerted by Mr. Plinio V. Xavier da Silveira about the directions Mr. O.F. was imparting to his own thoughts, he then stated, in order to help him resolve his problems, that he did not feel he had compromised himself in anything with the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick. Of this work (four volumes totaling 2,354 pages), he had read only scattered phrases, which he had liked and praised. This scanty reading being insufficient for him to discover the cabalistic-gnostic tenor of the work, it was possible that, in his conversation with Mr. O.F. and hearing from him the reading of the different texts, Dr. Plinio could perceive something that he had not perceived in the first reading. At any rate, what he had praised in the texts of Anne Catherine Emmerick was good, that is, he was supporting, with regard to the excerpts he had read, a good doctrine and not a bad one.

Naturally, the question could be posed here: “How is it that Dr. Plinio, with the charism of prophetism, did not perceive this?” And Dr. Plinio then added that the answer was most simple, since it was explained in the *Refutation* of the French Rapport (cf. *Imbroglia-Détraction-Délire/Remarques sur un Rapport Concernant les TFP, Tradition-Famille-Propriété*, Asnieres: France, 1980, vol. I, pp. 268-280) that the charism of prophetism, as understood in the TFP, manifested itself in the formulation of appropriate hypotheses concerning future events, which presupposes the help of grace. This same assistance of grace could be perceived in the orthodoxy of the doctrine. But this does not refer to texts by a determined author that he had not read, and even less when this author is writing with a hidden tone.

Once again, Mr. O.F. thinks he has cornered Dr. Plinio, and thus he describes the outcome of this meeting: “You yourself raised the question of prophetism and of inerrancy. ‘Someone could ask how this leaves the question of prophetism’ (having in view that you had eulogized Anne Catherine Emmerick innumerable times and **without making restrictions**)” (Letter 83, p. 13).

As I have shown, the context in which this statement was made is quite different, where Dr. Plinio was only seeking to resolve the problem that had been created in Mr. O.F.’s mind. For, except for Mr. O.F. and the small group of persons that he was influencing, no one else in the TFP had manifested that this subject had constituted any problem – a problem that, moreover, someone could have been resolved with the greatest facility.

An ample proof that this matter did not constitute a problem for anyone in the TFP is that the formal statement Dr. Plinio made in full assembly on June 24, 1983, proscribing the works of Anne Catherine Emmerick as current reading for the members and cooperators of the entity and ordering them removed from our libraries to be kept in our archive, caused no one any perplexity.

In his anxiety to shuffle the terms of the problem, Mr. O.F. is even unashamed to affirm that the eulogies made by Dr. Plinio of the works of Anne Catherine Emmerick were *without restrictions*, when it is public knowledge in the TFP that Dr. Plinio always had felt and communicated to all his great reservations about Clemente Brentano (which, as was recorded, he had commented upon in relation to these revelations).

On the contrary, we possess categorical testimonies that it was Mr. O.F. who sought to minimize the reservations that weighed over the work when he was warmly defending Anne Catherine Emmerick.

But this did not cause him to feel he compromised himself with respect to the errors that he later discovered in the *Visions and Revelations*. And properly so, since when he was defending this work, he was not defending the errors contained in it, but the good things that he saw in it. This observation Dr. Plinio had the occasion to point out to him in their conversation of January 11, to which he emphatically agreed.

5. A RIDICULOUS AND COMPLETELY BASELESS CONCLUSION

A word yet remains to be said about the triumphant and ridiculously foolish conclusion of Mr. O.F.: “Thus did you defend an incorrect thesis (that of your inerrancy) by means of a sophism (you admitted it) basing yourself upon an empty document (you admitted it)” (Letter 83, p. 16). Despite the assurance with which this triple affirmation is made, it is completely false.

I will later demonstrate how the theory of inerrancy, as understood in the TFP, is absolutely correct.

That Dr. Plinio had acknowledged that the thesis of inerrancy was based on a sophism is completely false. In the first place, Mr. O.F. himself had never at any time in his conversations with Dr. Plinio used the word *sophism*. Rather, he said that he saw in the word inerrancy an *imprecision*, which could lead (and he thought that this had actually happened in the TFP) to a bad understanding, in the sense that the person to whom inerrancy was attributed could never commit any error. Therefore, he considered that the idea that prevailed in the TFP was one of an *absolute inerrancy*, which was attributed to Dr. Plinio and which exclusively excluded any possibility of mistakes, equivalent in practice to *infallibility*.

He then proposed to Dr. Plinio in the meeting of February 22, 1983, the following rationale: Suppose a person of great wisdom – according to the excerpt from Cornelius a Lapide which Dr. Plinio had mentioned (in reality, the excerpt is from St. Thomas) – *is thought not to err, and not that he is inerrant*. The confidence that the person does not err does not exclude the possibility that he might commit some error, while the faith in an absolute inerrancy excludes the possibility of any error whatsoever. From this, it seemed to him that the word inerrancy should be better defined, or perhaps another term should be used that would better express this hope or moral certainty that there would be no error in the conduct of the person who possesses wisdom.

Dr. Plinio then agreed that the word inerrancy taken in this *absolute* sense would mean that the person “will never err.” But *it was not in this sense* that he was taking it. Thus, Dr. Plinio in no way acknowledged that he had fallen into a sophism, a word, moreover, as already mentioned, that he himself never even used.

Such lapses of memory are perfectly understandable in one who attempts to make notes on a conversation lasting two and a half hours “as soon as arriving home”! Nonetheless, the greatest caution should be taken by one who intends to use such notes in order to inveigh against another, even more when making such insolent and ridiculously arrogant charges that Mr. O.F. made against Dr. Plinio.

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Dr. Plinio also never admitted that he had elaborated the notion of inerrancy based on an “empty document.” In the first place, as I will demonstrate further on, the notion of inerrancy was not constructed

in the TFP from authors and documents, however distinguished these might be, but from a fact – the sureness of his *predictions* and the *conduct* he imparts to the activities of the TFP. An *explanation* and a *word* for this fact were then sought in the works of reputable authors. Obviously, the *explanation* in terms of Catholic doctrine was more important than the word itself, even though in fact we would have found both one and the other.

In his last conversation with Mr. O.F. on February 22 of 1983, Dr. Plinio cited from memory a text that provided the *explanation* for this fact, attributing this text to the great Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide (“as commendable for his piety as for his profound learning,” as St. Louis Grignion de Montfort says of him – cf. *Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, n. 161). In reality, the text that Dr. Plinio quoted was from St. Thomas of Aquinas, and referred to the *infallibility* and rectitude with such a person gifted with wisdom judges all things that are submitted to him.

Therefore, the text of St. Thomas employs a word with an even stronger connotation than inerrancy, even though, as I will demonstrate further on, theological liberality utilizes both words with admirable largess and liberality, characteristic of the spirit of the Church. That is to say, at times it employs one for the other; at other times, it establishes a distinction between the two. Positions far from the straight jacket approach of the rationalist-positivist dialectics with which Mr. O.F. was imbued – to the measure that he was losing the spirit and the mentality of the TFP!

That Mr. O.F. did not find any support for the notion of inerrancy in the text of Cornelius a Lapide, which was sent to him by oversight, is of no great importance, since the text that applied to the matter was from St. Thomas, which was sent to him together with the text by the Jesuit theologian in the same compilation of texts under the generic heading “*Wisdom and infallibility*.” The text that Dr. Plinio cited from memory in this conversation with Mr. O.F. was the text of St. Thomas, even though he attributed it, as already said, to Cornelius a Lapide. A slip, therefore, of author and even of word, but not, however, of doctrine.

Mr. O.F., demonstrating a most primary dialectics that one would not expect to find in a secondary professor, rends his garments because the text of Cornelius a Lapide says nothing about the matter and the text of St. Thomas speaks of infallibility.

As one will see further on, the text of St. Thomas provides more than sufficient support for the notion of inerrancy as we understand it in the TFP. And Mr. O.F. once again shows himself to be foolishly insolent, saying that it was only a “check without doctrinary funds.”

It is unfortunate that he was so precipitous as to make such an affirmation without any basis before first trying to “cash that check” in the Bank of Catholic Doctrine. Such caution would have spared him the chagrin of seeing his accusation again belied, like all the others that we have already considered up to now.

It thus becomes the opportune moment to analyze the concepts of inerrancy and infallibility, which are at the root of all these accusations.

CHAPTER THREE

RICH DIVERSIFICATION IN THE USE OF THE WORD INFALLIBILITY: THE DIVERSE CONCEPTS OF INFALLIBILITY

Attacking Dr. Plinio with regard to the use of the word inerrancy and identifying it with the word infallibility, Mr. O.F. interprets these words in the strict sense of the terms, and assumes that they are used in the TFP in this same sense. This is explicable, since he seems to ignore the other meanings outside of the strict one.

Thus does he attribute to members and cooperators of the TFP and, in final analysis, to Dr. Plinio, conclusions that result from this erroneous presupposition.

It seems proper, therefore, to delve into the subject, showing the rich diversity of meanings that these words possess.

1. COMMON USAGE OF THE WORD ‘INFALLIBILITY’

In everyday English the following uses of the adjective *infallible*, or the adverb derived from it, are frequently employed:

- * The “X” has an infallible (sure) aim;
- * This medicine works infallibly (will not fail) for this sickness;
- * “I will infallibly (without fail) be at the 4th stall of such-and such a place;
- * The way that “Y” spends, he will infallibly (inevitably) lose his fortune;
- * That mathematician can infallibly (with certainty) solve any problem that you give him.

Because of this, the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* by Houghton Mifflin Co. defines *infallible* as: “1. Incapable of erring; dependable: an infallible source of information. 2. Incapable of failing: an infallible antidote. 3. Incapable of error in expounding doctrine on faith or morals. Said especially of the pope speaking *ex cathedra*. 4. (n) An infallible person or thing.”

Thus, if among ourselves, someone would use *infallible* in everyday language to express the discernment of Dr. Plinio’s political foresight or his way of directing the TFP (which, by the way, is not done), he would be staying perfectly within the customs of our language. English – as well as all civilized languages that possess the word, does not presuppose an absolute sense of the word infallible, as the letter-writer (Mr. O.F.) rationalistically seems to imagine.

2. THE CONCEPT OF ‘INFALLIBILITY’ IN SCIENTIFIC, PHILISOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

If diversification exists in common usage, an analogous fact occurs in scientific, philosophical and theological language, where the concept of “infallibility” has many applications:

1st application: The infallibility of the human-intellectual conscience

As is well known and admitted by sound philosophical thought, every human intellectual act has a knowledge of itself (called *concomitant*, or virtual conscience) which cannot be false. This is described by Fr. Leovigildo Salcedo, S.J.: “*This knowledge, concomitant conscience, cannot be false*, because the known object is the act itself by which it knows itself and, because of this, **it is impossible that this knowledge be at variance with the known thing**, which would be required for falsity” (*Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, Madrid: BAC, 1957, vol. 1, p. 249).

The same holds true for the reflexive conscience, which is the intuition (or knowledge of the actual thing as what it is), which man has concerning the intellectual act itself with regard to an external thing. The same Fr. Salcedo says this: “*It cannot be false*: because it does not take into consideration it not being that which the concomitant conscience presents, although in a more explicit and direct manner; now, since the concomitant consciousness cannot be false, neither also can the reflexive be false” (*ibid.*, pp. 249-250).

2nd application: The infallibility of the human senses

Commenting on Aristotle, St. Thomas says: The sensible, properly speaking, is that which is understood by one sense and cannot be understood by another, and concerning which **the sense cannot err**, as the sight is properly cognitive to color, the hearing to sound, and the taste to flavor (*De Anima*, L. II, lecture XIII, n. 384, Rome: Marietti, 1948, p. 100).

Thus, each one of the senses cannot be deceived when it judges the sensible that is proper to itself, even though it can be deceived should it judge the *sensible common to all* the senses (that which is quintuple; these are, according to Aristotle and St. Thomas: movement, repose, number, form and size) or of the sensible *per accidens* (as, for example, when I say that I see a sweet: sweet is sensible *per accidens* in relation to sight and properly sensible in relation to taste, but it is not absolutely sensible to all the senses (cf. Ferdinando Palmes, *Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, Madrid: BAC, 1959, vol. II, p. 530).

In philosophy the subject of the *infallibility* of the senses has been widely debated, but it is obviously not the case to do so here. I simply mention what is sufficient to point out the diverse uses that the concept of infallibility comports.

3rd application: Infallibility of man concerning the first principles

Speaking on the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope and refuting criticisms of a well-known pedant, the protestant pastor Eduardo Carlos Pereira, Fr. Leonel Franca, S.J., writes in his famous work *The Church, the Reform and Civilization*:

“Another futile objection: Infallibility is the divinization of the Pope: the ‘sacrilegious divinization of the bishop of Rome,’ says our protestant on page 371; and on page 384: ‘what does such a proclamation mean except the apotheosis and deification of the Pope?’ (Note: Luther made use of the same paralogism to affirm that man is not free. ‘The free will is an exclusively divine term, which can only be attributed to the majesty of God. ... To apply it to men would be to divinize them: There is no greater sacrilege’ – Weimar, XVIII, 636. This sophism is a hereditary fault in the protestant family.)

“Before writing his ‘dogmatic-historical study,’ Mr. C. Pereira obviously forgot all his theology. Why deification? IS infallibility an exclusively divine attribute? Yes, but (this refers to) absolute, omnimodus and unimpacted infallibility. In this way, the intelligence, the will and liberty are also exclusively divine attributes. Will Mr. C. Pereira say that man is god because he possesses intelligence, which is a divine attribute? He will deny, perhaps, that infallibility is incommunicable. Who told him this? *In the natural order, all men are infallible concerning the primary principles.* No one would err to the point of saying that $1+1=3$, that the whole is less than each one of its parts, that a thing can be and not be at the same time. **In this lies natural infallibility, a gift to the whole human species.** God desired this so that the primary principles, the support and foundation of all scientific constructions, would not vacillate in the fluctuations of doubt. In the supernatural order Christ disposed that the supreme Pastor of His Church would not err in teaching us its faith and morals so that the whole spiritual edifice of our salvation would not fall into ruins” (*The Church, the Reform and Civilization*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1934, pp. 165-166).

In this way the great Jesuit countered the protestant pedant, showing how the word infallible has degrees and diverse applications that the minister did not consider since he interpreted the word in its absolute sense, which is the protestant custom.

4th application: The infallibility that comes from the upright use of the natural faculties

In man there exists, moreover, an infallibility that comes from the upright use of the natural faculties. Cardinal Louis Billot speaks of this: “Whence it seems as much as *this infallibility* (of the Magisterium of the Church) *differs from the other* that the philosophers say exists in the natural faculties when they teach that **they are immune from all error**, granting two orders of facts: that they are applied to the object itself, and that they do so in the fitting way” (*De Ecclesia Christi*, Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1921, vol. I, p. 366).

5th application: The infallibility of scientific and human laws

Once again, this deals with a relative infallibility limited in its terms. Fr. José Hellin, S.J., clearly explains this in the work *Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, co-authored by the same professors of the Company of Jesus from the Departments of Philosophy in Spain that we have already cited, Fr. Salcedo and Fr. Palmes. He says:

“A law is one thing, and a theory, or scientific hypothesis, is another. *The law* is the essential inclination to always act in a uniform and constant way under the same circumstances. These laws are **most certain** and refer to the angle of incidence and reflection of light, or to its angle of refraction, or the laws of chemical combinations – these always remain the same, even though all the hypotheses and theories might change.

“The *theory* or *hypothesis*, however, is a certain antecedent that is presumed conjecturally as true, and that is proposed as the cause or condition of the phenomena. ...

“If, by means of this theory or hypothesis, the known facts are *sufficiently explained* and there is *no fact* opposed to such hypothesis, this hypothesis enjoys **probability**; it does not, however, enjoy certainty because, according to the laws of logic, the verification of the conditioned does not follow from the verification of the condition, because the conditioned can also be verified under other conditions.

“But if, by this theory, all the known facts are explained and if, in addition to this, it is proved that without this theory it is absolutely impossible to explain such facts, then this theory or hypothesis becomes the true thesis” (*Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, vol. II, p. 214).

As one can see, all this is most variegated, lying within the understanding of persons of good secondary formation.

Certainty, however, it is not the same when dealing with human laws, as St. Thomas judiciously says: “Therefore, human laws cannot have that **infallibility** that belongs to the demonstrated conclusions of the sciences. Nor is it necessary for every measure to be altogether **unerring** and certain, but according as it is possible in its own particular genus’ (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 91, 3, ad 3).

In this way, the human laws also enjoy certain *infallibility*, proper to its genus, but with nothing of an absolute character.

Once again, the matter has been amply unfolded, and it suffices to mention here that, on the natural plane, only the metaphysical certainty is perfect, and that the certainties that come from the physical and moral laws are certain truths, even though they be imperfect. (cf. L. Salcedo, *Philosophiae Scholasticae Summa*, vol. II, p. 361-368).

After analyzing the concept of *infallibility* in some of its multiple scientific and philosophical applications, let us now go onto examine its applications in theology.

6th application: The infallibility of prayer

I begin with the *Theology of Christian Perfection* by Fr. Antonio Royo Marin, O.P., which establishes the following thesis: “Prayer, when it fills the requirements, infallibly obtains what is asked by virtue of the *promises of God*” (*Theology of Christian Perfection*, Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1962, p. 113).

The divine promise concerning prayer, as Fr. Royo Marin reminds us, is repeated insistently in Sacred Scriptures (Mt. 7:7-8; Mt. 21:22; Jn. 14:13-14; Jn. 15:7; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 16:23-24, and I Jn. 5:14-15). The author then asks: “But what conditions are required for prayer to **infallibly** obtain and fulfill the divine promises?” (*Ibid.*, p. 184)

These conditions are expressed quite clearly by St. Thomas: The conditions are four by which, all being present, a person will always obtain what he requests: (1) that one must pray for himself; (2) that

one pray for those things necessary for salvation; (3) that one pray piously, and (4) that one pray with perseverance (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 83, 15, ad 3).

Fr. Royo Marin develops these four conditions. By way of illustration, I include excerpts from only two aspects, quoting always from Fr. Royo Marin:

“First condition: The reason that one must pray for himself is that the granting of a divine grace always demands a subject who is properly *disposed*, and it may be that one’s neighbor is not disposed to receive that which is asked in prayer. ... This is not to say, however, that praying for others is always inefficacious. On the contrary, it often obtains what is asked, but we cannot have *infallible* certainty of an answer because we cannot be certain of the dispositions of the person for whom we pray. We may ask God that He *dispose* our neighbor for a certain effect through his infinite mercy, but God has not promised this to anyone and therefore we cannot obtain it *infallibly*” (*Theology of Christian Perfection*, p. 114).

St. Thomas reduces to only one word the diverse conditions that are required *on the part of the person who prays*: “Piety” (That is, that he pray piously). By this it is understood that a person pray (1) with *humility*, (2) with *firm confidence*, (3) *in the name of Christ*, and (4) with *attention*.

“Some authors,” comments Fr. Royo Marin, “include all these subjective conditions under the heading of the state of grace, without which, they say, no one can pray piously. But they are mistaken. St. Thomas raises this very objection, and this is his solution: ‘The sinner cannot pray piously in the sense that his prayer is informed by the supernatural habit of the virtue of piety, which he lacks, but he can pray piously in the sense that he can ask for something that pertains to piety, just as he who does not have the habit of justice may nevertheless desire something that is just. And although the prayer of the sinner is not *meritorious*, it can nevertheless have an *impetratory* value, because merit is based on justice, while impetration is based on pure gratuity or liberality’ (II-II, 83, 16, ad 2; cf. III, Supl. 72, ad 4).

“Consequently, although the state of grace is undoubtedly most fitting for the INFALLIBLE efficacy of prayer, it is not absolutely necessary. It is one thing to demand a wage that is due in justice, but is something quite distinct to beg for alms. In the second case, no other titles are necessary but one’s need. What is always necessary, however, is the previous impulse of an *actual grace*, which can be given and actually is given to sinners” (*Theology of Christian Perfection*, pp. 141-145).

After underscoring the role of perseverance in prayer, Fr. Royo Marin concludes: “Such are the conditions for the *infallible* efficacy of prayer. In practice, however, we obtain many things from God without fulfilling all these conditions because of the superabundance of the divine mercy. But if we do fulfill all the conditions, we shall infallibly obtain, by reason of the divine promise, even those graces which we could not merit in an absolute sense” (*ibid.*, p. 115).

As one sees, even the prayer of the man in the state of mortal sin is *infallible* when the required conditions are all present.

7th application: Infallibility of the virtue of obedience

St. Ignatius of Loyola speaks of the virtue of obedience in a letter to Fr. Manuel Godinho, dated from Rome on January 31, 1552. He says: “We rightly hold any operation whatsoever in which charity is exercised to God’s glory to be very holy and suitable for us, and those activities even more so in which the **infallible rule of obedience** to our superiors has placed us” (*Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Chicago, Ill.: Loyola University Press, 1959, p. 255).

The two last applications show with what largesse and, at the same time, with what assurance Catholic theology uses the word *infallible*, without any of that strait-jacket attitude which characterizes the cartesian-positivist rationalism that still impregnates so many contemporary cultural ambiances (ceding way rapidly, however, to the sorcery of parapsychology).

While much more could be said on the subject of theological applications of the word *infallible*, I will now touch more directly on the subject that specifically relates to the object of this letter.

8th application: The infallibility of the wise man

Wisdom can come to man in four distinct manners: as natural acquired virtue, as supernatural infused virtue, as a gift of the Holy Ghost, and as a charism.

Treating on the gift of Wisdom, St. Thomas says about natural wisdom:

“I answer that, according to the Philosopher (*Metaph.* I, 2), it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause. By means of that cause we are able to form a **most certain judgment** about other causes, and according thereto all things should be set in order” (II-II, 45, 1, *resp.*).

As for natural intellectual virtue, wisdom can exist in man independent of sanctifying grace.

When sanctifying grace enters the soul with Baptism or it returns with the Sacrament of Confession, the soul is adorned with all the virtues that God infuses in the soul, by which the man has the propensity, facility and readiness to know and to do good (cf. *Maggiore Catechism promulgated by Saint Pius X*, Milan: Edizione Ares, 1979, p. 195).

Thus, while the *natural virtue* of wisdom is acquired by man through the course of time, he already possesses the *supernatural virtue* of wisdom since Baptism. He loses it with sin, and recovers it with absolution in the Sacrament of Penance.

Man receives the *gift of Wisdom* together with the rest of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as well as the sanctifying grace that is communicated to him by Baptism.

The *gift of the Holy Ghost* can be distinguished from the *supernatural virtue*: For example, among other points, the latter disposes the man to do good *through his own efforts*, while the gift of the Holy Ghost disposes the man *to allow himself to be guided by God*.

To each of these modalities of wisdom corresponds a proportionate degree of infallibility.

Treating on the relationship of the gifts with the Beatitudes, St. Thomas says: In a similar way, the gift of *wisdom*, by which it is proper to judge, be it ordaining or sanctioning the spiritual things that the intellect understands, **will judge and ordain infallibly and uprightly** in respect to all things that are submitted to it, be they apprehensions, affections or operations; it is in this that a certain semblance to the Divinity will appear in men, by the fact that God took the name of man to sanction and to judge, and in this semblance man will show himself manifestly to be a child of God. From which, in the seventh beatitude, which is reduced to wisdom, it is said: “*for they will be called children of God*” (*III Sententiarum*, d. 34, q. 1. art. 4, n. 115).

This is the phrase of St. Thomas that is the object of controversy in the formerly mentioned alterations of Mr. O.F.

By all that has already been said here, as well as by that is still to be said, there is no reason whatsoever to take the word “*infallibiliter*,” which appears in this phrase in the absolute sense, as exclusive of God (as, for example, was done by the protestant pastor Eduardo Carlos Pereira, and so fittingly rebutted by Fr. Leonel Franca).

St. Thomas even explains how, in the operation of man, wisdom appears as “*a certain semblance to the Divinity*,” since God took the name of man justly to sanction and judge – “*a providendo et iudicando nom acceperit*” – and that in this is manifested the resemblance of man to God. This leads to the conclusion of the whole topic by St. Thomas, where he says that the wise man completes the seventh beatitude: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

In *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas explains this point in more detail and with his always enlightening clarity:

“Now a peacemaker is one who makes peace, either in himself, or in others: and in both cases this is the result of setting in due order those things in which peace is established, for ‘peace is the tranquility of order,’ according to Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, XIX. 13). Now it belongs to wisdom to set things in order, as the Philosopher declares (*Metaph.* I, 2), wherefore peace-ableness is fittingly ascribed to wisdom” (II-II, 45, 6, *resp.*).

Then, St. Thomas explains that since Our Lord Jesus Christ is Wisdom Incarnate, the peacemakers who receive the gift of wisdom will achieve with this a certain participation in the likeness of the Son of God, and, because of this, they are called children of God (*ibid.*).

Nothing in these texts speak in favor of an absolute infallibility, but rather of an imparted infallibility, which man obtains with the gift of wisdom. And it is exactly this relative and imparted infallibility – and not the absolute infallibility – that is spoken of in the TFP when it touches on the subject of inerrancy, for which, therefore, the text of St. Thomas furnishes more than sufficient basis. Because he did not understand any of this, Mr. O.F. derisively speaks of the “check lacking doctrinary funds,” a precipitous and groundless accusation.

*9th application: Infallibility of the charism of Wisdom and of the discernment of spirits.
Wisdom and prudence.*

It remains to say a word about the charism of wisdom and about a correlated subject, which is the discernment of spirits.

I have already shown the difference between the *supernatural infused virtue* and the *gift* (of wisdom). Charism is distinguished from both by the fact that the former are given to men primordially in view of their own sanctification, while *charism* is conceded for the good of others, or for the common good of the Church. The gift and the supernatural virtue are present in the soul with sanctifying grace; charism can exist in some persons independent of the state of grace. That is, charism can exist even in the sinner. Charism itself has no direct and necessary relation to the merit of the person.

St. Thomas speaks of all this with his sublime clarity and spirit of synthesis:

“For the measure of right judgment attained by some, whether in the contemplation of Divine things or in directing human affairs according to Divine rules, is no more than suffices for their salvation. This measure is wanting to none who is without mortal sin through having *sanctifying grace*, since if nature does not fail in necessities, much less does grace fail: wherefore it is written (I Jn. II:27) ‘(His) unction teacheth you of all things.’

“Some, however, receive a higher degree of the gift of wisdom, both as to the contemplation of Divine things (by both knowing more exalted mysteries and being able to impart this knowledge to others) and as to the direction of human affairs according to Divine rules (by being able to direct not only themselves but also others according to those rules). This degree of wisdom is not common to all that have *sanctifying grace*, but belongs rather to the *gratuitous graces*, which the Holy Ghost dispenses as He wills, according to I Cor. XII:8: ‘To one indeed by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom,’ etc.” (II-II, 45, 5, *resp.*).

Quite expressive of the nature of charism is the term *gratuitous grace*, the ‘*gratis data*’ as St. Thomas calls it.

Moreover, as St. Thomas says, to wisdom belongs not only the manifestation of the highest mysteries, but also the direction of earthly things according to divine norms. It becomes opportune, therefore, to establish now the relation between wisdom and prudence.

St. Thomas: 'Prudence Is Wisdom in Man'

In the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, H.D. Noble defines the working of prudence in this way: “The proper action of prudence is to direct human actions toward the moral ideal throughout the multiple and varied circumstances of life. ... (It is) to foresee an action that has still not been realized and to prepare for it should it be realized because one judges that it is in accordance with the present situation and with the opportunity of the existing circumstances: This is prudence.

“Obviously, this requires foresight; it is necessary to consider and weigh in advance the consequences, the advantages or disadvantages. **This foresight is the important element for prudence** and

the very word ‘prudence’ etymologically signifies foresight and providence. It is because of this that foresight is essential to the principal action of prudence: the precept. To this discerning foresight of future action belongs all the diligence and all the dexterity of the practical spirit. ... Experience of life, sagacity, docility, cautious good sense and correct reasoning all serve to work for the good and judge well beforehand the action as to what it will and should be. To be provident is to be prudent (cf. II-II, 49, 6)” (entry *Prudence*, DTC, vol. II, cols. 1051-1052).

This long excerpt is cited because it helps to establish both sides of the relationships between prudence and wisdom; it also serves to set the stage for the explanation of the concept of prophetic inerrancy as we understand it in the TFP and as it is well explained in the Refutation to the notorious French *Rapport* (cf. *Imbroglia - Détraction - Délire / Remarques sur un Rapport Concernant les TFP, Tradition - Famille - Propriété*, Asnières: France, 1980. vol. I, pp. 253-284; 309-310).

Prudence is wisdom in man, according to the definition of St. Thomas: “Wisdom considers the absolutely highest cause: so that the consideration of the highest cause in any particular genus belongs to wisdom in that genus. Now, in the genus of human acts, the highest cause is the common end of all human life, and it is this end that prudence intends. ... Wherefore it is clear that prudence is wisdom about human affairs: but not wisdom absolutely, because it is not about the absolutely highest cause, for it is about human good, and this is not the best thing of all. And so, it is stated significantly that ‘prudence is wisdom of man,’ but not wisdom absolutely (II-II, 47, 2, ad 1).

After thus establishing the relation between wisdom and prudence in man, it becomes meet to say something about discernment of spirits. I refer again to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, under the entry *Discernment of Spirits* by A. Chollet, who makes this distinction: “Discernment is an *art* or a *gift*: in the first case, it is acquired by the actual effort of the man, inspiring him in the laws or counsels of the Holy Scripture or of Tradition; in the second case, it is *infused* by a special grace” (DTC, Paris: 1920, vol. IV, col. 1401).

The infused discernment “is infallible, but rare”; the acquired discernment “is far from being infallible and presents great difficulties” (*ibid.*, col. 1401).

The *gift* of discernment, “being a charisma, is ordinarily reserved to the saints and on exception conceded to sinners” (*ibid.*, col. 1412).

“There is no doubt that, through the course of the centuries that have passed since St. Paul revealed to us the existence of this charisma, the gift of discernment was conceded to many saints. Some, like the Savior, Who saw the secret thoughts of His disciples (Mt. 9:47) or of the Pharisees or the movements that agitated their hearts; others can, under the form of perfumes or in other ways, perceive the state of grace or of sin in which men find themselves” (*ibid.*, col. 1413).

“In accordance with what has just been said, one sees that the act of discernment is twofold: One is rare and pertains less to this gift and more properly to the gift of prophecy, which consists of the knowledge of the secrets of the heart (cf. St. Thomas, I-II, 111, 4); the other, more frequent, is that which is properly the discernment of spirits and consists of discerning the secrets of hearts – being already known, normally or miraculously – by a judicious judgment of that origin, good or bad, from which they proceed” (*ibid.*).

In this respect, St. John of the Cross remarks in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel*: “But it must be known that those whose spirits are purged can learn by natural means with great readiness, and some more readily than others, that which is in the inward spirit or heart, and the inclinations and talents of men, and this by outward indications, albeit very slight ones, as words, movements and other signs. For, even as the devil can do this, since he is spirit, even so likewise can the spiritual man, according to the words of the Apostle, who says: ‘*Spiritualis autem judicat omnia*’ (‘He that is spiritual judgeth all things’) (I Cor. II:15)” (book II, c. 26, Image Books, 1958, p. 319).

A. Chollet speaks on the *infallibility* of the gift of discernment in his previously cited *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*: “This supernatural instinct, based on naturally disproportionate exterior signs, is a type of divinization that does not confer any formal infallibility. The gift of discernment does not enjoy such an infallibility unless it yields forth the secrets of a soul by an express revelation from God manifested to the prophet.

“One can say of this gift that which St. Thomas taught concerning prophecy: This, he says, is perfect, be it by express or by imperfect revelation, this being by a most mysterious instinct. The first carries in itself certainty, the second has less; not that it can be deceived, but it is such that it does not know in a evident way that it comes from God. (II-II, 171, 5)” (DTC, vol. IV, cols. 1413-1414).

And the same author explains of what this informal infallibility consists: “The gift of discernment always enlightens a man, it enlightens him **INFALLIBLY**, and the things that it inspires are **always and materially true**; but **certainty** or **formal infallibility** is lacking when that which God inspires and **which is thus necessarily** true is unaware that it is inspired by God, and thus doubts subjectively the things that are objectively certain (cf. Suarez, *De Gratia*, part I, prol. III, c. V, n. 43, Paris, 1857, vol. VII, p. 164; St. Bernard, Sermon XVII, *Super Cantic.*, P. L., vol. 183, col. 855)” (DTC, vol. IV, col. 1414).

Thus, once again, one can speak of infallibility as the charism of wisdom and the discernment of spirits without need of admitting a *formal infallibility*. And the margin of possibility is always there to interpret the charism of discernment to be that which it really is not.

I will continue to show the wide range of applications that the word infallibility finds in Catholic theology.

10th application: Inerrancy or infallibility of Sacred Scriptures

Fr. Miquel Nicolau says in the *Sacrae Theologiae Summa* of the Jesuit Fathers, Professors at the Department of Theology in Spain: “Thesis 8. **All the sentences of Scriptures are infallibly true.** Notions: *Infallibility* signifies not only *absence* of error, but *impossibility of error* in the intelligent subject, or in his sayings and writings. Because of this, the infallibility of all the sentences of Holy Scriptures signify not only the fact of their truth (*inerrancy*), but the impossibility of any error. The question, therefore, is not only one of fact (*de facto*), but also of right (*de jure*)” (Madrid: BAC, 1958, vol. I, p. 1085).

In the same work of the Spanish Jesuit theologians, Fr. Joaquim Salaverri underscores the distinction between inerrancy and infallibility: “a) *Infallibility de facto*, or mere inerrancy, is the simple fact of immunity from errors; b) *Infallibility de jure* is the impossibility of error (*ibid.*, vol. I, p. 670).

On the other hand, Fr. Auguste-Alexis Goupil, S.J., author of the 15-volume *Une Théologie en Français*, speaking on the effect of inspiration in the Holy Books, which is “*inerrancy*,” says: “True infallibility does not deal only with an inerrancy *de facto*, but also *de jure*” (*La Règle de la Foi*, Laval, Mayenne: Imprimerie-Librairie Goupil, 1945, vol. II, pp. 81-82).

Using the word “*inerrancy*” for the first time in French in his work edited in 1945, Fr. Goupil makes the following footnote: “Even though this technical term does not belong to the French language, it expresses so well the idea of ‘the absence of error, *de facto* and *de jure*’ in the Holy Books, *it has entered in such a way into the usage of exegetics and biblical theologians that certainly no one will object that I employ it*” (*ibid.*, p. 14, note 1).

Once again then, Dr. Plinio, we see before us a theological terminology of admirable *largesse*, for, while two authors (Fr. Nicolau and Fr. Salaverri) establish a clear-cut distinction between inerrancy (*de facto*) and infallibility (*de jure*), another author (Fr. Goupil) includes in the concept of inerrancy the absence of error *de facto* as well as *de jure*... It is a simple question of not tripping up over words, as St. Hilary said, cited by St. Thomas: “Because things are not subject to speech, but speech to things” (I-II, 96, 6, ad 3).

11th application: Infallibility of the Pope and of the Church

The same concepts of inerrancy *de facto* and inerrancy *de jure*, changing at times regarding discernment and at times regarding the definition of the terms inerrancy and infallibility, appear when theologians treat of the infallibility of the Church.

Thus does E. Dublanchy in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* say this: “As for the magisterium established by Jesus Christ in His Church, it is manifest that the infallibility with which She is divinely conferred is not a simply **inerrancy *de facto***, even be it perpetually realized; it is an **inerrancy *de jure***, by virtue of which the teaching authority in the Church is preserved from all error” (entry *Église*, DTC, vol. IV, col. 2175). I point out that in the text the word “*inerrance*” appears two times, a word which, although not a part of everyday French, nonetheless enjoys free usage in theological language.

Cardinal Charles Journet, speaking on the divine assistance that the Church enjoys, also explains that “it is more than a simple **inerrancy *de facto***, it represents an **inerrancy *de jure***, because the Church can, in all circumstances, count upon the special assistance of God” (*L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962, vol. 1, p. 432).

On this point, Cardinal Journet adds in a footnote citing Cardinal Billot, translating from Latin to French: “Infallibility is distinguished from simple inerrancy. There is *inerrancy* when someone is, in himself, exposed to error but *de facto* possesses the truth. There is *infallibility* when a person is not deceived nor cannot be deceived. However, inerrancy *de jure*, opposed to simple inerrancy *de facto*, cannot be distinguished from infallibility” (L. Billot, *De Ecclesia Christi*, Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1921, vol. I, p. 366 – italics by Cardinal Journet). In these texts, the word “*inerrance*” always appears in French.

Finally, I turn once again to our renowned Fr. Leonel Franca, S.J.: “After thus painstakingly determining the organ, or subject, of **infallibility**, the conciliator definition, with equal perspicuity, needs the object. The privilege of **inerrancy** understands only the questions relative to faith or to customs: *in doctrina de fide et de moribus definenda* (in defined doctrine regarding faith and morals)” (*A Igreja, a Reforma e a Civilização*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1934, p. 163).

As one can see, Fr. Leonel Franca interprets the term infallibility, even *de jure*, as synonymous with inerrancy. I insist: It is absolutely necessary to not trip up over the words or to confuse the concepts, the latter being more important than the former, as St. Hilary said.

12th application: The divine infallibility

Hic taceat omnis lingua (here all tongues must be silent): “God possesses an infinite knowledge; God knows Himself in an infinitely perfect way; God knows all that has existed, exists or will exist, even the bad, in the moral as well as the physical order, as well as in the free acts of intelligent creatures (A. Michel, entry *Science de Dieu*, DTC, Paris, 1941, vol. XIV, col. 1600).

“The divine knowledge, being infinite, extends to everything: thus it is called all-knowing” (*ibid.*, col. 1598).

3. ABSOLUTE INFALLIBILITY, RELATIVE AND IMPARTED

As has been clearly defined by these texts, papal infallibility itself is not identified with the absolute infallibility of God. It is an *absolute*, but *imparted*, infallibility. It is *absolute* in the sense that the Pope – under the necessary conditions for the exercise of infallibility – by the will of God *cannot* fall into error. Nor can the Pope in such circumstances refuse the help of God, thus he does not err. It is imparted because it is a communication of the divine infallibility to the Head of the Church.

On the contrary, the *relative* and *imparted* infallibility of the man who possesses the virtue, the gift or the charism of wisdom is such that he can refuse or not exercise that virtue, gift or charisma. He will be infallible only *in the cases* where he does not refuse the help of God, or is not lacking in it.

If this man has a long and uninterrupted habit of corresponding to these favors of God (proven also in arduous circumstances where fidelity to this help demands from him heroic sacrifices), one can have the *moral certainty* that such a man does not err. One does not, however, have the *absolute certainty*.

From this comes the legitimate distinction that can be established between infallibility and inerrancy, reserving the terms for two different things: *Infallibility* will thus be the impossibility of error; inerrancy is the firm or well-entrenched habit of not erring (*habitual inerrancy*), which is different from the impossibility of error.¹²

¹² Formally speaking, three concepts of inerrancy could be distinguished:

a. Inerrancy *de facto*, or mere *inerrancy*, which is the absence of error (an abstract form of the condition of *inerrante de facto*, which is the original sense of the term inerrancy);

b. Inerrancy *de jure*, or inerrability, which is the impossibility of error (equivalent to infallibility, in the sense that it is used in biblical exegesis);

c. Habitual inerrancy, of one who is habituated to the good and to truth, through virtue or through wisdom (Equivalent to the *viability* of wisdom or prudence, both not being infallible).

An example will help to clarify this difference: If I know a Sister of Charity, venerable by her age and her virtue, I can ask: Is it possible that one night she would kill a child, cook it and eat it?

“Impossible,” one would say, *generally speaking*. That is, the profound habit of detesting a crime like this is so deeply rooted in her spirit that I can have the *certainty* that she would not do this. Nonetheless, this certainty is not on par with the certainty inspired by the absolute infallibility of God or, participatively, of the Pope.

The Portuguese proverb says: “It is impossible only for God to err,” or, I add, “It is impossible only for the Church to err.” This impossibility is a true infallibility, in the full sense of the word.

The case of the Sister of Charity differs in the degree to which I am certain that she is not going to kill, roast and eat a child, because, in thesis, in the strictest sense of the word, this could occur. The degree of firmness of my persuasion is not, in this case, the same as when I affirm that the Church cannot err.

The distinction made above between infallibility and inerrancy has the same scope.

We can have confidence in the inerrancy of a person to the degree that we have reached the conclusion that it exists in a person. Thus, it is legitimate that I would believe in a determined thing because of the inerrancy of such a person.

In this case, however, it is necessary that I can also believe in view of the intrinsic merit of the question, since inerrancy is confirmed by the continual verification of the correct discernment of the person in whom I confide. And it contains, therefore, a confirmation of what the inerrant person says or does that is within my capacity to know with all certainty.

The inerrant person should view such a confirmation with complete good will, to the point of helping whoever makes it.

There is no clearer manifestation of this as when the Magisterium of the Church, even when exercising her absolute infallibility, maternally gives the rational explanations for why such a teaching is the way it is, rather than some other way. When the human spirit believes because the Church teaches, it practices an act of faith in the proper sense of the word, because of the person’s faith in the infallibility of the Church. But, at the same time, the human spirit feels itself maternally treated and has the conditions for a redoubled certainty that the Church has reason for what she teaches when She provides her rationale.

Then, the position of the Catholic is this: He believes because the Church teaches, and he would believe even if he did not understand the rational proof of some truth, because the Church is infallible. But he also knows that the fixed teachings of the Church can be logically proven in some demonstrable manner, and this gives him great security in the interpretation and understanding of what the Church teaches.

This is not without its practical advantages in many circumstances. Since “the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh weak” (Matt. 26:41) if the Catholic has a general notion of the reasons for which the Church teaches what She teaches, in an hour of weakness, he has a greater support for his faith, which, above all, must not falter.

All these considerations play a role in the distinction between inerrancy and infallibility. Given the vigilance a man needs to have with himself in order not to fall into error and to sin, he should equip himself with all recourses in order not to vacillate in the faith and in the truth.

Thus should he ignite over that which is offered as objects for his adhesion all the holophotes at his disposal: the holophotes of faith, in the case of the Church; the holophotes of confidence in the case of a person in whom he recognizes inerrancy; but, in addition to this, the holophotes of reason. And all this must be done with respect to the hierarchy of the values.

In the next chapter I will show how these notions are applied in the TFP.

* * *

CHAPTER IV

THE NOTION OF INERRANCY APPLIED WITHIN THE TFP

Thus seeing, in thesis, the notion of *inerrancy* and how a distinction between it and *infallibility* can be legitimately established, let us see how this notion is applied to Dr. Plinio within the TFP.

1. HOW THE NOTION OF INERRANCY WAS BORN WITHIN THE TFP

Any person who comes into an even superficial contact with Dr. Plinio, and more, one who follows his newspaper articles, reads his books or manifestos published by the press, assists at his conferences or participates at the meetings over which he presides, is at once impressed by the correctness of his views, the acuity of his commentaries, and the largesse and profundity of the panoramas that he presents.

This, which can be verified by a simple meeting or by merely hearing one of his conferences or even by reading one of his works, obviously is noticed even more by those who have the good fortune to live with him and collaborate in his magnificent work.

Since the times of *Legionário* in the second half of the '30s, his first companions in the ideal have admired these qualities and, above all, were impressed with the accuracy of the predictions that he made concerning the imminent war, as well as the events that followed once it broke forth. This accuracy is recorded in the pages of the *Legionário*, the official weekly of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, a periodical that was read even by persons outside the Catholic ambiances as a fountain of orientation amidst the tumultuous events of the time. For example, the case is known of a journalist, most controversial but undoubtedly brilliant, founder and director of a large chain of newspapers throughout Brazil, who had the habit of keeping the *Legionário* on his desk.

Moreover, it was these qualities that made Dr. Plinio become, from the beginning of his career, a Catholic leader with influence throughout Brazil, extending far beyond the narrow limits of the religious sphere.

It is natural that, with new generations of increasingly numerous disciples who have gathered around him, this admiration and enthusiasm would in no way diminish but, on the contrary, increase.

And, to the measure that the contemporary chaos has grown, so also has the enthusiasm increased with which the most recent generations have recognized and noted these qualities of Dr. Plinio.

It then becomes opportune, naturally, to seek an explanation in terms of Catholic Doctrine for a fact so notorious and worthy of admiration, which was the accuracy of his predictions and conduct, which acts as the source for the growth of the TFP, not only in Brazil, but throughout Latin America and North America, extending as well to Europe and Africa.

The word *inerrancy* then surged with the desire, dear to the souls of Catholics, of marking an essential difference in relation to the privilege of the *infallibility* enjoyed by the pontifical authority. The

word *inerrancy* was coined in the conventional sense of the word, according to the usage of legitimate and leading theologians, as I have shown in the prior chapter.

The concept of inerrancy, strictly linked to that of prophetism, was thus born organically, and clarified itself to the degree that souls were open to this reality or that the needs of the controversies surrounding the TFP obliged an explanation. One such instance was the notorious French *Rapport*, where a whole chapter on the question of prophetism in the Church was prepared for the refutation. This chapter examined the official prophetism inherent in the Hierarchy, as well as private prophetism concerning the gift or charism that the Holy Spirit distributes “as He pleases” – “*prout vult*” – for the good of the whole Church (cf. *Imbroglia - Détraction - Délire / Remarques sur un Rapport Concernant les TFPs*, Tradition, Famille, Propriété, vol. I, chap. VII, pp. 253-284).

2. WHY THE NOTION OF INERRANCY WAS NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESSED IN THE RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH *RAPPORT*

There is no need to reproduce here all that has already been sufficiently explained (in the *Réfutation* to the French *Rapport*). Let it suffice to point out that the anonymous author of the *Rapport* focused more on the theme of prophetism, and, consequently, this was the subject that was addressed more directly in the response.

The *Rapport* alluded in passing to the notion of inerrancy, stating that it was common practice in the TFP to affirm: “*The TFP has never failed.*” (“*La TFP n’a jamais failli*”) “*Dr. Plinio cannot be mistaken*” (“*Dr. Plinio ne peut pas se tromper*”) (p. 61). In response to this accusation, the refutation published by the French TFP devoted two pages of the first volume (pp. 309-310). There they affirm that “the TFPs publicly affirm their whole purpose as civic associations of Christian inspiration, based on the traditional teachings of the Church. In their meetings and conferences, as well as in their publications, traditional pontifical documents are always invoked as decisive proof that the doctrinary positions of the TFP are correct.

“Truly one cannot imagine that the TFPs, and Dr. Plinio personally, could do more in this matter

...

“Now, whoever alleges the opinion of another as decisive in a debate implicitly recognizes himself to be fallible and proclaims the infallibility of the other.

“In concrete terms, the Brazilian TFP and Dr. Plinio repeatedly affirm their own fallibility and proclaim the infallibility of the Church” (*ibid.*).

And, after calling to mind that the TFP has never published any document that involved Church doctrine without consulting the theologians who honor the organization with their friendship and frequent visits to the group’s seats, the refutation concludes: “Where, then, is this arrogance and absurd infallibility? Dr. Plinio has never pretended to be a theologian. He presents himself only as one of the faithful with a firm Catholic sense. And one of the elements of Catholic sense in a layman consists in rendering the respect due to the opinion of theologians and in accepting not only with humble consonance, but with avidity, that which the Church teaches” (*ibid.*).

Since the French *Rapport* used the verb “*faillir*,” it is understandable that the refutation to this false accusation would reply in its rebuttal to this “*arrogant and absurd infallibility*.” The term infallibility was not, therefore, the topic under consideration.

Always bold and little versed in theological terminology, Mr. O.F. feels himself to be in the right when he affirms that the French *Rapport* even “raises the question of the belief of the members of the group (cf. Prior Considerations, Note 3) in your infallibility. In the ‘Imbroglia’ you (Dr. Plinio) deny that you are “infallible.” It would be difficult for you to deny that you consider yourself inerrant because the ‘*Imbroglia*’ was published in French, a language that does not possess a word equivalent to inerrancy” (Letter 83, p. 13).

It has already been shown how “*inerrance*” and “*inerrant*” have free course in theological language in France. Moreover, in accordance with the best linguistic theories, the vocabulary of a language is not made up only of the words catalogued in a dictionary – and even less made up only of words officially acknowledged by the Academy of Letters. But it is also made up of all the words that compose the specialized terminology of a determined branch of science, art, a profession, etc. Even more, to the vocabulary of this language also belongs the words that are never used by anyone, but that, in accordance with the good rules of the formation of words of languages, can come to be used by someone who speaks this language in such a way as to be normally understood by other persons who also speak the same language (cf. Joseph Vendryes, *Le Langage*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1968, pp. 210-211).

Therefore, the words “*inerrance*” and “*inerrant*” should be considered as belonging to the vocabulary of the French language since, even though they are not employed in common usage, they have already been adopted in the usage of theologians.¹³ Thus, it is not correct to say that French is a “language that does not possess a word equivalent to inerrancy.” With this peremptory affirmation, Mr. O.F. simply demonstrates his ignorance of theological terminology in the French language.

This ignorance should by no means cause surprise because no one is obliged to know a specialized terminology, especially in a foreign language. What should cause surprise is the brazenness with which the accuser departs from this ignorance to launch this insult against Dr. Plinio and accuse him unjustly of this unworthy manner of proceeding.

In reference to the *Refutation* to the French *Rapport*, it behooves us to point out that the accused always has the right to restrict his defenses to the limits of what has been accused. If, then, the French *Rapport* used the word “*faillir*,” which naturally leads to the idea of “*infaillibilité*,” it was this accusation that should have been confronted. And this was in fact done. There was no reason, therefore, to specific-

¹³ From the theological language, as is natural, the word filters into the current Catholic language. Thus, the well-known manual of Catholic Doctrine by Boulenger already uses it with no inconvenience: for example, in the following phrase: “by the fact that God is the author of Sacred Scriptures, it follows that it is *inventa de erro*. However, it is necessary to note that inerrancy (*inerrance*) does not apply except to the original text, that which issued from the hands of the sacred writer” (A. Boulenger, *La Doctrine Catholique*, Lyon–Paris: Librairie Catholique Emmanuel Vitte, 1927, part I, p. 14).

And the *Larousse Universel in 2 volumes / Nouveau Dictionnaire Encyclopedique* published under the direction of Claude Auge, specialized acceptance: “entry *Inerrance*, n.f. (lat. *inerrantia*). Quality attributed by theologians to the Bible, which consists in not having errors.”

ly deal with the concept of inerrancy, especially since a much higher theme was the subject of focus – the matter of prophetism – to which the refutation consecrates no less than two chapters: one to the subject of prophetism as such, and the other to correlative accusations.

Thus, the accusation of Mr. O.F. that the *Réfutation* to the French *Rapport* cleverly sidesteps the question of inerrancy lacks any basis, be it for the alleged reason (the word “*inerrance*” does not exist in French), as well as for the insinuated objective (to escape an embarrassing question).

The question of inerrancy is not at all embarrassing for the TFP, because its usage was based on a fact notorious in the most diverse ambiances of the entity – and even outside of it – a fact for which, as I already said, an explanation and a word was sought in terms of Catholic Doctrine.

I will enter now into the heart of the matter.

3. CONFORMITY OF THE NOTION OF INERRANCY WITH CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Let me first cite excerpts of various concepts and clarifications from the refutation to the French *Rapport*, which will serve as an introduction to the matter:

The TFP holds a weekly meeting, in which about 200 members and cooperators of diverse levels of responsibility and coming from throughout the Country (as well as visitors from other TFPs) take part. The meeting is devoted to the analysis of facts of interest that have occurred during the week. Since almost all the news used in the meeting consists of clippings from newspapers, this meeting took on the name of *Clippings Meeting* (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 268-269).

The method used by Dr. Plinio in this meeting has always been the same throughout these 50 years. It corresponds to the Thomist trilogy: to see, to judge and to act:

- a. *To see* the national and international contemporary situation, based on clippings and informative facts furnished by those who should so desire to present them;
- b. *To judge* the situation, that is, to analyze it in the light of Catholic Doctrine in its respective time reference, its historical antecedents, and the contingent developments to which it gives rise.
- c. *To act* (in Clippings meetings) results in outlining plans, foreseeing means of action, and at times also in assigning missions (cf. *ibid.*, p. 272).

Predictions rise, in the Clippings Meetings, as remote hypotheses, of which some die naturally and others are expanded upon and ratified with the course of events, to the point of giving birth at times to a *moral certainty*: it is them characterized as *foresight*.

The past issues of *Legionário* and *Catolicismo*, as well as his articles and interviews to the daily press, exist to demonstrate how, throughout these last 50 years, the foresight of Dr. Plinio has been habitually confirmed by the facts – and at times notoriously and contrary to the expectations of the general public (cf. *ibid.*, p. 273).

Now, foresight, as I showed in the prior chapter (cf. 9th application of the concept of infallibility) is an act proper to prudence, which is, in its turn, proper to wisdom in man.

It then became the case to ask in the TFP is this notable accuracy of Dr. Plinio's predictions, which has as its corollary the extraordinary discernment of the orientation that he imparted to the TFP, was not the fertile fruit of the virtue and the gift of wisdom shining forth in him, perhaps even the fruit of a charisma, since charism is given by the Holy Ghost and acts not for one's own good, but for the good of others, as I have already explained. It would be, then, the charism of wisdom, and perhaps, as well, the charism of prophecy, of which St. Paul speaks (Rom. 32:4-8; I Cor. 12:1-11 and 28:30; Eph. 4:7-13), added to the gift of discernment of spirits. Obviously, the response to this question was never a question posed within the TFP. What matters here is not to demonstrate that Dr. Plinio was favored with such charisms, but to analyze if this is consonant with Catholic Doctrine in order to see if it is legitimate to speak of inerrancy in reference to this verification.

What was said in the 9th application of the concept of infallibility shows the perfect consonance of this hypothesis with the explanations of eminent theologians enjoying wide prestige in the Church.

It behooves us here to note that we insist upon the *relative infallibility* – that which we call inerrancy – which issues from the possession of these gifts.

Concerning this, we quote Cardinal Journet from a subordinate topic subtitled "*Prophetic knowledge will not be extinguished in the Church*": "The Church knows not only revealed material, but she is also enlightened about the *state of the world* and about the movement of spirits. The most lucid of her children will participate in this miraculous insight. They will know how to discern, according to divine light, the profound sentiments of their epoch; they will know how to diagnose the true evils and prescribe the real remedies. While the mass will seem affected by blindness, while even the best will hesitate or grope their way, they, with a supernatural and infallible instinct, will hit the target.

"The passing of the centuries will reveal the sureness of their vision. St. Athanasius or St. Cyril, St. Augustine or St. Benedict, Pope St. Gregory VII, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic – they saw with a type of prophetic clarity the march of the times and the orientation that was necessary to give to souls. The author of *City of God*, the contemplative who founded the rule of the Carthusians 800 years ago, St. Thomas who, 300 years before the Reform, elucidated the truths that were most contested at the threshold of the new times, Joan of Arc, Teresa of Ávila: These are the true prophets of the Church, even though it is true that prophecy is distinct and even separate from sanctity.

"But when it (prophetism) is authentic, it always fits perfectly in the class of apostolic revelation; and, just as the power of the master sustains and guides the efforts of the disciples, the authentic prophets are sustained and guided by the revelation of Christ and the apostles. 'At all times,' says St. Thomas, 'there have not been lacking persons having the spirit of prophecy, not indeed for the declaration of any new doctrine of faith' (*ad novam doctrinam fidei depromendam*) but for the direction of human acts (*ad humanorum actuum directionem*)' (II-II, 174, 6 ad. 3). The prophets that do not follow this pathway are false prophets" (*L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. I, pp. 173-175).

And, as a side note, Cardinal Journet cites St. Thomas twice more: “‘The ancient prophets,’ St. Thomas says, ‘were sent to establish the faith and restore customs. ... Today, the faith is already founded, because the promises were fulfilled by Christ. But prophecy, which has as its end to restore the customs, does not and will not cease’ (*Comm. in Math.*, c. XI). He [St. Thomas] also explains that the prophecies which reveal to us the reservoirs of divine faith are diversified to the measure that they become more explicit with the passing of time, but the prophecies that have for their end directing the conduct of men should change with the circumstances, because the people dissipate when such prophecy ceases: ‘Wherefore at all times men were divinely instructed about what they were to do, according as it was expedient for the spiritual welfare of the elect’ (II-II, 174, 6)” (*ibid.*, pp. 174-175).

Once again it is necessary to observe, Dr. Plinio, that what is under discussion here is not whether you possess these most elevated gifts and this privileged mission. What behooves us to establish is the conformity of this conception with Catholic Doctrine, standing, as it does, in good faith, as shown by Cardinal Journet with unequivocal quotations from St. Thomas.

That the progressivists have tried to avail themselves of the same doctrine to construct their imaginary and heretical theories of “prophetic groups” in no way diminishes the right of citizenship of this doctrine in Catholic theology.¹⁴

Where, therefore, does inerrancy enter the picture? It enters in this “*supernatural and infallible instinct*” that directly hits the target, with this “*sureness of vision*” that indicates to men of our epoch the fitting and correct “*conduct*” to follow. That this is proper to the wise man is well expressed in a previously-cited excerpt from St. Thomas (*III Sententiarum*, d. 34, q. 1, art. 4, n. 115), an excerpt that Dr. Plinio sent to the letter-writer, who harshly called it a “check lacking doctrinary funds.”

All these citations clearly show how this text, seen in its true and complete context, has the exact interpretation that Dr. Plinio gave to it. That is, the virtue and the gift of Wisdom (it is superfluous to speak of charisma) communicate to the man the capacity to properly and infallibly judge and direct things with respect to all things, this corresponding exactly to the idea of inerrancy present in TFP, as has been described under this topic.

What must still be analyzed is whether this doctrine of inerrancy has suffered any deformation through the course of time, as the letter-writer falsely accuses.

4. THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY IN THE PRACTICE OF THE TFP

The concept of inerrancy that has always been present in the TFP is testified to by Mr. O.F. himself in his letter of March 1982:

¹⁴ It serves to emphasize that in this as in other questions, we do not engage ourselves in the debate between divergent theological schools. In explaining a determined theory defended by a current theologian, we do not enter *ipso facto* into the corresponding theological debate. To the theologians belongs the discussion. As for us, we plead only the right to be treated as those who follow a theological school with citizenship in the Church.

“We have **always** heard you (Dr. Plinio) tell us with great sincerity and humble truth that your stands and predictions issue from a meticulous and judicious analysis of the facts, which has permitted you, by means of reason and logic, to anticipate events in the R-CR fight in History.

“How many times have we heard you affirm, **upon your predictions being realized**, that you did not use a crystal ball, or have visions or revelations.

“Your prophetic charism was not of a mystic-visionary nature. You exacted a logical and wise examination of the concrete facts.

“As a consequence, you always carefully examined the newspapers. ... And in these 50 years of clippings meetings, **your prophetic charism has been most evident. And your logical method quite substantiated**” (Letter 82, pp. 4-5).

Mr. O.F. continues on for several paragraphs on this matter in order to show it was always admitted in the TFP that Dr. Plinio did not possess “a charismatic omniscience which would dispense with the need for study, analyzing and having concrete information,” and that the members and cooperators of the TFP rendered to him a valuable collaboration, furnishing him with “concrete facts that made it possible for you to see, judge and act prophetically.” “Nothing could be clearer,” concludes Mr. O.F. (*ibid.*, p. 5).

It would be superfluous to underscore how accurately this description confers with all that which has already been said about the concept of prophetic inerrancy present in the TFP.

However, at a given moment, these lucid ideas, which clearly have nothing of a visionary and fanatical mysticism, begin to become confused in the mind of Mr. O.F., and he begins to see things in a different manner:

“Yet, in these last years, a false approach of this most diverse problem has been developing.

“In actuality, it is known that some members of group consider that all information, even that from the newspapers, is superfluous, and even prejudicial, for you. It is not said that you are all-knowing, but in practice this is what seems to be at the back of their minds. Proof of this is that to even raise the problem is difficult. And if someone would affirm that you, not being all-knowing, could be wrong or, being poorly informed, could be deceived, this would raise a most vociferous and quite angry protest” (Letter 82, pp. 5-6).

On the next page, Mr. O.F. emphasizes that this approach exists “Especially in the *enjolras* ranks (young members) of the group” (Letter 82, p. 7).

And, after describing the crisis through which he passed concerning the concept of inerrancy thus understood and applied to the case of Anne Catherine Emmerick and how he had come to see the light at a determined moment, he concludes: “Therefore, the thesis at the back of the minds of the *enjolras* (young members) was wrong” (Letter 82, p. 14).

Here is not the place to bring up the spiritual evolution of Mr. O.F. that led him to contest the formation given in the TFP to the younger generations. Instead, I analyze the brute fact that he presents:

In the TFP, and especially in the most recent ranks, he (Dr. Plinio) could be held as all-knowing and not susceptible to any oversight, that is, “*inerrant*” in the absolute sense of the term.

Mr. O.F. himself testifies that this is not the doctrine *taught* in the TFP and that he has never *heard* this said of Dr. Plinio, as has already been shown. What is important to analyze is whether this doctrine is alive *in practice*, especially among the ranks of the most young, in order to verify whether the correct doctrine is poorly interpreted or wrongly applied.

Mr. O.F. does not take into consideration the phenomenon of respect for authority and how, at times, certain situations naturally arise which, analyzed in a superficial way, would lead to erroneous conclusions.

It is a commonplace and trite observation that, through the course of his development, a child passes through diverse stages. One of these stages is that of absolute confidence in his parents. Until he reaches a certain age, the father and mother represent for the child the beacon of truth and the inexhaustible fountain of human knowledge. With the passing of time, without trauma and without the need to be told that his father and mother are not infallible or all-knowing, the normal sound child becomes adjusted to his own way of viewing reality and begins to distance himself and form his own criteria to evaluate the world.

This which takes place in such a characteristic and obvious manner in childhood development is repeated in its own way in the diverse phases of the life of the man. The adolescent is, for example, exposed to the university life, then the professional life, the world of business, etc. In each phase, the man is learning and acquiring experience. And thus, as the man matures with age, at the same time his capacity for learning declines. This gave rise to the well-known antinomy: “*Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*” (“If the youth could know it; if the old age could do it”) One cannot expect from youth the deliberation and experience proper to maturity.

This fact, true in all epochs of the History of mankind, acquires special relevance in the present generations, children of what is often termed the “civilization of the image.” The immaturity of youth today has attracted the attention of professors, sociologists, philosophers, theologians, in short, all those who have to do with the education and formation of the new generations.

It was natural that these problems were also felt in the internal life in the TFP with the ever-increasing entrance into its ranks of youths from this generation. It was the members of this generation, with their qualities and their defects, who were given, in both the spirit of affection and fun, the designation of “*enjolras*” (cf. Prior Considerations, Note 4).

Considering all the above, it is perfectly comprehensible how “especially in the ‘*enjolricas*’ ranks of the group,” the idea of inerrancy would not be perfectly formulated and assimilated.

Could Mr. O.F., who mounted a well-organized and outlandish system of investigation within the TFP, have collected examples of affirmations from “*enjolras*” who attributed to Dr. Plinio such an infallibility, which borders upon *absolute inerrancy*? It would then be necessary for him to demonstrate that such affirmations were not the result of:

- a. An immaturity proper to youth;
- b. The notorious difficulty of expression common among today's younger generations.

To these conditions, it would be necessary to add a third: Because of the lack of the exact recollection of Mr. O.F., already verified, he would have to demonstrate, moreover, that the persons incriminated by him said *exactly* that which he said that they said... A difficult task, but indispensable for one, such as he, who has the habit of examining what others have said before distorting mirrors, as well as presenting such things out of context...

At any rate, this is not to deny that “especially in the ‘*enjolricas*’ ranks of the group” everything is not, in every case, expressed and understood with the maturity of a completely formed person. What is inadmissible is to try to extract from this a proof that the doctrine *in force* in the TFP about inerrancy leads *in practice* to the admission of an absolute infallibility, which would be contrary to the Doctrine of the Church.

As demonstrated, this argument is absolutely insufficient and unqualified.

Mr. O.F. will retort that even older persons slide into the same error: “Some [not specifying which ones] stoutly affirm your infallibility. Others do not say this, but they act in practice as if you (Dr. Plinio) were infallible. *No one* dares to say that you erred” (Letter 83, p. 14). The “*no one*” there is absolutely exclusive, and therefore, pertains also to those who are older.

This affirmation clashes, however, with everyday practice. Not to mention his written works, which he always submits for review to various persons in the TFP who have full liberty to express their opinions, present suggestions and point out faults – a public and well-known fact in all the ambiances of the entity – his daily transactions with those in authority over the diverse sectors (of the group) all take place in an atmosphere of free speech, with his courtesy and amiability bespeaking a true gentleman ever and increasingly present. Thus, a person always feels able to correct some fact upon which he (Dr. Plinio) is basing some rationale or making some deliberation. And if some comment does not coincide with the reality that the person knows as such, he can with all liberty present to Dr. Plinio the correct observation.

It is clear that all this takes place in an atmosphere of great respect, characteristic of all transactions within the TFP. However, if, in a given circumstance, it would not be courteous to openly tell whoever it might be, even Dr. Plinio, that he has “erred,” then an educated person would have recourse to correcting the error of Dr. Plinio or of another without falling into such discourteous language.

Thus, in the TFP no one would deem it proper not to furnish Dr. Plinio with the correction of some fact, especially in view of the fact that this accuracy is indispensable to the correctness of a given deliberation or evaluation of the facts. And it is natural that all this should take place in the proper manner: *Est modus in rebus* (There are different ways to understand things).

All those who have the honor of participating in these decision-making meetings can testify to the absolute truth of what has just been affirmed.

Where, then, comes the idea of an absolute inerrancy “in practice”?

Moreover, the practice in the daily life of the TFP obviously excludes the idea that one might imagine Dr. Plinio to be gifted with an inerrancy that would little welcome anyone supplying him with some information.

On the contrary, in these multiple meetings that take place between those in charge of the various duties (within the group) and Dr. Plinio, the first and most elementary purpose is that the participants at the meeting should inform him of how their work is progressing, of the public reactions in the face of the activities of the TFP, etc.

Moreover, he receives a large number of reports or letters containing repercussions of the same nature, sent by members or cooperators travelling throughout Brazil or abroad. It is not uncommon that he values these reports so highly that he reads and praises them at Clippings Meetings.

Finally, anyone who works for the TFP, however young or inexperienced he might be, is not ignorant of the fact that the TFP maintains a whole service for the collection and selection of newspaper clippings, to whose study Dr. Plinio, along with specialized advisers, dedicates three fixed hours a week. It is, therefore, inconceivable that Mr. O.F. would have dared to insinuate that within the TFP Dr. Plinio is held to be like some arrogant fortune-teller, closed to the reality around him.

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It is true that this climate of respect reigning in TFP acquires more solemnity in the open meetings. By the proper natural order of things, no one would stand up to correct some minor imprecision or add a small detail of no great importance. But no one would refrain from furnishing some information whose omission would prejudice the normal development of the meeting. And when this occurs – the ascertaining of a fact that was lacking to Dr. Plinio – it scandalizes no one – not even the ‘enjolas’ ranks of the group.” Ample proof, once again, that no thesis about his absolute inerrancy exists “in the backs of the minds” of persons.

But, doesn’t it happen that some persons could be somewhat inhibited in this ambience of respect and solemnity? – This could be, because timid persons exist everywhere, and there is no reason whatsoever to think that they do not also exist in the TFP.

And doesn’t it also happen that there are ‘hissing sounds’ when someone makes an inopportune interruption? – As in any large group, one cannot claim that all the interruptions during the TFP meetings are perfect and opportune. It can happen that, at some point, should someone distinguish himself for the *gaucherie* or *maladresse* of his interruptions, around him could be created a climate of voiceless censure, even reaching the point of becoming voiced in the more conspicuous cases. The person feels the silent censure (or hears the rabble around him), and, if he is humble, he corrects himself. If he is not humble, he becomes resentful with all the bad spiritual consequences that come from this. All this is normal in the life of any institution in this valley of tears, stained as we are by original sin. And the TFP is no exception to the case.

Furthermore, however *gauche* an interruption might be, Dr. Plinio always receives it with all courtesy and gives a detailed response – as well as full liberty to the objector to raise new objections.

Even more, he seeks to cover for the *gauche* objector, smoothing things over for him against the general clamor that might be roused.

The argumentation given is not, therefore, truthful that says that the TFP is party to a situation where, in any meeting, a person is “unwelcome” who “dares” to make any correction or simply tries to make some contribution, which would be, in practice, to understand the concept of inerrancy in an absolute sense.

Mr. O.F. does not, therefore, base his affirmation upon consistent facts, and advances, once again precipitously, his thesis that in the TFP Dr. Plinio is held to be all-knowing and absolutely infallible.

It is true that Mr. O.F.’s major argument against the doctrine of inerrancy is not *per se* in these observations that I have just analyzed, but in the Anne Catherine Emmerick “case,” which, as was demonstrated, gives no support for such an affirmation.

Thus, one must conclude that Mr. O.F. was tilting at windmills.

5. THE CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT SURROUNDING THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY IN THE PRACTICE OF THE TFP

At this point in the exposition, someone could say to himself: Concretely speaking, if there is the possibility of error, there is not inerrancy. This is the basic rationale of Mr. O.F., as was seen.

I return to what was already explained: Inerrancy, for us, is but an expression of confidence or moral certainty that Dr. Plinio will not err in matters related to the fight of the Revolution and Counter-Revolution, wherein to him falls a role so salient that we cannot help but see it as providential. “Prophetic mission,” we say, following the lines defined by Cardinal Journet, based on St. Thomas.

This confidence, as I said, is based *on the fact* that in 50 years of accurate analysis of the contemporary situation, his well-aimed foresights were brilliantly confirmed by the events (to which Mr. O.F. himself gives testimony – Letter 82, pp. 4-5). It is this prophetic inerrancy that has led the TFP to an amazing success, a story that can be read in the book *A Half Century of Epic Anti-Communism* (NY: The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc., 1981, 459 pp.).

One who marvels at this epic history cannot but be convinced that the *gift* of Wisdom and the supernatural *virtue* of Wisdom unequivocally live in Dr. Plinio, and perhaps even the *Charisma* of the same name, as I have explained (cf. chap. IV, 3). For he has devoted himself to the good of Christian Civilization in order to defend and restore it, according to that magnificent directive given by St. Pius X, which was the luminous motto of his Pontificate: “*Omnia instaurare in Christo*” (To restore everything in Christ).”

All this characterizes not an impossibility *de jure* and *de facto* of erring, but a strong probability *de facto*, a moral certainty that within the specific ambit of his “prophetic mission” he will not err. Such a mission, as we believe, was confided to him by Providence. Thence do we deem it proper to apply to him the concept of inerrancy as defined by Cardinal Billot, already cited: “There is *inerrancy* when someone

is, in himself, exposed to error, but in fact possesses the truth” (*De Ecclesia Christi*, Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1921, vol. 1, p. 366).

The habitual possession of truth includes the most firm habit of submission to the Magisterium of the Church.

One might wonder, then, whether this inerrancy, even in matters relative to the fight between the Revolution and Counter-Revolution upon which it is based, manifests itself in a uniform manner. For it is proper to the wise man to outline directives principally for that which is more elevated and as a rule exceeds the normal man’s capacity to determine. Inerrancy is, therefore, more cognizant when it focuses on a more elevated matter; it wanes in proportion to the measure that it enters the scene of less important matters. Paradoxically, in secondary matters that lie within the scope of the common man to resolve, there is, in wisdom, more possibility of error than in elevated matters. Thus, in small matters, inerrancy manifests itself in a more tenuous and diffuse manner.

I do not enter here into the relative long-range relevance that small aspects of an important question can circumstantially assume. In this case, the wise man will then discern the relevance of these small aspects and, with proportionately diluted attention, will correspondingly find solutions of significant scope.

Alongside this interesting question, I ask: What should the comportment be of the average man, or even the wise man who has the good fortune of exercising his action under the direction of a man of great wisdom?

He owes a *prudent fidelity* to the wise man, which leads him to give an *overall assent* to the directives that he receives from him. This does not include, however, a tributary fidelity which belongs to one who has the impossibility of error *de jure* and *de facto*. But, realizing that the wise man is subject to error – especially in matters of little importance – he does not refuse his assent even in these secondary points. At most, having more weighty reasons to question an action, he will suspend his judgment in the hope of a later clarification, which the normal course of events usually brings.

Such is the *prudent* and, in a certain sense, *ascetic*, way of acting for the man of medium wisdom, because he perceives that if today he disagrees with the wise man on a small point, influenced perhaps by his own preconceptions and passions, tomorrow he will rashly disagree on more important points. In short, the whole edifice of his confidence in the wise man, which was validly constructed upon a solid foundation, will fall into ruins. To act differently is obvious foolhardiness, which, at the end of the road, leads to effects more catastrophic than the casual error that comes from a small oversight in a secondary matter.

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The Church gives us a magnificent example of this in relation to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. At the Council of Trent, his works were solemnly placed on the altar alongside Sacred Scriptures. It is impossible to imagine a greater honor for a Doctor of the Church. Notwithstanding, the doctrine of St. Thomas is not infallible, and it is legitimate to disagree with it in some points. Thus, in 1854, the Church defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, in disagreement with the deci-

sion of St. Thomas who, centuries before, taught that Our Lady was conceived with original sin but had been purified of it immediately afterward.

This did not prevent Leo XIII from proclaiming St. Thomas the *Common Doctor* of the whole Church, that is, the great Doctor whom all theologians and doctors should adopt as common Master. This naturally postulates a *global and reverent assent* to his doctrine without excluding that, for grave and justified reasons, some point could be the object of some rectification by renowned theologians and, above all, by the infallible Magisterium of the Church.

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Analogous principles guide the conduct of men in any society, whatever be its size. In all of them, the proper natural order always establishes an authority that should normally be followed and obeyed, because all power comes from God, Author of nature. Without obedience to authority, no society can sustain itself.

Does this mean that all authority is infallible? Obviously, not. However, to the measure that the subjects note the correctness of the directives of a determined authority, they submit themselves more easily and readily to the orders they receive. And thus, accordingly, such a confidence can be established that, in particularly complicated situations where no one sees clearly the direction to follow, the subjects can confide in the decision of the superior because of the certainty they have acquired from his habitually indicating the correct course.

It is this natural phenomenon, commonplace in the life of any society but enriched in the TFP by a firmly established confidence in the predictions and directives whose accuracy has been continuously proven over a half-century, that has occurred with us in relation to Dr. Plinio. Such a prolonged and amazing accuracy as what we have before our eyes makes us have the moral certainty that the pathways that he indicates to us and upon which he leads us are the pathways of God for our times. Such is the essence of *propheticism*, such the *providential* leadership that we perceive in him.

Thus have we traced the boundaries and contours of *prophetic inerrancy*, which do not imply an impossibility of erring outside of this specific field, but rather inspire in us a solid confidence in the direction that Dr. Plinio gives to all that takes place in the TFP.

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Will it always be this way? – If Solomon, gifted in abundance with Wisdom by God, can prevaricate, the same can happen with any man who is not confirmed in grace. Since Dr. Plinio is not confirmed in grace, he is exposed to the weaknesses of all mortals. It could happen, therefore, that he could cease to have the supernatural support that inerrancy presupposes. Since we are not dealing in this case with an inerrancy *de jure*, the possibility exists that he could come to err. But this would not take place without obvious indications, which would be within the scope of anyone to notice.

Naturally we have confidence that he will not prevaricate and that the grace will assist him until the final fulfillment of his providential mission. This is the voice of grace speaking in our souls, and for which reason our hearts are constantly raised to God in continuous prayer and acts of thanksgiving.

6. CONFORMITY OF THIS FILIAL CONFIDENCE WITH THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

This climate of confidence that surrounds Dr. Plinio in the TFP, joined to the filial respect that we give him, generates an ambience with an absence of criticisms and murmurings, which is what upset Mr. O.F., animated as he was by the spirit of revolt that finally erupted, induced by an erroneous notion of inerrancy. I have already shown how he was mistaken in this.

I end by emphasizing how this climate of filial submission and confidence is in accordance with the teaching of the Church concerning respect to Superiors. Toward this end, it suffices to quote from a letter of the great St. Ignatius de Loyola:

“For the superior is to be obeyed not because he is prudent, or good, or qualified by any other gift of God, but because he holds the place and the authority of God, as Eternal Truth has said: ‘He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me’ (Lk 10:16). Nor, on the contrary, should he lack prudence, is he to be less obeyed than in that in which he is superior, since he represents the One who is infallible Wisdom, and who will supply what is wanting in His minister; so also [should he be obeyed] should he lack goodness or other desirable qualities, since Christ our Lord said, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses,’ and adds, ‘All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not’ (Mt. 23:2-3)” (Letter to the members of the Society in Portugal dated Rome, March 26, 1553, *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, p. 288).

But, one will say, this text refers only to the ambit of a religious order, that is, to the obedience of the subject (the monk or friar) to his Superior. This is not, however, true. St. Ignatius extends these principles to all human relations, including those in the merely temporal order, saying that such relations always consist in obedience of one to another who rightly holds command, be it in the political, social or any other order. He says this expressly:

“Therefore, I should wish that all of you would train yourselves to recognize Christ our Lord in any superior and, with all devotion, reverence and obey His Divine Majesty in him. This will appear less strange to you if you keep in mind that St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, bids us obey even temporal and pagan superiors as Christ, from whom all well-ordered authority descends: ‘Servants be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in the simplicity of your heart, as unto Christ, not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord and not to men’ (Eph 6:5-7)” (*ibid.*, pp. 288-289).

Thus, there is nothing more noble and sanctifying for an inferior than to abstain from criticizing his superior, trying to see in him Christ Our Lord. In this lies only reason for praise, according to Catholic Doctrine, rather than censure, as the letter-writer implies, desiring as he does to incite in whomever he can the spirit of revolt, as one could clearly see some time before his break, and even more afterward.

7. CONCLUSION OF THIS CHAPTER

Based on the express thinking through the centuries of so many and well-authorized personages who are generally esteemed in the Church, it can be concluded that:

- A. It would have been licit to use the word infallible to designate that which in the TFP we understand by inerrancy;
- B. The word inerrancy was preferred to better mark the essential difference from the infallibility *de jure* and *de facto* enjoyed by the Pope and the Church;
- C. In the TFP the word *inerrancy* was not used and is not used in the sense of attributing to it an absolute character;
- D. The respect that the TFP pays to Dr. Plinio is an expression of an elevated Catholic spirit, and not the fruit of pusillanimity that comes from an erroneous concept of inerrancy.

I will later analyze the accusation of the illicitness of the cult rendered to the person of Dr. Plinio in the ambiances of the TFP.

* * *

CHAPTER V

SUPPOSED DETHRONEMENT OF OUR LADY IN THE TFP

Another accusation that Mr. O.F. paints in dramatic colors is the supposed “dethronement” of Our Lady in the TFP.

In his zeal to prove something so grave, he affirms that in the TFP there is devotion (cult) to Dona Lucilia and to Dr. Plinio. In order to cover them up, the TFP uses its most evident devotion to Our Lady. In reality, this would be a dethroned Queen in the TFP.

I have already dealt with the intellectual appropriateness of such an accusation (cf. Prior Considerations, 2, B).

I will now analyze:

1. If there has been a dethronement of Our Lady;
2. What is private devotion to the Saints and the Blessed and what of this is permitted to others who have died;
3. If there is devotion to Dona Lucilia;
4. If there is devotion to Dr. Plinio.

That is obviously the most extreme and serious point of his libel, that is to say, it stands at the very apex of his confused mountain of accusations.

In effect, to have a cult of *dulia* to Dona Lucilia and to Dr. Plinio – which the letter-writer unfoundedly imagines to be opposed to the doctrine and laws of the Church as the following chapters will demonstrate – would, in fact, constitute a very grave matter. But to have the absurd intention of dethroning the Virgin Mother of God, denying the *hyperdulia* that is due only to Her, in order to replace Her with Dona Lucilia: this would be the summit, or better said, the very delirium of evil in this matter.

By virtue of the principle that however grave be an accusation, the clearer and more solid and indisputable should be the proofs upon which it is based, this should be the most documented and well-argued part of Mr. O.F.’s libel. For the sake of justice, the reader has the right to demand crystal-clear and irreprehensible convincing proof. As we will shortly see, this is perhaps the part where the inconsistency of the “proofs” is the most palpable.

1. WAYS THE TERM ‘DETHRONEMENT’ OF OUR LADY COULD BE UNDERSTOOD

A. In the Catechism, as in any other Catholic book that speaks on the subject, one can find the reasons for which Our Lady receives from the faithful the cult of *hyperdulia*. Mary Most Holy receives this cult above all because She is the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The cult of *hyperdulia* is rendered

to Her, then, in recognition of Her as Mother of God. Therefore, what would it mean: “to dethrone” Our Lady? Would it be to attribute to some other person the prerogative of having been the Mother of God? Does the letter-writer mean to say that in the TFP this prerogative of Our Lady is attributed to Dona Lucia? We pass over this hypothesis, which would be irreverent even to mention and which I only record in keeping with the rigor of the method of analysis, that is, in search of coherence in the thinking of the letter-writer.

B. If the “dethronement” does not concern the capital aspect of this devotion, perhaps it was spoken of in respect to its accidental aspects – for example, in relation to the splendor or external display with which the TFP rendered the cult of *dulia* to someone. This would be, then, a splendor and display that would be greater than what it used in the cult of *hyperdulia* to Our Lady.

In other words, it would be because, we imagine, the cult to some Saint was rendered in some place in a more splendid way than the cult in this same place rendered to the sublime Mother of God.

The Church, then, in the imagination of the letter-writer, would not permit under any circumstances or occasion that there should be another exterior devotion which is superior in display than that which is rendered to the Mother of God. How, then, can we explain that the Basilica of St. Peter, Christianity’s most magnificent edifice, is dedicated to the Apostle and not to the Virgin Mary? And that, in Rome, the Basilica of Saint Maria Maggiore is not the largest church in Rome?

And how can it be explained that St. John Bosco, who had such great devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians, founded a Congregation (the Salesians) that honored most especially the name of St. Francis de Sales?

Would all this signify a “dethroning” of Our Lady?

How can it also be explained that in numerous churches, the statue placed in the most prominent spot is not that of Our Lady, but of some Saint?

The Church has room for all the Blessed of Heaven to be honored without, by this, Our Lady ceasing to be Queen of Heaven and of Earth, and without the cult of *hyperdulia* rendered to Her being diminished in any way. The reason for this is also found in the Catechism: Since Mary Most Holy is the Universal Mediatrix of Graces, the prayers that we make to a Saint or a just soul necessarily pass through Her. Therefore, the request to a Saint is an indirect request to Her. She is glorified in the devotion to the Saints, all of whom were helped to sanctify themselves through Her intercession, just as a mother is glorified on this Earth when a child (and Our Lady is the Mother of all the Saints) asks her intercession in order to obtain something from her.

The letter-writer seems to imagine a self-seeking competition among the various Saints and just souls as they vie for prestige among men. The protestants make an analogous error when they sustain that devotion to Our Lady diminishes that which is due to Our Lord. That is to say, that the emphasis given to the less high mediator usurps something from what is due to the most high.

Fr. J.-B. Terrien, S.J., eminent Mariologist, quiets such fears: “I join together all the homage of veneration, admiration, praise and love that the friends, servants and the elect of God merit, and this is

undoubtedly quite great; however, it is still less than the cult that we are asked to give to the Mother of God, the Daughter of God, the Spouse of God. This is because this cult is the cult of *hyperdulia*” (*La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des Hommes*, Paris: Lethielleux, 1943, part II, vol. II, p. 179).

It is clear, therefore, that the cult to other Saints and just souls that is not directed immediately to Our Lady does not dethrone Her.

Let us now see if there has been a “dethronement” of Our Lady in the TFP.

2. PERSONAL DEVOTIONS OF TFP MEMBERS AND COOPERATORS TO OUR LADY

I begin by naming the acts of piety of a personal nature practiced by the members and cooperators of the TFP:

1. The members or cooperators of the TFP habitually consecrate themselves solemnly to Our Lady as “slaves of love,” according to the method of St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort;
2. It is the general custom to daily renew this consecration to Our Lady, according to the formula of St. Louis Grignion;
3. Many wear on their persons a chain of slavery, a practice also recommended by St. Louis de Montfort;
4. They direct their morning and night prayers to God through (the intercession of) Our Lady;
5. At the beginning and end of meetings, they always pray the so-called “prayers of the Group,” which are composed of one *Salve Regina*, four Hail Marys, seven ejaculations to Our Lady and the *Memorare*;
6. Before beginning their work in various sectors of the TFP, the *Concede nos* (a prayer composed by Dr. Plinio in homage to Mary) is also prayed;
7. All the members and cooperators of the TFP daily pray the three *tercos* of the Rosary, so pleasing to the Blessed Virgin, and they carry it with them constantly both day and night;
8. After the Rosary, all pray the Litany of Loreto. Dr. Plinio always says this prayer aloud after ending his act of thanksgiving after Communion.
9. At Communion – habitually daily – all ask the intercession of Mary Most Holy in order to receive Our Lord well;
10. A habitual practice is the reparatory Communion of the First Saturdays in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary;
11. In addition, many pray various *tercos* of various ejaculations to Our Lady daily;

12. At noon and at 6 p.m., the *Angelus* is invariably prayed in all the seats of the TFP;
13. Before any trip, or even traveling inside the vast city of São Paulo, the “travel prayers” are prayed, which are composed primarily of three Hail Marys;
14. The greetings salutation among members and cooperators of the TFP is *Salve Maria*;
15. One distinction of members and cooperators of the Brazilian TFP is that the group was formerly a Marian Congregation, with the Cross and monogram of Mary;
16. All wear the Scapular of Carmel, for which they nurture special devotion;
17. All those who can enroll themselves in the Carmelite Sodalties in homage to Our Lady of Carmel;
18. Almost all wear around their necks the Miraculous Medal and are ardent propagators of this medal, inside and outside the TFP circles;
19. Almost everyone carries in his billfold one or more pictures of Our Lady;
20. In our *Eremos*, the Little Office of Our Lady is often sung;
21. Everyone prays at least one time a day the *Restoration Prayer*: Composed by Dr. Plinio and directed to Our Lady, this prayer asks to have the plenitude of devotion toward Her.

3. DEVOTIONS OF THE TFP AS AN ENTITY TO OUR LADY

1. The entity officially consecrated itself to the Most Blessed Virgin on the initiative of Dr. Plinio on October 13, 1967;
2. In all the halls or regular rooms in all of the Seats, there is invariably a statue or picture of Our Lady;
3. A picture of Our Lady always occupies the place of honor at all the meetings of the TFP;
4. Almost all the Seats of the TFP take the name of some invocation to Our Lady;
5. All the altars of the chapels existing in the various seats of the TFP are named in homage to some invocation of Our Lady and they have her statue in the retable, with only one exception, where a Crucifix hangs in the retable;
6. Under the insignia of the rampant lion on the two official standards of the entity appear the words *Ipsa conteret*, from the verse in Genesis “*Ipsa conteret caput tuum*” (She shall crush your head Gen 3:15), applied by the Church to Our Lady;

7. With time, it has become the habit to acquire large statues of Our Lady in order to put them in the gardens of the various Seats;
8. Upon arriving at or leaving some seat of the TFP, Dr. Plinio always greets those present with the ejaculation: “*Dignare me punare pro te, Virgo Sacrata,*” (Deign to allow me to fight for Thee, O Sacred Virgin) to which all respond: “*Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos*” (Give me strength against Thy enemies);
9. At times, upon taking his leave, Dr. Plinio adds: “*Nos cum prole pia,*”, and all respond: “*Benedicat Virgo Maria*” (May the Virgin Mary bless us with her holy Child);
10. For 14 years the TFP has kept a statue of the Immaculate Conception in an oratory opening to Martim Francisco Street. The TFP has also held a nocturnal vigil for 14 years before this oratory with the continuous recitation of the Rosary, carried out by its members and cooperators who, in hourly shifts, pray there from 6 p.m. until 8 a.m. every day of the year;
11. The TFP also has oratories that open to the street in the seats of Itaquerea (SP), Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and Fortaleza, all of which have a statue of *Nossa Senhora Aparecida*, Patroness of Brazil; in Recife there is also one dedicated to *Nossa Senhora dos Prazeres*. What all this signifies in terms of the affirmation and propagation of devotion to Our Lady among the public who daily pass before these oratories is incalculable.
12. By means of street campaigns carried out throughout Brazil, the TFP promotes the sale of the book *The Apparitions and the Message of Fatima according to the Manuscripts of Sister Lucia*, written by a member of the entity, with 19 editions having already been printed, with a total of 440,000 copies;
13. During the public campaigns of the TFP, close to 1,100,000 pictures of Our Lady of Fatima have already been distributed;
14. The TFP has also distributed rosaries and Miraculous Medals, as well as picture of Our Lady, to the sick in the hospitals;
15. The TFP promotes the praying of the Rosary on various days of the week with groups of sympathizers in cities or surrounding environs.

4. OTHER DEVOTIONS TO OUR LADY IN THE TFP

In addition these devotions to Our Lady have always been firmly rooted among us in the TFP::

- * The Wise and Immaculate Heart of Mary,
- * Our Lady of Fatima,
- * Our Lady of Good Counsel of Genazzano,
- * Our Lady Aparecida, Patroness of Brazil,
- * Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of America,
- * The “Madonna of the Miracle” (from the Church of *Sant' Andrea delle Fratte* in Rome).

In the last years, as a result of the Brazilian TFP's contact with the TFPs of other countries, there has been an expressive surge of Marial fervor among our members and cooperators to include the following devotions to the Most Blessed Virgin:

- * To Our Lady of Coromoto of Venezuela,
- * To Our Lady of Las Lajas of Colombia,
- * To Our Lady of Good Success of Ecuador,
- * To Our Lady of Graces (Rue de Bac, Paris), whose statue has been placed in the gardens of the Seats,
- * To Our Lady of Necessities of Portugal.

Here I stop the list, by no means complete, of the acts of piety and devotion which, from the depths of our hearts, we tribute to her to Whom we deliver our bodies and our souls. And there is still much more that we would like to do for Her! "*De Maria nunquam satis*" (Of Mary there is never enough).

If one compares this ocean of respect and honor paid to the Mother of God in the TFP with the limited homage that is offered to Dona Lucilia in our association, one will see how there is truly no term of comparison.

All told, I have cited as examples *48 types* of distinct Marian devotion and actions that are practiced among us in the TFP. If one were to consider only the Hail Mary's prayed by members and cooperators of the Brazilian TFP, and subtracting at least a thousand from this number (without counting, moreover, the number of our correspondents and sympathizers), we would have at the minimum the total of 150,000 daily Hail Mary's.

All this fully demonstrates the intensity of the cult of *hyperdulia* rendered to Our Lady in the TFP.

What, then, does the letter-writer mean by this dithyrambic phrase: "How did the Group, which always had devotion to Our Lady as its foundation stone and point of honor, arrive at the miserable situation of denying to Her the central place? How did it arrive at the absurdity of replacing devotion to Our Lady with devotion to another person, a person not canonized?" (Letter 83, p. 1).

Can it be that Mr. O.F. has forgotten the 48 types of Marian devotions that I have described?

It now remains to analyze what is meant by the word "dethronement" with regard to the removal of Our Lady from the thrones that She occupies in the TFP.

5. IF THERE WAS 'PHYSICAL' DETHRONEMENT OF OUR LADY IN THE TFP

- A. The place of greatest honor, the principal "throne" that Our Lady occupies in the TFP, is in the retable of the altars in the chapels that we habitually have in our seats. All the altars customarily have a retable. And in it always a fixed statue of Our Lady presides. And it has never been shown – nor does Mr. O.F. even allege this – that any statue of Our Lady has been removed from these symbolic "thrones" that they occupy.

- B. In addition to this, Our Lady occupies places of honor in almost all the halls in our seats, as I already said. But such places cannot be compared to thrones, except in a quite distant analogy. Here also, nothing has taken place that would justify the accusation of “dethronement”.
- C. What merits our attention is a statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence, which usually remains on the left side of the altar, placed upon the seat of an armchair. The letter-writer seems to be referring to it when he quotes another person (who, like him, had broken with the TFP) who participated in two or three ceremonies that took place there (among a total of eight or nine between June of 1980 and May of 1982). In respect to this, Mr. O.F. says: “What would he (Fr. Tam) say ... if he had had the occasion to be present at the ‘ceremony *da meta*’¹⁵ at Divine Providence? How could it be explained that in this ceremony, the statue of Our Lady that is at the side of the altar was removed and taken to another place in order to replace it with a portrait of Dona Lucilia?” (Letter 83, p. 19).

This statue was a gift from Dr. Plinio to that seat. *Since they already had a statue of Our Lady of Paris* in the retable of the altar, the new statue was placed on the left side of the altar on an unpretentious chair of no special merit. This was a common type of commercial chair, of a vaguely Spanish “style,” lacking any appreciable artistic workings.

The property occupied by the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence permits, in its division of rooms, a certain ambivalence of ambiances that needs to be clarified in order to avoid confusion.

This *Eremo*, installed in two adjoining properties, previously residential, uses what was formerly a dining room as a chapel, and the old living room as the refectory. These contingent rooms are separated from each other by a sliding door with two leaves, which, opened, unite the two ambiances and, closed, preserve the two distinct ambiances. Thus, it is possible to eat meals in the ex-living room without showing disrespect to the adjoining chapel. And, outside of the meal hours, uniting the two ambiances (by opening the sliding doors), it is possible for the daily religious ceremonies to take place there in the morning, before work, making it able to accommodate a number of persons that only the chapel could not hold.

The chapel is small, and for the routine acts of piety the tables in the refectory are pushed aside, the doors that separate it from the chapel are opened, and thus it becomes one room, more ample in size, with sufficient space for the 55 members who are usually present.

The *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence is especially dedicated to the collection of donations. Toward this end, the collectors ask the protection of Our Lady, as well as of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of St. John Bosco, secondary patrons of this sector of activities in the TFP. So that they might achieve the difficult task of meeting the stipulated goal to pay the necessary expenses, they place their petitions (with the prescribed goal) at the feet of the aforementioned statue of Our Lady of Fatima. And, more recently, they have also proceeded to request the intercession of Dona Lucilia.

This was done some eight or nine times during the course of a religious ceremony of varying duration (around an hour), which took the name of “ceremony *da meta*.” Without the knowledge of Dr. Plinio, the promoters of this act resolved to place an oil painting of Dona Lucilia *to the side of the altar* (on a

¹⁵ The “ceremony *da meta*” will be explained further on in this chapter.

wooden easel with a backboard covered with cloth or, at times, a small table from the middle of the room) in the place where the statue of Our Lady of Fatima normally stayed. In two of the eight or nine “ceremonies *da meta*,” this statue (of Our Lady) was then placed in front of the altar in a place of greater prominence than it normally occupied. In the remaining six or seven ceremonies, during only the hour that the ceremony lasted, the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima was placed on the mantel place in the refectory, worthily decorated for the occasion.

With the doors of the chapel open, as I have said, the ambience of the two rooms becomes one. Moreover, the disposition of the participants, who are in rows from the refectory to the altar, assures the unity of the ambience. Therefore, the statue was never taken from the site of the ceremony and was, as such, placed in the most honorable place in the refectory, provisionally united to the chapel. Since the mantel place is high and the statue large, its presence could be noted throughout the ceremony, even should one be turned in another direction, that is, toward the altar, in whose retable is found the statue of Our Lady of Paris. The ceremony ending, the picture of Dona Lucilia was returned to its habitual spot above the mantel place in the refectory, and the statue of Our Lady was returned to its customary place at the side altar and there continued to receive the devotion it has always received.

I note in passing that it is the habit of all the members of this *Eremo*, upon going and coming, to make a visit to the chapel and kiss the statue of Our Lady. This was the customary practice before the “ceremonies *da meta*,” nor did they leave it off during the period when these ceremonies took place or after such ceremonies had completely ended (they have not taken place since May of 1982). And the members and cooperators still continue to practice this same act of piety toward the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. The hands of this statue are already worn out from the practice of this devotion.

It would seem that Mr. O.F. had these ceremonies in mind when referring to the “dethronement.” This would be, then, one of his reasons for saying that Our Lady was dethroned in the TFP and Dona Lucilia was enthroned in Her place.

To such an accusation I respond:

1st - Dr. Plinio did not know of such ceremonies; moreover, they cannot express the thinking of any except those who participated in them and not that of the TFP as such;

2nd - The place occupied by the statue of Our Lady of Fatima varied during the ceremonies, being at times placed in a more central place than it normally occupies, and at other times in a place less central. The variation of the placements reflected a concern that the ceremony be well-ordered, and not the intent to “dethrone” Our Lady;

3rd - As the mentioned setting where the picture of Dona Lucilia was placed is not a throne, it also could not properly be called an “enthronement.”

4th - Using the supposed logic of the letter-writer, why would Our Lady have been dethroned only to re-enthroner her an hour later and continue to honor Her exactly as before? What would be the significance of these six or seven “dethronements,” followed by the six or seven “enthronements”? Since the ceremonies ended in May of 1982, according to this strange logic, would the last ceremony (of “dethronement”) prevail, or would it be the sixth or seventh “enthronement” of the statue of Our Lady?

5th- If the letter-writer thinks that there was a dethronement in the fact of taking down the statue of Our Lady of Fatima from the place that it occupies at the side of the altar, why does he not also conclude that the picture of Dona Lucilia was dethroned by being taken from this same place and returned to above the mantel place? And why does he not conclude that it was truly definitively dethroned, since it was never again returned to the setting at the side of the altar? If this is one of the facts that Mr. O.F. uses as the basis of his accusation, one sees that the letter-writer suffers from both lack of coherence and lack of good sense;

6th - One circumstance remains to be noted which the letter-writer – conveniently for him – omits. **The place of greatest honor in the chapel is not the chair at the side of the altar, but the retable, where the statue of Our Lady has never been removed under any circumstances. Nor does the letter-writer allege this. Thus, there was no “dethronement”;**

7th- With this, I conclude that if the “dethronement” in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence were true, it would still be improper to attribute this generalization to the whole TFP; however, such a “dethronement” is not only false, but without any basis.

D. Having analyzed Catholic Doctrine in relation to the cult of *hyperdulia*, and the relationship of the Saints and just souls of Heaven with Our Lady with respect to the truth of Faith of the Universal Mediation of Mary, having analyzed also the devotion that exists in the TFP in comparison with the veneration that it has for Dona Lucilia, and, finally, having studied the various types of “thrones” that Our Lady has made in the TFP, it can be concluded that **in any of the meanings that could be made for the expression “dethronement” of Our Lady,” such a fact did not occur in the TFP, but, on the contrary, devotion to Our Lady among its members and cooperators is growing more and more.**

6. ANOTHER SUPPOSED MANIFESTATION OF ‘DETHRONEMENT’ AGGRAVATED BY THE ‘SIN OF SIMULATION’

The letter-writer, in his excessive desire to detract, presents a feuilletonistic “Tam maneuver” by which he attempts to draw proof to slander Dr. Plinio and the TFP from the accusation of *hypocrisy* and *simulation*, this being also another fact indicative of the “dethronement” of Our Lady.

Mr. O.F. says: “During the days when he (Fr. Tam) was there in the *Eremo* of Divine Providence, the order was given to remove the photographs of Dona Lucilia from the desks of the hermits, as well as the picture of her in the place of honor in the chapter room of this *Eremo*, so that the Priest would not see them...

“Worse than taking down the photographs of Dona Lucilia was the fact that they were replaced with statues or pictures of Our Lady. Thus, there is no doubt that the place of honor in the *Eremo* is normally occupied by photographs of Dona Lucilia, and not by statues or pictures of Our Lady. ...

“To complete this evil, as soon as the Priest would leave, the statues and pictures of Our Lady were taken down from the place of honor and were again replaced by the photographs of Dona Lucilia. It is obvious, then, that Our Lady was honored with the principal place in the chapter room of the *Eremo* because of (the presence of) the priest, and not because of Our Lady” (Letter 83, pp. 18-19).

This, together with the “ceremony *da meta*,” is the second of the two concrete facts presented by the letter-writer, which he imagines sufficient to demonstrate the most grave accusation that “the place of honor in the *Eremo* is normally occupied ... not by statues or pictures of Our Lady” (Letter 83, p. 18).

Such a fact would reveal, according to Mr. O.F., a “dethronement of Our Lady, aggravated, in this case, by a sin of *simulation* and of *hypocrisy*.”

“How can that which was done in the *Eremo* of Divine Providence – the Tam maneuver – not be classified as simulation?”

“Without wanting to judge the intentions and consciences, what was done could objectively be called a lie, with aims to deceive by thought and deed. And, objectively speaking, to pretend in order to deceive, in this case, is a sin. How could it not be a sin of simulation when the statue of the Mother of God Herself was used? How can such a pretense, which uses the portrait of the Virgin Mother, Queen of Heaven and Earth, in order to deceive a priest who visits us so that he might believe that Our Lady holds the center place in the *Eremos*, not be hypocrisy?” (Letter 83, p. 21).

He adds further on: “It cannot be said to us that we are exaggerating and that this case of the Tam maneuver in the *Eremo* of Divine Providence is an isolated case, explicable by the measure of prudence. The virtue of prudence cannot be reconciled with the sin of simulation (Letter 83, p. 23).

Let us see what actually happened in this case:

- Dr. Plinio commanded, prior to a visit of Fr. Tam, that the photograph of Dona Lucilia be removed from the refectory of the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence;
- Those who carried out the order then took a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel of Genazzano, which is normally hung in a worthy place in the entrance hall, and placed it above the mantel place in the refectory, substituting it for the picture of Dona Lucilia that normally hangs there on the wall;
- At the end of the visit, everything was returned to the prior order.

The accusation of “dethronement” that Mr. O.F. infers from this is confused. It lends itself to three interpretations:

1. The “dethronement” could consist of having removed the picture of Our Lady from above the mantel place after having placed it there;
2. The “dethronement” could consist of habitually keeping the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano in a secondary place in the entrance hall;
3. The “dethronement” could consist of habitually keeping the picture of Dona Lucilia above the mantel place, which would be improper because it is the “place of honor in the *Eremo*” (Letter 83, p. 18).

I will respond to each of these possible interpretations of the accusation:

1st interpretation – To remove the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano from above the mantel place after having placed it there does not characterize any “dethronement” because there was no disrespect in returning the picture of Our Lady to the worthy place that it had occupied for four years.

Moreover, before the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano was placed in the hall, it had hung for some time above the mantel place. However, when the Weeping Virgin of Our Lady of Fatima was in the *Eremo*, it was placed in this spot above the mantel place. When it left, in remembrance of its stay, a simple banner of blue velvet with an M occupied the greater part of the mantel place. In the meantime, the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano was placed in a place of honor in the entrance hall.

Considering that Our Lady was duly remembered and revered in the *Eremo*, for, in addition to the two statues in the chapel (Our Lady of Paris above the altar and Our Lady of Fatima on the chair to the side), there were more than five pictures of Our Lady in the first floor of this building; those in charge of decoration took the velvet banner from the refectory, and, in its place, put up a picture of Dona Lucilia. Thus, for the five social rooms in the building – the chapel, refectory, hall, workroom and dormitory, in each *Eremo* there are seven statues or pictures of Our Lady and one photograph of Dona Lucilia.

In view of this, it also becomes clear that there was also no “dethronement” in the past, because the picture of Dona Lucilia took the place of a simple velvet banner and not a picture of Our Lady.

Now, let us examine the logic of the letter-writer. Above (Letter 83, p. 19), he makes the accusation that there was a “dethronement” in the aforementioned ceremony because the statue of Our Lady was removed from the “throne” (the described chair) and had been left in a secondary place above the mantel place. Yet then he goes on to say that Our Lady of Genazzano was “dethroned” because she did not stay above the mantel place. If the place above the mantel place is, according to him, a “throne,” why does he make the accusation of “dethronement” in changing the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano?

Thus, there was no dethronement in substituting the picture of Dona Lucilia over the mantel place with that of Our Lady for one day; nor was there also any dethronement through the years. This being the valid explanation of the accusation, it reveals in the accuser a lack of internal coherence, good sense and objectivity.

2nd interpretation – There is nothing improper in the fact that a picture of Our Lady should be placed in a dignified manner in a secondary room, since Our Lady occupies the place of honor in the seat considered as a whole, which is what effectively takes place in all our seats, as already said. In effect, the chapel is the place of greatest dignity in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence, and in the retable of its altar is the statue of Our Lady of Paris, as was also already said and emphasized.

That a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel of Genazzano should be placed in the hall only reflects the praiseworthy desire of those who decorate the seat to place pictures of Our Lady wherever they deem worthy and reasonable.

There would be, then, no “dethronement” in hanging the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano in a secondary room such as the entrance hall. And for the accuser to interpret it as he did only reveals his lack of the most elementary good sense.

3rd interpretation – The “dethronement” would consist of habitually keeping the picture of Dona Lucilia over the mantel place, which would be improper since it is the “place of honor in the *Eremo*” (Letter 83, p. 18).

The greatest place of honor in the *Eremo* is reserved for the Blessed Sacrament in the Sacarium of the altar. The next greatest place of honor is the niche in the retablo of the altar, where – as already said – a statue of Our Lady of Paris is enthroned. The accusation, therefore, that the photograph of Dona Lucilia occupies “the place of honor in the *Eremo*” lacks any foundation.

To see how confused and chaotic the letter-writer is in his anxiety to accuse, it suffices to read that which he adds next: “To complete the evil, as soon as the Priest left, the statues or pictures of Our Lady (note the plural) were removed from the place of honor (in the singular) and were again replaced by photographs (in the plural) of D. Lucilia” (Letter 83, p. 18 – the words in parenthesis introduced in Mr. O.F.’s text are mine).

It appears from the text that various “statues and pictures of Our Lady” would have been placed “in the place of honor” (in the singular). It is absurd to image that, upon taking down the picture of Dona Lucilia, various “statues and pictures” would have been put up in its place. If the intention was to speak in the plural, “places of honor,” it would also be completely false since the referred to picture of Dona Lucilia is the only one that occupies the principal place (moreover, the only one appropriate for such) in this room of the *Eremo* (refectory – *sala de atos*).

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Since the casuistry has already been completely analyzed, it now remains, Dr. Plinio, to respond to the other accusation, which would constitute aggravating circumstances to the matter of the “dethronement.” This deals with the accusation of “*hypocrisy*” and “*simulation*” (Letter 83, pp. 21 and 23), which the letter-writer makes in view of the fact that you ordered the removal of the photograph of Dona Lucilia from above the mantel place. The object of such “simulation” would be to cover up a secret devotion to Dona Lucilia, which we would not want Fr. Tam to know about.

In reality, the photograph of Dona Lucilia was removed for a much more comprehensible reason. The amiable visitor was coming from an ambience where there are persons who are very hostile to the TFP. His position concerning our entity was not then sufficiently known to us. As I have already described, when all the hermits would join together in the small chapel, the normal solution to accommodate their large number is to open the sliding doors between the chapel and the refectory to allow sufficient room for the extra persons. Would it be correct, on this occasion, for the photograph of Dona Lucilia to hang on the wall since the refectory functions as an adjunct to the chapel during the Holy Sacrifice? The problem, of a canonical nature, had not yet been considered. In the imminence of the visit of Fr. Tam, who would celebrate Mass there, there was no time to make the necessary studies: thus Dr. Plinio ordered the photograph to be taken down. From the decorative vantage point, a vacuum remained in the place

where the picture had been, which was filled by the picture of Our Lady of Genazzano that was in the hall.

At the end of the visit, the two pictures were replaced, each one to its respective spot. And the matter of the presence of the picture of Dona Lucilia in the refectory when there is a ceremony in the chapel remained to be studied.

Mr. O.F., always quick to interpret with malevolence all that takes place in the TFP, saw in this a serious “sin of simulation” and “hypocrisy.” However, the explanation of the fact is quite simple, and it is disconcerting to see Mr. O.F. stirring up such a tempest over a teapot.

As St. Thomas teaches: “Just as a man lies when he signifies by words that which he is not, yet lies not when he refrains from saying what he is, for this is sometimes lawful, so also does a man dissemble, when by outward signs of deeds or things he signifies that which he is not, yet he dissembles not if he omits to signify what he is” (II-II, 111, 1, ad 4).

Now, the removal of the picture of Dona Lucilia from the refectory on this occasion was due, as I have said, to a problem of a canonical nature that we did not know how to resolve at that time, and not from the intent to hide from the visitor a devotion that we have no reason to conceal.

Thus it is totally false and abusively unjust to make the accusation that simulation took place in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence.

Moreover, in the various seats that he visited, Fr. Tam could see many photographs of Dona Lucilia in the places that they habitually occupy. In the *Eremo of Praesto Sum*, for example, where he went two times, he spoke at length in the main room of the *Eremo*, where a photograph of Dona Lucilia figures in a prominent place. Now, if the accusation of Mr. O.F. were true, it would have been necessary to remove all the photographs of Dona Lucilia from all the seats, which did not take place.

Then, there was neither simulation nor hypocrisy, nor the attempt to cover up something secret.

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Mr. O.F. moreover alleges that on the occasion of the same visit of Fr. Tam to the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence, “the order was given to remove the photographs of Dona Lucilia from the desks of the hermits” (Letter 83, p. 18).

With Fr. Tam coming, as was said, from an ambience very prejudiced against the TFP and where the false accusation of an unwholesome devotion to Dona Lucilia was already circulating, we could not foresee what his reaction would be in the face of this fact, be it nonetheless quite legitimate. Would he not think it disproportionate that a certain number of hermits had on their work desks photos of Dona Lucilia?¹⁶

¹⁶ I observe, moreover, in passing that in the majority of the cases, this refers to the pocket photos that the hermits carry with them in their billfolds and which they have the habit of placing on their respective desks when they are working. In these cases, therefore, to remove them from their desks meant simply to put them back, or retain them, in their billfolds...

It would be necessary, then, to explain to him that the presence of these photos is in token of their gratitude to the numerous graces received through the intercession of Dona Lucilia for the obtaining of donations, and perhaps also for graces of a personal order. All these explanations have an inevitable opinionative character, which does not always impress the interlocutor in the same way as the person certain of having been favored by the said grace. It was, therefore, an understandable measure of prudence to avoid a problem, the practice being, in this case, relating more to the interior life of each person. And the lack of prudence falls more to the innocuous ravings of Mr. O.F., who rejected *a priori* this explanation (Letter 83, p. 23).

That the devotion to Dona Lucilia existing in the TFP was not hidden from Fr. Tam remains clear by his visit (previously mentioned) to the rest of the TFP seats. Moreover, in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence, Fr. Tam could see various photos of Dona Lucilia in the individual dormitories (cells) of the hermits. The informants of Mr. O.F., always quick to furnish him with some fact that would serve to show the negative side of the TFP that the latter wants to prove, symptomatically omitted this fact. For this would upset the puzzle put together by Mr. O.F.!

7. CONCLUSION OF THIS CHAPTER

Having exposed all this, it can be concluded that there was no type of “dethronement” of Our Lady in the TFP; but, on the contrary, Marian devotion flourishes among us. Nor is there any secret in the devotion to Dona Lucilia that exists among the members and cooperators of the TFP, which is, moreover, of general public knowledge.

I will next show how that this devotion to Dona Lucilia is perfectly in accordance with the laws and the spirit of the Church.

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CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH CONCERNING CULT¹⁷ IN GENERAL AND THE CULT OF *DULIA* IN PARTICULAR

A certain presupposition underlies the imaginative construction, highly defamatory, erected by Mr. O.F. in regard to the supposed “dethronement” of Our Lady to the “benefit” of Dona Lucilia. This presupposition is that the cult to Dona Lucilia, a person not canonized or beatified, or even in the process of canonization by the proper Ecclesiastical Authority, is contrary *ipso facto* to the doctrine and laws of the Church. Because of this, he supposes, the devotion to Dona Lucilia existing among the members and cooperators of the TFP was hidden from Fr. Tam, an accusation, as already proven, that does not correspond to the truth.

The letter-writer seems to imagine that cult can only be rendered to canonized or beatified persons. This is not the teaching of the Church nor is this decreed by the *Code of Canon Law*.

The letter-writer also seems to imagine that every manifestation of respect and veneration to persons still living infringes upon the legal disposition of the Church who regulates the cult of *dulia* rendered to the Saints and the Blessed.

In order to conveniently clarify these two matters, I must present here a review of what the Church, through her Pontiffs, theologians and doctors, teaches or states in this respect.

In this chapter I will examine Catholic Doctrine concerning cult *in general*, and the cult of *dulia* in particular; in the following chapter, what they dispose with regard to the laws of the Church.

The subject has been amply discussed by theologians, moralists and canonists, who have generally adopted the same terminology, at times with differences in various contrasting points, but in nothing that alters the substance of the doctrine.

For the ease of exposition, I will follow what has been said on the matter by A. Chollet in his *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (entry *Culte en general*, Paris, 1923, vol. III, cols. 2404-2427). When opportune, I will insert quotations from other authors to better clarify the points being dealt with.

1. NOTION, TYPES & FORMS OF CULT

A. *Notion of cult*

The word *cult* comes from the Latin verb *colo, colis, colere, colui, cultum*, whose first meanings are to inhabit, to cultivate, to care for, to protect, to desire good to, to give pleasure to, and, by extension, to honor, to pay devotion to, to venerate, to respect (A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire Étymologique*

¹⁷ *Cult* is used to mean the word *worship* in this chapter; but the two words (*cult* and *worship*) are used interchangeably in the succeeding chapters.

de la Langue Latine – Histoire des Mots, Paris: Klincksieck, 1979, p. 132). These acceptations fittingly lead to the notion of *cult*:

“Unanimously,” one reads under the cited heading in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, the “theologians, following in the footsteps of St. John Damascus (Orat. III, *De Imaginibus*, n. 26, P.G. vol. 94, col. 1346, ...) and Franzelin (*De Verbo Incarnato*, Rome, 1874, vol. 45, p. 456), define cult as a sign of submission in recognition of the superiority and excellence of some person” – “*nota submissionis ad agnitam excellentiam alterius*” (A. Chollet, DTC, *ibid.*, col. 2404).

This definition encompasses three essential elements:

- a. *An objective element*: the superiority and excellence of some person who is honored or to whom devotion is paid by another;
- b. *A subjective element*: the recognition of, voluntary submission and deference to this superiority and excellence;
- c. *A sign*, internal or external, of this recognition and this submission (cf. *ibid.*, col. 2406).

The distinct forms of objective and subjective elements and their combinations, as well as the nature of the sign, give rise to diverse types and modalities of cult.

B. Civil cult and religious cult

a. *Individual cult*: “A person, in effect, can manifest his excellence and superiority in diverse ways and in different spheres. He can be superior, eminent, by his *personal valor*. He is a *genius* whose knowledge is immense, whose intuitions are amazing, and who opens horizons to the human understanding heretofore unsuspected; he is a *hero*, whose character and energy enjoin the admiration of all and whose perspicacity and power of will triumph over unspeakable difficulties; or, more simply, he is a *colossus*, whose physical constitution and muscular prowess recall the giants of old; intellectual valor, moral valor, physical strength thus impose themselves before others and give origin to a sentiment of admiration mixed with deference and respect, which is cult. The rest (of mankind) trail easily behind these heroes, and the vinculum by which the multitudes submit to their ascendancy **is a cult** (*individual cult*)” (*ibid.*, col. 2404).

b. *Familiar cult*: “A man can be superior by the *function* that he fulfills in the *family*: he is a father; he establishes a home, he governs it with the authority that comes from the solemn contract made with his spouse before God, or from the fact of the procreation of children. The wife and children recognize his authority, respect him, and confirm this by their submission or filial piety. **This is, again, a cult** (*familiar cult*)” (*ibid.*, cols. 2404-2405).

c. *Social cult*: “If a man has a *social* mission and holds an office in the nation that makes him a leader of his fellow-citizens, who recognize in him the authority and prestige that surround him and who publicly manifest their deference to his person, **they practice in this way acts of a real cult** (social cult)” (*ibid.*, col. 2405). In its turn, the social cult is as diverse as the particular asso-

ciations that constitute the national society” (cf. *ibid.*). *The devotion of students to their masters, for example, is classified as a social cult.*

All these varieties of cult constitute the civil cult, because they consider the natural excellence in men that makes them superior.

But “above the individual, the family, and the fatherland, there is a society that binds man to God, his Creator, his King and his Father, and makes them members of one same divine fatherland, of one same religious family. This society has its proper hierarchy – at whose apex is God, and then eminent personalities whose excellence proceeds from God. To know and proclaim the excellence of God and of the ministers that he constituted in order to lead us to Him, to testify to the respect and submission due to sacred persons or to divine persons is to practice the *religious cult*” (*ibid.*, col. 2405).

“Therefore, the *religious cult* is an acknowledgement of the divine perfection, of the eminent superiority and excellence of God over all creatures. This extends itself as well to the acknowledgement of the superiority emanating from God in the religious society, be it natural (human society), supernatural (the Church), or preternatural (the angelic society)” (*ibid.*).

This last consideration leads us to the distinction between natural cult and supernatural cult.

C. *Natural religious cult & supernatural cult*

“Even if God had not called men to the supernatural order, we would still be obliged to practice the virtue of religion, to render to the Creator a cult based upon the *natural* knowledge of the Lord. ... This would be a *natural cult*, which social institutions would have the capacity to develop and organize. ... But God raised us to the supernatural order: Jesus Christ came to restore this order, upset by sin, and He established between God and man new relations of divine supremacy and human dependency. These relations demand that we acknowledge and proclaim them by exterior signs, which constitutes cult. This is ... *supernatural cult*” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, col. 2410).

D. *Supreme cult & subordinate cult: Latria & dulia*

The cult owed to God is the *supreme cult*, called by theologians the cult of *latria*:

“God desired to make creatures participate in His incommunicable perfection; and in men, in heroes, in their virtue and sanctity shine a spark of the divine perfections and excellence of their Creator.

We can reverence them by reason of this divine life in them developed by their virtues and the grace of God. This cult will be dependent upon the first, from which it finds its reason for being. It will be a *subordinate cult*, called by the ancients *dulia* (from the Greek *douleia*)” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, col. 2407).

Hyperdula & protodulia

“Among the holy souls, who participate supernaturally in the perfection of God and of Jesus Christ, one distinguished herself in an incomparable manner, reaching heights of virtue to which no creature

after her could be able to aspire. This is Mary, whose sublime and inimitable excellence, while created and finite, is nonetheless the object, by reason of its supereminence, of a special and distinct cult called *hyperdulia*” (*ibid.*, col. 2407).

For analogous reasons – his eminent sanctity and his relation to Our Lord Jesus Christ and Mary Most Holy, many modern theologians designate the special cult to Saint Joseph as *protodulia* (That is, the first among those of *dulia*) (cf. Bonifacio Llamera, *Teologia de San José*, Madrid: BAC, 1953, pp. 330-338).

“The expressions *dulia* and *hyperdulia* are easily understood. The Greek word *doulos* signifies slave or servant. The saints are the servants of God. They are saints to the measure that they were servants of God, and they are honored, or at least have the right to religious honors, to the measure that they are saints” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, col. 2407).

I will later point out what are the honors reserved by the laws of the Church for the canonized or beatified Servants of God. What behooves us to emphasize here is that this religious cult can be rendered as well to the saints *in life*, that is, to those who are still on this earth. And the reason for this is simple: Even while living they share, by their virtue and by grace, in the divine excellence. This is expressed by the renowned theologian and moralist Fr. Antonio Peinador, C.M.F.:

“In respect to supernatural *dulia*, it should be noted that it is attributed to God in an eminent manner; to the inhabitants of Heaven because they are in a state of sanctity; and also **to those who on earth are distinguished by a preeminent sanctity** or enjoy a special spiritual dignity.

“1. To *God* it is due in an *eminent* way because ‘just as religion is called piety by way of excellence, inasmuch as God is our Father by way of excellence, so again *latria* is called *dulia* by way of excellence, inasmuch as God is our Lord by way of excellence (II-II, 103, 3, rep. obj. 1). Therefore to God more properly is due *latria*, and not *dulia* (According to the explanation of St. Thomas of why *dulia* is a virtue distinct from *latria*, cf. II-II, 103, 3, *respondeo*).

“2. To the *inhabitants of Heaven*, *dulia* is also rendered, since they have, by divine disposition, a true reason for superiority over us, and because of this we should be their humble servants.

“3. Moreover, (it is also rendered) *to those on earth who enjoy a presently existing sanctity*, since **sanctity while following the course (here on earth) is substantially identical to the sanctity of glory**. Therefore, **the excellence** by which the inhabitants of Heaven are worthy of the honor of subjection is **also shared by the saints of this world** (cf. Cajetanum, in a. 4).

“4. Finally, a supernatural *dulia* is rendered to all those who possess some *spiritual or supernatural dignity* since, because of this dignity, we are made their servants.

“5. A special *dulia*, which receives the name of *hyperdulia*, is due to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God” (*Cursus Brevior Theologiae Moralis ex Divi Thomae principiis inconcussis*, Madrid: Colsa, 1956, vol. III, pp. 395-396).

I point out that, to persons who hold in the Church “*some spiritual dignity*,” such as the Priest in relation to laymen, the Bishops in relation to the Priests, the Prioress in relation to her Religious, and principally the Pope in relation to all the faithful, to them is due the *religious cult of dulia*.

The same doctrine is explained by Fr. Clemens Marc, C.S.M.R. – from the school of St. Alphonsus – in more concise but no less clear terms: “The **religious cult** can define itself simply in relation to the spiritual excellence of the man still a pilgrim on this earth, for example, of a Priest or Bishop, or **also of someone who demonstrates a singular sanctity**. The cult, however, is sacred (in a more strict sense) when it relates to the divine excellence or that of the blessed who are indissolubly united to God” (*Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae seu Doctoris Ecclesiae S. Alphonsi Mariae de Ligorio Doctrina Morais ad usum scholarum accomodata*, Rome: Della Pace, 1906, vol. I, p. 355).

E. *Absolute cult & relative cult*

“The reason for which a person or a thing is the object of cult can be intrinsic or extrinsic to him, united or separate. In the first case, cult is *absolute*; in the second, *relative*” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, col. 2409).

“The absolute cult addresses itself directly to persons; the relative cult venerates the images or relics – but because of the persons to whom they relate, and it is, in final analysis, to these persons that the homages are directed. To adore the material image would be idolatry and would explain the furor of the iconoclasts; but Catholics, however little instructed they might be, know that the image and the relics have as their end an increase of their devotion to God and His saints” (E. Jombart, *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1948, fasc. 22, col. 862).

“Suppressing the substantial union between the object of the cult and the person whose excellence is the *reason* for the cult, you have a *relative* cult, thus called because that which makes this object venerable is its *relation* to a holy person, venerable or adorable.

“The relation can be **between two persons**, for example, when I pay respect to an ambassador because of the prince who sent him, or **between a person and thing**, as when I venerate the crown of thorns because it encircled the forehead of the Savior.

“The relation can be based upon a **past fact**: for example, when I venerate the Precious Blood because it flowed from the Body of the Savior; or upon a **present fact**, as when I venerate a portrait that represents the presently reigning Supreme Pontiff” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, col. 2409).

Some examples will show the scope of these distinctions. A. Chollet says:

“The cult of Jesus Christ gives rise to special questions that have been heatedly debated in the History of the Church. In effect, Christ is God and man; He is a Divine Person and possesses in the unity of the Persons two infinitely distinct natures. What cult can be rendered Him? How should religion honor His Humanity? The response has varied with respect to whether one admits or denies His divinity, or according to the type of union that is professed between God and the man in Him” (*ibid*, col. 2415).

“The Council of Ephesus, defining the personal unity of Christ in the duality of natures, declares as anathema ‘whoever would say that one should *coadore, coglorify and codesignate God* the man and God the Word, as if they were one or the other. In effect, the prefix ‘co’ obliges the understanding in this way.’ The Church understands by the prefix ‘co’ the signification of two distinct persons united by a bond that allows the existence of the distinction of persons. Thus, at the same time that the Church confesses that the Holy Spirit is adored with the Son and the Father because there is a distinction between the persons honored by the same cult, it does not desire the co-adoration of the man and God in Christ, because there is unity of person” (*ibid.*, col. 2416).

The Second Council of Constantinople, which brought down Nestorianism and Monophysitism, in its 12th anathema prohibited “the relative cult given to the humanity of Christ, as if we should venerate Him as we would an image, not for His own proper worth, but for His extrinsic relationship with the Word, the Son of God. It is necessary, therefore, to adore Christ, the Man-God, with an **absolute and direct cult**” (*ibid.*, col. 2417).

From whence the conclusion: “There are not, therefore, two adorations, but only one cult of Christ; and the humanity of Christ is an integral part of the object of this cult. This is, consequently, honored with **an absolute cult of latria**, a cult paid also to each one of His living parts, considered distinct but not separate from the total being of the Savior” (*ibid.*, col. 2418).

Fr. Charles Sauve, S.S., in his book *Le Culte du Sacre-Coeur* (Devotion to the Sacred Heart) also applies these notions: “The *heart* of Jesus is Jesus Christ Himself adored from the point of view of the heart, of love, just as the *precious blood* is Jesus Christ entire adored under the aspect of the blood He shed, of the sacrifice, just as devotion to the *body* of Jesus is devotion to the person of Jesus Christ from the point of view of the body immolated by us, just as devotion to the cross is, at heart, devotion to Jesus Christ under the symbol of His death. You have always before you the person of Jesus Christ entire, and not one part of His person” (Paris: J. de Gigord, 1906, vol. I, p. 24 – *apud* A. Chollet, *ibid.*, col. 2406).

However, in the last case – that of the Holy Cross – we are no longer dealing with an absolute cult but a *relative* cult, since a *substantial* union does not exist between the Cross and the person of Jesus Christ. The reason for the cult of the Cross is its relation (and not substantial union) with the adorable person of Jesus Christ, which characterizes it as a *relative cult of latria*.

The relationship that lays the foundation for the relative cult can be quite varied: “**Every real and proper relationship can be the basis for a relative cult**” (A. Chollet, *ibid.*, col. 2409).

“More commonly this deals with a *vital* bond, a bond of *propriety*, or a bond of *signification*. The *vital* bond is one that, presently broken, had formerly united the members to the body and to the person of a saint, the Blessed Virgin Mary or Our Lord. In this way are constituted the *relics properly so-called*, to which worship (cult) is paid because of the real bond that unites them to a person who is venerated or adored. A bond of *propriety* results with regard to some object or some place that such a person produced or possessed, occupied or lived in, employed or directed, and *ipso facto*, sanctified or blessed, and which, in this way, became transformed into relics *improperly so-called*.¹⁸ Finally, there is the bond of signification-

¹⁸ For example, one of the miracles approved by St. Pius X for the beatification of the Curé d’Ars was that of a young girl who was touched with the shoestrings from a pair of old shoes of Father Vianney, preserved as a precious relic by the Sisters of Charity in an orphanage in the Parish of St. John in Lyon (cf. Francis Trochu, *The Curé d’Ars*).

tion, or of *symbolism*, by which an image or a conventional symbol represents in our mind or recalls to our memory a divine person, an angel or a man who has a right to our religious sentiments. The following would be the gestures and actions of exterior cult: paintings and sculptures, engravings and carvings, which are not properly or improperly relics and which have nothing to do with the persons venerated through them save the *logical* relationship of representation or remembrance”¹⁹ (A. Chollet, *ibid.*, cols 2409-2410).

“Obviously, a graduation exists in the three categories of religious objects: “To have been part of a vital composite is certainly, for the same reason, more honorable than having been merely possessed by the person; and to have been possessed by him is more honorable than simply having symbolized or still symbolizing him. A statue of Jesus Christ is more worthy of religion than a portrait of a saint; however, such an image is less venerable than a tunic or vestment of the Divine Master; and these vestments are even less still than would be a particle of His Blood or His adorable Flesh, should any particles have remained fixed to the true Cross. And this Cross is much more worthy of veneration than a blessed cross or a miraculous picture’ but it is infinitely less than an Eucharistic Host” (*ibid.*, 2410).

¹⁹ In this sense, it is interesting to note the case of the chair in which Our Lady is said to have sat during the first Apparition to St. Catherine Labouré in the Chapel of the *Rue du Bac* in Paris in 1830.

The matter is controversial. The writings of St. Catherine Labouré do not lead to this supposition, but contradict it, since the Saint compares the chair in which Our Lady had sat with that which is represented in the picture of Saint Anne (which hangs on the left side of the Chapel), to which the chair that is the object of worship (cult) bears no resemblance. Moreover, the cult to this chair was slow to rise, having begun almost four years after the death of the Servant of God and 50 years after the Apparition, and resulted from what appears to be a confusion on the part of the last Mother Superior of St. Catherine Labouré.

According to her own words, the Saint was kneeling next to this chair while awaiting the Apparition. Our Lady appeared in another chair on the stairs of the altar. Catherine Labouré doubted what she was seeing, and the Angel who had accompanied her had to speak out to her to dispel her hesitation. The Saint then moved away from the place where she was (next to the chair of the spiritual Director of the Daughters of Charity) in order to join Our Lady on the steps of the altar, filially placing her hands on the knees of the Blessed Virgin. There she had an ineffable conversation with the Mother of God that lasted for close to two hours.

Upon these facts, Fr. René Laurentin judiciously comments: “The chair of Fr. Richenet, which has been restored several times, excites the fervor of the visitors and pilgrims who leave letters and offerings there. There is no reason to be shocked at this. Even though the analysis (of the documents and deposits from the process of canonization) leads one to believe that the chair of Our Lady was part of the Apparition and disappeared with her, and even though the testimony of Catherine, practically speaking, does not permit identifying it with the chair of Director, this chair nonetheless conserves a valor of a memorial and of symbolism. It was still there in the presbytery, a few steps away from the Apparition. ... This chair evokes, in a vivid way, the ‘meeting’ of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, with men” (*Life of Catherine Labouré - Preuves*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1890, vol. II, p. 164).

For this reason, there is a legitimate basis for the relative cult that is paid to it by the faithful world-over.

The same can be said of the holm oak over which our Lady of Fatima appeared. The indiscreet devotion of the first faithful literally demolished this holm oak. How praiseworthy would have been the zealous soul who would have saved at least the trunk of this tree! In Fatima they now preserve only a holm oak that has been there *since the time of the Apparitions*. Yet the faithful judge this simple fact a legitimate reason to conserve and respect it. And the whole world would indignantly deplore the critical spirit that would resolve to cut it down “for causing confusion and not being the actual holm oak over which Our Lady appeared.” It was there during the Apparitions -- and acts as a memorial of them -- and is thus preserved with respect. For this reason, one can speak even of relative cult, although it be in a most tenuous way.

In this one sees the spirit – at the same time vigorous, variated and graduated – of the Catholic notion of cult.

“It is evident that “relative cult is *inferior* to absolute cult, because it is less worthy to be venerated for an extrinsic reason rather than a personal motive. The relative cult *presupposes* the absolute cult and recovers it; I cannot venerate the relics of saint to whom I have no devotion; and the veneration to his remains becomes manifest, finally, in a homage paid to his person and his high virtue” (*ibid.*).

F. *Internal cult & external cult*

“If we pass from the objective reasons for cult to its subjective manifestations, we still see that it can take various forms and diversify itself. Let us distinguish, for example, between *internal* cult and *external* cult. The first is that which takes place entirely within the depths of the soul. It is a language in which, directed by the will and the heart, the reason expresses to God the submission and the veneration of the soul. These intimate sentiments can be translated externally by words, acts or sensible signs, such as genuflection, the bowing of the head, the hands being folded, raised or extended (as in the manner of praying in former times), kisses, the prostration of the body.

“These signs become, then, an *external* cult; if they are organized in a complete and sacred ceremonial, established by the religious authority, they constitute the *liturgy*. A close relationship, analogous to the relationship between the soul and the body, binds together the interior and exterior cult. The latter proceeds from the former, manifesting it, expressing it and complementing it. Interior devotion of the soul has a spontaneous tendency and manifests itself externally by religious signs: They have in themselves a relationship of cause and effect. This causal action gives origin to a reaction that causes the exterior manifestation to nourish and stimulate the interior, which thus becomes to a certain degree dependent upon and an effect of the rites that they produced. From this it follows that even though the interior cult, strictly speaking, can exist by itself, normally it works together with the exterior cult. And contrariwise, the latter, unless it be hypocritical, cannot exist without the former” (A. Chollet, DTC, vol. III, cols. 2410-2411).

This whole doctrine collides head-on with Protestantism, which abhors cult to Saints, relics and images: “The reformers (protestants) amassed objection after objection against cult as it is practiced in the Catholic Church, considering as idolatry devotion to the saints, their remains or images, as well as exterior signs of cult that they would have preferred to lock up in the interior of the soul” (*ibid.*, col. 2422).

G. *Public cult & private cult*

“The external cult is subdivided into *private* cult and *public* cult, depending upon whether it expresses the sentiments of an individual or whether it manifests the religious deference of a society. In effect, societies are based upon the divine authority: All power comes from on high, and the social good has neither value nor force if it is not sanctioned by God. Consequently, between God and the human groups exists a relationship of domination and dependency, by which individuals submit to the Lord. Societies have their religious obligations and their own cult. This is exercised by representatives who carry out religious rites in the name of their brothers. Such rites constitute public cult, as opposed to private cult, which is exercised by the individual in his own name and privately” (*ibid.*, col. 2411).

There is one important distinction to make here: “**Public cult should not be confused with a cult exercised in public:** An act of private cult can be carried out in public” (*ibid.*, col. 2411). For example, “Acts of public cult can be carried out privately, such as the Priest who recites the Breviary in his

own quarters, but in the name of Christian society, which is the Church. The public cult receives its valor from the society itself, in whose name it acts as delegate; in this way, the culpable Priest validly celebrates (the Holy Mass) and efficaciously recites the Breviary, because it is the Church that celebrates (the Mass) through her intermediary and who prays through his mouth” (*ibid.*, col. 2411).

In the next chapter I will analyze what the laws of the Church establish with respect to public and private cult.

2. THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS CONCERNING THE CULT OF *DULIA*

The same fluctuation and elasticity that we saw existed in the usage of the words inerrancy and infallibility (cf. chap. III) is again verified in the use of the words *cult* (worship) and *dulia*. This fluctuation is legitimate and not at all incongruent; on the contrary, it expresses the largesse and openness with which theologians deal with the matter.

Obviously, Cartesian spirits of all types and species (protestants, rationalists, positivists) bellow against this truly catholic liberality. They would like a uniform, unequivocal, mathematical language, free of all analogous usages, which locks human thinking into a “straitjacket.” This is not, thanks be to God, the language of the Church. While taking every care to verify in each case the meaning and the context in which a determined word is being employed, theologians, moralists, and canonists permit some variation in the terminology, within legitimate limits, in order to substantially uphold the same doctrine.

Naturally, to protestant spirits, this is a continual source of inconvenience and discomfort, whether they find ground to unjustly inveigh against Catholics whose spirit conforms with that of the Church, pointing out in this supposed contradictions or even chimerical violations of Canon Law.

It is necessary, therefore, to expound upon the notions that have just been set forth, showing the basis that they have in the doctrine of St. Thomas, and then comparing this doctrine with the teaching and terminology of present-day theologians. Thus will we verify the perfect harmony and continuity that exists in this teaching, which takes into account the already referred to fluctuation and elasticity in the usage of words.

A. *Concerning justice & the virtues annexed to it: Religion, piety & respect (observance)*

“Now the essential character of justice consists in rendering to another his due according to equality.” This is the classic definition of justice that St. Thomas makes upon entering into the question of the virtues annexed to justice (II-II, 80, 1, *resp.*).

Yet man cannot render to God, on the plane of equality, what he has received from Him, according to Ps. 115: 12: “*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?*” (“*What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?*”)

Because of this, in retribution he offers Him respect, homage, and worship (cult), which pertain to the virtue of religion. This is the first virtue annexed to justice (cf. II-II, 80, 1, *respondeo*).

Secondly, it is not possible to make to one's parents an equal return for what one owes to them. One's retribution lies in fulfilling one's duty toward them, honoring them, and, at the same time, paying them a diligent worship (cult). All this belongs to *piety*, the second virtue annexed to justice (cf. *ibid.*).

Finally, man is unable to offer an equal recompense for virtue. Because of this, St. Thomas cites Cicero as saying that deference and honor should be rendered to those who excel in worth. This, then, belongs to the virtue of *observance*, or *respect* (cf. *ibid.*).

Thus, God is worshiped with *religion*, parents with *piety*, and eminent persons with *respect* (or *observance*), these three virtues all being subordinate to justice (cf. II-II, 102, 1, *resp.*).

B. Concerning respect (observance): Honor & worship (cult)

St. Thomas asks if it belongs to respect (observance) to pay worship and honor to persons in positions of dignity. He responds thus:

“It belongs to persons in positions of dignity to govern subjects. Now to govern is to move certain ones to their due end: thus a sailor governs his ship by steering it to port. But every mover has a certain excellence and power over that which is moved. Wherefore, a person in a position of dignity is an object of twofold consideration: *first*, in so far as he obtains excellence of position, together with a certain power over subjects; *secondly*, as regards the exercise of his government. In respect of his excellence there is due to him honor, which is the recognition of some kind of excellence; and in respect of the exercise of his government, there is due to him *worship*, consisting in rendering him service, by obeying his commands, and by repaying him, according to one's faculty, for the benefits we received from him” (II-II, 102, 2, *respondeo*).

A distinction between honor and worship (cult) can also be established.

To the objection that worship seems the same as honor since, as St. Augustine says, we are said to worship these persons whom we hold in honor, St. Thomas replies: “Worship includes not only honor, but also whatever other suitable actions are connected with the relations between man and man (II-II, 102, 2, *ad 1*).

And, responding to the objection that worship and honor are due only to our superiors, St. Thomas responds: “Our debt is twofold. One is legal debt, to pay which man is compelled by law; and thus man owes honor and worship to those persons in positions of dignity who are placed over him. The other is moral debt, which is due by reason of a certain honesty: It is in this way that we owe worship and honor to persons in positions of dignity even though we be not their subjects” (II-II, 102, 2, *ad 2*).

All these notions broaden our views and perspectives concerning the concept of cult.

C. Concerning *dulia*: Honor, praise & glory

According to St. Thomas, *dulia* is one part of the virtue of observance (respect). It has as its end to render honor and worship (cult) to superiors. Examining it, St. Thomas takes the opportunity to delve into the concept of honor: “Honor denotes a witnessing to a person's excellence. Therefore men who wish

to be honored seek a witnessing to their excellence, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. I. 5, VIII, 8). Now witness is borne either before God or before man. Before God, Who is the searcher of hearts, the witness of one's conscience suffices; wherefore honor, so far as God is concerned, may consist of the mere internal movement of the heart, for instance when a man acknowledges either God's excellence or another man's excellence before God. But, as regards men, one cannot bear witness, save by means of signs, either by words, as when one proclaims another's excellence by word of mouth, or by deeds, for instance by bowing, saluting, and so forth, or by external things, as by offering gifts, erecting statues, and the like. Accordingly honor consists of signs, external and corporal" (II-II, 103, 1, *resp.*).

How can honor, praise, and glory be distinguished? St. Thomas responds: "Praise is distinguished from honor in two ways. *First*, because praise consists only of verbal signs, whereas honor consists of any external signs, so that praise is included in honor. *Secondly*, because by paying honor to a person we bear witness to a person's excelling goodness absolutely, whereas by praising him we bear witness to his goodness in reference to an end: Thus we praise one that works well for an end. On the other hand, honor is given even to the best, which is not referred to an end, but as already arrived at the end, according to the Philosopher.

"Glory is the effect of honor and praise, since the result of our bearing witness to a person's goodness is that his goodness becomes *clear* to the knowledge of many. The word glory signifies this, wherefore a gloss of Augustine on Rom. XVI: 27 observes that glory is *clear knowledge together with praise*" (II-II, 103, 1, *ad 3*).

And after showing that *dulia* (due to man) is a virtue different from *latria* (due to God) since God has full and principal dominion over all creatures while man has only a certain semblance to the divine dominion, St. Thomas asks if there are various species of *dulia* or only one. And he answers:

"*Dulia* can be taken in two ways. In one way it may be taken in a wise sense as denoting reverence paid to anyone on account of any kind of excellence, and thus it comprises piety and observance, and any similar virtue whereby reverence is shown towards a man. Taken in this sense it will have parts differing specifically from one another. In another way it may be taken in a strict sense as denoting the reverence of a servant for his lord, for *dulia* signifies servitude, as stated above. Taken in this sense it is not divided into different species, but is one of the species of observance, mentioned by Tully, for the reason that a servant reveres his lord under one aspect, a soldier his commanding officer under another, the disciple his master under another, and so on in similar cases" (II-II, 103, 4, *resp.*).

D. Worship (*cult*), devotion & religion

St. Thomas also asks if devotion is an act of religion. And, following his well-known scholastic method, after presenting the opposing arguments, he gives the answering responses: "Devotion is derived from *devovere* (which signifies to subject oneself wholly). But a vow is an act of religion. Therefore devotion is also an act of religion (II-II, 82, 2, *resp.*).

In a prior article, St. Thomas defines devotion as "wherefore those persons are said to be devout who, in a way, devote themselves to God, so as to subject themselves wholly to Him" (II-II, 82, 1, *resp.*). Now, "it is evident that to do what pertains to the worship or service of God, belongs properly to religion,

as stated above. Wherefore it belongs to that virtue to have the will ready to do such things, and this is to be devout. Hence it is evident that devotion is an act of religion” (II-II, 82, 2, *resp.*).

Particularly interesting is the solution that St. Thomas gives to the following *objection*: “Further, by religion man is directed to God alone, as stated above. But devotion is directed also to men, for we speak of people being devout to certain holy men, and subjects are said to be devoted to their masters. ... Therefore devotion is not an act of religion” (II-II, 8, 2, *ad 3*).

The solution of St. Thomas is the following: “**Devotion to God’s holy ones, dead or living, does not terminate in them, but passes on to God, in so far as we honor God in his servants.** But the devotion of subjects to their temporal masters is of another kind, just as service of a temporal master differs from the service of God” (II-II, 82, 2, *ad 3*).

Therefore, according to St. Thomas, devotion to holy persons, living or dead, is an act of the virtue of religion and relates to the worship of God, in which it terminates.

3. PRESENT-DAY THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE CONCERNING THE CULT OF *DULIA*

It remains to ask if this doctrine, so clearly and magnificently presented by St. Thomas Aquinas, father of Church Doctrine, is still applied today in the same terms, or if Sacred Theology has incorporated and evolved another terminology with respect to this subject.

The cult of *dulia* is studied by moralists in relation to the Fourth Commandment: “Honor thy father and mother” – because the virtues of piety, observance, and obedience (called potential parts of the virtue of justice) include almost everything that is established by this Commandment of the Law of God (cf. Prummer-Munch, *Manuale Theologiae Moralis secundum principia S. Thomae Aquinatis*, Freiburg-Breisgau: Herder, 1940, vol. II, p. 451).

In response to the question formulated at the beginning of this topic, we can say that the treatise writers of the past century and the first half of this century, which would be pre-conciliar, have continued to flow this same doctrine, adopting practically the same terminology of St. Thomas, enriched, it is true, by the doctrine of another great Doctor of the Church and first among the moralists, St. Alphonsus de Liguori. It behooves us, therefore, to point out some small variations in the terminology.

By way of example, we see this text from the aforementioned *Manual* of the Dominican Fathers Prummer and Munch:

“572. *Definition.* *Observance is the virtue by which ‘worship and honor are paid to persons in positions of dignity.’* St. Thomas says this (II-II, 102, 1), following the teachings of St. Augustine (1. 83, q. 31) and Cicero (*De invent.*, rhet. 1. II, chap. 53), who says: ‘Observance is the virtue by which men excelling in some dignity are considered worthy of some worship and honor.’

“The name of observance was given to this virtue because, it seems, to observe is to look at or to take note of something attentively. Whence the veneration with which we worship those who enjoy some dignity is called observance, because we observe such ones attentively when they require our service (cf. Billuart, *De virt. justitiae annexis* diss. I, a. 3). That which observance considers above all else in a per-

son in positions of dignity is *government*. In this way, just as piety renders worship to parents because they are the *authors of our life*, in the same way observance honors superiors because *they govern us*. Notwithstanding, as St. Thomas wisely warns us (II-II, 102, 1, *ad 2*), by this virtue we honor not only our superiors, but also all those who are gifted in science, virtue and all like this, and who, even though they do not in fact govern us, should the occasion arise, they would be capable to do so. From this, also, comes that formula used in letters, ‘*observantissimus tuus*’ (respectfully yours) which is very significant of the honor given to the person who receives the letter.

“573. *Distinctions*. It is customary to differentiate a threefold observance in conformance with the three positions of dignity to which observance is rendered: a) *civil* observances, when the position of dignity is civil, as with kings, masters, patrons, etc.; b) *religious* observance, when the position of dignity is ecclesiastic, as with the Pope, the Bishop, the priest, etc.; c) *supernatural* observance, when the position of dignity is based on the heroic virtue of the saints. In this last sense, the observance is customarily called *dulia*, in the strict sense of the word. At times, however, *dulia* is taken in a broader sense, in order to designate the **honor rendered even to men still living**” (p. 454).

As one sees, this is essentially the doctrine of St. Thomas, summarized in brief. Notwithstanding, it bears notice how, while remaining substantially the same, the terminology suffers a slight modification with some authors concerning the usage of the word *dulia*.

Thus, in *Theologia Moralis* by A. Lehmkuhl, S.J., one reads: “Worship (cult) is the rendering of honor which finds its basis in the esteem for another, of which it is the manifestation” (Freiburg-Breisgau: Herder, 1888, vol. I, p. 208). And, in respect to observance: “It can be differentiated above all (in these ways): 1) *political* and *religious* observance; 2) religious observance is natural or supernatural. To the latter belongs, in addition to observance to ecclesiastic prelates, observance to the saints, namely, *dulia*, and *hyperdulia*, which is the cult to the Blessed Virgin Mary” (*ibid.* p. 456).

In the already cited *Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae*, Fr. Clemens Marc, C.S.S.R., defines worship (cult) in this way:

“Worship (cult) in general, is *honor rendered with submission*. And insomuch as honor is the sign of our esteem for the excellence of another, *worship (cult)* can also be defined as the testimony to the excellence of another and of our own submission (cf. Polm. 2.2, nn. 780-81).

“*Honor* is paid not only to superiors, but also to equals, and even to inferiors, according to the Apostle: ‘*Honore invicem praevenientes*’ – ‘Loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, with honor preventing one another’ (Rom 12:10). And God Himself pays honor to His Saints.

“*Worship*, however, pays tribute only to superiors because it includes the appropriate submission of oneself to the excellence of another. Appropriate, we say, so that it will not be greater than what is due so that there is not sin by excess, nor will it be lesser so that there is no sin from not enough” (*Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae*, Rome: Della Pace, 1906, vol. I, p. 355).

In another paragraph, this author employs the term *dulia* in the classic sense of St. Thomas (cf. *ibid.*, p. 256).

Theologiae Moralis by Aertnys-Damen, C.S.S.R. admits the two senses, tending, however, to restrict its usage to the cult (worship) of the Angels and Saints: He refers to “*dulia* as that which pays honor to a person in a position of dignity. Among theologians, it designates **principally** the cult (worship) of the Angels and Saints in Heaven” (*op. cit.*, Marietti, 1950, book I, p. 241).

The *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* manual by Genicot-Salsmans, S.J. goes even further, reserving the term for the cult (worship) of those who are already in possession of eternal glory:

“*Adoration* designates *in genere* any action by which we pay reverence to someone by reason of their excellence. Adoration, therefore, is distinguished by the nature of that which constitutes its formal object, or the intermediate act by which we worship that excellence (cf. canon 1255).

“If the formal object is the excellence of God, infinite and imparticipative, it is adoration in the *full and proper sense* of the word, which is identified with the cult of *latria*. But if the object has a finite and participative excellence, it is an adoration in a *less proper sense*, which one can render to creatures. And this last sense is identified with the cult of *dulia*. This word designates, **among theologians of former times** (cf. St. Thomas II-II, 103, 4), the reverence paid to any man by reason of whatsoever excellence; **today, however, it is reserved to the cult (worship) that should be rendered to those who, because of their eternal glory, have the maximum union with God.** Thus, also, the word *hyperdulia*, which previously (*ibid.*) designated the cult rendered to all the saints, is now reserved to designate the eminent excellence of the Blessed Virgin Mary” (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951, vol. I, p. 203).

This text offers opportunity for a commentary:

As for *hyperdulia*, the fixation of the exclusive use of the term for Our Lady is a point of no contention. As for *dulia*, from all the authors cited and others who for the sake of brevity were omitted, one can deduce that the meaning of the term is far less fixed, with the extension given to the term by St. Thomas still remaining largely in use. At any rate, it behooves us to note that the last author cited sees things in a different way, which perhaps indicates a tendency of certain modern theologians to reserve the expression *cult of dulia* only for the canonized. The use of the word *dulia* in this sense obviously in no way alters the decision of theologians about the legitimacy of the civil cult, as well as the manifestations of veneration and respect rendered to living persons who distinguish themselves for supernatural virtue, and which, still today, the cited theologians continue to label as *cult of dulia*.

The explanation of the renowned contemporary theologian Fr. Royo Marin, O.P. is more variegated and encompassing: “As indicated by its very name (from the Greek *douleia* = servitude), *dulia* in its strict sense consists of the honor and reverence that the servant owes to his master. In a broader sense, it signifies the honor that is due to any person in a position of dignity. And **in the sense commonly adopted by the use of the Church**, cult (worship) is veneration that is due to the *saints* who already enjoy eternal blessedness in heaven” (*Teologia Moral para Seglares*, Madrid: BAC, 1957, vol. I, p. 650).

Thus, while upholding the classic conceptions of *dulia* (in the strict sense and the broader sense) in accordance with the doctrine of St. Thomas, Fr. Royo Marin points out the *common use* of the word *dulia*, serving to designate the cult rendered to the saints who possess eternal glory. This common use would distinguish itself, therefore, from the *specialized usage* of theologians when they convey the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning the cult of *dulia*.

Thus can one see how rich, diversified, and variegated theological terminology is. Nor is there reason to hold someone to a single and exclusive meaning of a term whose signification has not been definitively fixed by theology. Moreover, the small or great variations of terminology cause no problems for circumspect and well-formed persons, while they profoundly irritate minds infected with the rationalist-positivist virus. For the latter, the only possible recommendation is that they should seek means to cure themselves of their sickness....

4. APPLICATION OF THIS DOCTRINE TO THE CASE AT POINT

Passing over these cautions, Mr. O.F. lunges against Dr. Plinio because the *Refutation* to the French *Rapport* says that “you (Dr. Plinio) would never permit that a cult of *dulia* be rendered to you, which, in itself, is unacceptable. And nothing like this has taken place in the TFP” (Letter 83, p. 12). Then he gives instances of cult to Dr. Plinio and points out the supposed contradiction: “We have more than 100 cases relating to the cult rendered to you. Nothing like the cult practiced in the TFP has ever taken place in the History of the Church, we presume [sic]. And if it has taken place, how can you yourself say this in itself is unacceptable?” (Letter 83, p. 12).

The passage in the *Refutation of the French TFP* to which Mr. O.F. refers is quoted here in French (Letter 82, p. 2): “*Cependant demander les prières de quelqu’un est une chose, l’invoquer comme on invoque un saint en est une autre bien différent. Ce serait un acte de cult, de dulia, que Dr. Plinio ne permettrait jamais qu’on lui rende et qui en soit inaccessible. Jamais rien de semblable ne s’est passé dans la TFP*” (However, to request the prayers of a person is one thing, to invoke him as we invoke a saint is something very different. This would be an act of cult, of *dulia*, which Dr. Plinio would never permit that he receive and that in itself is inaccessible. Something like this has never happened in TFP) (*Imbroglia-Détraction-Délire/Remarques sur un Rapport Concernant les TFP*, p. 321).

It is easy to see that in this passage the terms cult and *dulia* are used exactly in the present day sense, pointed out by Fr. Royo Marin, when he referred to the “cult and veneration that are due to the Saints who already enjoy eternal blessedness in heaven” (*Teologia Moral para Seglares*, p. 650), and that it was not employed here in the specialized sense, still largely in use by moralists.

Therefore, there is no contradiction whatsoever: The manifestations of respect and veneration that are practiced in relation to Dr. Plinio in the TFP – acts of the *cult of dulia*, in the specialized sense of theologians and, in particular, that of St. Thomas of Aquinas – do not imply an affirmation that Dr. Plinio is a Saint declared as such by the Church. It is instead employed simply in recognition of the excellence of his virtue, which everyone in TFP holds in high account, and which in no way precludes the judgment of the Church, which moreover, could obviously only be given after a person’s death.

And whatever the meaning given to the word *dulia*, the essential point of the issue lies in the fact that no moralist denies the legitimacy of such a recognition of excellence, which lies within the variety of modalities that I have already described.

5. EXTERIOR ACTS OF THE CULT OF *DULIA* RENDERED TO LIVING PERSONS

Many ways of manifesting veneration are not, in themselves, indicative of the type of cult that the persons wish to pay to those to whom they are rendered.

Fr. A. Vermeersch, S.J., expresses this most concisely: “Except for sacrifice, which is proper to the cult of *latria* and belongs to the public cult, the other external acts, according to who renders the cult and to the circumstances, can manifest *latria* or *dulia*: for example, genuflection, the lighting of candles, and also the offering of incense” (*Theologia Moralis Principia-Responsa-Consilia*, Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1924, vol. II, p. 133).

Almost identical definitions are found in the treatise of Genicot-Salsmans, S.J.: “Among the external acts by which we manifest reverence, most of them are in themselves *indifferent to latria* or *dulia*, according to the internal intention of those who perform them. However, *the sacrifice*, at least by cause of the signification that all people associate with it in the sense of recognizing the supreme dominion (of God) can only be used for the cult of *latria*” (*Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951, vol. 1, p. 203).

Other treatise writers explain this matter in more detail. Thus, in the *Summa Theologiae Moralis* of Noldin-Schmidt-Henzel, S.J., one can read: “*Adoration* taken in the *broader* sense of the term is the act by which we give testimony to the excellence of another and our own subjection. In this broad sense, adoration is the same thing as cult. And, in this sense, Holy Scriptures says that both the angels and men (for example, kings) are adored (cf. Gen. 18:2; III Kings 1:16; Act. 10:25). Taken in the *strict sense*, adoration is the external act of religion by which we give testimony to the supreme excellence and dominion of God and to our perfect dependency upon and subjection to Him. Such an adoration is only fitting and due to God (Mt. 2:11).

“a. Adoration understands a twofold act: the one is *internal*, with the intellect as well as the will knowing and recognizing the excellence of another and its own subjection, and with the intention of manifesting exteriorly by some sign this veneration and submission; the other is *external*, that is, the act of humiliation and of subjection by which one exteriorly manifests the internal act;

“b. The external acts by which one can render adoration are: sacrifice; prostration (of the body) to the ground; bowing the head and the upper torso; genuflection; the kiss given to the one who is adored or to his clothing; uncovering the head, etc.

“c. All these external acts of adoration (with the only exception of sacrifice) are indifferent, and can be rendered to God as well as to creatures. However, in these acts, the type of cult that is rendered to someone depends upon and is qualified not in relation to the external act, but only to the internal act.

“Therefore, that which by an external act (for example, that of prostrating oneself to the ground, which has the intention of submitting oneself to someone *tamquam Deo* (like unto God), constitutes an act of *latria*; while that which does this *tamquam amico Dei* (like a friend of God) constitutes an act of *dulia*, which, when paid to a man holding a position of power, manifests an act of civil cult” (Innsbruck: Felizian Rauch, 1963, vol. II, p. 125).

The *Manuale Theologiae Moralis secundum principia S. Thomae Aquinatis* by Prummer Munch, O.P., also sets forth this same doctrine:

“In a generic sense, *adoration is the honor rendered to another because of his superior excellence and in attestment to our submission to him*. Therefore, adoration is less extensive than honor, for one can honor an equal or even an inferior, but one cannot adore any but a superior.

“Since a triple superiority can be distinguished, divine knowledge, supernatural creation, and natural creation, so also can a triple adoration be distinguished: *the first*, which pertains to that of divine excellence and which is called *latria*; *the second* which pertains to that of supernatural created excellence, which exists in angels and saints, and which is called *dulia*; *the third*, which pertains to that of natural created excellence and which is called *civil cult*. In Holy Scriptures it is not uncommon that the word adoration is taken in the second and third sense. For example, Abraham adored the angels and the children of Heth (Gen. 23:7); Bethsabee adored King David (III Kings, 1:16); ‘And it came to pass, that when Peter was come in, Cornelius came to meet him, and falling at his feet adored’ (Acts 10: 25).

“We speak here above all of the adoration which is *latria*. This adoration understands two acts: One is *internal*, the knowledge of the intellect (which recognizes the divine excellence and our subjection) and of the will (which wants to pay tribute to this knowledge and this subjection); the other is *external*, by which this knowledge of the divine excellence and of our subjection is, in fact, manifested. The principal act by which God is externally adored is the *sacrifice*. This act is reserved only to divine adoration. However, the rest of the external acts which are customarily used in adoration, for example, the genuflection, the bow, the prostration, the kiss, the uncovering of the head, etc., can be employed not only in divine adoration, but also in *dulia* and in civil worship (cult)” (Freiburg-Breisgau: Herder, 1940, vol. II, pp. 321-322).

Such doctrine, moreover, is nothing more than the amplification and specification of the teaching of St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*:

“Reverence is due to God on account of His excellence, which is communicated to certain creatures not in equal measure, but according to a measure of proportion, and so the reverence which we pay to God and which belongs to *latria*, differs from the reverence which we pay to certain excellent creatures; this belongs to *dulia*, and we shall speak of it further on. And since external actions are signs of internal reverence, certain external tokens significative of reverence are offered to creatures of excellence, and among these tokens the chief is adoration: Yet there is one thing which is offered to God alone, and that is sacrifice. Hence Augustine says (*De Civitate Dei* X. 4): ‘Many tokens of Divine worship are employed in doing honor to men, either through excessive humility, or through pernicious flattery, yet so that those to whom these honors are given are recognized as being men to whom we owe esteem and reverence and even adoration if they be too far above us. But who ever thought it his duty to sacrifice to any other than one whom he either knew or deemed or pretended to be a God?’” (II-II, 84, 1, ad 1).

Thus the exterior acts of the *cult of dulia* that can be rendered to persons living because of their excellence (religious or civil) are multiple.

Concerning the case at point, the problem, therefore, has shifted: It lies in knowing if the acts by which we manifest honor and submission to Dr. Plinio – once again, the cult of *dulia* in the sense of St.

Thomas of Aquinas – are permitted exclusively to canonized or beatified persons according to the laws of the Church. This is a problem of a canonical nature, which it now behooves us to explain.

Such an explanation serves also to dispel the uproar that Mr. O.F. stirred up around our devotion to Dona Lucilia, in which he sees manifestations of an illicit and absurd cult (Letter 83, pp. 20 and 26). “sufficient to destroy any possibility of her canonization” (Letter 83, p. 26).

The laws of the Church do not provide any basis for these impassioned statements.

* * *

CHAPTER VII

WHAT CONSTITUTES PRIVATE CULT TO THE SAINTS & THE BLESSED, & WHAT IS PERMITTED FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED BUT ARE NEITHER CANONIZED NOR BEATIFIED

What does Canon Law dispose concerning cult?

The *1917 Code*, also known as the *Pius-Benedictine Code* (since it was initiated by St. Pius X and finished by Benedict XV), was in force until November 27, 1983. Even though there now exists a new canonical legislation promulgated by John Paul II, the law that was in effect and would thus relate to the facts that took place up to the date of the last letter of Mr. O.F. is the *1917 Code*.

We use this *Code*, therefore, as reference in the study that follows.

1. PUBLIC CULT AND PRIVATE CULT IN CANON LAW

Public cult was always the object of special vigilance in the Church. The *Code of Canon Law* shows great foresight in regard to it, and it has been regulated by acts of the Roman Congregations.

On the contrary, no official regulations were fixed for private cult, but “with regard to it, the faithful should not become concerned without reason” (P. Sejourné, entry *Saints, Culte des*, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 1939, vol. XIV, col. 975).

The *Code of Canon Law* defines public cult (worship) in this way:

Canon 1256. – “If worship is offered in the name of the Church by persons lawfully deputed for this function and through acts which, by the institution of the Church, are to be offered only to God and the saints and blessed, the worship is *public*; otherwise, it is *private*.”

Canonists have debated the interpretation of this canon. According to some writers of standing, the canon requires three elements for public worship: a) That it be paid in the name of the Church; b) (That this be done) by persons legitimately appointed for such; c) (that this be) by means of determined acts reserved by the Church to honor God and the Saints and the Blessed. If these three conditions cannot be verified, public cult does not exist.²⁰

²⁰ The renowned Italian Capuchin Friar Matteo Conte a Coronata teaches: “In conformity with this canon, public cult (worship) seems to require three conditions, that is, that it be rendered *in the name of the Church*, that it be rendered *by persons legitimately appointed for this*, and that it be rendered by *determined actions*. If one of these three conditions is lacking, there cannot be public cult.

“In saying *in the name of the Church*, it is meant that it is done under the precept of the public authority of the Church, or at least with Her consent and without her opposition: for example, if a Priest or religious community, against the will of the legitimate Superiors and the laws of the Church, would celebrate Mass and recite the canonical

Other canonists of no less authority see in this canon *not three conditions, but only two forms* necessary to render public cult: a) when it is tribute in the name of the Church by persons legitimately appointed for such; b) when it is paid, by whomever it might be, by means of actions that are reserved by the Church for the worship of God, the Saints, and the Blessed.²¹

Therefore, according to this interpretation of the Codice, public cult exists when acts that the Church reserves for the honor of God, the canonized, and the blessed are practiced, even by laymen.²²

The two interpretations of canon 1256 both present a common element as a necessary requirement for public cult: the practice of acts reserved by the Church to honor God, and the Saints and the Blessed. It behooves us, then, to verify what these acts consist of and to see if the incriminations made by Mr. O.F. can be numbered among these acts.

I continue, then, with my analysis.

hours in honor of some Servant of God still not included in the number of the Blessed, one could not say that, in doing this, he was practicing public cult (worship), because it would not be done in the name of the Church, but rather in opposition to the Church.

“The *legitimately appointed person* need not necessarily be a priest or cleric, but can also be a moral and upright layman; whence the recitation of the canonical hours made in choir by a community of religious would be public cult; in a contrary sense, the painting of the image of a Servant of God in glory or with a halo made by a private lay person without the consent of the ecclesiastic authority is not public cult.

“It moreover requires that the *act be at the institution of the Church*, reserved to God, the Saints and the Blessed: whence it comes that the painting of images of the Servant of God on the walls of the Church constitute public worship” (*Institutiones Iuris Canonici*, Turin, Rome: Marietti, 1947, vol. II, p. 146). See also, among others, Jose Antonio Martins Gigante, *Instituições de Direito Canonico*, Braga: Escola Tip. Oficina de S. José, 1954, vol. II, n. 105; Stephanus Sipos, *Enchiridion Iuris Canonici*, Rome: Orbis Catholicus-Herder, 1954, p. 582).

With regard to the example given in the last paragraph of the excerpt by Frei Coronata, it should be understood that the painting of the Servant of God would be represented in glory or with a halo, or another such sign of sanctity, as it clearly states in decree n. 3835 of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites (cf. ahead chap. VII, 4, D).

²¹ The Jesuits Vermeersch and Creusen comment upon canon 1256 in this way: “This canon seems to require three elements to constitute public cult. But then it could not be reconciled with the canons relating to the process of beatification through the (ordinary) means, (which is) not cult, as designated by canon 2057, by which the witnesses are enjoined to testify that no public cult was rendered (to the Servant of God), worship that might have been practiced by private persons. In fact, as it clearly sets forth in the *Constitution Quamvis iustor* of April 30, 1749 by Benedict XIV, the word *et* (and) adds not another required condition, but another form of public cult, meaning by this the same as *vel* (or).

This has escaped some writers (as, for example, Father Augustine) who enumerated three conditions as necessary for public cult. While, on the contrary, it should be said that there are two types of public cult: one, which is paid *in the name of the Church by legitimately authorized persons*; another, where *whoever it might be practices acts that, instituted by the Church, are reserved for the worship of God and the Saints and the Blessed*” (*Epitome Iuris Canonici*, Malines-Rome: H. Dessain, 1927, vol. 2, n. 574, p. 356). See also, among others, Udalricus Beste, *Introductio in Codicem*, St. John’s Abbey Press, entry *Cult* in *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1948, fasc. XXII, col. 862; Sabino Alonso Moran *Comentarios al Código de Derecho Canonico, BAC, Madrid, 1963, n. 699.*

²² With regard to this, writers usually cite the following text of Benedict XV: “There can be no doubt that included in public cult are those acts exercised in private, which are in the same category as those instituted by the Church to solemnly venerate the Blessed or the Saints” (Apostolic Constitution *Quamvis iusto*, of April 30, 1749, n. 12, in Bullarium, Typographia Aldina, Prati, 1846, vol. III, p. 55).

2. SPECIFICATIONS OF PRIVATE CULT

Private cult has no *definitive definition* in the Code of Canon Law, being defined only in contrast to public cult, as was seen (cf. canon 1256). From this canonists have drawn their definitions as, for example, that of Fr. S. Alonso Moran, O.P.: “Private cult is the cult exercised by the faithful in their own name, practicing acts which, through the institution of the Church, are not reserved to public cult, be these acts that are realized in sacred places or outside of them, with or without the assistance of the Clergy” (*Comentários al Código de Derecho Canónico*, Madrid: BAC, 1963, vol. II, n. 699).

“The *private cult* can be *individual*, as in the case of a person who privately prays his Rosary, or *collective*, when a group of persons pray private prayers together, even if it be in public, and even in a sacred sanctuary, with or without the presence of a Priest.

Thus, the faithful of a parish who join together at night under the direction of the Pastor for acts of devotion proper to the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the month of June (Consecration, Act of Reparation, prayers, litany) practice an act of *collective private cult*. Even a group of Priests, on a Retreat or in conventual life, who pray the Rosary together in the Church practice an act of private cult, because the Rosary is a private devotion.

3. PUBLIC CULT TO THE SAINTS & TO THE BLESSED

The *Codice* establishes: “Canon 1277 § 1. Only those servants of God may be honored with public worship who are by authority of the Church numbered among the Saints or Blessed.”

Public Cult to the Saints consists of the following acts:

1. To dedicate altars or churches to them;
2. To invoke them in the public prayers of the Church;
3. To recite the Divine Office and offer the Holy Sacrifice in their honor, or commemorate them in the Divine Offices;
4. To consecrate feast days in their honor;
5. To paint their pictures with halos to symbolize their glory;
6. To expose their bodies or relics for public veneration in the churches (cf. P. Sejourné, entry *Saints*, DTC, vol. XIV, col. 975).

Public worship rendered to the Saints and the Blessed is not the same: “**The worship of *dulia* is due to those who are canonically recorded in the catalogue of the saints**; saints may be honored **in all places and by any acts which belong to that kind of worship**” c. 1277 § 2)” Full public cult is directed only to the Saints: “*praeceptivus, universalis et publicus*” – “*perceptive, universal and public*” – as ex-

pressed by Benedict XV (*De Servorum Dei Beatificatione, et Beatorum Canonizatione*, L. IV, vol. II, chap. XIX, n. 16, *apud* P. Sejourne, *ibid.*, col. 976).

For the Blessed, on the contrary, cult is not perceptive, but merely permitted or tolerated: “But the **Blessed** may be honored only in the place and manner which the Roman Pontiff may have allowed (canon 1277, § 2).”

Ordinarily, when the servant of God belongs to some religious family, the celebration of the Mass and the recitation of the Divine Office in churches of that Institute is authorized; moreover, this is also at times authorized in the Dioceses where the Servant of God was born and died.

The acts with which the Blessed are worshiped “are determined by custom, if it be immemorial (decree of the S. C. of the Rites of April 24, 1914), or by the papal indult which permitted the cult; it does not include erection of a church in his honor (canon 1168 § 3)); and even in the churches or oratories in which his public office is recognized, it does not admit altars erected under his invocation (canon 1201, § 4)” (P. Sejourne, *ibid.*).

One can, therefore, do the following:

1. Place pictures and relics of the Blessed over the altars in churches where the celebration of their Mass is authorized;
2. Paint pictures of them *in glory* (but not with halos, reserved only for canonized Saints);
3. Expose their pictures in churches where their Office and Mass are permitted;
4. Apply to them the title of Blessed, but not that of *Saint*;
5. Choose them, with the special indult of the Holy See, as Patrons of nations, dioceses, provinces, religious families, and other moral places and persons (canon 1278).

4. PRIVATE CULT TO THE SERVANTS OF GOD WHO ARE NOT CANONIZED OR BEATIFIED

A. Licitness of this cult

As one saw, according to the *Code of Canon Law* of 1917, it is only licit to render *public cult* to those who have been formally canonized or beatified by the Church (canon 1277, § 1). For this reason, the *Code* exhorts the postulators for the Causes of Beatification to vigilance. In this way, should the *introduction of the Cause* come before the Sacred Congregation of the Rites (that is, the official acceptance by the Holy See to examine the life and the works of the Servant of God in order to pronounce upon his sanctity or martyrdom, a process that takes place after the preparatory diocesan procedures have been concluded favorably) no honor that signifies *public cult* might be tribute to the Servant of God (canon 2084, § 2); it also warns that the attribution of the title of *Venerable* (in recognition of the heroism of his

virtues or martyrdom, by decree of the Sacred Convention in the name of the Pope) “does not in any way permit that they be paid public cult” (canon 2115, § 2).²³

It is not, therefore, licit to pay public cult to the Venerable and the rest of the Servants of God.

Is it licit to pay them *private cult*?

Belgian Benedictine theologian Gregoire Manise responds: “One can *privately* invoke those who have died with the fame of sanctity or of martyrdom, even if they have not been canonized or beatified; one can also render **private cult** to their **pictures and relics** (entry *Santos* in the *Diccionario de Theologia Moral*, Roberti & Palazzini, p. 1138).

More explicit are the words of French theologian P. Sejourné under the already cited heading *Culte des Saints* in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*: “Canonists hold that it is **permitted** to render **private cult** to the Servants of God who were martyred or who died in the odor of sanctity and to those to whom miracles are attributed. For these private homages, it is **necessary and sufficient** to have a **reasonable persuasion** of sanctity” (entry *Saints*, DTC, vol. XIV, col. 976).

Fr. Sabino Alonso Moran also affirms that one can render private cult to “**all those whom it is believed with moral certainty that they have been saved**” (*Comentarios al Código de Derecho Canónico*, vol. II, n. 720).

Another opinion is held by French theologian and canonist Raoul Naz: He holds that “**all those who have died in the peace of God**” can be the object of *private cult* (*Traité de Droit Canonique*, vol. III, n. 107).²⁴

P. Sejourné reasons thus: “This **private cult is legitimate inasmuch as it remains within the limits of the cult of *dulia***: It is *absolute* if it is directed to the *person* of the Servant of God, and *relative*

²³ The title of *Venerable* is reserved to those whose heroism of virtue or martyrdom has been recognized by pontifical decree; it is prohibited to confer it, as was formerly done, upon those who, their diocesan processes having been concluded favorably only have their Cause already introduced before the Sacred Congregation of the Rites.

As for the title of *Servant of God*, no canonical disposition exists concerning its attribution. Moreover, it is, so to speak, a “title of courtesy,” applied today to any person who dies in the odor of sanctity, whether his process of beatification has been opened or not, the first case being more frequent.

In a broader sense, the expression *Servants of God* designates the faithful in general, being frequently used in the Liturgy, in the West as well as East; it is also used as an expression of humility (the Pope calls himself the “Servant of the Servants of God”).

The attribution of the titles of *Servant of God* and of *Venerable* do not have, therefore, liturgical consequences, because, as was said, public cult is not permitted to them.

²⁴ About the licitness of private cult to persons who are not canonized or beatified, see also Guidus Cocchi, *Commentarium in Codicem Iuris Canonici*, Turim-Rome: Marietti, 1924, vol. III, Pars. III, n. 91e; A Vermeersch - J. Creusen, *Epitome Iuris Canonici*, Malines-Rome: H. Dessain, 1927, vol. II, n. 602; Francisco X. Wernz - Petri Vidal, *Jus Canonikum*, Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1934, Book IV, vol. I, nn. 458, 487; Dalricus Beste, *Introductio in Codicem*, Collegeville (Minn.): St. John’s Abbey Press, 1946, pp. 625, 646; Matthaeus Conte a Coronata, Turim-Rome: *Institutiones Iuris Canonici*, Marietti, 1947, vol. II, n. 381; E. Jombart, entry *Culte* in the *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique*, col. 862; José Antonio Martins Gigante, *Instituições de Direito Canônico, Enchiridion Iuris Canonici*, Orbis Catholicus, p. 595; Eduardus Regatillo *Institutiones Iuris Canonici*, vol. II, n. 124).

if it concerns his *relics* or *images*, but always conforming to reason and to prudence, and directed to a person who **can be reasonably considered as predestined**, avoiding with this all superstition or scandal” (DTC, vol. XIV, col. 976).²⁵

B. *Necessity for this cult*

Private cult to the Servants of God who are not canonized or beatified is not only legitimate, according to the opinion of canonists, but constitutes a steadfast practice in the life of the Church, as can be easily ascertained.

Moreover, *it is necessary and even indispensable for the life of the Church*, since it is from the private cult rendered to the Servants of God that the processes of beatification and canonization are initiated and carried out: *The fame of sanctity precedes the canonical investigation about this very sanctity*.

In effect, the first step for the introduction of the Cause for Beatification is *processus informativus de fama sanctitatis, virtutem et miraculorum*. This process, prepared by the Bishop of the place where the Servant of God lived or died, has as its end to officially establish, by juridical means, that the reputation of sanctity that the deceased person enjoys is not an empty rumor, fruit of an indiscreet and passing enthusiasm, but a durable sentiment founded on solid and proven facts. It is only after a favorable sentence has been delivered by the diocesan tribunal (which officially recognizes that the Servant of God enjoys the *fame of sanctity*) that the Church, represented by the Sacred Congregation for the Cause of the Saints, deigns to examine in an official way the virtues and the miracles attributed to the deceased.²⁶

²⁵ The question could be raised: To whom does it belong to determine if such or such a deceased person of merit should be honored with private cult?

Of itself, to any of the faithful, since any of the faithful can request an investigation of the Cause before the proper tribunal and can be admitted as witnesses in the various processes (moreover, even heretics and the unfaithful can be admitted as witnesses) (cf. canons 2003, § 1; 2023; 2027, § 1). If any of the faithful can request the opening of the process of beatification and serve as witness, it is presumed that they have the capacity to discern the sanctity of someone in order to thus render him private cult.

The question is, therefore, more prudential than canonical.

²⁶ “As great as might be the brilliance of their virtues and the austerity of their penances, as extraordinary as might be the graces and gifts that God bestows upon them – ecstasies, prophecies, miracles, ability to read the interior of hearts and minds and know the secrets of consciences, as numerous as might be the multitudes who gather at their tombs and the miraculous cures or prodigies of all types that take place there. the Church is content to wait in expectant silence: ‘*expectat ut videat ut fama ista santitatis et miraculorum evanescat, an incrementum capiat*’ (Benedict XIV). *If this reputation of sanctity issues from men, it fades, rapidly; if it comes from God, it will increase with time*” (T. Ortolan, entry *Canonization* in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 1923, vol. II, col. 1645).

As this author observes, the faithful have a kind of *sixth sense* for distinguishing true sanctity from false, or merely assumed. In this way, popular veneration, the *vox populi* (voice of the people), frequently corresponds in truth to the *vox Dei* (voice of God) (Alfred Rush, *The Autobiography of St. John Newman*, 9th Bishop of Philadelphia, St. Paul Editions, 1977, pp. 69-70).

For this reason, the Church neither encourages nor represses these spontaneous manifestations of the faithful around the gravesite or in memory of the Servants of God who have died with the reputation of sanctity or martyrdom. However, like a prudent Mother attentive to the well-being of Her children, She guards against abuses, superstitious, or grotesque practices, or doctrinal errors that might lead them off the correct pathway. In the rest she allows them to be inspired with the holy liberty of children of God by the breath of the Holy Spirit and according to the impulses of grace.

Since, however, in this matter they can easily fall into illusions or indiscreet enthusiasms that affect the *public order* of the Church, observes canonist of Salamanca Tomás García Barbarena (*Comentarios al Código de Derecho canonico*, Madrid: BAC, 1964, vol. IV, n. 3), the ecclesiastical laws only permit *public cult* to those who have

It is easy to see that without the existence of a *private external cult* to the Servant of God, it would be most difficult, even almost impossible, to establish *in a judiciary way* that the *fame of sanctity, virtues and miracles* exist, and that this has been maintained and continues to grow with time. During the whole course of the process – always long and costly – the concourse of the devotees to the Servant of God is indispensable.

In effect, the beatification process requires two, three, or even four (according to the case) canonically proven miracles attributed to the Servant of God's intercession. This presupposes once again the existence of a *private external cult* to the Servant of God. For without such a cult, it would be impossible to initiate or carry forward any process of beatification, much less of canonization (because no Servant of God can be canonized without having been previously beatified) following the ordinary routes and in conformity with the ecclesiastical customs and the canonical legislation presently in force [*Code of 1917*]).

This common sense observation is set forth in the manual of Moral Theology by Genicot-Salsmans-Gortebecke, SJ: "Therefore, private cult is not prohibited, nor that rendered in private devotion, as in the case of one who recites various prayers in honor of some Servant of God, even within the hearing of others. In effect, if such things were not licit, a long-standing fame of sanctity could not be recorded, which must justly be investigated prior to beatification" (*Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951, vol. I, p. 204).

Such a cult, it behooves us to insist, should not exceed the boundaries of what has been qualified as *private cult*, under pain of impeding the beatification of the Servant of God who is venerated.

C. *Normal proceedings for beatification*

There are two types of procedures for the process of beatification:

- a. The *ordinary means* or process *in absence of cult*. Since it is prohibited to venerate with public cult persons not canonized or beatified, it falls to the Postulation of the Cause to first prove that the Servant of God did not receive public cult, *or that such a cult had disappeared completely in the case that it had been introduced abusively*, not only before the opening but even during the course of the process.
- b. The *extraordinary means* or *the executed case of cult*. This deals with obtaining an approbation of approval from the Supreme Pontiff for the public veneration of the Servants of God, who, through tolerance, received public cult after the pontificate of Alexander III (sec. XII) and from the *Caelestis Jerusalem* constitution of Urban VIII (1634) (cf. T. Ortolan, entry, *Canonisation*, in DTC, vol. II, cols. 1625-1659).²⁷

been canonized or beatified (*Code of Canon Law*, canon 1277, § 1). To those who have not yet been inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints or the Blessed, *it is licit* only to render them *private cult*.

²⁷ This same distinction exists for canonization: "The *formal canonization*, or canonization properly speaking, is that which encompasses a normal and open process conducted in the full rigor of a most severe juridical procedure, in such a way as to juridically verify the heroism of the virtues practiced by a Servant of God, as well as to verify the truth of the miracles by which God manifested this. The definitive sentence, officially designated as *urbi et orbi*, is pronounced by the Supreme Pontiff in the plenitude of his apostolic power and amid the solemn ceremonies that properly emphasize its importance. The *equipollent canonization* is a sentence by which the Supreme Pontiff ordains

D. Acts of private cult

As we have seen, *private cult* is defined only in contrast to public cult. In an analogous way, the *acts of private cult* can be conceived thus: “Acts of private cult in general are those that, while contributing to the honor of someone, nonetheless were not instituted by the Church to pay cult to the Blessed or to the Saints” (Sabino Alonso Moran, *Comentários al Código de Derecho Canonico*, vol. II, n. 699).

Having already pointed out the principal acts of public cult reserved for the honor of the Saints and the Blessed, one can, by exclusion, arrive at the acts of private cult with which the Servants of God who are not canonized or beatified might be worshipped.

For greater clarity, it is necessary to first present some practices which *are not permitted* for the honor of the simple Servants of God, which would constitute, according to Fr. Sabino Alonso Moran, acts of *illegal public cult*. According to this author:

1st – *It is not permitted:*

“a. To paint pictures of persons who are still not beatified with halos or in glory, or in any other way that inspires veneration or renders to them cult;²⁸ to keep pictures **painted in this matter** in any public or private place; **to place pictures of such persons**, even if they do not have the aforementioned adornments, **on public or private altars; to place them in churches and oratories,**²⁹ **even off of the altars and separate from the images of the saints and the blessed. It is**

that a Servant of God may be honored as a Saint in the Universal Church even though his cause was not introduced in a regular process, since, from time immemorial, he has been the object of public cult” (T. Ortolan, *ibid.*, col. 1636).

²⁸ Obviously, the author is referring here to a cult that involves the affirmation of sanctity still not officially recognized by the Church.

²⁹ “By the term church is understood a *sacred structure* devoted to divine worship for the principal purpose of being used by all the faithful for public divine worship (canon 1161, § 1).”

And the 1917 Code defines oratory in this way:

“*An oratory is a place devoted to divine worship, not however principally for the purpose of serving the faithful in general for public religious worship* (canon 1188, § 1).”

From this definition it can be inferred that the oratory is distinguished from a church by the limitation of people who can be admitted into it. It is also distinguished by the limitation of acts of worship that can be practiced in it, the Church being, moreover, a *sacred edifice*, while the oratory is not always this; therefore, so that one could celebrate the Divine Offices in it, it would be necessary that it be consecrated or at least blessed with a *constitutive blessing*; with respect to oratories, such an obligation only exists for public oratories, as we see further on.

According to the *Code of Canon Law* of 1917, there are three types of oratory:

a. *Public Oratory*. This is erected chiefly for the use of some college or even of private individuals, but on such terms that all the faithful have the right, legitimately proved, of having access to it at least at the time of divine services. (Among the signs that customarily indicate that such a right exists is this fundamental point: that the door should open to the street, or that there should be free passage from the street to the oratory, at least during celebrations).

These oratories should be blessed or consecrated, with the same legislation applying to them as to churches. All the ecclesiastical functions that are not forbidden to parish churches can be celebrated in them. Such functions require authorization of the Ordinary of the Parish Priest, depending on the case (for example, baptisms, marriages, funerals). Moreover, those functions not permitted by the rubrics (the final *Triduum* of Holy Week, for example) cannot be celebrated there.

only permitted to expose such pictures, or the feats realized by those persons, **on the walls or windows of the churches under the condition that they do not lead to any sign of cult** (cf. note 28) **nor imply some testimony of sanctity**, and, on the other hand, have in them nothing of the profane or in nonconformance with the customs of the Church, as declared by the Sacred Congregation of the Rites on August 14, 1894.

“b. To place on their tombs wax or silver images, votive cards, and a certain genre of illuminations;³⁰

“c. To expose their bodies or relics to **public veneration** in the churches;

“d. To erect altars in their honor and, consequently, to convert the house or place in which they were born (or died) into churches or oratories;

“e. To commemorate them in the Divine Office, to pray the office (private or common) or celebrate the Mass in their honor; to **invoke their name in litanies prayed in public**”³¹(12) (Alonso Moran, *Comentarios al Código de Derecho Canonico*, vol. II, n. 699).

To these acts mentioned by Fr. Alonso Moran, it is necessary to add that it is not permitted to transport images or relics of the Servants of God (direct or indirect) in procession³² (cf. Raoul Naz, *Traité de Droit Canonique*, vol. IV, n. 810).

b. *Semi-public oratory*. It is erected chiefly for the convenience of some community or group of the faithful who use it, but is not freely available to everyone, as is the case of oratories of chapels of seminaries, convents, hospitals, schools, barracks, prisons, etc.

It is not permitted, to erect semi-public oratories without the permission from the Ordinary, who shall not give this permission without having visited the oratory beforehand, either in person or represented by some other ecclesiastic, and found it properly appointed. Once the permission has been given, the oratory cannot be converted to profane uses without the authority of the same Ordinary. However, after being legitimately erected, all divine services and liturgical functions can be celebrated, unless the rubrics provide otherwise or the Ordinary has made some exceptions.

These oratories can be blessed or consecrated, and if they are, to them are applied all that the Code disposes concerning the violation, execration, and reconciliation of churches. Such public oratories are furnished with what is needed for many effects (for example, the gaining of indulgences in certain conditions).

c. *Private or domestic oratory*. It is erected in a private house only for the benefit of some family or private person.

The oratories of Cardinals and Bishops (whether residential or titular) are private oratories, but they enjoy all the rights and privileges of semi-public oratories.

Domestic oratories cannot be consecrated or receive a constitutive blessing; they can only have, although it is not necessary, the common blessing of places and houses. But even if they have not received some blessing, they should be reserved exclusively for divine worship and free from all domestic uses.

That which characterizes public recitation is that it be made in *churches* or *public oratories* (or *semipublic*, in determined circumstances).

³⁰ In places where it is the custom to light candles or votive lights at the sepulcher, this is permitted, not being considered an act of public worship (cf. Matthaeus Conte a Coronara, *Institutiones Juris Canonici*, vol. III, n. 1534, note 3).

³¹ It is permitted, nevertheless, to invoke the name of the Servant of God in litanies prayed *privately*, as we shall later see.

We emphasize: *All these manifestations are illicit because they constitute acts of public cult, to which it is only licit to tribute to those Servants of God who, by the authority of the Church, have been inscribed in the catalogue of the Blessed.*

2nd – What is permitted:

The acts by which it is legitimate to honor the simple Servants of God are enumerated by the canonists as follows:³³

- a. To preserve the clothing (of the deceased);
- b. To adorn their bodies;
- c. To approach in groups to kiss the feet and hands of the deceased;
- d. To carry out the burial amid a large crowd of people;
- e. To maintain an external light for relatives who have died;
- f. **To place on the walls of a church, or to expose next to a catafalque, pictures of the deceased along with noteworthy information, or even to represent them in windows** (outside the altar and without halos, splendor, or any other insignia of sanctity, according to Decree no. 3835 of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of August 14, 1894, confirmed by Leo XIII on August 27 of the same year);

³² The *Code* defines “*procession*” in this way: Canon 1290 – § 1 – “The term ‘sacred processions’ signifies solemn supplications performed by the people under the leadership of the clergy by proceeding in order from one sacred place to another, for the purpose of fostering piety, commemorating and giving thanks for God’s blessings, or imploring His help.”

Alonso Moran comments:

“Four things are required according to § 1 of the canon for a sacred procession:

- a. That it be made by the faithful;
- b. That it be led by the clergy;
- c. That it travel in an orderly fashion from one sacred place to another sacred place, be the latter distinct from the first or returning to the same place where the procession began, as normally occurs;
- d. That it acts to excite the piety of the faithful, such as to commemorate the divine blessings (bestowed by God) and to give thanks to the Lord for them, or to implore His help” (*Código de Derecho Canonico*, BAC, Madrid, 1954, canon 1290).

By “sacred places” the Code of 1917 understands those places destined for divine worship or for the burial of the faithful, by a consecration or blessing prescribed for this purpose by approved liturgical books (cf. canon 1154). A simple room with a private “altar” that has been transformed into a “chapel” or domestic “oratory” (in the common sense of these words and not the canonical or liturgical sense) cannot be considered a “sacred place” since it lacks the blessing or aforementioned consecration.

Lacking the characteristics stipulated above, simple “cortesges,” “parades,” “marches,” etc. cannot, therefore, be qualified as “processions.” Rather, they constitute strictly private acts, without any aspect of public worship.

³³ Cf. De Meester, *Compendium juris canonici*, III, n. 1248, apud P. Sejourmé, entry *Saints* (Culte des) in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. XIV, col. 976; Udalricus Beste, *Introductio in Codicem*, p. 625; Sabino Alonso Moran, *Comentários al Código de Derecho Canonico*, vol.k II, n. 699. This is, moreover, the doctrine of Benedict XIV (*De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione*, L. 2, c. 11-14), followed by all the authors.

- g. To bury the deceased in a honorable or more blessed site, or in a specially constructed **tomb**, or even **adorn it with flowers**;
- h. To make a private fast on the vigil of the anniversary (of the death), or to abstain from servile work on this anniversary date;
- i. To transport the body from one place to another, in accordance with the Ordinary, secretly and without pomp;
- j. **To compose litanies and recite them privately**, provided that they not be published or spread.³⁴

This listing is only by way of example; there are other common practices to honor the Servants of God who are not canonized or beatified that will be analyzed further on.

E. Common Practices to Honor the Servants of God Who Are Not Canonized or Beatified

In addition to those mentioned, the following practices are common:

- a. *To invoke the name of the Servant of God in private prayers*, requesting graces and spiritual or material favors, *making him promises, as well as offering him “votive candles”* in fulfillment of a promise and in acknowledgment for the obtaining of graces and favors;³⁵
- b. To carry representations of the Servant of God (pictures, statues, medals, photographs, stain glass windows, etc.), to expose them in a private place, or *to venerate them with acts of the cult of dulia – both interior and exterior* (kissing, bowing the head or kneeling before it, etc.). This should be done with the restrictions pointed out above: The representations cannot have a halo (attributed to Saints) or glory (attributed to the Blessed), and they cannot be placed on public or private altars;
- c. *To carry the relics of the Servant of God*, be they direct (mortal remains, skin fragments, ashes, hair, fingernails) or indirect (clothing, furniture, objects of his personal use, utensils, dwelling-places, and other objects or places possessed or occupied by the Servant of God), *to expose such in a private place, or to venerate them – in the same way and under the same conditions as described in the previous article*;³⁶

³⁴ Publication is understood as placing the litanies at the disposition of the general public, and not a simple distribution in some private circle (cf. *An Anti-TFP Commentary – Refutation* by Gustavo Antonio Solimeo, Appendix).

³⁵ *Such votive lights* cannot be exposed in churches, chapels, and oratories, nor at the tomb of the Servant of God, but they can be *maintained in private places*, according to the declaration of the Holy See of October 2, 1625 (cf. Raoul Naz, *Traité de Droit Canonique*, vol. IV, n. 810, note 4).

³⁶ Since the cult to relics is *relative*, that is to say, it is paid in virtue of the object's *relation to the venerated person*, it is indispensable that there should be no doubt as to its authenticity, in other words, to the existing relation upon which the cult is based. For this reason, the Church says: “Sacred relics whose certificate of authenticity has been lost through civil disturbances or by any other accident, are not to be exposed for public veneration without a previous

- d. *To print and divulge pictures (“holy cards”) with the portrait of the Servant of God* (without a halo or in glory), either accompanied or unaccompanied by prayers and biographical facts, *providing that they have nothing opposed to the sense and decrees of the Church* (cf.. canon 1399, 12o.) and that *they have received ecclesiastical approval* (canon 1385, §1, 30.);
- e. *To compose, pray, print, and distribute litanies and other prayers in praise of the Servant of God or to ask graces through his intercession.* To be printed and spread, such cards must have ecclesiastical approval;
- f. *To distribute direct or indirect relics of the Servant of God* (See article “c” above);
- g. *To divulge their deeds or actions, words or writing, their miracles, charism, gifts and virtues; to present the Servant of God as a model for the faithful in general or for those in a determined state of life, in writing as well as orally* (for example, in speeches given outside the burial site or in commemoration of anniversaries of the deceased). This always naturally assumes submission to the definitive and infallible judgment of the Holy Church, under the terms established by Urban VIII concerning the matter;³⁷
- h. *To visit the tomb of the Servant of God* – individually or in groups – to request or give thanks for graces and favors;
- i. *To decorate the tomb with flowers and to light candles or votive lights* there, even perpetual ones, because in this case they would express more a profession of Catholic faith in the Resurrection than an act of cult (Declaration of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites on Sep-

decision by the Ordinary of the place; the Vicar General cannot make this decision without a special mandate” (canon 1283, § 1).

As for the relics of the Servants of God who are still not canonized or beatified, no ordained conditions exist with respect to them, since it is not permitted to render public cult to such relics, and the canonical legislation does not concern itself with private cult. However, it is customary to verify the authenticity of such relics by means of a signature, rubric, seal or sign of a physically or morally appropriate person. This was, for example, the case with a fragment of the bloody shirt of Garcia Moreno, conserved in one of the TFP seats in Itaquera (*Eremo of Elias*). With it is a testimonial given by a Jesuit Priest, who wrote a biography of the Ecuadorian President-Martyr (The signature is acknowledged by an ecclesiastical authority).

The Postulators and Vice-Postulators of the Causes for Beatification customarily verify the authenticity of the relics that are not distributed so that the certainty of their authenticity is not lost in case their precedence comes to be forgotten in the future, as well as to constitute a guarantee for the private cult for the present.

It is also customary to make public documents of the burial, exhumations, or transportations of the mortal remains of the Servants of God who may come to be beatified or canonized. This was done, for example, in the case of the exhumation of the mortal remains of Jacinta and Francisco Marto: A document was drawn up that was signed by all those who were present at the procedure.

³⁷ The decrees of Urban VIII prohibited attributing the titles of “Saint” or “Blessed” to those who have not been formally canonized or beatified by the Church. They also prohibited *anticipating the judgment* of the Church by attributing mystical graces, extraordinary gifts, miracles, etc. to persons who have died in the odor of sanctity. They require that it be stated that such affirmations merit only human faith, in this way allowing the faithful the liberty of accepting them as true or untrue.

tember 30, 1922, *apud* Alonso Moran, *Comentário al Código de Derecho Canonico*, canon 1211);

- j. *To spread devotion to the Servant of God, be it orally or by writings, exhorting others to have recourse to him in their necessities; to publish the graces and favors received through the intercession of the Servant of God;*³⁸
- k. To request the Ecclesiastical Authority to initiate the efforts necessary for the beatification of the Servant of God and to bring up his Cause after such a petition is accepted (canon 2003, §§1 and 2)
- l. To promote campaigns for the beatification of the Servant of God, such as prayers or requests for donations, etc.

5. SOME CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF CULT TO THE SERVANTS OF GOD WHO DIED IN THE ODOR OF SANCTITY

To illustrate what has been said, let us look at the following examples:

A. *Dom Frei Maria Gonclaves de Oliveira O.F.M, Cap. – Bishop of Olinda*

He was born in Pedras de Fogo (then Perambuco, today Paraiba) on November 27, 1844, and died in Paris on July 4, 1878. The diocesan process for the beatification of the Servant of God was initiated on January 23, 1960, and on April 7 of the same year a historical commission was formed for the collection of documents for the informative process of the writings of Frei Vital.

- *His gravesite* – His mortal remains, brought to Recife, were buried in the burial site of the Capuchin Fathers in the Basilica of *Nossa Senhora de Penha*, and, in 1937, they were placed in a mausoleum in the interior of the same Basilica, with a statue of the Prelate atop it. Since that time, his tomb has become the object of pilgrimages.
- *Relics and “holy cards”* – “The immortal Pope Pius IX considered him a saint; *Pope Leo XIII asked for a relic of the great Prelate*” (Felix de Olivola, *Um Grande Brasileiro: O Servo de Deus D. Frei Vital Maria Gonclaves de Oliveira, Bispo de Olinda*, Recife: Imprensa Universitaria, 1967, p. 205 – edition sponsored by the vice-Postulation for the Cause of Beatification).

The Vice-Postulation distributed “holy cards” with a portrait of Dom Vital, accompanied by an indirect relic (a fragment of thread from his clothing) with the following recommendation: “Keep with you a relic, or a holy card, or a remembrance of Dom Vital, and read his life. You will expe-

³⁸ There are numerous magazines, bulletins, leaflets and periodicals dedicated exclusively to spreading the devotion of certain Servants of God, as well as to divulging the graces and favors or miracles ordained by their intercession. In the following section, some of these will be mentioned.

It is also common to find in Catholic magazines and newspapers, as well as in various secular ones, notices of thanksgiving to this or that Servant of God.

rience his protection!” The holy card moreover says: “The Dom Vital Museum, adjoining the Basilica of Penha, preserves precious relics and abundant explanation that attest to his virtues and his heroism.”

- *Spreading the Life of the Servant of God* – The vice-Postulator recommends reading the biography of Dom Vital, in particular the book by Friar Felix de Olivola mentioned above. In addition to this, it published the magazine *Dom Vital*, which printed articles about the life of the Servant of God, as well as making “holy cards” available that were widely distributed.
- *Divulgence of the virtues of the Servant of God* – This book by Friar Felix, like the magazine *Dom Vital*, as well as the “holy cards” circulated by the Vice-Postulator, have as their end the idea of making the virtues of the Servant of God known, with sights aimed toward his beatification (cf. Venancio Willeke, *Um Grande Brasileiro*, p. 223 – Friar Venancio is a member of the Historical Commission of the Diocesan information process).
- *Publication of graces received* – “His devotees are receiving innumerable graces through his intercession. ... notifying the Father Vice-Postulator of the graces received. ... The most important graces, deemed miracles, should be sent to the Vice-Postulator duly verified and documented with recognized signatures, medical testimonies, statements from the Bishop, Father Vicar or some Authority or qualified person, etc.” For several years, the aforementioned magazine *Dom Vital* has published records of the graces received through the intercession of the Servant of God.
- *Prayer to the Most Holy Trinity for the Beatification of the Servant of God Dom Frei Vital Maria*: “O Eternal Divine Father, by the mercies of Thy Only-begotten Son, I beg Thee to glorify on this earth your Servant Dom Frei Vital Maria, conceding to me the grace that I implore of Thee in my present necessity. Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...; II. O Eternal Divine Son ...; III. O Eternal Divine Holy Ghost ...”
- *Ecclesiastical approval* – The leaflet carries this note: “With ecclesiastical approval.” It also makes the following warning: “Public cult is not permitted to the Servant of God. *Private cult, particular or common, is, however, licit.*”

B. Father John Baptista Reus, S.J.

He was born in Germany on July 10, 1868, and died in São Leopoldo (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) on July 21, 1947. The preparatory diocesan process for beatification was begun in 1954.

The facts that follow were taken from a pamphlet published in 1954 by the Vice-Postulator for the Cause (Jesuits from Rio Grande de Sul) and from other leaflets that were later circulated.

- *Gravesite* – “His body rests in the cemetery of the Jesuits in São Leopold. ... *His tomb has become the object of continuous pilgrimages.*”
- *“Holy cards” and indirect relics* – In 1978 the Vice-Postulation had already distributed 4,500,000 “holy cards” with the portrait of the Servant of God, his signature and an indirect relic (thread from his clothing).

- Spreading of the life of the Servant of God – The pamphlet circulated by the Vice Postulator (whose circulation in 1954 had reached 700,000 copies in Portuguese and 100,000 in other languages) includes a small biography of Fr. Reus. The same pamphlet offers to the “*devotees of Fr. Reus*” a booklet titled *Life of Fr. Reus, S.J.* (circulation: 15,000 copies) and a *Complete Biography: Father John Baptista Reus, S.J.*, as well as a book written by the Servant of God himself: *Prayer – Complete Manual of Prayers and Religious Instructions.*”
- *Divulgence of the virtues of the Servant of God* – “He entered the Company of Jesus on October 16, 1894, moved by the desire to become a saint. ... Following the Divine Master in the practice of all the virtues, he received notable mystical graces. ... He was always united to God in his works and sufferings. ... His Autobiography and his diary, written in obedience to an order from his superior, recorded extraordinary mystical graces and numerous visions and ecstasies, whose authenticity will be judged by the Authority of the Holy Church. In 1912, he received the invisible stigmata, which was most painful. Fr. Reus did not seek these graces, nor did he judge himself to be worthy of them. However, he corresponded to them with the utmost fidelity. On January 16, 1916, he made the vow to always make the most perfect choice, which he carried out with heroic zeal until his death. He lived in a sensible and continuous union with God, afire with the most intense love. ... He practiced austere penances for many years. He desired to be a ‘Victim of love.’ Humble, pure, mortified and recollected, he was a model of the interior life. ... He received stupendous promises from the divine liberality, one being that he would be canonized. ... On June 10, 1947, he celebrated his last Mass. He suffered greatly from asthma. Celestial visits and visions comforted him. On July 21, 1947, at 4 o’clock, he came to the blessed end of his life” (excerpts from the pamphlet published in 1954 by the Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Beatification).
- *Publication of graces received* – “More than 7,000 published graces attest to his *powerful intercession before the throne of God.* ... Biographical facts, writings, and graces received are published in the trimestral magazine *News for our Friends* and in two Almanacs: *Fahne* and *Anuário Inaciano: em Busca do Ideal!*’ ... Permission was asked of the Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Beatification to circulate news of graces received through the intercession of Fr. Reus” (*ibid.*).
- *Devotion to the Servants of God* – The pamphlet spread by the Vice-Postulator mentions the expression “*devotees of Fr. Reus*” three times, as well as other analogous terms.
- *Novenas* – The “holy cards” circulated by the Vice-Postulator have on them the “Novena Prayer,” in which one requests “the grace to imitate him (Fr. Reus) in his total surrender to the Sacred Heart, in his love for the cross and sacrifice, in his esteem for the holy Mass, in his intimacy with the Sacramental Jesus, in his zeal for vocations, and in his filial devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces.” It also requests the glorification of the Servant of God, as well as the desired grace.
- *Ecclesiastical Approval* – The pamphlet carries the “*Reimprimi potest*” of the Provincial of the Jesuits of Rio Grande de Sul and the “*Reimprimatur*” of the Vicar General of Porto Alegre. It also makes the following note: “We humbly submit all the publications referring to Fr. Reus to the decree of Urban VIII and to the decisions of the Ecclesiastical Authority.”

And, finally, the requisite warning: “*Avoid every appearance of public cult!*” Whence one can conclude that none of the manifestations mentioned above present the appearance of cult, according to the Vice-Postulator of the Cause for Fr. Reus.

C. Father Rodolfo Komorek, Salesian

He was born in the Austrian Silesia (today Poland) on October 11, 1890, and died in São José dos Campos on December 11, 1949. The diocesan informative process concerning his virtues and the concept of his sanctity was begun in São José dos Campos (Diocese of Taubaté, SP) on January 31, 1964.

The Secretariat (for the Cause), Father Rodolfo, circulated “holy cards” with the portrait of Father Komerek and a prayer asking God for the glorification of this Servant of God, as well as a short book with his biography, which reads: “At 11:30 he delivered his beautiful soul to God. It was December 11 of 1949. ... During the day a continuous throng of the faithful came to contemplate for the last time his mortal remains and *respectfully touch to it medals and rosaries*. .. And even today, after 16 years, his tomb in S. Jose dos Campos *is frequently visited by faithful devotees* who come to implore his holy soul for graces and favors, placing on his tomb candles and flowers as signs of their recognition” (*Traços Biográfico do Servo de Deus Pe. Rodolfo Komorek*, Campinas: São José: Artes Gráficas da Escola Salesiana, 1965, pp. 18-19).

Thus, one can see how very many actions that the laws of the Church permit for private cult to the Servants of God who die in the odor of sanctity or simply whose salvation is presumed.

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CHAPTER VIII

OF THE PERFECT LEGITIMACY OF DEVOTION TO DONA LUCILIA AS IT IS PRACTICED IN THE TFP

Viewed thus in its doctrinary and practical aspects, the legitimacy of cult to deceased persons whom we can presume with moral certainty to have been saved makes it easy to show how all that takes place in the TFP in relation to devotion to Dona Lucilia is in perfect conformity with the Doctrine and Laws of the Church.

Thus do I go on to analyze, point by point, the accusations of Mr. O.F. concerning cult to Dona Lucilia.

1. THE ABSURD ‘AVE LUCILIA’

The letter writer, taking up an old attack of the French *Relatorio* against the TFP in 1979 (referred to in *O Estado de S. Paulo* of August 12, 1979), attempts to revive an already publicly refuted issue: that is, the existence in the circles of the entity of an absurd “Ave Lucilia,” an extravagant transposition of the *Ave Maria* to Dona Lucilia.

In the *Refutation* to the French *Rapport* (pp. 298-299), as well as in his letter to *O Estado de S. Paulo* (published by that newspaper on August 22, 1979), Dr. Plinio categorically denies the existence of the aforementioned prayer in the TFP. And, to provide basis for his denial, Dr. Plinio argues not only from his personal experience, but also with the results of a careful investigation that he ordered to be made in the TFP. Immediately afterwards, he adds the proviso that, if it had existed, it would have been a merely personal initiative, which he would have immediately condemned should he have known of it.

Mr. O.F. tries to find in this clause, which appears in the paragraph following the categorical denial, an attempt to cover up the truth. And he adduces facts that, in reality, explain the clause, but which he, blinded by his anxiety to detract, assumes to be as a denial by Dr. Plinio.

Moreover, he goes on to formally state that a witness – anonymous, let it be noted – “well versed in the question” “during the time of the French case,” told him “what is in the *Refutation* does not correspond to the truth” (Letter 83, p. 3).

And his most grave conclusions to all this, in addition to the falseness of the affirmations of Dr. Plinio (or, at least, the statements of those who would have informed him on this subject), is that such a transposition of the *Ave Maria* by the “Ave Lucilia” provides proof for the substitution of Our Lady by Dona Lucilia in the TFP.

His proofs for such a momentous conclusion would be only these:

1. That Prince D. Bertrand, a distinguished member of the TFP, had given Mr. O.F. to clearly understand that the “Ave Lucilia” did in fact exist, composed “by a French adolescent” (Letter 83, p. 3);

2. That “an ex-hermit of *Praesto Sum*” would have affirmed that this prayer “was circulating among the younger ones of the group here in São Paulo” (*ibid.*).

*

The defamatory offensive that broke loose in France and in other European traditionalist circles at the end of June 1979 found their starting point in the distribution of a mimeographed leaflet titled *Tradition, Famille, Propriété – Secte or pas Secte? (Tradition, Family, Property – Sect or Not a Sect?)* (Referred to here simply as the *French Rapport*). This account contained the most fantastic accusations against the orientation given by the TFP at the *École Saint Benoît*, a secondary level scholastic establishment situated in the interior of France, which functioned under the fortuitous guidance of our French sister-organization. Various students from this School have been in Brazil visiting the Brazilian TFP and have showed themselves enthusiastic and disposed to develop an analogous work in defense of Christian Civilization in their homeland within the ambit of operation of the French TFP.

Beginning with a group of professors discontent with the orientation of the TFP, a crisis broke loose in the School that involved some of the students’ parents who were hostile to the association and ended with the dissolution of this establishment of learning. All this is succinctly recounted in the re-sponse that the French TFP offered to the aforementioned *Rapport* in February of 1980. This response, in two mimeographed volumes, is titled *Imbroglia, Détraction, Délire. Remarques sur un Rapport Concer-nant les TFP*; even up until today this response has never been refuted.

In this context, one small fact that occurred in the same *École Saint Benoît* takes on relevance. Around October or November of 1978, a 16-year old youth, a student in the afore-mentioned School, pre-sented to several of his colleagues, as his own personal work, this extravagant “Ave Lucilia.” But even though he presented the work as his own creation, the youth seemed to insinuate that he was acting in ac-cordance with the “better winds” that blew from São Paulo with respect to Dona Lucilia. Received with surprise by some and with ingenuousness by others, it was rejected by the first and foolishly accepted by the second (some five or six, or, according to the largest estimate, ten. The exact number of these youths, explicably ingenuous in view of their age, is impossible to determine because of the dispersion that fol-lowed of the students from the School. This included the unfortunate author of the extravagant composi-tion soon after he had removed himself completely from the School and from the TFP).

This episode, which took place in the *École Saint Benoît*, limited to an insignificant number of youths and restricted in place and time (it ended with the dispersion of the students from the School in the first part of April of 1979) was later examined in the *Rapport*. It had its echo as well in Brazil, with the eager publicity given to the French *Relatorio* by two newspapers of the center-left and two magazines of the left.

However, nothing of any significance or permanence was found in the French TFP concerning the absurd “Ave Lucilia.” It should also be mentioned that the extravagance that resulted from the afore-mentioned French youth and the practice of this prayer (by the few who used it sporadically and not habi-tually) disappeared completely. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the youths who made use of this prayer at no time stopped praying the complete daily Rosary to Our Lady, as is the custom among mem-bers and cooperators of the TFP.

This, which was discovered during the careful investigation made at the request of Dr. Plinio among the remnants of the *École Saint Benoît*, was not publicly revealed because Dr. Plinio wanted to spare the youth, possibly ignorant of any offense because of his unthinkingness or a personal extravagance that could be explained by his age (16-years-old).

Would it have not been proper to make public all these specific explanations? Dr. Plinio wisely judged that this was not the case, since it would attract the attention of the readers to trifles, prejudicing the more important parts. Wouldn't he have lied by omitting these explanations? To omit is not to lie, as St. Thomas teaches (cf. II-II, 111, 2, *respondeo*, ad 4). The episode, isolated and restricted, ending completely after five months, would authorize the affirmation that it did not exist in the TFP.

For the sake of caution, Dr. Plinio ordered an analogous investigation be made in the Brazilian TFP, confirming the total inexistence of this prayer at any time in Brazil.

This explains, then, the clause that Dr. Plinio added in the most natural way possible, as, moreover, any person with a middling intelligence would understand upon reading his letter to the *O Estado de São Paulo*: "If perchance some individual fact of this nature would be produced, although without my knowledge, it would not prove anything. Because what large entity can be responsible for the individual oddities practiced by every one of its members or cooperators?" (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, 8-22-1979).

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To make it as clear as possible – always fitting to do when faced with geometric minds – I have recourse to a comparison, which depersonalizes the case and facilitates understanding it in an disinterested way.

In a prestigious lower school in a city, drug traffickers managed to find a point of support in one student, which allowed the narcotic to infiltrate a small nucleus of inexperienced and ingenuous youths, unaware of the evil involved in the use of the drug. The incident remained restricted to this nucleus, without the knowledge of the Director and with the formal rejection of other students to whom the first had offered the drug. Thus, the drug was not propagated in the school, and the nucleus within somewhat spontaneously dispersed itself. The guilty party lost its point of support and desisted in his onslaught. Six months later, a journalist hostile to that learning establishment made a public denouncement that "the use of drugs exists in School X."

Surprised, the director ordered an investigation to be made of what actually took place, and ended by finding out about the episode that had taken place six months before. The director then sent out a press release: "After a careful investigation, the Director of School X categorically denies the circulation of narcotics in this establishment. Given the scope of the evil in the world today, it would always be possible for such a thing to happen. But this Director makes the assurance that, upon discovering any such case, its immediate extirpation will follow."

Would such a release be untruthful? Admitting that "the use of drugs exists in College X" would be the equivalent to acknowledging that the use of drugs in the school has a degree of frequency sufficient to affirm that it was a notorious habit practiced by at least an appreciable minority.

However, this is not what took place in the school. The use of the drug was only practiced by a very small nucleus of students. On the other hand, this nucleus had no permanence: It dispersed almost immediately. The director was, therefore, quite *correct* in saying that the use of drugs had not existed as a social factor in the school. It was a restricted and episodic fact.

Would the director have an *obligation* to reveal the episode that took place? And, consequently, the names of those at fault? No conscientious and prudent moralist would dare to recommend that he should do so. Because he would lose more by the undeserved loss of the good name of the school than he could gain by the revelation of a presumed episode of delinquents of which it was victim. Yet these boys, on the contrary, for whom honor has little value, would probably revel in such publicity. And they might even undertake a lawsuit for calumny, demanding incontestable proofs, which the director of the school would certainly have difficulty in providing.

Thus, prudence dictates cutting the provocation at its roots, with the college limiting itself to a categorical denial and a prudent safety clause.

This is what Dr. Plinio did in the actual case at hand.

The recourse to this imagined case does not imply, moreover, equating drug traffickers or drug users with what was involved in this heterogeneous and short-lived miniscule French case in the *École Saint Benoît*, which was only a single bubble that unexpectedly surfaced in a mass of liquid.

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Let us now review what was said in the *Réfutation*:

“After a careful investigation among the youths of the TFP, Dr. Plinio categorically denies the existence of the extravagant ‘Ave Lucilia,’ to which the *Rapport* refers.

“Certainly, if it had existed, it would have immediately been prohibited. Having said this, and given the natural propensity of youths and of adolescents – especially in our days – toward autonomous and absolutely extravagant attitudes, it would not be at all surprising that such a prayer should appear among them. The fact could only cause alarm if the leadership of the TFP would favor such a prayer. Or if the youths would resist the interdiction placed on them by the directors, which could by no means be tolerated.

“The model of equilibrium is found, as always, in the conduct of the Holy Church. In cases like this, she acts with all Her firmness of principles, all the vigilance of Her attention, and intervenes in an inflexible and maternally serene manner, as much to put a stop to the abuses as well as in respect for the practices that have no legitimate right” (*Refutation to the Rapport*, pp. 298-299).

Thus, there is no reason to imagine lies or complicity in a fact that was condemned publicly by Dr. Plinio, that was analyzed in both the letter to *O Estado de S. Paulo* as well as in the *Refutation*, and that, moreover, was cordially explained to the letter writer by Dom Bertrand. All this provides yet additional proof that the matter was not guarded secretly in the internal circles of the TFP.

If, after all this, Mr. O.F. pretends that such an absurd prayer is still being circulated in the French or Brazilian TFP, one should see in this new circulation no longer an absurdity or an extravagance, but an open treachery by one who, by this, would be trying to make pretexts for accusations against Dr. Plinio, such as what Mr. O.F. is doing...

2. THE LITANY TO DONA LUCILIA

A litany containing invocations to Dona Lucilia circulated for some time among the younger co-operators of the TFP. It was composed by two youths from the *Eremo Praesto Sum* (both 19-years-old at the time) at the end of 1977.

Of itself, it is completely legitimate to compose and privately pray litanies to the Servants of God who are neither beatified nor canonized with the hope of receiving graces, as I have shown in Chapter VII. It is not the case, therefore, to return here to the question of legitimacy according to the Laws and Doctrine of the Church about composing such a litany and saying it in private recitation.

Nonetheless, this litany was formally prohibited to be said within TFP circles on November 25 of 1979. One might, therefore, ask why it was prohibited if it is legitimate in itself.

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Before giving these reasons, the proximate and remote origin of this litany should be explained.

I will begin with the remote origin of devotion to Dona Lucilia, and, for this, I ask your permission, Dr. Plinio, to transcribe your own words in a letter dated August 15, 1979 (Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady) that you sent to *O Estado de São Paulo*, a letter that this large daily published on August 22 of the same year (Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary).

In it, Dr. Plinio wrote:

“A certain number of persons belonging to the TFP (or intimate with it) visit the tomb of my beloved and much-missed Mother in the cemetery of the Consolation. They adorn it with flowers and pray there in silent recollection.

“From this results a sequence of easily explainable facts.

“For more than 50 years I have dedicated myself to activities in defense of the Church and Christian Civilization. As it is well-known among those who have dealt with me, until the year 1967 some completely impervious rooms have constituted my home, where the traditional São Paulo lady who gave me the honor of giving me birth – and, on the other side, my valorous companions in public action – lived in the suave dignity of private life. Yet, in fact, only a half-dozen of these companions would frequent my house, and, to all the rest, my Mother was unknown, or almost unknown.

“In the year 1967, I became ill with my life at serious risk, and my residence naturally was filled with my friends. Profoundly distressed, my Mother, who had then reached the advanced age of 91, received them all. During this difficult time, she gave to all a welcome through which shined her maternal

warmth, her Christian resignation, her unlimited goodness of heart and her charming gentility of the day of yore of São Paulo. For all, she was a surprise, and, explicable, a delight of soul. Thus this convivium lasted for long months.

“I was not yet fully recuperated when God called my Mother to himself. Since that time, it occurred to some in the TFP to ask her intercession before God. And they saw their requests answered. There is nothing more natural than that they should then decorate her tomb as a manifestation of respect and gratitude. Nor is it any less normal that they should tell these facts to their friends. Yet more naturally still would be the consequent and gradual increase in number of those who go to pray at her tomb in the Consolation.

“Does it belong to me, as her son, to oppose myself to this, which, far from being ridiculous or extravagant, is – for those who have faith – highly respectable? Would it be beneficial if I were in some way to deprive this moral support to persons tormented by the tribulations of a life of battle in the full storm of the contemporary world?

“In the face of such facts that I have discretely witnessed without, however, stimulating them, does it not fall for me to maintain a reverent, moved and grateful silence?

“I insist. In my place, what son would not proceed in this manner?

“I have just set forth all of this from the point of view of good sense and goodness of heart. Elevating our sights now, I will go on to speak in terms of the Faith and Catholic doctrine.

“To ask the intercession of a person who lived and died piously does not carry the intrinsic or requisite significance of a proclamation that she was a saint raised to the altar. Catholic doctrine teaches it is legitimate for the faithful to have recourse to the intercession of those who precede them in death ‘*cum signo fidei*,’ especially when, by their conduct or their words, they stimulate (the faithful) toward virtue and thus draw them nearer to God. On this generic principle, for example, are founded the well-known prayers for the souls of Purgatory, for whom the faithful pray.

“And this has also been done on former occasions in an individual way in the TFP, where recourse has been had in the same way to the intercession of members or cooperators who died because of sickness or accidents, with their tombs being visited, etc. It is this that is done, within and outside the TFP, in relation to the mortal remains of persons that the Church has not canonized, such as the great Bishop of Olinda and Recife, D. Vital, or the heroic President of Ecuador, Garcia Moreno, assassinated in hatred for the Faith.

“And there is nothing more orthodox.”

This, then, was his letter in *O Estado de S. Paulo*.

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In the context that Dr. Plinio thus describes the spontaneous surging and propagation of devotion to Dona Lucilia in various ambiances of the association, ejaculations and small prayers were born in order

to ask her intercession. As I will show later on, these formulas of invocation were not always fortuitous or suitable, for which reason, in various cases, Dr. Plinio would advise against or prohibit them.

At the end of 1977, as I said, it happened that two youths of the TFP, upon receiving a certain favor after having prayed to the pious soul of Dona Lucilia, sought to hank her, composing a litany in honor of her.

Shortly thereafter, from the *Eremo Praesto Sum*, where these two youths resided, the litany spread to other sectors of the TFP that had contact with this *Eremo*. All this took place without the knowledge or encouragement of any person charged with direction in the TFP.

Around the end of 1978, we were living in days of great apprehension in view of an eventual attack by malefactors against the seats of the TFP. I was charged by Dr. Plinio to gather up and preserve all the papers inside our seats in such an emergency. On this occasion, or a little afterwards, at the beginning of 1979 (I do not remember the exact date), I found a paper with this litany. Highly displeased with the impropriety of various expressions, I showed it to Dr. Plinio. He immediately criticized the more preposterous expressions and told me to remove the litany from circulation. Thus I took the appropriate measures with those who had charge over the diverse groups.

To Mr. João Clá Dias, more especially in charge of the *Eremo Praesto Sum*, Dr. Plinio passed on the litany, saying that, for now, in order not to crush the enthusiasm of the ardent but unreflective youths who had composed it, he should rid it of the more extravagant invocations, and that he (Dr. Plinio) would study the rest later. The multitude of occupations in which he was involved caused him, however, to forget the matter.

In July or August of 1979, the youths of “*Praesto Sum*,” hoping to get a donation for rocks to pave the internal access road to the seat of the *Eremo* (which goes through the middle of a beautiful park) decided to make a novena, during which time they prayed a litany to obtain this favor through the intercession of Dona Lucilia. The rocks were obtained, and the road was finished in November of 1979, a date some months after the aforementioned novena, since the delivery of the stones suffered a certain delay and the work stretched out for some time.

In the meantime, on August 11, 1979, the defamatory campaign promoted by Brazilian newspapers and magazines about the French *Rapport* broke out. One of the frequenters of “*Praesto Sum*” brought up the question of the litany, which would have afforded opportunities for exploration analogous to those of the “*Ave Lucilia*” (already commented upon). Immediately, Mr. João Clá Dias determined that all who had the litany should hand it over to him.

It seems to have been on this occasion that Mr. O.F. became aware of the litany, which he included, among other denunciations, in the report that he presented to Dr. Plinio in the middle of September of 1979. Analyzing this report at the beginning of November, Dr. Plinio commented on the litany, invocation by invocation, pointing out the numerous improprieties of language and inappropriate formulas – fruit of the immaturity of the youths who had composed it – and he determined that it should be formally prohibited in a plenary assembly of *Praesto Sum*. All this took place on Sunday, November 25, 1979, with all the criticisms that Dr. Plinio had made concerning the litany being transmitted to all those present.

On the following day, November 26, Dr. Plinio had a meeting with Mr. O.F. and four of the cooperators whom he brought forth as witnesses of his denouncements, and all declared themselves to be satisfied with the measures taken the day before concerning the litany. This whole meeting was taped with the assent of the various participants, and the TFP has this tape in its possession.

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Setting forth the facts in this way, it becomes easy to dissolve the ruckus raised by Mr. O.F. around the litany:

A. *The Microformas Episode* – Microformas, a microfilm firm of Mr. Fausto Borsato, a member of the TFP, closed its activities on May 31, 1979, after its principal client, the Adolpho Lindenberg Construction Company, disassociated itself from its services. Three cooperators, Ivan Carlos Ramires, Ricardo José Basso and Alexandre Velozo, recall that, one week after having obtained a copy of the litany, they received the order to destroy it within the period of 24 hours. As they did not fathom the scope of the measure, they resolved to divide it into three parts so that each one might memorize one part so that they might pray it together later on.

The three youth all testify that they did not manage to memorize the litany in the time period stipulated to destroy the prayer, and thus could not pray it afterwards.

Of these three youths, the first two stopped working at Microformas on the same day of May 31, and the third some days before on April 12. This permits the establishment of the first knowledge of the litany, made by me, in the first quarter of 1979, since the first of these aforementioned youths remembers that the incident took place “several months before” the closing of activities at Microformas.

At any rate, it remains clear that such an incident occurred *before* the formal and definitive prohibition of November 25, 1979 (since on this date the Microformas was no longer in operation) and *not afterwards*, as Mr. O.F. seems to affirm (Letter 83, p. 4).

B. *Prohibited to have, but not prohibited to pray.* – Mr. O.F. infers that Mr. João Clá had given this order beginning with the episode of the three youths at Microformas that was just analyzed (Letter 83, p. 4).

In the first place, the order of the withdrawal of the litany that had reached those cooperators of the TFP came from me, and not from Mr. João Clá.

On my part, the order was clear: to destroy the copies of the litany within a determined time span. If they falsely interpreted the order, this interpretation was entirely of their own thinking. Nor would this be the first surprise that I have had from youths of this generation!

C. *Novena in Praesto Sum.* – As was said, this took place in July or August of 1979, before the participants had received the prohibition to pray it.

Let it be said in passing that there was no reason to speak of a recitation “behind closed doors,” as Mr. O.F. states (Letter 83, p. 4): Who would they be hiding from, since it was the very inhabitants of the building who participated in the novena?

D. ‘Perpetual’ Novena in Rio Grande do Sul and teaching to “a very young enjolras.” – The novena was actually prayed in 1981, but only once, and not as a perpetual novena, by a group of five persons with the end of obtaining the money necessary for the purchase of a van for the activities of the TFP, which they acquired immediately thereafter. One of the participants knew of the prohibition yet failed to advise the others, and this participant certainly merits censure. It is possible that this cited “very young enjolras” had learned the litany on this occasion. However, we cannot ascertain this fact, since this youth no longer frequents the TFP.

E. Copy of the litany possessed by a cooperator in São Paulo. – The cooperator in question, Mr. Sérgio Miyasaki, categorically denies that he possessed a copy of the litany.

F. The mother of two cooperators of Rio Grande do Sul. – This lady also denies that she possessed and prayed the litany. In a telegraph to her sons, in which they asked her to clarify this matter, she even said that she would like to know it...

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As one can see, of the facts set forth by Mr. O.F., only one was proven, and this one only partially (item D). But the evidence is absolutely insufficient to justify the ruckus that he raised about this matter.

What stands as a well-known and intangible fact is that the litany was publicly and formally prohibited by the direction of the TFP on November 25 of 1979. Even if isolated and quite circumscribed cases of disobedience were to be proved – which is possible – this does not alter the officially taken position of the TFP on the matter. A position that is, moreover, followed by the overwhelming majority – and almost totality – of its members and cooperators. Nor has there been negligence in warning the culprits when this disobedience has occurred and has been detected.

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In this regard, a consideration arises. The litany was prohibited by the direction of the TFP not because of its intrinsic illegitimacy (which does not exist, as I have already showed), nor because it contained invocations that were contrary to Catholic Doctrine (some, at first glance, give this impression, but after analyzing them and, above all, interpreting them in respect to what their inexperienced authors clearly wanted to say, are perfectly defensible), but because of their improprieties and shortcomings in expression, which truly cause strong displeasure, as well as because of certain expressions of bad taste, which demonstrate the physiognomy of the children of today’s “civilization of the image”!

Mr. O.F., on the contrary, purposes to affirm:

- a. The intrinsic illegitimacy of the litany;
- b. Its collision with Catholic Doctrine in diverse points;

- c. The illicit cult (judged by him to be so) that in this way would be rendered to Dona Lucilia;
- d. The undeserved application to Dona Lucilia of titles exclusive to the Virgin Mother of God (which would characterize yet another form of “dethronement” of Our Lady in the TFP).

In the annex of this work, one can find a study by Mr. Gustavo Antônio Solimeo where all these accusations are exhaustively analyzed and competently refuted.

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It remains to me, finally, to analyze one aspect of the accusation of Mr. O.F., which is the hidden way he imagines that the litany was diffused in the TFP. Attentively examining the letter of rupture of Mr. O.F., I find him contorting his confused thinking into tirades that, if they were true, would only prove the discretion and serenity with which recourse to Dona Lucilia is made:

* “Absolutely extravagant litanies existed among those who frequented *Praesto Sum*, being kept hidden by many members of the group” (Letter 83, p. 3)

* “When we denounced the ‘Litany to Dona Lucilia’ to Dr. Bertrand, Borelli and Plinio Xavier, they affirmed that they had never heard of it. This would prove that the prayer was circulated only by a group of ‘devoted enthusiasts,’ who knew how to ‘discreetly’ keep their devotion silent, even before elements of authority and those in charge of the group and of the TFP (*ibid.*).

* “The *enjolas* of the group divided among themselves this absurd and extravagant work with the aim of rapidly memorizing it within the established time span. Thus they no longer had the litany* and they could continue to pray it” (*ibid.*, p. 4).

* “And, in *Praesto Sum*, (February of 1980), behind closed doors ... they made a novena to D. Lucilia, praying the litany which was prohibited to have...” (*ibid.*).

The position of the letter writer is peculiar. If there are manifestations of devotion made in public, he rises up against them as a “cult”; if there are private manifestations, he insinuates secret action. If, as he admits, there were an order to destroy the texts of the litany (Letter 83, p. 4), he does not acknowledge that with this the TFP showed its disapproval of it. One sees that, in one way or another, what Mr. O.F. wants to impose is that devotion to Dona Lucilia cease in the TFP.

In such a large movement as the TFP, with many persons coming from the very young and less cultured ranks, it is impossible to avoid that one or another *gaucherie* should appear. Should this private devotion (to Dona Lucilia) be stopped, a devotion that has been the source of so many favors and spiritual benefits, only because some youths would have unthinkingly composed an objectionable formula and a very small number would have showed some resistance in heeding the order to stop reciting it? It seems to me the answer is no.

3. MEMORARE TO DONA LUCILIA

Mr. O.F. divulges the existence of a *Memorare* adapted to Dona Lucilia (Letter 83, p. 2). It behooves us here to ask whether this is illicit, according to the doctrine and the praxis of the Church.

The letter writer attempts to give the impression that the *Memorare* is a prayer conceived in such terms that they can only be applied exclusively to Our Lady, and that to pray such a prayer adapted to Dona Lucilia would reveal a desire to substitute Our Lady by Dona Lucilia. In this, he is wrong. For example, the same prayer is applied to St. Therese of the Child Jesus, composed by Mother Isabel of the Sacred Heart from the Carmel of Lisieux *before the beatification of the Saint*: “Remember, o most powerful little Queen ...” (*Novissima Verba*, Office Central de Ste. Therese de l’Enfant Jesus, Imprimerie Saint Paul, 1926, p. 222).³⁹ Therefore, *a priori*, his allegation has no foundation.

Moreover, the system of transposing prayers is a common practice among the faithful. Considering further only the *Memorare*, composed by St. Bernard and originally applied to Our Lady, this same prayer was adapted to one’s Guardian Angel,⁴⁰ to St. Joseph⁴¹ and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!⁴² These prayers can be found, for example, in the leaflet *The Month of October or the Month of the Most Holy Rosary* by Canon José de Souza Bittencourt (Porto Alegre, 1895, pp. 361, 363, 492-493), which also contains various other adaptations.⁴³

³⁹ “Souvenez-vous, ô puissane petite Reine, doux miroir de la miséricordieuse Vierge Marie, souvenez vous de la révélations que vous nous avez faite vous-même que jamais on ne vous prie en vain et qu’aucun de ceux qui vous invoquent n’est jamais délaissé de vous.

“Animée de las plus tendre confiance, je viens vous rappeler votre promesse de passer votre Ciel à faire du bien sur la terre, je viens vous supplier de répandre sur moi, et sur tous ceux pour lesquels j’implore votre protection, une abondante pluie de roses, un torrent de grâces célestes.

“Hâtez-vous de répondre à mon appel, daignez descendre auprès de moi, m’embraser du divin amour et axaucer mon humble prière. Ainsi soit-it (*Novissima Verba*, pp. 222-223).

⁴⁰ “Remember, o my Guardian Angel, to whom the Lord has confided the care of my soul that you might become my friend and protector. Because of this, filled with confidence in your goodness and never having solicited you in vain, I fly unto thee, my good Angel, my friend, and even though I have often not acknowledged your tender cares, I implore your powerful assistance. Do not refuse me, O Holy Friend of my soul, but hear my prayer and answer me. Amen” (*ibid.*, p. 363).

⁴¹ “Remember, o most pure Spouse of the Virgin Mary, my sweet Protector St. Joseph, that never was it known, that anyone who fled to thy protection and implored thy help was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee and fervently recommend myself to thee. O! Despise not my petition, foster father of the Redeemer, but deign to piously answer it” (*ibid.*, p. 361-362).

⁴² “Remember, o most sweet Jesus, that never was it known, that anyone who had recourse to Thy Sacred Heart, implored Thy help or sought Thy intercession, was abandoned by Thee. Possessing, therefore, and inspired by this confidence, O Most Sacred Heart, King of all hearts, I fly unto Thee, and groaning under the weight of my sins, I prostrate myself before Thee; despise not my petitions, but hear them favorably and deign to answer them. So be it” (*ibid.*, pp. 492-493).

⁴³ For example, the following adaption of the *Anima Christi* to Our Lady:

“Soul of the Virgin, illuminate me.

Body of the Virgin, protect me.

Milk of the Virgin, nourish me.

Assumption of the Virgin, animate me.

O Mary, Mother of grace, intercede for me.

4. OTHER INVOCATIONS TO DONA LUCILIA

Seeking to find support for his torrential diatribe and insinuating that in the TFP there was a usurpation of titles in favor of Dona Lucilia, which, according to sound doctrine, would be applicable only to Our Lady, Mr. O.F. twists the senses of common expressions or ones whose origins show that they did not have the same scope that he attributes to them.

A. The expression that seems to have most incensed the letter writer is the invocation to Dona Lucilia as “our Mother and Lady (*Senhora*),” actually used by a certain number of persons in the TFP.

The expression is completely proper, and in no way constitutes a usurpation of titles exclusive to Our Lady.

Mary Most Holy is, by antonomasia, our *Mother* and our *Lady*. The expression is less common in Hispanic countries, who prefer to use *La Virgen*; in France the title *Notre Dame* is more commonly used for the Mother of God. The English and Americans use *Our Lady*. The Italians personalize the term: *Madonna* (My Lady). The Germans generally say *Gottesmutter* (Mother of God). In Portugal and in Brazil: *Nossa Senhora* (Our Lady).

But this does not mean that the titles of *Mother* and *Senhora* are exclusive to the terms *Mother of God* and *Mother of men*. St. Thomas teaches that we should honor our *fathers* (and the same extends to those who act in some way as *mothers* to us). St. Thomas says: “Now just as a carnal father partakes of the character of principle in a particular way, so too a person who, in some way, exercises providence in one respect, partakes of the character of father in a particular way, since a father is the principle of generation, of education, of learning and of whatever pertains to the perfection of human life: While a person who is in a position of dignity and has government over certain things: for instance, the governor of a state in civil matters, the commander of an army in matters of warfare, a professor in matters of learning, and so forth. Hence it is that all such persons are designated as fathers, on account of their being charged with like cares” (II-II, 102, 1, *resp.*).

From this St. Thomas concludes: “Therefore, just as, in a manner, under religion, whereby worship is given to God, we find piety, whereby we worship our parents, so under piety we find observance, whereby worship and honor are paid to persons in positions of dignity” (*ibid.*).

Now, many members and cooperators of the TFP, principally among the younger, find spiritual assistance in the graces obtained through the intercession of Dona Lucilia. Thus do they have a special and legitimate reason for calling her *Mother*. Who can deny them this right? For by doing this, they in no

As thy servant, receive me.
 Let me always confide in Thee.
 From all evils, defend me.
 Assist me at my death.
 So that I might with sureness come to Thee.
 So that with thy chosen ones, I might glorify Thee
 For ever and ever. Amen.” (*ibid.*, pp. 333-334).

way deny, despise or substitute for another the spiritual maternity of Our Lady. They only take on another Mother – in addition to their incomprehensibly superior Mother. It is a genuinely Catholic position of soul, which would be unjust to censure.

In its turn, the very title of *Mother* in itself justifies the usage of *Senhora*, just as the title of *Father* would justify the usage of *Senhor*. In the respectful language of former times, it was common to say *o Senhor meu Pai*, or *a Senhora minha Mãe*. And even though it is not done much now, it used to be required by etiquette for someone to refer to the *Father* and *Mother* of an interlocutor with the expressions: *O Senhor seu Pai, a Senhora sua Mãe*.

Following an old Portuguese tradition, this way of speaking of *Senhora e Mãe* and of *Senhor e Pai*, common then in letter-writing, was preserved in the time of the Empire, and even until some time ago in the period of the Republic. Numerous letters exist to demonstrate this. Therefore, it is not the Brazilian tradition to consider this usage as exclusive only to Our Lady.

As for the Saints, they also used to be spoken of as *o Senhor São José, a Senhora Santa Ana, o Senhor São Roque*, etc. etc. The passage from St. Thomas, already cited above, is sufficiently encompassing to justify that we acknowledge even the seigniority of our Guardian Angel over us, as a Saint who specially protects us and, in this way, acts as *Father* to us. For, being the agent of father and of mother, a most just and specific title, since he is the instrument of the Providence of God in relation to use.

Thus it is true madness to think that, by invoking Dona Lucilia as our *Mother and Lady* (*Senhora*), we are attributing to her a title exclusive to Our Lady, as Mr. O.F. pathetically claims: “The TFP stopped being the TFP from the moment that it gave to other than the Virgin Mary the title of *Our Mother and Lady* (*Senhora*), an ejaculation made by you yourself for the group to pay cult to your mother. ... Upon doing this, the group allowed the scepter that was in the hands of our Queen to fall to the ground” (Letter 83, p. 27 – original emphasis).

What madness! All of the 48 forms of devotion to Our Lady existing in the TFP that I mentioned in Chapter V (topics 2, 3, and 4) are eclipsed in the eyes of Mr. O.F. by the invocation *our Mother and Lady* (*Senhora*) – which, moreover, was not composed by Dr. Plinio, contrary to what Mr. O.F. affirms. This one title expands before him like a giant Adamastor,⁴⁴ and he wildly proclaims: “The TFP ... stopped being the TFP from the moment that it gave to one other than the Virgin Mary the title of *our Mother and Lady* (*Senhora*). ... Upon doing this, the group allowed the scepter that was in the hands of our Queen to fall to the ground” (*ibid.*).

With a sad silence, I register these words...

B. Meriting special attention is the expression “Our Lady of Consolation,” which was used by some in the TFP to designate Dona Lucilia. Dr. Plinio disapproved of and categorically prohibited its usage as soon as he became aware of it. The expression, also born spontaneously among the more young, is shocking at first glance, and Mr. O.F. exploits this shock, cleverly omitting how it came into being,

⁴⁴ Adamastor is a mythologic giant created by Portuguese poet Luís de Camões in his epic poem *Lusíadas* to personify the Cape of Good Hope and the navigation dangers surrounding it. Adamastor stands for Untamed. So, the Cape would be a giant making the waters wildly tormentous to destroy the sailors who dare disturb his peace.

which would diminish its meaning, even though its ambiguity nonetheless makes it all in all reproachable.

The tomb of Dona Lucilia is located in the Cemetery of the Consolation in São Paulo, and it is visited often by the members and cooperators of the TFP. Speaking to each other in daily conversation, they often describe where they are going by simply saying: “I am going to the Consolation,” to designate that they are going to pray at the tomb of Dona Lucilia. Taking this a step further, they came to abusively say ... “Our Lady of (the) Consolation.”

A completely censurable usage, undoubtedly, since the venerable title of “Our Lady of Consolation” corresponds to a devotion propagated by the Augustinians under the complete title of “Our Lady of Consolation and the Sacred Cord,” representative of the consolation that Our Lady brought to St. Monica by promising her the conversion of her son, Augustine, and giving her, as pledge of this promise, the *Sacred Cord* that she wore when she was on this earth.

Thus, those who used this expression should be strongly censured. For even though they had only done so to signify Dona Lucilia, the expression can be confused with the other well-known invocation of Our Lady.

All this is clear and is duly recorded here.

It now falls to us to analyze the reaction of Mr. O.F. in face of this fact. He was perfectly right to censure the impropriety and ambiguity of this expression. But, with his tendency toward exaggeration, he immediately jumped to the impetuous conclusion that this would signify a “substitution” of Our Lady with Dona Lucilia!

Here, then, the system by which Mr. O.F. mounted his libel against the TFP becomes patent: “Ave Lucilia” (non-existent); a litany (legitimate in itself, but unsuitable in various of its invocations); a *Memorare* (legitimate); a legitimate invocation (“our Mother and Lady (*Senhora*)”); another invocation (“Our Lady of Consolation”) – unsuitable and ambiguous; the incensing of a picture of Dona Lucilia (whose legitimacy will be proved in the next topic); a supposed “dethronement” of the Mother of God in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence (already dealt with in Chapter V). By drawing up the facts and analyzing them in his own way, he aspires to draw an enormous conclusion: The TFP abandoned its former devotion to Our Lady and substituted it with devotion to Dona Lucilia! All the different types of devotion to Mary Most Holy in the TFP presently in force – and growing – disappeared before his eyes! Disappearing as well were all that has been written and spread in the TFP about Our Lady, her privileges, devotion to Her, etc.

Our response, made here in this work, is simple and serene, yet, at the same time, firm and categorical: His premises are false, unproved, lacking serious foundation, and radically insufficient to draw this abstruse and infamous conclusion.

5. THE INCENSING OF A PICTURE OF DONA LUCILIA

Since this chapter deals with the accusations relating to cult to Dona Lucilia, I will now respond to an objection that includes Dr. Plinio as well. This relates (once again) to the “Ceremony *da meta*,” in which the letter writer proposes a “dethronement” in the *Eremo* of Our Lady of Divine Providence.

The letter writer says: “How can it be explained that after removing the Most Holy from the Sacramentarium, the Holy Chalice was incensed,⁴⁵ and, afterwards, they incensed your picture, Dr. Plinio, and the picture of Dona Lucilia? How can it be denied that this is an act of cult?” (Letter 83, p. 20).

With respect to the incident where the Blessed Sacrament was outside of the Tabernacle, the letter writer maliciously omits to say that, the majority of times, the Ciborium was returned to the Sacramentarium, which was then closed. Only after this would the ceremony continue. This fact marks the separation of the two phases of the ceremony, even though it did not modify the nature of the act that followed, which has nothing illegitimate about it, as I will go on to show.

Let us see what the specialists teach about incensing. Ludwig Eisenhofer, Professor of the Catholic University of Eichstatt in Germany, says this: “The incensing of the Blessed Sacrament is a symbol of the act of adoration, properly so called (*cult of direct latria*); on the contrary, the incensing of the true Cross, the Crucifix, the altar, and the book of the Evangelists, which represent Christ, is a symbol and indirect act of adoration (*cult of indirect latria*). When the latter are incensed, in various manners according to their dignity, by liturgical persons (or ministers), one sees in this also a demonstration of honor that, in final analysis, refers to Christ, Whom the Roman Pontifical (*in ordinatione Presbyteri*) calls the ‘author and distributor of all dignity.’

“In this way as well, representatives of the civil power (kings, etc.) are incensed, because, according to the Apostle (Rom. 13:4), the prince is the minister of God. The incensing of laymen is, for them, a reminder that they should always remember their Christian dignity, which makes them ‘a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation’ (1 Pet 2:9). Moreover, it is customary to use incense to render honor to a deceased Christian’s body, because the body is the seat of the soul, sanctified by supernatural grace. ... In the funeral rites (cf. *Roman Pontifical, De benedictioine coemeterii*) and in other places ... incense is used even as a sacramental because of its purifying virtue” (*Compendio di Liturgia*, Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1954, p. 53).

Therefore, incensing always implies a demonstration of honor that, in final analysis, refers to Christ; in the case of incensing laymen, one should not see an act of homage in this, but an act that inspires as a reminder of their dignity as Christians.

If incensing is considered as an act of *latria* reserved to God, or of *dulia* restricted to the Saints and the Blessed, it would be necessary also to consider how it is that the faithful can be incensed by the acolyte in liturgical ceremonies and the body can be incensed by the Priest when he recommends the soul of a deceased.

⁴⁵ The letter writer obviously is referring to the ciborium or ampoule in which the consecrated Hosts in the Tabernacle are reserved. The Sacred Chalice is what the Priest uses for the Consecration during the Mass.

To the dramatic question of Mr. O.F.: “How can it be explained that ... they incense your picture, Dr. Plinio, and the picture of Dona Lucilia?” (*ibid.*) – I respond simply that this in no way violated the norms of the Church.

The pictures were not on the altar, but were set up at the side of the altar and completely separate from it in such a way that it could in no way be said that public cult was rendered to Dona Lucilia or Dr. Plinio. As is known, to place some image or pictures over the altar is a form of cult that the Church only permits to the Saints and the Blessed. But placing them outside the altar, on walls or in the stained-glass windows of churches without any sign of cult that implies a sanctity acknowledged by the Church, is permitted for pictures and statues of the Servants of God, as I showed in Chapter VII (item 7, D).

One sees, therefore, that if it is permitted to permanently place pictures or statues on the walls of churches, it is permitted *a fortiori* to place them temporarily -- for an hour, as was the case -- on the wall of a particular chapel or in a setting outside the altar.

Concerning the photograph of Dr. Plinio: Nor was any practice of cult restricted to canonized or beatified persons rendered to the photograph of Dr. Plinio because it was placed outside the altar, on the left side, in an improvised setting on a blackboard easel covered with cloth. The picture of Dona Lucilia was on another easel at the right side of the altar. The ceremony was directed principally to the Blessed Sacrament, and only afterwards, and secondarily, to the photo of Dona Lucilia and the photo of Dr. Plinio.

Therefore, the incensing of your photograph, Dr. Plinio, and the photograph of Dona Lucilia, would only be considered as public cult if the pictures had been placed over the altar, which is not permitted.

Since this did not take place, the accusation of Mr. O.F. is false.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Concerning the “ceremony *da meta*,” the TFP consulted the illustrious canonist Fr. Arturo Alonso Lobo O.P., professor of Canon Law at the Pontifical University of Salamanca and one of the collaborators of the famous *Commentaries to the Code of Canon Law* of the BAC (Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos). The responses of Fr. Alonso Lobo were the following:

“INQUIRY

“In the city of São Paulo (Brazil), in the year 1968, a lady died who was the mother of a family and who possessed eminent religious and domestic virtues.

“After her death, various persons having recourse to her intercession began to receive favors. Among these persons were especially adolescents and youths.

“With the impetuosity characteristic of their age, these adolescents and youths tended to thank her for the favors they believed to have received through her intercession by means of small courtesies: for example, placing flowers on the tomb of the lady, carrying her photographs with them and kissing them in moments of difficulty, and having frequent recourse to her intercession.

“Naturally, from this it came to pass that her photograph was placed in their respective dormitories. This photograph was also exposed over a small table in the private residence of a person. Frequently flowers were placed before this photograph. This table did not have the character of an altar, that is, it did not have an altar stone nor any depressed area in which to place it. It was an ordinary, everyday table. On certain occasion candles were lit on both sides of this lady’s photograph.

“The Most Blessed Sacrament being present in the building in which these youths resided, the Most Holy in the Sacrament (minor exposition) was incensed on nine different days and occasions. This Eucharistic ceremony having ended, the photograph of this lady was then incensed, the picture being placed on the side of the Gospel, but outside the altar, on a very small little table. This incensing was done by an extraordinary (lay) minister of the Eucharist, because at that time there was no priest present in the place.

"On one occasion, after this act took place, another small table was set up in the circumstances described above with the photograph (of the son) of this lady, a man of advanced age who is still living. He is a person highly regarded by these youths.

"It is asked:

"1. If this manner of proceeding infringes upon any Catholic doctrine;

"2. If it infringes upon something in the Code of Canon Law presently in force or upon any other prescription of the Holy Church in our times."

"RESPONSE

"*Response to n. 1* – More than against the doctrine of the Catholic Church, it is necessary to see if these acts transgress the *disciplinary* norms of the Church. For an act of cult to have the canonical character of *public*, it is necessary that it be rendered in the name of the Church, by persons legitimately designated for such an end, and they be practicing acts that, by the institution of the Church, are reserved to pay honor to God, the saints and the blessed.

"The first of these three conditions presents no problem in the present case.

"The second could only offer some difficulty for the present case if the extraordinary minister of the Eucharist with whom we are dealing would have received with this office an actual consecration as minister of the Church. But I am rather inclined to think that it treats of a simple authorization to perform external acts that are liturgically necessary for the normal development of cult.

"The third is the one that presents the greatest problems for its application to the concrete cases.

"In the exposition of the facts, it was said that the two acts of incensing were separate: one to the Most Holy in the Sacarium; the second, to the photograph of the mentioned lady, placed outside the altar, which took place after the Eucharistic ceremony had ended.

"This incensing of the photograph, far from having the character of public cult, was a manifestation of the gratitude and affection directed to her as an intermediary before God and Our Lady for the favors received. They also extended this manifestation of affection and gratitude to her son, still living among them. By this, we cannot think that they had the intention of rendering public cult to him as well.

"The Church also admits in liturgical usage the incensing of the faithful; and no one considers this gesture an abusive act, but rather an external sign of respect and unction for those who were consecrated by the Sacrament of Baptism. The bodies of our deceased and other material objects that have some special religious significance for Christians are also incensed.

"The concrete acts to manifest to the deceased our piety and remembrance vary from one region to another, to such a point that what is considered in some places as homage reserved to God or to what is considered in some places as homage reserved to God or to His saints in other places is employed in good faith and without scandal to manifest these legitimate Christian sentiments.

"The Church demands in processes of beatification that the Servants of God (the candidates to the honor of the altars) receive a constant and increasing private cult before they can be declared blessed. Because of this, the promoters of the aforementioned causes avidly take up the work of the diffusion of this private devotion by means of pictures, relics, novenas, litanies, prayers, and other similar acts. With this, it is the promoter's intention and the Church's desire that a private cult should always be maintained; however, in practice, at times individual persons poorly understand what this entails and come to mix up or confuse in practice (even though it might be done in good faith) that which is an act of public cult with that which is an act of private cult..

"*Response to n. 2* – After responding to (question) number one, I think that the acts of homage and veneration offered to the cited lady do not have the character of public cult and, therefore, are not contrary to the present day prescriptions of the Church.

"To avoid future difficulties, or bad interpretations on the part of someone who is unable to understand the thoughts already set out, I advise that, as a measure of prudence, the incensing of the photograph or similar acts should not be repeated, nor should the photograph be placed in the church or oratory. But I also insist that it is licit to honor, venerate, and invoke those who, because of their exemplary lives, we can have as intercessors before God; and if there were the intention or simple prospect of initiating future procedures for a possible beatification, it would be necessary to encourage and spread the private cult.

"Given in Salamanca on this the 20th of June of 1983.

Fr. Arturo Alonso Lobo, OP."

Prior to this, an oral inquiry was made to the same canonist, who responded in the following manner:

Question: "During their ceremony of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Sacarium open (minor exposition of the Blessed Sacrament) where there was a photograph outside the altar and to its side, the pho-

6. CULT TO DONA LUCILIA: PROOF OF HETERODOXY?

Always extreme in his conclusions and not content with accusing Dr. Plinio with transgressing the canonical laws, Mr. O.F. accuses him of going against the Faith itself:

“That which causes the greatest sorrow, however, is the veritable equation ... between Dona Lucilia and Our Lady. Equivalence, no. A preference for Dona Lucilia. ...

“And this not only goes against good sense and the canonical code, but it goes against the Faith. For no angel, no saint, can be equated with the Virgin Mary. She alone exceeds all others put together. It was this that I learned from you, Dr. Plinio. How, then, can you permit, provide incentive for or order that the group practice an act so contrary to our Faith and to the Marian devotion that we always practiced and always defended?” (Letter 83, pp. 20-21).

Before analyzing the accusation of heterodoxy, I observe in passing that is a true insult to truth to say that Dr. Plinio “provides incentive for or orders” that there should be cult to Dona Lucilia in the TFP. All are witness to the great circumspection with which he treats this matter, only speaking about his Mother when his disciples are very insistent. And, when he does so, he speaks in such a way about her or about facts from her life that he in no way affirms, nor even insinuates, sanctity of the altar. That he views the veneration paid to Dona Lucilia with emotion and gratitude is a fact that Mr. O.F. did not discover, for Dr. Plinio himself affirmed this in writing in his already-cited letter to *O Estado de S. Paulo* 8-22-79). But to conclude from this that he provides incentive for and even orders it is an enormous step, which he had always been most careful not to take.

Therefore, heterodoxy in what way? I have showed the enormous distance that exists between the private cult that we dedicate to Dona Lucilia and the immense cult of *hyperdulia* that we pay to Our

tograph was incensed on one occasion without closing the door of the Sacrament, through the ignorance of the Eucharistic Minister. What infraction did the Minister commit and is there some penalty?

Response: “There is no canonical sanction established in the law for this. Therefore, he incurs no guilt upon himself. The only thing (that exists) is that the competent superior should impose punishments on one who infringes upon a law. But (in this case) there is no established law: It would be a *‘ferendae sententiae’* law, but not *‘laetae sententiae’*; it would not be a case of a law imposed directly, but it would be imposing a penalty in case the responsible superior desires it. But as this was done in ignorance, without bad will, one cannot punish an action that does not imply guilt. Cause is one thing, and guilt is another. Where there is not guilt, the superior should not punish, because there was not moral responsibility.

“One should not impose a punishment upon one who, through ignorance, does an action contrary to the law, because the ecclesiastical penalties are not equal in all things to civil penalties. In ecclesiastical penalties what is sought above all else is spiritual salvation, the spiritual good. In the penalties of civil societies, other and different ends are sought, and, because of this, they impose punishments including presupposing the external transgression: They presume culpability. But in the religious sphere, if there is not moral responsibility, the superiors do not impose a penance.”

Question: “Let us suppose that someone presents this case, of incensing the photograph with the Sacrament open, as being (an act) of public cult. Could this prejudice anything (in a future process of canonization)?

Response: “No. That is to say if, once they are informed of how they should proceed in these things, they desist from repeating it from that time forward. That is to say, once this is done and it is learned that it should not be done, it is not repeated: This is a sign that they want to proceed and act in everything according to the will of the Church and that they do not want to anticipate the judgment of the Church. For when they become aware that there is an actual transgression, they thenceforth avoid it.

Lady. This cult is so great that a Prelate went so far as to say, not without a small amount of sarcasm, that we considered Our Lady almost as the fourth person of the Most Holy Trinity!⁴⁷

In the disordered and confused argumentation of Mr. O.F., the following rationale can nonetheless be discerned: Transgressing the norms of canonical law in what refers to cult of the Saints, the TFP is rendering to Dona Lucilia a cult that supersedes the cult due to the Mother of God; now, to render to some creature a cult superior to that paid to the mother of God is to go against the Faith, which places Our Lady at the apex of all mere creatures.

The rationale errs in its foundation. A disobedience to the norms of canonical law or of the liturgy can proceed from ignorance, from a momentary inadvertence, from the poor execution of established rubrics, etc. And, therefore, it would not constitute a direct sign of heterodoxy, nor even the suspicion of heterodoxy (cf. canons 2316, 2319 §2, 2320, 2332, 2320, 2332, 2340 § 1 and 2371). If a person, being warned, persists in disobedience, it becomes the case to see whether he is acting in this way because of a principle, through simple spite, obsession or revolt, because of inconformity with the law as such, or some reason of this sort. Because two different things are involved here: disobedience to the law or the liturgical norm, and doctrinary disagreement with the principle on which the law or norm is based. Illegality is not necessarily proof of heterodoxy.

Passing over all these rubrics, Mr. O.F. gallops forward: disrespect of rubrics, or canonical illegality ... denial of a principle of the faith ... heterodoxy ...

My response: This is delirious!

7. CONCLUSION OF THIS CHAPTER

I conclude, therefore, saying that there was never anything wrong, from the point of view of orthodoxy, Canon Law and the liturgical norms, in the existence of a litany and a *Memorare* to Dona Lucilia (the litany, in fact, was prohibited and has not been prayed for four years because of the extravagance of some of the invocations; furthermore, Dr. Plinio is commanding his directors to be vigilant and not to permit the circulation of these and other such singularities that can crop up). In addition, the use of the invocation to Dona Lucilia as “our Mother and Lady (*Senhora*)” is legitimate; while the expression “Our Lady of Consolation,” even though it is ambiguous, does not have the scope that Mr. O.F. tries to give to it.

Finally, it is not a form of cult exclusive to God, the Saints and the Blessed to use incense, as was done to honor the photographs of Dona Lucilia and of Dr. Plinio (even though it is known that in the TFP such ceremonies were carried out without his consent or his approval and that, moreover, they have fallen into disuse since May of 1982).

⁴⁷ As a sidenote, one can see what a contemporary author has to say on the subject: “Mary can be considered also as a complement to the Most Holy Trinity in so far as she eminently reveals the divine attributes and perfections. The supernatural excellence of the Virgin Mary seems, as it were, to have obliged God to the total application of his wisdom, goodness, and power. In short, the ‘Blessed Virgin constituted the fourth person in order of dignity, after the Three Divine Persons’ (Salmeron)” (Bernardo Cueva, *Doctrina y Vida Marianas*, Madrid, 1953, n. 99, *apud* Antonio Royo Marin, *Teología de la Caridad*, Madrid: BAC, 1960, p. 280).

8. A NECESSARY SUPPLEMENT: IT IS NOT IMPROPER FOR A CHILD TO PRAISE HIS PARENTS

By saying that Dr. Plinio permits or even favors devotion to Dona Lucilia in the TFP, Mr. O.F. insinuates that he thus acts in an improper way, because a son should not praise his own mother.

I have already analyzed the question from the point of view of orthodoxy and its conformity with canon law.

To that which touches upon the appropriateness, decorum, suitability, and other such insinuations, I will not respond with arguments, but with the example of Saints and eminent persons who praised their mothers or fathers, whether they were canonized or uncanonized.

A. Thus does St. Augustine give numerous titles to St. Monica in his *Confessions*.

The Saint attributed his conversion to his Mother: “‘You put forth your hand from on high,’ and You drew my soul out of that pit of darkness, when before You, my mother, Your faithful servant, wept more for me than mothers weep over their children’s dead bodies. By that spirit of faith which she had from You, she saw my death, and You graciously heard her, O Lord” (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, New York: Image Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960, p. 90).

He also relates how the great St. Ambrose venerated her:

“While he (St. Ambrose) loved her because of her most devout life, in which, so fervent in spirit among her good works, she frequented the church. Hence when he saw me, he would often break forth in her praise, and congratulate me for having such a mother” (*ibid.*, p. 135).

“Such was she (my mother), and she had You as her inward teacher in the school of her heart. ... She was also a servant of Your servants. Whosoever among them knew her greatly praised You, and honored You, and loved You in her, because they recognized Your presence in her heart, for the fruit of her holy life bore witness to this. ... she had testimony for her good works” (*Confessions*, p. 220).

Moreover, the great Doctor of the Church speaks of his Mother in yet other places in his *Confessions* (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 19, 90-2, 152, 223-28, 216-19, 218-21, 221-23, 388).

B. St. John Bosco, founder of the Salesians, did not hesitate to give great distinction to “Mamma Margherita” in his stories. In the Salesian congregation, great veneration is paid even today to the mother of John Bosco.

As his biographers record, Dom Bosco believed his mother to possess high virtue. Upon asking her to abandon everything in order to follow him, D. Bosco saw all the sacrifices that this would entail for her: “My mother is a saint; I can ask her to do this” (Fausto Curto, *A Mãe de D. Bosco*, São Paulo: Editorial D. Bosco, 1979, p. 44).

At the death of his mother, “Dom Bosco said a few words, which served to console the boys who surrounded him. ‘We lost our mother, but I am sure that she will help us from Paradise. She was a saint!’

And at that moment, he felt himself a brother of his young boys, like sons of the same mother. ... and, among themselves, they proclaimed her saint. ‘She was a saint!’” (Maria Bargoni, *La Madre de Don Bosco*, Madrid: SEI, 1956, p. 246).

A Salesian biography of St. John Bosco, whose author received a letter of congratulations from Blessed Miguel Rua, comments:

“And Margherita, saintly woman, made of her son a saint. Don Bosco was the faithful model of his Mother” (Eladio Egana, *Vida de San Juan Bosco*, Seville: Libreria Editorial de Maria Auxiliadora, 1970, p. 16).

C. St. Therese also did not hesitate to praise her father, the honorable Monsieur Martin:

* “When I think of you, my Papa, I naturally think of the good God, because it seems to me impossible that there would be anything more saintly than you on this earth. Yes, you are certainly as holy as St. Louis” (*Letters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus*, Porto: Livraria Apostolado de Imprensa, 1953, p. 83).

* “The Angels will be in admiration upon seeing a Father so pleasing to God, and Jesus will prepare a crown to join together all those who this incomparable Father joined together. ... I am now in retreat, and during the retreat, it is not permitted to write, but our Mother gave me leave to send you this short note. ... Undoubtedly, if it is prohibited to write, it is in order not to disturb the silence of the retreat, but how can one’s peace be disturbed in writing to a saint?” (*Ibid.*, pp. 109-110)

D. To draw from a more recent example, I cite from the *Memoires* of Cardinal Mindszenty, who after describing the pious life of his mother, tells the following story: “While I was still parish priest in Zalaegerszeg, a beautiful church had been built in Fairfield, Connecticut, for Hungarians who had left their native land behind them. For the silver anniversary of this church, the Franciscans from Transylvania, who supplied the priests for this church, set up in it a statue of Our Lady of Hungary. The figure of my mother had supplied the model for Our Lady: She was portrayed as a simple village woman holding the child Jesus. May God bless the sculptor, Bertha Hellebrandt, and also the kind priests and those from whom the idea had come. A nun from Hungary had taken a photograph of my mother with her to the United States, and the statue was modeled on that” (*Memoires*, New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1974, p. 231).

If more examples are desired, they could easily be sought and found.

It remains evident, from the examples cited and according to the dictates of good sense, that there is nothing improper or inappropriate that should prevent a son from eulogizing his mother. And if she died piously, the son can refer to this example of the Saints in saying that she is probably in Heaven.

* * *

CHAPTER IX

OF THE SUPPOSED MANIFESTATIONS OF ILLCIT CULT TO DR. PLINIO

1. THE NON-EXISTENT 'ALTAR-ORATORY' AT JASNA GORA

Mr. O.F. makes the following false accusation referring to the supposed illicit cult to Dr. Plinio:

* "In September of 1981, the camaldulense hermit Eliseu Garcia 'opened the bag' to Aramis Fazzioli and showed him a new room in the basement of Jasna Gora ⁴⁸ where there was an altar or oratory with your photograph (of Dr. Plinio), flanked by candles" (Letter 83, p. 5).

* "Mr. Aramis guaranteed us that on the floor of the room there were marks for the formation of errors. And the marks pointed to your photograph. ..." (Letter 83, p. 6).

A. In reality, what was there at the seat of Jasna Gora?

In a room on the ground floor with a height of 2.45 meters, or 8 feet, (which the letter writer, with the obvious intent to dramatize, maliciously calls a "basement," despite the fact that he had been there numerous times), there was, in the center of the wall on the left side an enlargement of a photograph of Dr. Plinio taken at a moment when he was listening to an exposition seated in an auditorium. At the front of the room was a very simple wooden triptych with a picture, also large, of Our Lady of Las Lajas (Famous sanctuary in Colombia) in the center. Supporting the triptych was a 61x120 cm. (2 ft x 4 ft.) cedar table standing 79 cm. tall (2-1/2 ft), which held two decorative candlesticks. To the right of one who would be looking at the triptych, there was another cedar table, with dimensions of 63.5x130.5 (2 x 4-1/4 ft) and 68.5 cm. tall (2-14 ft) next to a window (on the wall opposite the photograph of Dr. Plinio). The triptych was taken down at the beginning of 1983 and replaced by an altar, which was never definitively set into place and was also finally removed.

In the history of the seat of Jasna Gora, this room has had various successive uses, from refectory, work room and exhibit room for the activities of the TFP to provisionary chapel, etc. In every case, it was always a passage room to the rooms subordinate to the ground floor and patio. It was not in any way a "new room," as the letter writer claims.

For the sake of convenience or for decoration, at various times the 68.5 cm. tall cedar table was placed in front of the photograph of Dr. Plinio. On top of this table, short in height (again, I repeat, 68.5 cm or 2-1/4 ft) and thus absolutely could not be confused with an "altar or oratory," decorative candlesticks were occasionally placed, frequently without candles. This type of household decoration is common in residences, clubs, etc. in Brazil, where candles placed thus in front of photographs or pictures, such as scenes, pictures of animals or plants, historical events or personages etc. could in no way be associated

⁴⁸ Name given to a TFP seat in Itaquera in São Paulo, in homage to the famous sanctuary of Our Lady of Jasna Gora in Poland.

with cult. Moreover, the hermits of Jasna Gora testify, without exception, that they never saw the candles lit in these candlesticks.

Thus, this small table was not an altar because if there had been an altar in this room (which there was not) it would have been the table in front of the triptych where the picture of Our Lady of Las Lajas was situated. One can see as well that such a set up – a small table with candlesticks in front of Dr. Plinio’s photograph – was not an oratory, because it did not have any of the marks exclusively proper to an oratory. The candles that were occasionally on the table, under his photograph, were not placed there as an act of cult, but for merely decorative reasons.

B. It is also not true that the arrows painted on the ground (in the form of “V” adopted by the hermits as a standing position for the recitation of the Little Office of Our Lady) were turned toward Dr. Plinio’s photograph. The three arrows, one following another, were turned toward the picture of Our Lady that was in the triptych on the front wall. This can be deduced quite simply from the dimensions of the room and the area occupied by the arrows. The measurements of the room are 4.25x7.20 m. 14 x 23-1-2 ft). And the arrows on the ground were made in a rectangular area of 3.40x4.60 m. (11 x 15 ft) One sees, therefore, that it is absolutely impossible for the arrows to have been placed toward the side wall where the picture of Dr. Plinio was placed. Moreover, the normal positioning of an elongated “V” formation is lengthwise in a room.

C. Based on this, it remains clear that the accusation is false that refers to the existence of an “altar or oratory” to Dr. Plinio, as well as the affirmation that the arrows were directed toward his photograph.

D. Let us imagine, nonetheless, that there had been an act of homage rendered to Dr. Plinio with persons turned toward his photograph in an arrow formation, a formation frequently used by the TFP in their public manifestations. And that, for example, the persons thus placed would have prayed for the intentions of Dr. Plinio and made a bow in the direction of his photograph (all of which, most absolutely, did not take place). One could then ask: *Quid inde?* (And then, what?) I have already shown that such an incident would not in any way have transgressed the Doctrine and Laws of the Church (cf. Chap. VI and VII).

It would fall to Mr. O.F. to prove this. But he dispenses himself from this.

And here, once again, the curious method that the letter-writer adopted to mount his libel is revealed. He does not mention what would have been the acts of cult that would have been practiced in relation to Dr. Plinio and that would go against the norms of Canon Law or the Doctrine of the Church. He limits himself to saying: “On the floor of the room there were marks for the formation of arrows. And the marks pointed to your photograph...” (Letter 83, p. 6). The points of omission insinuate everything; and, for Mr. O.F., this is sufficient to prove what remains insinuated: illicit cult – heterodoxy!

For Mr. O.F., these three small points of silence suffice to constitute a “proof” of such great enormity!

2. ORATORY IN THE *EREMO* OF SÃO BENTO

Another accusation of Mr. O.F.: “At the same time we learned that the hermit Boldrini affirmed that in the camaldulense of Mr. Fernando Siqueira in São Bento there was an oratory with your photograph (of Dr. Plinio) with a small light at its side that was constantly lit” (Letter 83, p. 6).

The actual situation is simple and straightforward.

Mr. Fernando Siqueira, who for five years has no longer resided at the *Eremo* of São Bento, had a small statue of Our Lady of Victories that he placed in a niche in the wall of a type of oratory constructed by him in the upper floor of the building, next to the room that he occupied. The building of the *Eremo* had formerly belonged to the monks of the Monastery of São Bento in São Paulo, who had installed an astronomy observatory there. At the base of the telescope there is a hollow compartment measuring 1.20x1.20 m. 4 x 4 ft) and 2 meters high 6-1/2 ft), with an opening 60 cm. wide (2 ft) by 1.90 m. tall (6-1/4 ft) .

Mr. Siqueira made this cavity into an oratory. On the frontal wall he placed, as was said, a statue of Our Lady of Victories. Under the statue, he installed a pedestal of worked wood upon which he left a reliquary for the placement of a relic of the Holy Cross, which he possessed. At the side of the reliquary, Mr. Siqueira kept two candlesticks, which he would light when he placed the holy relic there.

In front of the statue and the reliquary, there was a prayer-kneeler. To the right side of the small niche where the statue of Our Lady was placed, he installed a small lamp, which only at first was lit, since he later lacked the money to buy oil for it. Also, the glass that held the oil broke and was not replaced.

On the side wall to the left of this oratory, for a certain period of time Mr. Fernando Siqueira placed a photograph of Dr. Plinio. The situation was such that whoever knelt on the kneeler, which faced the statue, would have the photograph of Dr. Plinio toward his left side. The light, moreover, was placed on the other wall (alongside the statue) and was destined to pay cult to the statue of Our Lady of Victories.

The photograph of Dr. Plinio was placed there, as was said, only for a certain period of time. But even if it had remained there the whole time, what problem would this have posed? How would this constitute an illicit cult? Can't a photograph of Dr. Plinio be placed on the side wall to the left of a statue in a compartment that could only be called an oratory in a most domestic sense, lacking, as it does, an altar? Why create such a melodrama over this?

3. THE SONGS AT THE *EREMO* OF SÃO BENTO

Mr. O.F. raises this general accusation against the songs in use by the Hermits of São Bento and *Praesto Sum*: “Today we know and, primarily, we understand what the words of these songs are saying. And we consider that various ones are extravagant, absurd, and, in themselves, unacceptable” (Letter 83, p. 4).

The song that seem to have roused the highest indignation in the letter writer was one titled *Leve-Toi* (Stand up), to which he devotes almost two pages of his Letter 83 (pp. 11-12), particularly challenging the last two verses of the second stanza:

“*Et les deux pouvoirs lechant la terre* [And the two powers lick the ground]
Acclament le grand vainqueur de cette guerre” [And acclaim the great victor of this war.]

As always, Mr. O.F.’s exposition is disordered and confused, requiring some effort to discern the actual point of his accusation. This effort is even more necessary when he intermingles his doctrinary objection with his protests concerning the delays that Mr. Plinio Xavier was obliged to make in dealing with him.

As a side note, let it be said that during this whole time, Mr. Plinio Xavier was trying to calm down Mr. O.F. in the vain attempt to lead him to a temperamental state more conducive to a calm and realistic analysis of the objections that were accumulating in his mind. Naturally, a person in the state of agitation does not understand the charity that another is practicing toward him, and even considers such temporizations as equivocal and underhanded.

Putting aside, however, the criticisms of a personal character related to the song *Leve-Toi*, what is important to analyze here would be the objections of a doctrinary nature that Mr. O.F. raises with regard to the verses in question and that require a certain effort even to discern due to the obscurity of his exposition.

Therefore, it seems as if the two objections of Mr. O.F. would be the following:

1. To apply the expression “*lecher la terre*” to the two legitimate Powers (the Church and the State) is an insult to the Church, as well as to the State, which is, in itself, unacceptable;
2. To apply the second line to Dr. Plinio is a manifestation of illicit cult to a living person and, therefore, is in itself unacceptable.

The second accusation is more explicit than the first (in his letter), possibly because he considered the first so evident that he need not even bother to clarify it.

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To respond to these objections, I begin by saying that the song in question celebrates the victorious outcome of Our Lady in the events predicted by Her at Fatima.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In the second part of the Secret, Our Lady announced the final triumph of Her Immaculate Heart, which will occur after a Chastisement where God will punish the world for its crimes. However, “In the end My Immaculate heart will triumph,” the Blessed Virgin said.

This triumph coincides admirably with the *Reign of Mary* prophesied by St. Louis Grignion de Montfort in his celebrated *Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* and in his famous *Fire Prayer*. In the Reign of Mary, according to this Saint, Our Lady will occupy a central role in the life of both the religious and temporal societies, exercising, as Queen of Hearts, a special reign over souls: In this way, a splendid reflowering of the Holy Church and of Christian Civilization will take place.

From the perspective of the revelations of Fatima, which no one is obliged to honor as dogma but which every Catholic accepts quite willingly, the Immaculate Heart of Mary will triumph over the revolutionary forces that are presently leading the world in a direction diametrically opposed to the plan of God for men. According to the two Secrets of Fatima that have already been revealed and the plausible conjectures that can be made about the Third Secret (still not revealed), temporal society and spiritual society will be affected by an immense crisis of faith, in particular by the errors of Communism, to such point that only a miraculous intervention by God, in which Our Lady will play a great role, can save the world. This is, moreover, the panorama that Dr. Plinio presents in his masterpiece *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, which sets forth all that he had thought since his youth – even before he knew of the Message of Fatima.

The song *Leve-Toi* quite justly celebrates this perspective, and in the mind of the one who composed it, as well as in those who sing it, “*les deux pouvoirs*” are, on one side, the temporal power that has fallen into revolutionary hands and, on the other side, not the legitimate spiritual Power, but that which the TFP calls the “structure,”⁵⁰ that is, the members of the Hierarchy who use their power to serve the Revolution.

The message of Fatima is a magnificent promise of the realization of this prophetic vision even in our days.

⁵⁰ The French *Rapport* has already tried to use this distinction that we make between the Church and the “*Structure*” against the TFP. Thus, we transcribe here what was said in the respective *Refutation* published by the French TFP:

“The ambience of the TFP overflows (quite literally) with enthusiasm for everything in the Church that is upright, good, and holy – both in the past and in our days. But, like so many other good Catholics, the members and cooperators of the TFP are grieved upon seeing, notably since Vatican Council II, that a torrent of errors has infested innumerable Catholic milieus, thus creating a dramatic state of malaise inside the Church. It is certainly possible to relate this situation to the words of Paul VI, who said that Church is passing through a mysterious process of ‘auto-demolition’ (Allocution of 12-7-68) and that the ‘smoke of Satan’ has penetrated even into the temple of God (Allocution of 6-29-72).

“The fact is that, since Vatican Council II, ecclesiastical authorities, even some of the highest, have begun to spread teachings contrary to the tradition of the Church. Something of this had already taken place on the occasion of the Council itself. Afterwards, the same errors found shelter in the documents of the Bishops of various Dioceses in the world, of theologians, of accredited Catholic thinkers, of important Catholic writers, of the most diffuse Catholic organs, etc.

“In the pastoral field, the same crisis broke forth. The omissions of countless ecclesiastical Authorities in the face of modern ways, the ‘free customs of our days – homosexuality, nudism, birth control – has reached the incredible. The Sacred Table is open to persons who notoriously live in a way that would have been considered unacceptable for any practicing Catholic before the Council. In the Liturgy, every type of abhorrence has been introduced. And ecumenism is going so far with its devastations that it gives many the impression that the boundaries between the Holy Catholic Church and the heretical and schismatic sects – and even pagan religions – are no longer clear or consistent. The boundaries between truth and error, between good and evil, seem to be increasingly obliterated.

“It cannot be denied that, unfortunately, a ponderable part of the responsibility for this disaster falls upon Catholic Prelates and Priests.

“On the other hand, among those who are not in the front lines of this process of deterioration, a good number can be noted for their remissness: While not pushing forward the course of this series of catastrophes, they close their mouths and cross their arms in the face of them. Moreover, there are those who permit in the places under their jurisdiction that doctrines (which they themselves hold to be abhorrent) be published and diffused. And they allow actions to be practiced which they themselves censure. In this way, by their indolence, they make themselves accomplices to these catastrophes.

“The number of Bishops and Priests who completely fulfill their duty in view of such a crisis is, unhappily, small.

“These facts are public and well-known. It suffices to look at the ranks of the Episcopate and Clergy of any Catholic nation to have an idea of how true they are.

Moreover, the revolutionary temporal power and the “structure” will be, according to the promises of Fatima, vanquished by Our Lady and “they will lick the ground” (the expression is from Holy Scriptures, which I will shortly show).

As he had already removed himself from the TFP, Mr. O.F., with his mind jumbled by all types of objections, could not manage to see this clearly. And Dr. Plinio, in his goodness, made allowances for his difficulty (that is, Mr. O.F. saying that he felt the expression “*les deux pouvoirs*” was making a reference to the two legitimate powers). Thus, he deigned to change the expression, adopting another expression: “*les potentats*” (the potentates) to signify what was just explained above.

This, then, explains the first verse and the reason for its modification.

As for the second verse, which acclaims “the great victor of this war,” it is speaking first and primarily of Our Lord Jesus Christ, along with the collaboration of She Who is, for the enemies of the Faith, “*terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*” – “terrible as an army set in battle array” (Cant. VI, 3). And, in justice to this acclamation, it includes all those on this earth who had been instruments of Our Lady for such a grand victory. Acknowledging to Dr. Plinio an eminent portion of merit in this triumph, it is also fitting, therefore without prejudice to the honor due to all those throughout the entire world who contributed their share to this victory, to justly acclaim him as “*grand vainquer de cette guerre.*”

“*Pari passu*, to these specifically religious catastrophes, the new policy of the Vatican in relation to Communism is unfolding. This confrontation has resulted in the irenic dialogue, and this yielding is responsible for the torrential penetration of socialist and communist influence in ecclesiastical circles.

“It cannot be denied that the ecclesiastics, due to their situation in the Church, constitute a paramount part of its structure. Equally, the laity, in their own position -- as subjects -- also find themselves in the structure of the Church.

“It would be neither just nor filial to attribute to the Church this collusion with condemnable errors and attitudes noted in Prelates, Priests, and responsible Catholic laymen.

“From this, then, for convenience sake, the word *structure* was used to designate the bloc responsible or accessory, by action or omission, to this catastrophe. The word *Church* was reserved to designate the part of the body of the Hierarchy and the faithful who continue to be in coherence with true Catholic Tradition, especially the Bishops and Priests who shine forth by their good teaching and example amid this crisis.

“This is not in any way to say that the Church has come to be a mere structure -- dead, nor is it to attack the Church. On the contrary, it is to adapt everyday language so that it (the Church) might be referred to with the most filial of veneration and tenderness, as it truly deserves to be treated.

“The ecclesiastical structure -- and the word structure is obviously employed here in its technical sense -- is a most holy structure, which corresponds splendidly to the hierarchical character of the Church, for which the TFP so strongly battles. The TFP recognizes the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church as having not only a spirit and a supernatural life, but also a hierarchical structure instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

“It is from this perspective -- and in an entirely characteristic way -- that the *Declaration of Resistance* of the TFPs was made with regard to the diplomacy of Paul VI with communist governments. It being a manifesto of opposition to the politics of Paul VI, head of the ecclesiastical structure, the document of the TFPs expresses its disagreement with the politics of the *structure*. But it does this with a most ardent act of love for the true structure: ‘*In this filial act, we say to the Pastor of Pastors: Our soul is yours. Our life is yours. Order us to do whatever you will. Only do not order us to cross our arms in the face of the assailing red wolf. To this our obedience is opposed.*’

“This distinction between the Church and the ‘structure’ (note quotation marks) is made, therefore, as a convenience of speech, and, more especially, out of love and respect for the true Church. As an important corollary, it provides that those who follow the TFP should not become disedified with the Church, confusing that which authentically belongs to it with the derangements to which it is impossible for a Catholic to adhere” (*Refutation*, pp. 82-86).

To see this, as Mr. O.F. seems to do, as a manifestation of illicit cult to Dr. Plinio is sheer madness!

I will now analyze the words “*lechant la terre*,” which particularly upset the letter writer. To put him completely at rest, he would profit from considering some phrases from Holy Scriptures, applied in the same sense:

From the Prophet Isaias: “Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and will set up my standard to the people. And they shall bring their sons in their arms, and carry thy daughters upon their shoulders.

“And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nurses: They shall worship thee with their face toward the earth ⁵¹ and *they shall lick up the dust of thy feet*” (Is. 49:22-23).

From the Prophet Micheas: “The nations shall see, and shall be confounded at all their strength: They shall put the hand upon the mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

“*They shall lick the dust* like serpents, as the creeping things of the earth, they shall be disturbed in their houses: they shall dread the Lord our God, and shall fear thee” (Mic. 7:16).

From a psalm of King David: “And he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

“Before him the Ethiopians shall fall down: and his enemies *shall lick the ground*” (Ps. 71-8:9).

Thus can one see that there is nothing intrinsically condemnable in singing: “*The potentates lick the ground.*”

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Let us now look at the rest of the verse: “*Acclament le grand vainquer de cette guerre*” (“They acclaim him the great victor of this war”).

Naturally, Mr. O.F. impugns this phrase also as being applied to Dr. Plinio.

Along these lines, many phrases can be found in Scriptures where God makes the enemies, humbled and conquered, acclaim the just victor. For example:

“And thou wilt lift me up above them that rise up against me: from the unjust man thou wilt deliver me. ... Giving great deliverance to his king, and shewing mercy to David his anointed: and to his seed forever” (Ps. 17: 49-51).

⁵¹ In the language of Holy Scriptures, the term adore [or worship] often refers to prostration as a sign of submission.

“For behold thy enemies, O Lord, for behold thy enemies shall perish: and all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn shall be exalted like that of the unicorn. ... My eye also hath looked down upon my enemies” (Ps. 91: 10-13).

“Because ... thou has kept my word and hast not denied my name. Behold I will bring of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and adore before thy feet. And they shall know that I have loved thee” (Apoc. 3: 8-9).

This language is valid and not in the least illicit, for Biblical language can be validly used in poetical language, where expressive hyperboles are permitted to give more emphasis to artistic thought. Thus, the famous Portuguese poet Camões, in his *Lusiadas*, speaking of Dom Afonso Henriques, exalts his heroism:

*“Quem é, me dize, estoutro que me espanta [Who is this man who astonishes me]
Pergunta o Malabar maravilhado, [Asks the marveling Malabar]
Que tantos esquadrões, que gente tanta [Who so many squadrons and so many people]
Que tão pouca, tem roto e destruçado? [Has destroyed with so few?]
Tanto muros aspérrimos quebranta, [Who has broken down so many walls]
Tantas batalhas dá, nunca cansado, [Has entered so many battles and is never exhausted]
Tantas coroas tem, por tantas partes, [Has won so many crowns, everywhere]
A seus pés derribadas, e estandartes?” [With so many standards, at his feet?] (Canto VIII, 10).*

And, referring to the vengeance of Dom Francisco de Almeida, Vice-King of India, against those who killed his son Dom Lourenço, we see more clearly how far the limits of poetic emphasis can extend:

*“Eis vem o pai, com ânimo estupendo, [Behold the father comes greatly animated]
Trazendo fúria e mágoa por antolhos, [Carrying fury and sadness in his eyes]
Com que o paterno amor lhe está movendo [And moved by his paternal love,]
Fogo no coração, água nos olhos. [With fire in his heart and tears in his eyes,]
A nobre ira lhe vinha prometendo [His noble ire was promising]
Que o sangue fará dar pelos geolhos [That blood would flows to the knees]
Nas inimigas naus: senti-lo-á o Nilo, [In the enemy ships: The Nile will feel it]
Podé-lo-á o Indo ver, e o Gange ouvi-lo” [The Indo River will see it and the Ganges hear it]
(Canto X, 33).*

In the arena of epic exaggeration, the Brazilian National Anthem also has symbolic hyperboles that would not be accurate in theological science, as, for example:

*“O Pátria amada, **idolatrada**. Salve! Salve!” [Hail, oh beloved and idolized motherland]
and
“Nem teme quem te **adora** a propria morte” [Who adores you does not fear death itself!]*

According to the logic used by the letter writer in his accusation against the TFP, he should also rise up against the National Anthem, accuse Brazil of being an idolatrous and pantheistic (or gnostic...) nation, and accuse each Brazilian who sings the hymn of being an accomplice to these sins, since idolatry

is not permitted by Catholic Morals and adoration (in a strict sense) is due only to God, etc. All of which would be perfectly ridiculous.

Part of the rudiments of learning is to understand that artistic exaggeration is permitted to those who compose an epic verse. Why would it not be licit for the epopee of the TFP to be sung with the same rules that are valid in all times and places? Why does the letter writer want to confuse an enthusiastic verse with a theological treatise? And especially since he shows himself, as I will prove, to be so little acquainted with such treatises? One must have great rancor to make an accusation so far removed from the reality I have just presented.

Even should someone want to handle the aforementioned verse with *parti pris* [a preconceived view], looking for something against orthodoxy or the Canon Law therein, he would find nothing, as I have demonstrated above.

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What yet remains to be considered is the generic accusation that Mr. O.F. makes against the rest of the songs in use in the *Eremos* of São Bento and *Praesto Sum*. He returns to the charge in diverse points of his letter of rupture: “You (Dr. Plinio) read the words of the songs that your hermits sing. Poor hermits who march well and walk off track. Poor hermits who, with their own proclamations, condemn themselves. You read the words of the songs, Dr. Plinio, and you did not even command that one of their verses be replaced. You read the following verses. You read the other songs” (Letter 83, p. 24).

It can be supposed that Mr. O.F., in making this general accusation, and, afterwards, picking out the two verses of the song *Lève-Toi*, to which he devotes almost two pages, as I have already noted, had specifically pointed to the two verses that he considered most characteristic of the aberrations he was denouncing.

However, as I have shown, these two verses have nothing intrinsically erroneous in them. At most, it could be said that the first could lend itself to a bad interpretation by malevolent persons. And, for this reason, Dr. Plinio ordered it to be modified.

It is impossible to know what abstruse and arbitrary interpretations the letter writer might have given to the other verses of the same song, or to the verses of the more than 30 songs composed by hermits of São Bento and *Praesto Sum*, among the total of almost 300 that they sing.

As I do not possess the gift of reading minds, I close here my analysis of the accusations of Mr. O.F. concerning the aforementioned songs.

4. THE ‘LITANY OF THE PROPHET’ & ASKING THE INTERCESSION OF LIVING PERSONS

Mr. O.F. is once again enigmatic in launching the accusation of the existence of a “litany of the Prophet” in the TFP: “We told Plinio Xavier that there was a ‘litany of the Prophet.’ We denounced innumerable other facts but nothing moved Mr. Plinio Xavier, who was more interested in knowing how we

came to learn the facts, as if the important thing were the leakage of the matter and not the illegitimate or wrong action” (Letter 83, p. 7).

To judge from this text, the “litany of the Prophet” would be, therefore, something “illegitimate or wrong.” But Mr. O.F. fails to explain in what way this would be so.

Thus, it is again necessary to make an effort to explain the accusation in order to see in what way, according to Mr. O.F.’s methodology, the “litany of the Prophet” would be wrong or illegitimate.

To do this, it was necessary first to make an investigation, because no person charged with direction in the TFP knew of the referred-to “litany of the Prophet.” This investigation revealed that it was the initiative and individual responsibility of a small group of persons who put such a litany into practice.

In effect, after a symposium by Prof. Jose Martini on St. Elias in the year 1972 (it was necessary to go back that far), some Itinerant Apostles⁵² made use of an excerpt of words addressed by St. Bernard to Pope Eugene III, and then adapted by Cornelius a Lapide to the great Prophet (Elias), in order to compose a series of formulas praising Dr. Plinio. The excerpt is the following, which I take from the study of Prof. Martini on St. Elias (pp. 52-53):

* Elias was “the model of justice, the mirror of sanctity, the model of piety, the proclaimer of the freedom of truth, the defender of the faith, the doctor of Israel, the master of those who did not have wisdom, the refuge of the oppressed, the advocate of the poor, the protector of widows, the eye of the blind, the tongue of the mute, the avenger of crimes, the error of evil, the glory of the good, the scourge of the powerful, the hammer of tyrants, the father of kings, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the prophet of the Most High, the precursor of Christ, the Christ of the Lord, the lord of Achab, the terror of the Baalites, and the thunderbolt of idolaters” (cf. St. Bernard, *De consideratione*, vol. IV, chap. VII, *apud* Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram in Librum III Regum*, Paris: Ludovicum Vives, 1874, vol. III, p. 639).

Comparing the excerpt of St. Bernard with the excerpt of Cornelius a Lapide, one sees that the great Jesuit exegete makes various adaptations: For example, where St. Bernard, directing himself to the Pope, says that he is the “doctor of the Gentiles,” “priest of the Most High” and “Vicar of Christ,” Cornelius a Lapide changes this to refer to St. Elias, calling him the “doctor of Israel,” “prophet of the Most High” and “Precursor of Christ.” The three final expressions – “lord of Achab,” “terror of the Baalites” and “thunderbolt of idolaters” are added by Cornelius a Lapide to the text of St. Bernard.

If Mr. O.F. intends to say that the literal transposition of some of these expressions to Dr. Plinio is improper, we would be the first to acknowledge this, because it is impossible to see how Dr. Plinio could be, for example, “the lord of Achab” and “the terror of the Baalites,” except, perhaps, if the Baalites are understood as referring to the revolutionaries of our days. Above all, it is ridiculous to say that Dr. Plinio is a “precursor to Christ,” as Elias was, even though he strives with all his soul for Our Lord Jesus

⁵² The “Itinerant Apostles” are members or cooperators of the TFP entrusted with acting in various parts of the nation in order to form and increase the local nuclei of the association. They generally move from one city to another, according to the need for their services. At the time in question, there were about 20 of these persons and, among some of them, the invocations that Mr. O.F. calls the “litany of the Prophet” circulated.

Christ to return to reign on the earth, from which he was expelled. Such interpretations, however, would be somewhat forced, and the youths who applied the text in question to Dr. Plinio, obviously impressed with the justness of some of the expressions, did not take into account the inadequacy of others. With this, they paid tribute to the lacunas of their generation, which so often greatly surprises and even shocks the generations preceding it.

I repeat, therefore, that if Mr. O.F. had limited himself to pointing out the impropriety of the application of some of these expressions to Dr. Plinio, his criticism would be just.

However, it does not seem that his censure was restricted only to this. If this were the case, his accusations would take on a much less strident tone and would be entirely insufficient for the colossal conclusion to which he arrives. What he does is accuse the TFP in general – and Dr. Plinio in particular – of violating Canon Law and – above all – of doctrinal error.

Moreover, he goes beyond this, and seems to assume that the actual recitation of these formulas in praise of Dr. Plinio – even those that are perfectly just and appropriate – constitutes an act of the cult of illicit *dulia*. In this respect, the critique of Mr. O.F. is totally unfounded, as was already seen in Chapters VI and VII, and it would be superfluous to return to the matter here.

Nonetheless, what should be clarified here is the fact that here were some who also utilized these expressions at times as formulas of petitions for graces for themselves. This would seemingly be the most acute point of Mr. O.F.’s accusation, since such a request for the intercession of a living person would be – according to him – contrary to Catholic Doctrine. We say here “seemingly” because Mr. O.F. is not explicit on this point, limiting himself to affirming that it is “illegitimate or wrong” (*ibid.*).

Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the legitimacy of invoking holy persons still living on this earth, and even persons of everyday virtue.

The doctrine of the Church upon this point is so clear and unequivocal that St. Alphonsus, in order to refute the protestant errors concerning the legitimacy of invoking the intercession of the Saints of Heaven, takes as his point of departure the legitimacy of invoking the Saint still living on this earth:

“It is good and profitable to humbly invoke the Saints and to have recourse to their protection and intercession in order to entreat benefits from God through his Divine Son, Jesus Christ” (Council of Trent, Session 25, dec., *de inv. sanct.*). This invocation to saints was rejected by the impious Calvin, against all reason; for it is licit and beneficial to invoke for our assistance the saints **still living** and to ask them to assist us with their prayers. ... If, therefore, **it is licit** to recommend oneself to the living, how, then, would it not be licit to invoke the saints who in Heaven enjoy God even more closely?” (St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation*, Petropolis: Vozes, 1956, pp. 27-28).

The same argument is employed to justify the cult to relics in the *Roman Catechism*, re-issued by a decree of the Council of Trent and published by the order of Pope St. Pius V:

“If the clothes, the handkerchiefs, and even the very shadows of the Saints, **while yet on earth**, banished disease and restored health, who will have the hardihood to deny that God can still work the

same wonders by the holy ashes, the bones, and other relics of the Saints?” (*Catechism of The Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, ed. by John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan, 1934, Part III, pp. 372-373).

This doctrine is explained in a quite accessible and complete way by Fr. Remigio Vilarino Ugarte, S.J.:

“Should we pray to the angels and the Saints? – There is no doubt that in the Catholic Church we can and should pray to both the Angels and to the Saints. Some, heretics or the dubious, say that to pray to the Saints constitutes an injustice to Christ, as if His intercession and merits were not sufficient. This is what the protestants affirm. They, who cite the Scriptures, can read in it that the Apostles prayed to the faithful that they might pray for them and for all. St. Paul asks that they pray for him and that they pray for each other. And St. Thomas recommends that when there is someone who is sick, they should take him to the priest and have him pray for the sick one. If it were an injustice against Jesus Christ to invoke the Saints, it would be an injustice to ask the living that they be our intercessors.

“But this is not the case. Because it is not by necessity that we should pray to the Saints, but because Our Lord thus disposes this: that as brothers in the Church we should help each other to be more united. Moreover, God wants to honor His servants, conceding through them that which at times He does not concede when we invoke Him as individuals. Some say that the Saints do not know of our supplications; this, however, is false: They can have knowledge of them, and God permits that they know this by one of the many means that He disposes for this.

“To what Saints we can pray – It is fitting to clarify what is understood or what can be understood by the term Saint. A Saint is, in the broadest sense, everyone who has sanctifying grace. Or, that is, all the just, be they living or in Heaven. And, so that we can pray to someone, it suffices to know that he is a good man who is in the state of grace, that which we should believe of all unless there is reason to believe to the contrary. And there are many who we can believe are in Heaven because they lived and died well, or because they died without losing their innocence, as, for example, baptized children who die before reaching the use of reason and becoming capable of sinning. And to all these – in private prayers – we can direct our supplications and ask them to pray to God for us. But in public prayer and official cult we can only pray to the canonized, or at least beatified, Saints.

*“What is a Saint – As we said, a Saint is one who has sanctifying grace, that is, one who does not have mortal sin. Thus St. Paul, when he composed his letters and salutations to the Christians, called them Saints, because, supposing that they were good Christians, he judged that they were in the grace of God. When he wrote to the Christians of Rome, he said: ‘To all that are at Rome, the beloved of God, called to be saints.’ And he also speaks of the alms gathered among the Saints; moreover, he calls himself the least of the Saints and counsels that, to settle disputes, one should not appeal to the pagans, but to a Saint. In his manner of speaking, to say Saint was the same as to say Christian. However, in today’s everyday language, we properly understand Saint to be someone who had special merit and excellence of virtues. And, strictly speaking, it is necessary for the Church to have canonized someone to give him the title of Saint” (*Puntos de Catechismo*, Bilbao: Editorial El Mensajero del Corazon de Jesus, 1962, nn. 800-802).*

Concerning some of the points of doctrine set out above, the TFP consulted the illustrious theologian Fr. Victorino Rodriguez, O.P., member of the Pontifical Roman Academy of Theology and Professor of the Superior Council of Scientific Investigations of Madrid, who gave the following responses to the questions presented:

Question: “The Saints in Heaven know of our invocations in the Beatific Vision, and thus they can attend to them; but the saints who live on earth do not have this means of knowing our invocations when they are far away from us; however, in many cases, they know of our invocations and attend to them. How can this be explained?”

Response: “The faithful, during their earthly life, be they saints or not, can and should pray to each other, present or absent, in general as well as in particular, that they might be saved, as St. Paul and St. Timothy commanded to their faithful (Rom. 15:30; James 5:16).

“This prayer for others can be efficacious, be it by means of simple impetration: ‘Ask, and it shall be given you’ (Luke 11:9), or be it by means of impetration and of merit, proceeding from the grace that unites us to Jesus Christ, ‘because all those who are of Christ by possessing His Spirit, constitute one same Church and are mutually united in it’ (*Lumen gentium*, n. 49).

“When it is a matter not of praying for others, but of invoking them or recommending oneself to them so that they might intercede for us during their mortal life, three hypotheses can occur:

“a. That they learn of our invocation or the object of intercession for which we are asking either orally or by a message that we send them, and thus they pray to God for us;

“b. That God allows them to know our request more or less determinately by some type of revelation (in the form of a dream, presentiment, vision, etc.) and, consequently, they intercede for us;

“c. That God, in consideration of the **merits** of the holy persons invoked by us and listening to our **supplication**, concedes to us that which we ask, even though our protectors do not expressly know of our supplication.

“Any of these processes explains the aforementioned facts.”

*

Question: “If the person with the reputation for sanctity whom we take as our intercessor is not really holy, what value does the invocation to God that we make through him have?”

Response: “Every person who lives in the grace of God, even if he is not a “Saint” in the conventional sense of the term (that is, canonized or able to be put up for canonization after dying), can pray meritoriously for himself and intercede for others, with a greater or lesser probability of efficacy according to whether he is receptive to the dispositions of the consignee and conformable to the designs of God.

“If the person is not really holy at all – that is, if he lives removed from God by mortal sin – his prayer of intercession for us does not have value **by means of merit**, even though it does have value **by means of simple impetration**.

“Our prayer, at any rate, is good and praiseworthy, because all true prayer goes directly to the merciful God, even though we might have appeal to the mediatory intercession of a person with a false reputation for holiness: The shortcomings of the human advocate, of which we have no knowledge, do not invalidate the merciful will of God toward whomever properly entreats Him.”

*

Question: “What objective would God have in thus glorifying His saints on this earth, before He calls them to eternal glory, by attending to the invocations that we made through their mediation or simply in their name, even from some distance?”

Response: “The extraordinary or miraculous intervention of God for men through the mediation of holy persons still living signifies, before all else, the providential and merciful attention of God to the needs of men, stimulating in this way their faith and confidence in God and the action of grace. In the second place, it constitutes the testimony of God that the life and the intercession of His saints, still living, is pleasing to Him. With this, He incites us to imitate them and to the sentiment of solidarity in the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. This is the same objective of the action of God in working miracles through the intercession of saints already dead, be they canonized or up for canonization: It is the ratification of their exemplary religious life.

“Moreover, it is always good, and was recommended by the Apostles, to recommend oneself to the intercession of the other faithful, who by means of **merit** or of simple **supplication**, intercede for us. St. Paul, for example, told the Romans: ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help men in your prayers for me to God’ (Rom. 15:30). And St. James: ‘Pray one for another, that you may be saved’ (James 5:16).”

*

Question: “How can one explain and justify that such devotion to still living saints in no way replaces, harms or diminishes the devotion of *hyperdulia* that we owe to the Blessed Virgin?”

Response: “Devotion to the saints and to their intervention in obtaining graces from God in no way diminishes, prejudices or replaces the devotion and the recourse that we should have to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, because it deals with subordinate, or **relative**, devotions and intercessions, which draw all their value and efficacy from the general, or universal, intercession of Our Lord and Our Lady. The Council of Trent explained this well, declaring that ‘the saints, who reign with Christ, offer their prayers for men to God, and it is good and useful to invoke them with supplications, having recourse to their assistance in order to obtain benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who is our only Redeemer and Savior. ... The holy bodies of the martyrs and of other saints who live with Christ, which were living members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit and which He will raise again

and glorify for eternal life, should be venerated by the faithful, which will result in many benefits for men” (Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, nn. 1821-1822).

“Moreover, the doctrine of invoking the saints, living or dead, and of venerating their images or relics has been continuously affirmed or defended in its true sense by the Church from the Second Council of Nicaea to Vatican Council II, being upheld by the Roman Council of 993, the Fourth Lateran Council, the Council of Constance, the Council of Trent, and the Profession of Faith by Pius IV” (cf. Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, nn. 600, 675, 818, 1269, 1744, 1821, 1822, 1867; *Lumen gentium*, n. 50, and *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, n. 111).

*

All this considered, if Mr. O.F. attempts to see in the series of invocations to the prophet Elias that were applied to Dr. Plinio either as a formula of praise or as a request for the intercession of his prayers an “illegitimate or wrong” act (*ibid.*), it must be concluded that his accusation is completely groundless.

Moreover, to all that was said the fact can be added that, following the sound recommendations of the Holy Church, Dr. Plinio has the habit of offering to God all the actions of his day – his prayers, sacrifices, Communion, and even the simple acts of daily life that are conformable to the Natural Law established by God – in union with the divine intention of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the maternal providence of Mary. And he does this also for all those who recommend themselves to his prayers and who desire to pray spiritually united to him.

Thus, from every side that the question is considered, it is entirely correct and legitimate to recommend oneself to his prayers and invoke his intercession, joined to Our lady and Her Divine Son. That this might be done by means of a series of invocations is *in itself* perfectly consonant with the doctrine of the Church. This presumes, naturally, that the invocations, individually considered, should also be consonant with the Church’s doctrine and, even more, that they be appropriate for the one to whom they are directed.

5. ‘MORE THAN 200 CASES OF CULT’

Mr. O.F.’s denouncement ends in the accusation of the acts of cult rendered to Dr. Plinio:

“We could cite more than 200 cases related to cult to your mother and to you yourself. More than 200 cases, which would form a quite voluminous and awesome dossier.

“What a long letter, what a sad letter it would be were we to cite all that we have substantiated well with witnesses ready to testify. Spare us the grief of writing this letter to you. ...

“More than 200 facts is a lot, Dr. Plinio. Even for that half of those who will find **excuses** or explanations” (Letter 83, pp. 23-24, my emphasis).

What we see in the TFP, what anyone who frequents the ambiances of the entity can confirm, are manifestations of veneration for Dr. Plinio – acts of the cult of *dulia*, in the terminology of St. Thomas of

Aquinas – all of which is perfectly in accordance with the Doctrine and the laws of the Church, which was explained in Chapters VI and VII.

Identical or analogous acts can be read in the lives of many Saints, and even in the lives of great men or national heroes who distinguished themselves in services rendered to their country. I could fill page upon page if I were to transcribe here examples of this nature.

The TFP also consulted Fr. Victorino Rodriguez about this matter, and he gave the following response to the question presented:

Question: “How can one justify, according to theology, these true acts of the cult of *dulia* that the fervor of the people leads the faithful to practice, amidst such enthusiasm, to holy persons still living? How can one explain the acquiescence of the saints themselves to these honors and homages rendered to them, which could be said to be more proper for those who have already been raised to the altar?”

Response: “In the first place, it is necessary to warn that the fact of being or not being raised to the altar (that is, canonized or not canonized) does not change the degree of one’s sanctity or configuration with Christ, but only adds the authorized and public acknowledgment of the Church. The canonized saint is not more holy or more grateful to God by the fact of being raised to the altars. What the Church does upon canonizing him is to attest that such a person lived in a holy manner and is worthy of imitation.

“Therefore, when the saints in mortal life accept honors and assert their intercession before God, they seek nothing more than the honor and glory of God, practicing mercy toward men with the help of God. A typical case is that of the Blessed Virgin, who did not reject the honors that Her cousin St. Elizabeth paid to Her as the Mother of the Savior; what Mary did was to refer everything to the mercy of God: ‘*Magnificat anima mea Dominum ...*’ (Luke 1:42-48).

“When men want to go to excesses in giving an absolute cult to the Saints, as occurred in Lystra with St. Paul and St. Barnabas (Acts 14:13-15), they categorically repelled such attempts: ‘Ye men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things, to the living God.’

“At any rate, when the Saints in life allow themselves to be honored by the action of God in them or through them, they absolutely avoid making themselves the final point of reference for these actions: They do it for the good of others and for the glory of God.”

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The TFP also consulted the eminent theologian Fr. Antonio Royo Marin, O.P., Professor of the Pontifical Department of St. Stephan College in Salamanca. He gave the following response to the question set before him:

Question: “In the History of the Church, there were Saints who rejected the homages that were paid to them, while, on the contrary, there were those who accepted them with all naturality; in the life of one same Saint, at times the two attitudes can be found. What can be said about this apparent contradiction, and how can it be explained?”

Response: “The true Saints allow themselves to be guided, in each case, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which directs and governs them entirely. When they reject homages, they practice the virtue of humility; when they accept them, they practice evangelical simplicity. Both of these things are good.

“St. Paul says: ‘For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God’ (Rom 8:14). And the Prophet Isaias writes: ‘Say to the just man that it is well’ (Is 3:10).

*

I conclude by relating several facts that occurred in the life of St. John Bosco during his travels to France in 1873: “After Paris, they saw him in Lille and Amiens. Everywhere, the same scenes repeated themselves: He was always surrounded by multitudes. In the church, the people climbed on their chairs to see him, and wherever he would pass, the exclamation could be heard: ‘*C’est le saint! C’est le saint*’ (‘It’s the saint! It’s the saint!’). And more than once they tore off pieces of his habit. He tolerated everything humbly and with good humor, exclaiming once or twice: ‘Well, well, one can see that not all the madmen are in Charenton!’ (Charenton-le-Pont, a French village about 2-1/2 miles from Paris, famous for its insane asylum).

“He distributed innumerable rosaries and medals and, what seems more strange, small pieces of himself. For he never disdained the modern methods of publicity, once noting that the demon utilizes them with a certain success in all types of dubious undertakings, and that this authorized his adversaries to take up the same modern arms in order to fight for a good cause” (Lancelot Sheppard, *Don Bosco*, Barcelona: Herder, 1959, p. 194; Spanish translation of English original with the same title, London: Burns, Oate & Washbourne, 1957).

If Mr. O.F. had lived in the past century, he could have noted “more than 200 cases” relating to the cult of *dulia* rendered in life to St. John Bosco, which perhaps would constitute, for him “a quite voluminous and awesome dossier” that would cause him “grief in writing,” facts that today are the delights of the biographers and devotees of the Saint.

Thus does the TFP tranquilly and serenely consider this “quite voluminous and awesome dossier” which Mr. O.F. states would constitute a cult rendered to Dr. Plinio and to Dona Lucilia. By the examples that he gave, which can be surmised to be those that he considered as the most characteristic, one can conclude that they in no way transgress the Doctrine and Laws of the Church.

* * *

CHAPTER X

THE MULTIPLE & MERITED REASONS FOR THE VENERATION & RESPECT PAID TO DR. PLINIO IN THE TFP

In addition to the theological qualifications that can be given for the various manifestations of respect shown to Dr. Plinio in the TFP, barring any comparison with any Saint whatsoever “*quae ecclesia abhorret*” (which is foreign to the Church), it behooves us to note here the multiple and merited reasons that explain the enthusiasm which he inspires in all who surround him.

With this, I also make a token of homage and gratitude to him for all that we owe him, and an act of reparation for the unseemly injuries that one of his former disciples, an ex-companion in our ideal who rendered so many services in the past to the Cause but confounded today by passion and moved by fierce resentment, now launches against him.

1. CONCERNING RESPECT DUE TO SUPERIORS

In Chapter IV (topic 6) I cited an enlightening phrase from St. Ignatius Loyola concerning the respect due to superiors. Let me briefly call to mind other phrases that demonstrate what the Church teaches us concerning this subject.

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* points out that the Fourth Commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” includes the honor and respect due to superiors, which should be understood as a divine precept. As commonly known, this *Catechism* is for parish priests, giving them instructions on how to teach the faithful. Explaining the Fourth Commandment (Part III, *The Commandments*, chap. V), it says:

* “The application of this Commandment is of very great extent. Besides our natural parents, there are many others whose power, rank, usefulness, exalted functions, or office entitle them to parental honor.”

* “If, then, we honor our parents, the tribute is paid to God rather than to man. Accordingly we read in St. Matthew concerning duty to superiors: ‘He that receiveth you, receiveth me’ (Mt 10:40).”

* “After these preliminaries, the pastor should explain the words of the Commandment, beginning with honor. To honor is to think respectfully of anyone, and to hold in the highest esteem all that relates to him. It includes love, respect, obedience, and reverence.”

* “For although the law refers primarily to our natural fathers, yet the name belongs to others also, and these seem to be indicated in the Commandment, as we can easily gather from numerous passages of Scripture.”

* “Besides our natural fathers, then, there are others who in Scripture are called fathers, as was said above, and to each of these, proper honor is due.

“In the first place, the prelates of the church, her pastors and priests, are called fathers. ...

“Those who govern the State, to whom are entrusted power, magistracy, or command, are also called fathers; thus Naaman was called father by his servants (4 Kings 5: 13).

“The name father is also applied to those whose care, fidelity, probity, and wisdom others are committed, such as teachers, instructors, masters, and guardians; and hence the sons of the Prophets called Elias (4 Kings 2: 12) and Eliseus (4 Kings 13: 14) their father.

“Finally, aged men, advanced in years, we also call fathers.

“In his instructions the pastor should chiefly emphasize the obligation of honoring all who are entitled to be called fathers, especially our natural fathers, of whom the divine Commandment particularly speaks.”

* “We are bound to honor not only our natural parents, but also others who are called fathers, such as Bishops and priests, kings, princes and magistrates, tutors, guardians, and masters, some in a greater, some in a less degree, to share our love, our obedience, and our assistance” (*Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, translated by John A. Michugh & Charles J. Callan, New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1937, pp. 409-414).

St. Ignatius, in the already cited letter, asserts that the superior should be esteemed and respected as if he were Christ: “Therefore I should wish that all of you would train yourselves to recognize Christ our Lord in any superior, and with all devotion to reverence and obey His Divine Majesty in him. This will appear less strange to you if you keep in mind that St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, bids us to obey even temporal and pagan superiors as Christ, from whom all well-ordered authority descends” (*Letter to the Members of the Society in Portugal* dated Rome, March 26, 1553, *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959, p. 288).

After thus pointing out the Doctrine of the Church concerning respect due to Superiors, I will go on to show the various reasons why Dr. Plinio deserves to be honored and obeyed in the Brazilian TFP.

2. FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE BRAZILIAN TFP

Undoubtedly, the TFP is, in reality, the largest anti-communist civil movement in Latin America, with few similar movements comparable to it existing in the world. Through the continuous action of Dr. Plinio during 50 years of struggle (cf. *Half a Century of Epic Anti-Communism*, NY: The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc., 1981, 459 pp.), through the dedication of its members and its broad-scale organization and competent action, the TFP already holds a position of high stature in the contemporary History of our Brazil.

Considering its history and proportions, as well as the resonance of its voice sounding throughout the Country, the TFP constitutes to be one of the orienting poles of Brazilian public opinion in our times.

Being of Catholic inspiration (although enjoying the autonomy defined by Canon Law in relation to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy),⁵³ the organization thus in some ways recalls those ancient Orders of knights, whose members, while not clerics, dedicated themselves completely to fighting the infidels on the temporal plane by means of military activity, along with their corollary political and diplomatic interests.

Acting peacefully in the terrain of counter-revolutionary psychological warfare, Dr. Plinio has formed in the TFP study teams, men of action, and organizers in the most varied camps touched by this authentic, although bloodless, form of war.⁵⁴

⁵³ According to the terms defined by the Resolution of the Sacred Congregation of the Council of Nov. 13, 1920 (cf. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. XIII, pp. 135 ss.), the TFP can be considered a *Confraternitas Laicalis* (Lay Association), that is, an association of Catholics with a religious purpose, but not instituted or governed by the ecclesiastic authority (which only has the right to exercise vigilance over lay associations from the point of view of Faith and Morals). Its members, therefore, direct themselves freely according to the terms of its social statutes.

The religious end of the TFP lies in acting over public opinion, using peaceful and legal means, to restore *in the temporal sphere* the basic principles of the natural Christian order, according to the motto of the Pontificate of St. Pius X: "*Omnia instaurare in Christo*." It strives for that which Pius XII designated as "*consecratio mundi*" (the sacralization of the temporal order), appointing this to be the specific duty of the layman (cf. Allocutions to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate of October 5, 1957, *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi of His Holiness Pius XII*, vol. XIX, p. 459).

This purpose is recorded in article 1 of the TFP statutes in the following terms: The Society "has a cultural and civic character, striving to enlighten national opinion and the public Powers about the harmful influence increasingly exercised in intellectual and public life by the socialist and communist principles, to the detriment of Brazilian tradition and the institutes of the family and private property, pillars of Christian Civilization in our Country. The Society also has a philanthropist character, its objective being to promote activities or works of a beneficial or social nature that, directly or indirectly, serve to diminish or eliminate social crises and tensions, resolving the problems of discontent persons or groups."

But it is neither in lay nor nonreligious terms that the TFP seeks to accomplish these civic, cultural, and beneficial ends. The TFP understands such ends, expressed in terms of Natural Law in statutes registered with organs of a State officially separated from the Church, in the religious sense defined above.

What distinguishes lay associations from ecclesiastical associations is not the purpose – which is religious in one as well as the other – but the fact that the former were not instituted by ecclesiastics; nor are they directed by ecclesiastical authorities as are the latter.

⁵⁴ Counter-revolutionary psychological warfare is defined as opposition to revolutionary psychological warfare.

The existence of psychological warfare is recognized by Western experts, as well as by communists.

Soviet Marshall Nikolay Bulganin says: "The modern war is a psychological war, with the Armed Forces serving only to deter an armed attack, or eventually to occupy the territory conquered by psychological action" (*apud* Hermes de Araujo Oliveira, *Guerra Revolucionaria*, Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1965, p. 60).

Terence H. Qualter, of the University of Waterloo in Iowa, observes: "Originally, psychological war was planned as a preliminary for military action, with the objective of demoralizing the enemy soldiers before the attack was launched, or even as an auxiliary to the military action, expediting and reducing the costs for victory. Today it has become a substitute for military action. ... A defeat in cold war could be as real and as definitive as a military defeat, and, certainly, it would be followed by military defeat" (*Propaganda and Psychological Warfare*, New York: Random House, 1965, pp. XII-XIII).

General Humberto B. Martins, Commander of the Military Academy of Portugal, has this to say about it: "A new secret arms was discovered and is habitually wielded by those who strive to achieve their complete hegemony in Europe and Asia. These lethal methods, based fundamentally on the study of waves of psychologically maneuvering the masses, are masterly joined to convergent forces that aim for the annihilation of the moral, economic, and military structures of the nations targeted in each phase" (Preface to the book by Hermes de Araujo Oliveira, *Guerra Revolucionaria*, Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, Editora, 1965, p. 21).

And French specialist Maurice Megret observes that "from Clausewitz to Lenin, the evolution of the techniques and the progress of the psychological sciences were conspiring to confer to psychological warfare the almost magical powers of an 'art of subversion'" (*La guerra psicologica*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 1959, p. 31).

In addition to this, in the eyes of public opinion, the TFP has an almost epic aura that issues from the way it acts with religious heroism in the civic field, recalling the battles of days gone by in the History of Brazil. It acts with a Catholic heroism that recalls the epopee of the Crusades, the wars of the Reconquest, and the Orders of Chivalry, as well as with a modern heroism, which consists so often in confronting demagoguery, in making the intellectual and practical preparation necessary to discern the plans, maneuvers, and ruses developed by the adversary in its attempt to conquer Brazil by means of revolutionary psychological warfare.

Because of this and much more – being the Founder and President of the national Council of the Brazilian TFP as well as the radiating focus for the rest of the 14 TFPs spread throughout the world, in itself a signal honor – Dr. Plinio merits all praise, respect, and admiration from its members, as well as from History, as the future will tell.

3. CATHOLIC LEADER

As a Catholic leader, which Dr. Plinio has incontestably been since, at age 24, he was elected national Representative of São Paulo by the Catholic Electoral League, he has rendered multiple and ines-

Another eminent French expert, Roger Mucchieli, adds this: “The classic conception of subversion and psychological war would picture it as one weapon of war among others utilized during the time of hostilities, and put aside at its conclusion. Today’s States, immobilized by this archaic definition, do not understand that psychological war has debunked the classic distinction between war and peace. It is an unconventional war, a stranger to the norms of International law and the rules of conventional warfare; it is a total war that defies the lawmakers and pursues its objectives from the shelter of its codes. ...

“The modern war is, above all else, psychological, and its relation to classic weapons is inverted. Today the combat is in the (guerilla) field, which has become an auxiliary of subversion” (*La subversion*, Paris: Bordas, 1972, pp. 26-27).

The same Roger Mucchieli explains that “subversion (such is the name given to it as well as others they call psychological war) is not an agitation, nor a political propaganda properly speaking; it is neither an armed conspiracy nor a force that mobilizes the masses. It is a technique of weakening the power and demoralizing the people. This technique is based on the understanding of the laws of psychology and psycho-sociology, because it aims as much at public opinion as at the power and the armed forces at the latter’s disposal. It acts upon public opinion by subtle and convergent means, as we will describe.

“Subversion is, therefore, more insidious than seditious. The destruction of the State (When it deals with internal subversion) or the overthrow of the enemy (when it deals with organized subversion on the outside) are sought and obtained by a radically different means of revolution (understood in the sense of popular uprising) and of war (understood in the sense of a confrontation between adversary armies and of territorial battle). The targeted State will sink itself in the indifference of the ‘silent majority’ (because this is a product of the subversion); the enemy army will cease of itself to fight because it will be completely demoralized and disarticulated by the scorn that surrounds it” (*ibid.*, p. 7).

Marius Trajano T. Neto, from the Brazilian Army, discerningly concludes that “The Revolutionary War is ... much more a War of Souls than of Arms” (*A guerra revolucionaria o misonismo*, in *Military Review*, Port. ed., August 1974, p. 53, *apud* Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in collaboration with Gustavo Antonio Solimeo & Luis Sergio Solimeo, *The CEBS ... Much is Spoken About Them, But Little Is Known - The TFP Describes Them As They Really Are*, São Paulo, 1984, note. 2, pp. 83-85).

The counter-revolutionary psychological war cannot be defined simply as an anti-communist and anti-socialist revolutionary war.

It is impossible to understand how the TFP conceives of this counter-revolutionary psychological war without studying the essay *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, written by Dr. Plinio.

timable services to the Church and to Christian Civilization, defending it from the attacks of progressivism and leftism, which increasingly strive to deform its features in the theological, moral, and socio-economic fields.

Dr. Plinio, through his name and public action, and the TFP, inspired by him, act for our country as a banner of integrity and firmness in the Faith, purity of customs, and Christian patriotism. Without this banner, our Faith and customs would have already fallen much lower than they have due to the neo-pagan ambience and leftist intoxication of our days.

Quite expressive of this influence is the eulogy of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities made by His Eminence Cardinal Guiseppe Pizzardo, countersigned by then-Archbishop Dino Staffa (later named Cardinal), about his work *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*: “Our congratulations ... to the distinguished Author, deservedly renowned for his philosophical, historical, and sociological knowledge, and we augur the greatest diffusion of this thick pamphlet that *is a most faithful echo of the Documents of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church*” (my emphasis).

And, for these reasons, many Catholics tribute him their gratitude, respect, and admiration.

4. SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Your example and your teachings, Dr. Plinio, are a constant stimulus for the members and co-operators of the TFP, as well as for Catholics, to remain in the state of grace amid the spiritual disorientation and moral deterioration of these times. Moreover, many might have strayed from the Catholic position if it were not for this constant example that they have before their eyes.

And there are many among us who have converted from other religions through the brilliance of the Catholicity that exists in the TFP and that radiates from your person.

More important, perhaps, because they are more frequent, would be the number of conversions of those who were living the mundane everyday life to become those who live in the integral and fervent practice of the Catholic Faith. While this person or that may have been the intermediary of these conversions (some quite resplendent that have caused great joy in Heaven – “*gaudium erit coram angelis Dei super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente*” [Lk 10:10]), it is your Catholic apostolate for more than half a century that is at the root of these conversions.

For this reason, also, each one is grateful and justly tributes to you praise, respect, and admiration.

5. TEACHER

With great discernment, the aforementioned organ of the Holy See wrote in the above letter that you are “deservedly renowned for your philosophical, historical, and sociological knowledge.”

* *Catholic teacher and thinker*. For almost 30 years, Dr. Plinio held three meetings a week where he taught Catholic thinking to the TFP. The various currents of philosophical thought, from Plato to Kant, and from Kant to Sartre, Marcuse, and Levi-Strauss, were analyzed by him in the light of Catholic Doc-

trine. He examined the great Catholic teachings of St. Augustine to St. Thomas, going through the sterling phase of Scholasticism and the philosophies of the last phase of the Constantinian era. From there, he went on to examine the “Catholic Liberalism” of the past century to the “Catholic leftism” of our days.

In addition to the simple study of the ideas of such currents of thought, he analyzed the psychological reasons for each doctrine, linking them to their respective authors and to the public to which that author was speaking, as well as to the historical events of the times. Dedicating himself to these studies, he brought out the internal coherence of various parts of Catholic Doctrine, the point of convergence of the modernist doctrines, and the bond that links together the laic doctrines.

* *Master of historical science.* For 25 years, Dr. Plinio was a university Professor of History, first in the University College in the Department of Law at the University of São Paulo, and later in the São Bento Department of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters, both integrated with the Catholic Pontifical University of São Paulo.

Through the course of time, he formed a grand architectonic vision of History in respect to the fight between the good and the evil. His book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, is a synthesis of this vision, more relevant than ever in our days. After his careful study of the high and Low Middle Ages, he studied the Renaissance and Humanism, Protestantism, the French Revolution and Communism. Presenting the guiding thread of all these events, he makes the conferences and expositions that he gives in the TFP meetings an intellectual delight for all those who participate in them.

However, he was not content with the broad horizons of the Philosophy of History. He sought to know, through the doctrine of St. Thomas and, more especially, in view of exemplary cause, how God desires to be loved by man in the contemplation of His designs and the action of His Providence in History, using as criteria the established teachings of the great Catholic Saints and Doctors.

Finally, observing the symmetry of certain actions of God in the Old and the New Testament, he had recourse to the great exegetics of Holy Scriptures, namely, the illustrious Jesuit of the 18th century, Cornelius a Lapide, whose commentaries are a precious fountain of light for understanding the interventions of Divine Providence in the History of mankind.

In this way, his historical horizon, although it was essentially delineated by the Philosophy of History, went beyond this to the analysis of the minute facts symptomatic of the nascent revolutionary tendencies (which would be included in the “*petite Histoire*”) and even so far as the study of the more elevated commentaries of exegetics concerning the designs of God.

The TFP has reaped the benefits of all these treasures through the years in his splendid doctrinal expositions.

* *Master of sociological science.* The formation of a civilization and a culture depend upon the formation of a people and a society. The sociology studied by Dr. Plinio is a science born from his experience from an observation of men, from the accurate analysis of the present day sociological events, and from the study of History. His sociology has, in addition to the logic and elegance proper to thinkers, the force of reality. As a scientist analyses his laboratory experiences, Dr. Plinio penetrates deep into the understanding of diverse societies, analyzing their characteristics, their laws, their foundations, their historic

missions. And he frequently readjusts his description of this living sociology in view of new facts that become known to him, so that he never loses contact with the reality in any point.

If, therefore, a high organ of the Holy See affirms that Dr. Plinio is “deservedly renowned for his philosophical, historical, and sociological knowledge,” how could the TFP not have an immense gratefulness to him for the multiple treasures that his teachings present to us, as well as all the respect and admiration due to a person who has in such a manner and to such a degree dedicated himself that the wise contemplation of these horizons began to be co-natural to his exceptional intelligence?

6. POLITICAL ANALYST

All the above mentioned qualities contribute to Dr. Plinio’s extraordinary analysis of national and international politics. Since the ides of 1935, he has published a lucid critique of weekly events in the *Legionario*, official organ of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, under the heading *Alongside the Facts*, which later took the name *Seven Days in Review*. From then up to the present, he also holds the weekly “Clippings Meeting,” which is the principal meeting of the TFP. In this meeting, based on clippings from national and international newspapers and magazines, Dr. Plinio elaborates hypotheses explaining present and future events from the point of view of the *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* battle.

Moreover, the predictions that he makes have stood the test of time with admirable accuracy. This verification speaks much more eloquently than any explanation.

This gave rise to the fact that, within the TFP ambience, persons have asked if this veracity is not due to a special grace given to him by Our Lady. And, after serious studies made by his disciples, it can be affirmed in all fairness that, in fact, such a grace exists and rose from an excellence of virtue or the gift of wisdom, perhaps even a prophetic charisma, according to the explanation given in Chapters III and IV.

The members of the TFP have in this reality, that is, the luminous accuracy of his predictions in matters of Revolution and Counter-Revolution, yet another reason for gratitude and respect. For it is no small gift to clearly see current events and be able to make secure hypotheses concerning future events in these times of extreme confusion.

7. ACCLAIMED WRITER & JOURNALIST

It would be natural for all these qualities to unleash themselves in the writing of books and essays so that his talent as writer could transmit to the public the wisdom and correctness of his analyses. And this is, in effect, what has occurred in his numerous works, of which I will only mention the titles and editions:

1. *In Defense of Catholic Action* (1943): Two editions, 4,000 copies. A work eulogized by Pius XII in a letter from Msgr. J. B. Montini, Vice-Secretary of State, later Paul VI.

2. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (1959): 18 editions, 95,000 copies (editions in Spain, Argentina, Chile, Canada, the United States, and Italy).

3. *Agrarian Reform – A Question of Conscience* (1960 – in collaboration with Dom Geraldo de Proenca Sigaud, Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer, and economist Luiz Mendonca de Freitas): 7 editions, 39,000 copies (editions in Argentina, Spain, and Colombia).

4. *Accord with the Communist Regime: For the Church, Hope or Autodemolition?* (1963 – first edition published under the title *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*): 38 editions, 171,000 copies (editions in German, Spanish, French, Hungarian, English, Italian, Polish, and Vietnamese). A work praised by Cardinals Pizzardo and Staffa of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.

5. *Declaration of Morro Alto* (1964 – in collaboration with the same authors of *Agrarian Reform*): 3 editions, 32,500 copies.

6. *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue* (1965): 18 editions, 100,500 copies (editions in Spanish and English).

7. *The Church in the Face of the Rise of the Communist Threat – An Appeal to the Silent Bishops* (1976): 4 editions, 51,000 copies.

8. *Indian Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the 21st Century* (1977): 9 editions, 87,500 copies (translated to English).

9. *The “Sandinista Night:” Sandinista “Christians” Incite the Catholic Left in Brazil and Spanish America to the Guerrilla Camp* (1980): 7 editions, 75,000 copies (editions in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Colombia).

10. *I am Catholic. Can I Be Against Agrarian Reform?* (1981 – in collaboration with economist Carlos Patricio Del Campo): 4 editions, 29,000 copies.

11. *What Does Self-Managing Socialism Mean for Communism: A Barrier? Or a Bridgehead?* (1981): 155,000 publications (in its entirety or in resume), 33.5 million copies in 69 countries in six languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, Italian, and German).

12. *The CEBS... Much Is Said About Them, But Little is Known – The TFP Describes them as They Really Are* (1982 – in collaboration with TFP members Gustavo Antonio Solimeo and Luiz Sergio Solimeo): 6 editions, 72,000 copies.

Of these books or essays, we point out that each one of them constitutes a milestone in Brazilian History (although we place nn. 2, 4, 6, and 11 in another category of achieving international influence). No serious historian could ignore them if he wanted to fully describe the religious and civic history of Brazil in the last 40 years.

Nor did I mention (because the list would be immense) the numerous documents that Dr. Plinio has elaborated and that have been published by the press in the name of the TFP: manifestos, communiqués, clarifications, declarations, open letters, statements preceding signed petitions, messages, and telegrams to illustrious persons. These are all described in detail in the book *Half a Century of Epic Anti-*

Communism, which narrates the history of the TFP from its earliest times in the Catholic movement in the '30s.

To this already rich intellectual harvest, we would have to add the 500 articles for the daily press, with this number including only those articles published since 1968, primarily in the *Folha de S. Paulo*, the daily newspaper with the largest circulation in the State and one of the four largest of Brazil. In these articles, Dr. Plinio has demonstrated a journalistic handling of current events and a perspicacity of analysis that made him one of the most widely read columnists in all Brazil. These articles have helped much to enlighten the confused consciences of our contemporaries.

It is impossible to speak of his journalistic activity without making special mention of *Catholicismo*, the official organ of the TFP. Under the direction of competent members of the entity, this magazine has been inspired by Dr. Plinio throughout its brilliant course. To this monthly publication, a beacon in the Brazilian Catholic press whose light projects into the international sphere, he contributed not only his wise directives, but also an effective collaboration: Here I mention in particular the series *Ambiences, Customs and Civilizations*, a most original commentary on sociology, psychology, art, and history that even today raises admiration in those who have the good fortune to read them. The collection, containing 185 articles, was recent republished upon the continuous request of numerous readers (São Paulo: Artpress Papeis e Artes Graficas, 1982).

For all this, Dr. Plinio, we are grateful to you, and our consideration and respect grows, as does that of many Brazilians of upright heart, each time that our souls are gratified by these true jewels of literature and political wisdom, illuminated by the sun of your flawless Catholicity.

8. MAN OF ACTION

To give just a tiny part of the profile that Dr. Plinio projects in the internal life of the TFP, it was indispensable to describe these high plateaus of Philosophy and History, as well as the dense realities of Politics and Sociology, so that we might touch upon the field of concrete action.

The TFP – and here I speak only of the Brazilian TFP – is a small world in itself. It has around 1,000 members and cooperators, with this number including only those whom the North-Americans call “*full-time members*.” We leave aside, therefore, the much broader peripheries of the correspondents and supporters of the TFP, as well as its numerous sympathizers. With its dedicated members and cooperators and their capacity, the TFP multiplies its action in the most varied camps, defending our Country from the communist-progressivist onslaught. Such action is immense, and it presupposes a sagacious organization (which has earned the entity the greatest praises, even from enemies) and a leadership that is cautious, flexible, intelligent, and firm.

This organization as well as its direction come principally from Dr. Plinio. The full utilization of every available recourse, the organization of campaigns, the adaptation of our activities to new needs that arise, the orientation of the methods of the formation of the youth – all this action, and much more, issue from his untiring zeal and his judgment, so extraordinarily adjusted to the reality of situations and psychologies.

In this also, his subordinates find reason for admiration for all that they see, as well as gratefulness for all that they come to know.

9. OTHER ASPECTS OMITTED HERE FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY

I have not yet even mentioned his exceptional gift as speaker, his fame as *'causeur,'* his distinction as a true gentleman, his intrepidity as a warrior, and his goodness as a father.

But if, for the sake of brevity, I refrain from these analyses, I cannot omit mentioning that these qualities that Our Lady placed in him, She also gave indirectly to those who have the honor of acting under his direction. And, for this reason, these beneficiaries, who are the members and cooperators of the TFP, tribute to Dr. Plinio a great respect and gratitude.

10. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

I end with that beautiful incident that took place after the Battle of Aljubarrota, when they asked a warrior of Portugal how it could be explained that an army of only 7,000 Portuguese, commanded by the Blessed Nun'Alvares, could have conquered the enemy forces of 35,000 men. To this, the warrior responded: "Our King won because his army is made up not of soldiers, but of sons."

Thus also, Dr. Plinio, in this psy-war that is the Counter-Revolution, you can count upon unselfish sons, rather than just companions in the ideal or mere disciples. And the veneration, the respect, the obedience – and why not the enthusiasm? – that they have for you in the TFP is that which the Church, by Her Doctrine and through the example of her Saints, recommends in regard to one's superiors.

If this scandalizes Mr. O.F. today – and there was a time when the same enthusiasm also filled his soul – this constitutes no reason for us to stop fulfilling this duty so pleasing to the hearts of your sons and disciples, Dr. Plinio.

There are people today who automatically brand any type of enthusiasm as fanaticism.

True fanaticism is an enthusiasm that is all the more impetuous and aggressive the more it lacks any serious reasons for its existence. Behold, therefore, those souls who, in face of what deserves their enthusiasm, sin against justice by remaining cold and indifferent.

Does that which I affirm here have any basis?

The TFP is always ready to document, dialogue, or debate on this matter.

But what it cannot permit is an unreasonable critique, which seeks to see in these deserved manifestations of veneration and acknowledgment a canonical violation that exists only in the mind of one person, who, out of jealousy, closes his eyes to the authentic basis for this enthusiasm.

Moreover, it is not only those in TFP who manifest their enthusiasm over the work of Dr. Plinio. In March of last year *Catolicismo* published a collection of repercussions from the *Message* of the 13 TFPs (today 15) on Self-managing Socialism written by Dr. Plinio. These expressed the great joy that

other persons felt, not only in response to the magnificent document itself, but also in relation to the Catholic orientation that many of these enthused readers discerned through a simple document. Who could accuse these spontaneous testimonies coming from 115 countries around the world of being exaggerated?

* * *

CHAPTER XI

VARIOUS SCATTERED ACCUSATIONS

In the preceding chapters, the essential accusations in the three letters of Mr. O.F. were analyzed. It was shown how they suffer from a systematic distortion of the meaning of the facts and offered no foundation for the enormous accusation the letter writer attempts to launch against Dr. Plinio and the TFP.

To provide substance to this misrepresentation of the facts – at times banal in themselves – Mr. O.F. fills his letters with other related accusations, as groundless as the first ones. This, then, is what I will go on to examine.

1. THE DANGER OF ‘THE OVERSHADOW’

Referring obviously to himself and to his studies about Anne Catherine Emmerick and gnosis, Mr. O.F. describes the climate that he found in the TFP: “If someone were to say that he had discovered something new through his own studies, this would be taken as pretension, and this pretension would be considered absurd. To affirm any opinion of one’s own is considered as something of bad spirit, and to enter upon any intellectual work, without having been assigned it, is interpreted as a desire to compete with you (Dr. Plinio) or to try to **overshadow you**” (Letter 82, p. 6).

However, in his 1982 letter, Mr. O.F. himself defends this accusation, presenting himself as an echo and reflection of the doctrine, arguments, examples, and metaphors of Dr. Plinio, which he describes as “splendid and didactic,” adding later: “What a ridiculous accusation is that of **overshadowing** you or of wanting to compete with you! How can the reflection **overshadow** the light? How can the firefly shine at midday? How can he compete with the sun? ...

“I have always claimed such, and I affirm that all my honor comes from being your reflection. Because my mirror was covered with mud and you cleaned it. My soul was in the darkness and you illuminated it. I lived in the night and it was your song that made the sun of Catholic Truth rise for me. ...

“That which I aspired to with my thesis (about Anne Catherine Emmerick), most esteemed Dr. Plinio, was not to **overshadow** you, but to defend the Catholic Faith, and this ideal of fighting for the Faith, insomuch as I have it, insomuch as it is the reason for my life, I owe to you” (Letter 82, p. 9).

Further on in the same letter, he returns to the subject of overshadowing, a theme that obsesses him: “You constructed a true cathedral of logic and wisdom. If you would descend from this superior position in order to delve into books of the cabal and gnosis, I think that you would be humbled. This inferior task, not arquitectonic, falls to your sons and your auxiliaries. When they do this, **they do not overshadow you**, but assist you. Whoever affirms that the stonemason, by making a wall, competes with the architect does not understand the value and excellence of the architect. He does not have the vision of what architecture is. He does not understand what a prophetic mission is” (Letter 82, p. 15).

In Letter 83, the specter of the overshadow returns to beset the mind of Mr. O.F., but now with a connotation clearly detractive to the TFP: “From all sides the signs of extravagant and absurd devotions continued to **increasingly overshadow** true devotion to Our Lady. *How is it that you take such great care that they do not overshadow you*, and that you allowed the devotion to Dona Lucilia to **overshadow** devotion to Our Lady? (Letter 83, p. 5).

What exactly would constitute this “overshadowing” of devotion to Our Lady? Would it be to substitute it gradually by another devotion, or at least to mitigate it? None of the facts cited by Mr. O.F. prove this substitution, and, on the contrary, as I have shown, the devotion of members and cooperators of the TFP to Our Lady is immense and even growing. Moreover, the completely private devotion that they have to Dona Lucilia acts as a constant stimulus for them to sustain themselves in the practice of virtue, and in this way they direct their steps to Our Lady and, by this means, to Our Lord.

The idea that a lesser devotion can “overshadow” a superior one does not make sense, as was surmised and clarified by St. Thomas: “It is God’s will that inferior beings should be helped by all those that are above them, wherefore we ought to pray not only to the higher but also the lower saints, else we should have to implore the mercy of God alone. Nevertheless it happens sometimes that prayers addressed to a saint of lower degree are more efficacious either because he is implored with greater devotion, or because God wishes to make known his sanctity” (II-II, 83, 11, ad 4).

In this way, the members and cooperators of the TFP, in order to more efficaciously obtain graces, have recourse to the intercession of Dona Lucilia – without ceasing from having recourse, as they always do, to the Blessed Virgin. Thus do they apply this principle of St. Thomas, and in no way do they diminish by this their devotion to the Mother of God, nor does it “overshadow” devotion to Our Lady.

*

Putting aside this trivial objection, I go on to analyze the supposed care that the TFP has in seeing that no one overshadows Dr. Plinio. I have noted this fear on the part of no one, and I only see such a specter floating about in the mind of Mr. O.F. It could be that, enraptured by the merit of his own studies about Anne Catherine Emmerick and gnosis, he had allowed the idea to surge in his mind that someone in the TFP thought he was trying to “overshadow” Dr. Plinio. And, from this came, *first*, the protest he makes that he was not aspiring to do this (Letter 82, *ibid.*) and, *afterwards*, the transposition of this fear (which belongs only to him) to the whole body of members and cooperators of the TFP. Verified once again here is the curious phenomenon of projecting a sentiment that belonged to him as an individual to the minds of others, as if the others were preoccupied with what preoccupied only him.

I do not see, I repeat, that this desire of “eclipsing” Dr. Plinio has passed through the minds of anyone in TFP. I note this preoccupation only in Mr. O.F. “*Quem usa, cuida,*” says the maxim. That is to say, he who is accustomed to make a certain extraordinary action imagines that others also want to do it.

Seeking thus to interpret the scope of what Mr. O.F. is saying on this matter, the only hypothesis that remains standing is that what would be feared in the TFP is that the person of Mr. O.F. could over-shadow the person of Dr. Plinio. And such a fear – the letter writer supposes – would have led to the multiple consequences in our relationship with him.

The metaphor of the overshadow can be interpreted in two senses. In an improper and domestic sense, it would be that of luminous bodies, like the sun that, upon appearing, obscure with their brilliance the light of all the other celestial bodies, which would thus no longer be seen by our eyes. In the proper sense, the metaphor of the overshadow is applied when some obstacle is placed between the focus of light and the illuminated surface.

I analyze here the two senses of the metaphor in order to see which one would be the overshadowing that the letter writer could project upon Dr. Plinio.

If Mr. O.F. imagines himself to be like a luminous celestial body bestowed with its own light, he could then obscure Dr. Plinio by the brilliance of his intellectual capacities (which he shows quite well in his letters...) and by the dazzling resplendence of his personality. We have already examined the lucidity of his opinions, the coherence of his thinking, and the clarity of his exposition, as well as the seriousness, the absence of passion, the gratitude, etc. that the letter writer manifests in his ideas and attitudes.

Let us look now at the resplendence of his personality. The letter writer had formerly demonstrated a most salient gift: This was his capacity to attract new cooperators to the TFP. For this, moreover, he was eulogized by Dr. Plinio in an article in the *Folha de S. Paulo* (2-22-69), and this fact is also acknowledged in the book *Half a Century of Epic Anti-Communism* (p. 445).

However, with the passage of time, it is a well-known and sad fact that this gift was becoming increasingly less effective, and his apostolate was bearing less fruit. On the other hand, at the same time, the apostolate being developed by other persons in the TFP began to attract to the entity a much larger number of cooperators than the letter writer had brought to it in his golden phase. Therefore, the most salient quality of the personality of the letter writer became increasingly less significant with the passing of time. Now, it bears mention to note that during this golden phase, the letter writer lived together with Dr. Plinio peacefully and tranquilly – without noticing that Dr. Plinio feared that he (Mr. O.F.) might overshadow him. How, then, could he imagine that his influence, as the shadows fell, could obscure Dr. Plinio? If he insists that someone is being obscured, it would be more proper to say that the apostolate of the other persons in the TFP overshadowed with its brilliance the waning apostolate of the letter writer.

Thus, the problem of obscuring would be resolved at its roots if this were the meaning adopted by the expression “overshadow.”

If the letter writer imagines himself to be illuminated, like a body that receives light from outside, he would be saying that he was placed between the source of light and Dr. Plinio, so that it were possible to have a shadow. By the laws of physics, a tree must be placed between the sun and a person for it to project a shadow upon this person. That is to say, it would be necessary that he would have a greater stature than that of Dr. Plinio in order to cast a shadow over him, because a small shrub would not overshadow anything except the grass.

In the letters of Mr. O.F., it is not clear as to what is the focus of light that he prevents from reaching Dr. Plinio – since the letter writer presents himself as the reflection of the light that he received from Dr. Plinio (Letter 82, p. 9) – nor does he manifest the magnitude of his stature. In addition to this, no one can manage to perceive – however great his imagination or sense of observation – what would be the shadow that the letter writer could project upon Dr. Plinio.

A shadow that cannot be perceived by anyone is nonexistent for all practical purposes.

Thus does one see that there is no danger of “overshadowing” in either meaning, and the suspicion of the letter writer that there is a concern in the TFP that no one should overshadow Dr. Plinio (Letter 83, p. 5) is destitute of any base.

2. READING NEWSPAPERS IS CONSIDERED SUPERFLUOUS & DETRIMENTAL IN THE TFP

The letter writer states: “In fact, it is verified that some members of group consider that all information, even that in the newspapers, is superfluous and even detrimental for you” (Letter 82, p. 6).

The words “some members” seem ambiguous, because they lend themselves to two interpretations:

- a. In this context, it could be an increasingly growing number of members who, if they do not predominate in the TFP, will soon predominate with a fanatical spirit. Then this accusation would be directed to the whole TFP;
- b. Another interpretation would be somewhat deflated: “Some members” would be only some members.

I will not examine the second interpretation, because it is irrelevant in itself; I will respond only to the first.

Such an affirmation, which would attempt to insinuate that a mystical sectarianism hovers in the spirit of the members of the TFP, collides headlong with the truth.

There is the greatest interest in the TFP in all types of spoken and written information. Because of this, there exists in the TFP a Commission of Readers of books, newspapers and magazines, whose purpose is to select the materials for the books and manifestos of the TFP, as well as to follow the national and international situation under the most diverse areas: religion, morals, philosophy, politics, sociology, art, etc. To analyze all these materials, Dr. Plinio devotes three hours of his work time per week, and afterwards he gives a weekly meeting, properly titled “Clippings Meeting,” to the members and cooperators of the TFP.

In addition, the TFP has a service for listening to radio and television broadcasts. An informative bulletin titled “Meetings of the Day” is also edited for the use of members and cooperators, as well as correspondents and sympathizers of the association. For those who are interested, this bulletin furnishes facsimiles or typed resumes of the news that best describes the current (national and international) situation. This information is taken from the leading newspapers of Brazil and even from small newspapers from the interior of the Country, as well as from more than 150 publications coming from all parts of the world, including some inside the Iron Curtain. In this bulletin, ample space is also provided for all the critiques and praises of the TFP.

Moreover, in the last five years more than 1,300 books were reviewed, which would average around five books per week – and this in addition to reviewing the aforementioned publications in various languages, many of them weekly publications and some of them even dailies! Without such services and extensive reading, the TFP could not keep its members properly informed, and, in view of the ever growing amplitude of panoramas, Dr. Plinio could not give the principle meeting of the entity, which is the Clippings Meeting, and the TFP could not act with the alacrity and sureness for which it is so proverbially well-known.

In addition to these news sources, it is common for members and cooperators of the TFP to converse about internal and external news, favorably or contrary, such as the repercussions that the TFPs are receiving throughout the world. These repercussions, moreover, are shared with all in the plenary meetings of the TFP that are held two or more times per week. In these meetings, these repercussions are read in a manly, grandiose and solemn tone of voice, which intensifies the value of the read text. This system, which from the beginning was received with general warmth, has become known in the TFP as the system of *proclamations*, by its nature vaguely inspired by the heralds of times long past.

Obviously, the TFP does not make available to its members and cooperators such magazines and books that are immoral or directly contrary to the Faith, unless they should be of interest to the studies of mature persons.

In face of this great mass of information, it is difficult to understand how Mr. O.F. could have written that “some members of the group consider that all information, even that in the newspapers, is superfluous and even detrimental for you” (letter 82, p. 6).

Therefore, if the meaning of “some members” was applied to the first interpretation, the accusation would be false; if it were the second, it would be irrelevant.

3. IT IS NECESSARY & SUFFICIENT IN THE TFP ONLY TO STUDY THE LIFE & EXAMPLES OF DR. PLINIO

Mr. O.F. affirms that in the TFP “to want to study has come to be proof of the ‘plock-plock,’ ‘crushed can’ etc. spirit. It would be necessary and sufficient only to study your life (of Dr. Plinio) and your examples (Letter 82, p. 6).

With this double affirmation, the letter writer presents what takes place in the TFP in the matter of study from a distorted viewpoint.

The type of learning that Dr. Plinio promotes is truly averse to an erudite, hollow and inconsistent pedantism, lacking life and unrelated to reality. It is this that has been called, since the early history of the group the ‘crushed can’ learning (an allusion to the aluminum cans that are crushed after usage, making a deplorable appearance). More recently, the onomatopoeical expression “plock-plock” has been warmly accepted, it being more favored by the younger generation.

What does the TFP condemn about the “crushed can” or “plock-plock” learning? It is a form of study and learning that puts aside the nuances and the living savor of reality. Because it lacks deep roots

in the facts, which it has in great profusion, it runs the risk of drawing conclusions that conflict with what reality shows to be most evident.

It was this that took place with Mr. O.F., who, to the measure that he was distancing himself from Dr. Plinio and his spirit, was becoming impregnated with rationalist-positivist ideas, to the point of believing in a caricature of the TFP that he himself fabricated and that, notwithstanding, he took to be reality, even though it collides headlong with what the TFP actually is.

Feeling, most probably, that the criticisms that we make about “plock-plockism” were beginning to also touch upon him to the measure that he was being imbued with this spirit, he began to take offense at this criticism. And, distorting its true significance, he began to say that it implies a censure of all serious study.

In the TFP, each one always followed his own discretions in his studies. However, more recently – since 1978, to be exact – a “Commission of Readers” was set up, as was already mentioned, in order to take better advantage of these studies in view of the needs of the Cause to which we are dedicated. But since the danger of ‘plock-plockism’ always persists amid this “canned” learning we inherited from four centuries of Revolution, the warning against it is continuously renewed.

Therefore, the TFP promotes and stimulates study among its members and cooperators, even while it cautions against these aforementioned, as well as other, deformations of the human mind, which make reality appear as it really is not.

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The primary characteristic of the “plock-plock” mentality is to scorn every living representation of the principles, as if the principles can only exist in the abstract and cannot be made manifest and, so to speak, become incarnate in the persons permeated by them.

Saint Teresa complained of the harm that some spiritual directors caused her, preventing her from considering the adorable Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Humanity, and recommending, on the contrary, that she should try to grasp the Divinity directly, *in abstracto*. God being pure spirit, it would perhaps seem at first glance that such a recommendation is logical and rational. In truth, man not being pure spirit, he needs to reach God through created beings. And at the apex of them all is the Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, united hypostatically to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

If we are able to recollect ourselves in reverent adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ before His image on the Holy Shroud in Turin, which portrays Our Lord dead, how much more intense would be the adoration of those who, seeing Our Lord living on this Earth, could see a simple gesture He might make, and a thousand other marvels of the Divinity?

I went straight to the highest example! *Servatis servandis*, I can apply the same to persons eminent in virtue, where I can see in the facts of their life not only how I should proceed in analogous situations, but I can also discern the divine attributes themselves that shine in them by their virtue: “*Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis*” – “*God is admirable in his Saints,*” the Liturgy intones (Ps 67:36).

In practice, this principle has an even broader scope, because it serves as well for those persons who have an eminent degree of some virtue or natural quality. This gave rise to the prestige of the general biography and autobiography that became so popular in the last centuries and endures even until today. The biographies of great men – saints or not – are studied as a recognized factor of a formative element of good culture. The reason for this has already been given: These men manifest by their actions, virtues, and qualities what we should try to acquire. Thus, illustrated by these living examples, we are more readily captivated by the virtues and qualities that we should practice. The example of a chaste person frequently speaks much more to our soul than a theoretical treatise about the virtue of chastity...

We, who have the grace of being called to the TFP, to this sublime mission of restoring Christian Civilization, together with all those who are disposed to this – we have Dr. Plinio as a living example of how we should act. From this comes our insistence that he should tell us facts about this past life – the “*fatinhos*,” (small facts full of expression) in the delightful language of the “*enjolras*” – which provide us with incentive to proceed in the same manner in combating the Revolution.

As all of this is most obvious, it is difficult to believe that Mr. O.F. has raised objections concerning this point.

If he rebels only against the “exclusiveness” of this method of formation, our response is that in no way does the formation in the TFP restrict itself to this. And it would be distorting the evidence to affirm the contrary.

It is true that many of our meetings end with the classic “*fatinho*,” emphatically demanded by the “*enjolras*.” But to claim that nothing but Dr. Plinio’s life and examples are studied in the TFP is to caricaturize the internal life of the TFP even beyond the limits of insanity. How could our members and cooperators, who are in frequent contact with the public, adequately carry out their mission if they did not study first of all the works of the TFP, and then the sources of Catholic literature from which these works issued?

Moreover, the time devoted to reading and to study has not only increased, but it has intensified. A survey made in 1982 showed that in the *Eremo* of São Bento the number of books reviewed was double the number read during the same period in 1972, when this *Eremo* was inhabited by persons of a prior generation.

Thus, Mr. O.F.’s affirmation that in the TFP “it would be necessary and sufficient only to study your life and your works” is false and has no basis in reality.

4. IN THE TFP THEY PLACE ‘THINGS ABOVE THE CREED & THE GOSPELS’

Already in 1981, in a letter that was not sent (it being sent later, together with the letter of rupture) Mr. O.F. was announcing his departure from the TFP, or, in his words: “the others who left it upon it changing its doctrine, **upon placing something else above the Creed and the Gospels**, and upon making absurd comparisons between persons and Saints, and even with Our Lady (Letter 81, p. 7).

I will comment here upon the affirmation that in the TFP there are “things” placed “above the Creed and the Gospels.” The rest of the accusations have already been amply commented upon in the preceding chapters.

The accusation under discussion is vague: There is no specification of what these “things” might be. It is also confused and termed most inadequately: “Things?” What does he mean to say by “things”? Moreover, what precisely does he mean by saying that these “Things” are “placed above” the Creed and the Gospels? There are “things” in the Church that, in some sense, are situated “above the Creed and the Gospels.” The Blessed Sacrament, for example. The formula of the Creed is not intangible and was being perfected by the Popes and by Councils through various centuries. One who can modify the formula of the Creed (in such a way as to more adequately express the deposits of the Faith) is, in a certain sense, above the Creed.

Perhaps Mr. O.F. means to refer by this to the words or doctrine of Dr. Plinio: But Dr. Plinio has always insistently repeated that he submits all his doctrine and his whole person to the judgment of the Church. Thus, in no way does he or the TFP put themselves above the Church and, *a fortiori*, “above the Creed and the Gospels.”

We categorically reject such an accusation.

5. ‘THE Gnostic MOUNTAIN OF THE PROPHETS’

The letter writer’s blood boils as well when he treats of the ‘Mountain of the Prophets’ described in *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick, and which Prof. Martini included in his work *Saint Elias, the Prophet of the Alliance* (São Paulo: Editora Vera Cruz, 1972, pp. 144-145). Mr. O.F. says this:

* The “mendacious mountain of the prophets, where an ecumenical Saint Elias would have lived” (Letter 82, p. 19).

* Speaking of the book of Prof. Martini: “Unfortunately it (the book) contains various passages that should be revised. Principally, there is one chapter in ACE that treats of the evil and gnostic vision of the Mountain of the Prophets... Moreover, it was this vision of the Mountain of the Prophets that inspired some crazy conclusions concerning your (Dr. Plinio’s) journey toward such a Mountain” (Letter 82, p. 22).

Taking in *malam partem* all that is done, said, or written in the TFP, Mr. O.F. comes to say that the gnostic and ecumenical sense of such a vision of the “Mountain of the Prophets” is obvious. And thus, since he includes this vision in his book, Prof. Martini, consciously or unconsciously (Mr. O.F. leaves this unclear), gave course to the “evil and dangerous ‘Siberian pipeline’ constructed by Brentano” (*The Visions and Revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerick*), thus instilling in his readers “the venomous miasmas of gnosis, cabalism and romanticism” (Letter 82, p. 27). From this comes the need, proclaimed by the letter writer, for a “Revision” of the book by Prof. Martini.

However, Prof. Martini accepted the vision of the Mountain of the Prophets with the improvidence and confidence that everyone postulated, as was said (cf. Chap. I) for a book with free circulation

in Catholic circles and, moreover, one with numerous and prestigious ecclesiastic approbations. If something sounded strange in this vision, the ecclesiastic approbation of the work leads one to seek an interpretation in accordance with Catholic orthodoxy.

In this spirit, Prof. Martini interpreted an excerpt from the vision of the Mountain of the Prophets, which spoke in particular of the Prophet Elias, the specific object of his study. Without having read the work except for this excerpt, which another cooperator of the TFP had provided him with, Prof. Martini took it in a Catholic sense that a person unwary of problems would have no difficulty in finding. And, like him, all the others in TFP who read this vision, be it directly in the works of Anne Catherine Emmerick or in the study by Prof. Martini, understood it in the same sense. If there would have been something that resisted a good interpretation, the bad ideal ringing out was debited to the writer Clemente Brentano, over whom hangs the deep suspicion that he debased the texts of the visionary, presumably authentic.

I go, then, to the excerpt of the 52 lines that Prof. Martini transcribed on two pages in a 72-page chapter in his book. (A small detail: Mr. O.F., always prone to exaggerate, speaks of an entire chapter.)

First, I will ask whether the phrase in question is open to a ready, simple, and serene Catholic interpretation.

As one immediately will see, this interpretation is not only comfortable and immediate, but it orients the spirit to the consideration of most elevated panoramas and perspectives, which justifies the interest that the excerpt raised inside the ambiances of the TFP. And it never lead the mind of anyone – not even the mind of Mr. O.F. himself when he was an ardent defender of the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine – toward the delirious fables of gnosis. Whence we see how absolutely unfounded is the suspicion of the letter writer that the inclusion of this excerpt in the book of Prof. Martini constituted a “dangerous Siberian pipeline” that diffused in our midst “the venomous miasmas of gnosis, cabalism and romanticism” (Letter 82, p. 27).

The excerpt in question, which occupies pages 144 and 145 of the book by Prof. Martini, is the following:

“2. *Elias and the Mountain of the Prophets* – In a garden in front of Paradise, Anne Catherine Emmerick saw a figure of a man radiant with sanctity seated next at a table in a tent. He was examining great volumes, and those which were false he set to the left to be burned in the inextinguishable fire that burned in front of him. What was good was placed to his right. ‘For men cannot yet receive these treasures before another comes’ (*Complete Visions and Revelations*, Anne Catherine Emmerick, vol. I, p. 589).

“I have again seen the Mountain of the Prophets. The man in the tent reaches to a figure floating over him from Heaven who left leaves and books, and received others in return. He who floated above reminded me very much of St. John. He was more agile, pleasing and lighter than the man in the tent, who had something sterner, more energetic and unbending about him; the former was to the latter as the New to the Old Testament, so I may call one John, the other Elias. It seemed as if Elias presented to John revelations that had been fulfilled and received new ones from him.

“Then I suddenly saw from the white sea a jet of water shoot up like a crystal ray. It branched into innumerable jets and drops like immense cascades, and fell down upon different parts of the earth, and I saw men in houses, in huts, in cities all over the world enlightened by it. I also saw some protestants who were illuminated by these drops. A certain movement sprouted in their heart that, after great tempests, will give forth fruit in its full splendor” (*ibid.*, pp. 593-594).

Three points should be discussed in this excerpt:

- a. If there could be a Mountain of the Prophets and if Elias could be there;
- b. If St. John could maintain some type of relationship with Elias;
- c. If such a place could provide graces for men.

What should be examined in each one of these three items is whether they comport an orthodox interpretation or whether they are *necessarily evil*, mendacious, gnostic, and ecumenical (in the sense of interconfessional), as the letter writer seems to think is so obvious.

A. *If there could be a Mountain of the Prophets & if Elias could be there*

That Elias did not die and was carried away to some place is a firmly established tradition in the Church. Opinions are divided as to the place to which he was carried off. The Scriptures say simply: “And as they (Elias and Eliseus) went on, walking and talking together, behold a fiery chariot and fiery horses parted them both asunder: and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (4 Kings 2:11).

Cornelius a Lapide summarizes the four positions adopted by the authors in this way (*Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram – librum IV Regum*, Paris: Ludovicum Vives, 1877, vol. IV, p. 7):

1st - Some think that he was really carried off into heaven, not the Heaven of the blessed, but to the firmament, where he leads a life almost celestial (Dorotheu, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, Alcimus and Serarius).

2nd - Others think that he was taken to the terrestrial paradise, where Enoch is also found (St. Irenaeus, St. Justin, St. Isidore, St. Thomas);

3rd - Others think that he was taken to some unknown region on the earth (St. Gregory the Great, Ruperto);

4th - More likely, others say that the place where Enoch and Elias are is uncertain (St. John Chrysostom, Theophyll and Ecumenio, St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, Teodoreto).

Wherever he might be, Elias leads a tranquil and holy life in the continual contemplation of God, as St. Augustine says (Gen 5:22), and he will return at the end of the world in order to fight against the Antichrist⁵⁵ and “to pay the tribute of death,” as St. Gregory the Great says (Hom. 29 in *Evang.*).

⁵⁵ I will not enter into the debated question of whether or not Enoch and Elias will come at the end of the world or in an epoch before it. I adopt the formulation that they will return at the end of the world only for ease of exposition, and

As candidates to eternal life and citizens of Paradise, Enoch and Elias are confirmed in grace. And even if they do not see God, they receive many lights and consolations from God. They live as if in the “courtyard of the House of the Lord,” where they are frequently visited by Angels, with whom they make constant colloquies. God preserves them incorrupt (even their clothing, just as He preserved the clothing of the Hebrews during their 40 years in the desert) – sound, vigorous, healthy, content and exultant with their situation, state and office, rendering to God continuous acts of grace (cf. Cornelius a Lapide, *ibid.*).

Whether they are in the condition to earn merit or not has been debated. Those who affirm that they are allege their condition as pilgrims. Those who disagree consider that their being carried away from this earth is equivalent to death (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7-8).

This remains, therefore, an open question within the Church. And the most current opinion is that which says it is uncertain where they are. Thus, it is possible, without transgressing anything in the Faith, to admit the hypothesis that Elias and Enoch could be on a mountain.

B. *If St. John could maintain some type of relationship with Elias*

St. Thomas says this about the death of St. John:

“Various things have been said about his burial. All agree, however, that he entered the sepulcher, which can still be seen. Some say that he entered living into the sepulcher and, by a divine grace, he left, being taken to the place where Enoch and Elias are, where he is reserved for the end of the world. Others, however, say that entering living into the sepulcher, which is in Ephesium, he lives there in a slumber until Jesus Christ will come. ...

“This is not to be believed; since he died and was resurrected - in body as well. And the sign of this is that his body was not found, and thus it is with the blessed with Christ” (*Super Evangelium S. Joannis lectura*, Turim-Rome: Marietti, p. 487, n. 2467).

Therefore, according to St. Thomas, it can be believed that St. John the Evangelist died, was resurrected and is in Heaven, in body and soul.

What then, would prevent one Saint, with the gift of mobility of his glorious body, from visiting Elias and having a certain relationship with him?

The opinion of St. Thomas – as one can easily see upon reading the forecited text – does not completely exclude the possibility that St. John could return at the end of the world with Enoch and Elias. In reality, there are many who think this. The great Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide recounts: “As for the fact that St. John will return and will prophesize at the end of the world, there are serious Doctors from the past and even some of our time who are of this opinion” (*In Apocalypsin*, Prologue). And Cornelius a Lapide cites in particular St. Hippolyte, Ambrose, Catarino, Salmeron and Barradio.

I leave the question open, thus respecting the position of those who defend the thesis that the coming and destruction of the Antichrist will take place in an epoch prior to the end of the world.

According to these doctors, St. John, like Enoch and Elias, would not have died, but he would have conserved his mortal body and will return to preach against the Antichrist, from whom he will suffer martyrdom. However, by a special dispensation from God, he would have already enjoyed the beatific vision (cf. *ibid.*). According to this hypothesis, St. John would have a close relationship with the two prophets of the Old Testament.

Fr. Martin Jugie, Professor of the Pontifical Lateran Athenaeum, analyzes this question in depth in his book, *La Mort e l'Assomption de la Sainte Vierge* (The Death and the Assumption of the Holy Virgin), published under the aegis of the Vatican Apostolic Library in the collection *Studi e Testi*, n. 114 (City of the Vatican, 1944, pp. 710-726), from which we take the following facts.

Fr. Jugie first observes that “certain Priests and theologians attributed to the beloved Apostle an ultra-terrestrial destiny not completely similar, but at least analogous to that of the Mother of God.” (*ibid.*, p. 710). This gave rise to an appendix in a book about the Assumption of Our Lady concerning the final destiny of St. John the Evangelist.

The death of St. John, Fr. Jugie points out, “has been duly testified to by an impressive number of irrefutable witnesses since the second century” (*ibid.*, p. 711). The author cites as examples a letter of the Bishop of Ephesus Policrates to Pope Victor I, and depositions of St. Dionysius of Alexander, Tertullian, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, Pope St. Celestine and the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus (in the year 431). “This is not a matter of mere references in passing, as is the case of those few individuals who testify to the death of Mary, which we gathered during the same period,” Fr. Jugie continues. “They are clear and direct affirmations of the fact of his death and of the existence of the tomb of the Apostle in Ephesus (*ibid.*).

The fact of his death and the tomb of the Apostle are so well known that not even the Apocrypha swerves on this point of historical authenticity.

Notwithstanding, a Catholic author, pseudo-Procoro,⁵⁶ by the year 500, adds another fact, that also appears in various apocryphas, which says that after the burial of St. John, assisted at by only a small group of disciples, the faithful of Ephesus forced the witnesses of his death to show them the sepulcher where St. John himself had laid down and expired. Opening the sepulcher, it was verified that the body had disappeared. This was the point of departure for all the later stories concerning the posthumous destiny of the Apostle.

Therefore, it would be precipitous to disregard as ludicrous any hypothesis of this order, if one considers that St. John himself records something along this line in his Gospel. When Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection at the shore of the Sea of Tiberius, St. Peter questioned Him about the destiny of St. John. And Our Lord, wanting to make Peter see that his question had been indiscreet, responded to him: “So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee, follow thou me” (Jo 21:22). The Evangelist, that is, St. John himself, adds: “This saying therefore went abroad among

⁵⁶ In Catholic literature, unknown authors whose texts were attributed for a certain time to other known authors were named in this way – with the prefix “pseudo.”

the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but, if I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?" (Jo 21: 23).

Thus, while the death of St. John is historically certain, the story about his immortality finds roots – insufficient, it is true – in the mysterious response given by Our Lord Jesus Christ to St. Peter.

Since the fourth century, or perhaps even before, there have been those who have claimed that the Apostle had not died, but had simply fallen asleep, and that this sleep would be prolonged until the return of Our Lord at the end of the world. Cited as proof is a fine white mist that was emitted from the depths of his tomb and that seemed to issue forth to the rhythm of human breathing. This mist was immediately considered miraculous, and was the cause for cures of diverse sicknesses. The Byzantine Church instituted a feast on May 8 in order to commemorate this miracle (cf. *La Mort et l'Assomption de la Sainte Vierge*, pp. 712-713).

With all this, discarding the account of the simple sleep in the sepulcher, which was immediately abandoned, four hypothesis can be constructed about the final death of St. John, that is, four different ways of viewing his assumption:

1st - The hypothesis of his immediate and glorious immortality without passing through death;

2nd - The hypothesis of his provisional immortality, such as that of Enoch and Elias: John did not die; he will live until the end of the world and will be killed by the Antichrist with the two witnesses of whom the Apocalypse speaks;

3rd - The hypothesis of his glorious prior resurrection and entrance into Heaven body and soul;

4th - Finally, the theory of the dual assumption (the soul was taken to Heaven and the incorrupt body was transported to some unknown place to await the general resurrection)" (*ibid.*, p. 714).

* *Partisans of the 1st hypothesis (the immediate glorious assumption)*: Hippolytus of Thebes, Pseudo-Bede, Orderic Vitalis and Ambrose Catarino. This last, however, adopts a singular opinion that serves as a transition to the second hypothesis: "John did not die; he is not sleeping in the sepulcher; rather, he lives in the terrestrial paradise with Enoch and Elias. With them, he already enjoys the beatific vision, but his body is not yet glorified because he must die at the end of times, with his two companions. The three will be killed by the Antichrist, Enoch representing the Natural Law, Elias the Mosaic Law, and John the Law of Grace" (*ibid.*, p. 715).

* *Partisans of the 2nd hypothesis (provisory immortality without beatific vision)*: Pseudo-Hippolytus, Pseudo-Dorotheus of Tyre, Ephraim of Antioch, Andreas of Caesarea, St. John Damascus, Simeon the Metaphrast, Agapius, Michael Glykas, and George of Trebizond; St. Francis de Sales also clearly speaks in this sense in various of his sermons. For example: "It is true that the Scriptures teaches us in general terms that all men must die and that no one can be freed from death; but it does not say that all men are dead, nor that all those who lived have already died; on the contrary, it exempts some, like Elias, who, without dying, was carried away by a chariot of fire, and Enoch, who was taken away by Our Lord before he suffered death, and even St. John the Evangelist, as I think to be most probable, according

to the word of God (Jo 21:22)” (*Oeuvres de Saint Francois de Sales*, ed. Annecy, vol. VII, 1896, p. 442 – *apud* Martin Jugie, *ibid.*, p. 719).

The authors who adopt this position base their reasoning on expediency: “It is necessary that, at the end of the world, Jesus Christ receive the testimony not only of Natural law and the Mosaic Law, represented respectively by Enoch and Elias, but also of the law of grace, of which John would be the prototype” (*ibid.*, p. 716).

* *Partisans of the 3rd hypothesis (death and glorious resurrection)*: Nicetas David, Niceforo Blemmide, Niceforas Callisto Xanthopoulos, Cyril Lucaris, Pascasio Radberto, St. Fulbert de Chartres, St. Peter Damian, Hugo of St. Victor, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Albert the Great, Nicholas of Lyre, Thomas of Argentine.

“This hypothesis,” observes Fr. Jugie, “is the most probable, because it does not contradict, before presuming, the historical fact of death” (*ibid.*, p. 719).

Various of the cited authors admit this hypothesis only with *pious faith (ut pie creditur)*. St. Bonaventure, however, says that it lacks foundation, and Dionysius the Carthusian expresses uncertainty.

In our days, there are few Latin theologians who present this even as an established opinion. The majority follow the opinion of St. Bonaventure and Dionysius the Carthusian; for example: Suarez, Noël Alexandre and Jacques-Hyacinthe Serry (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 723-724).

At any rate, the hypothesis of the death and a glorious resurrection does not impede the possibility, according to Niceforo Blemmide, that St. John the Evangelist could be the “third witness of Christ, who will be united with Enoch and Elias in order to combat the Antichrist; however, while Enoch and Elias will be killed by the Antichrist, John, with his glorious body, will escape the furor of the Antichrist and will thus await the coming of the Lord” (*ibid.*, p. 720).

* *Partisans of the 4th hypothesis (simple incorruption of the body, with or without its translation to some unknown place)*: certain Byzantine theologians, St. Theodore the Studite, Abelard, Hildebert of Tours, Raoul Ardent.

Therefore, while one can see a certain tendency in the Latin Church to reject these hypotheses, the question is not closed (at least concerning the third hypothesis), and it is licit to think in any of these ways concerning the death, resurrection, and future mission of St. John, as well as his relationship with Enoch and Elias.

I conclude, then, saying that there is nothing heterodox in saying that Elias could be in some place on this Earth, and there is no error against the Faith in the hypothesis that there could be a relationship of some sort between St. John and St. Elias.

C. *If such a place could provide graces for men*

The drops of water that fell to Earth and touched the hearts of men should be considered in the symbolic sense, because a drop of water cannot penetrate the heart. These would be, then, graces that would come to men through the intercession of Elias.

These graces would also touch some who were outside the Church for their conversion. This is the normal effect that a Catholic attributes to graces conceded to protestants, upon interpreting the description in the aforementioned vision.

Considering, therefore, the excerpt from the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerich cited in the book by Prof. Martini in its first meaning, there is nothing heterodox about it, nor is it dangerous or ecumenical.

Mr. O.F. can naturally allege that this excerpt, interpreted according to the light of the general line of the work, is gnostic and has an underlying ecumenical meaning, which initiates and specialists can discern. But this does not authorize saying that the hypothesis that St. Elias and St. John might be found on some place on Earth - mountain or not - and that this place could attract from Heaven graces for men would be *in itself* mendacious, gnostic, evil, and ecumenical. It is perfectly licit to uphold the hypothesis in its obvious Catholic sense, categorically rejecting the underlying gnostic and ecumenical sense. This was what was done in the TFP, following in the footsteps of so many Saints and theologians who have adopted a similar position.

6. 'CRAZY CONCLUSIONS' WITH REGARD TO DR. PLINIO

A response should also be made to the following affirmation of Mr. O.F.: "Moreover, it was this vision of the Mountain of the Prophets that inspired some crazy conclusions with respect to your (Dr. Plinio's) journey toward such a Mountain" (Letter 82, p. 22).

As Fr. Martin Jugie notes in his forecited book, the authors who concede the return of St. John with Enoch and Elias based their reasoning on expediency. That is: "It is fitting that St. John should appear at the end of time as a precursor of the Judge, to represent the Evangelical Law, just as Enoch and Elias will represent the prior period for the law of grace" (*ibid.*, p. 720 – note 1).

Led by analogous reasons of expediency, one of your disciples, Dr. Plinio, – the one who is writing this to you – conjectured the following in the year 1966: Since it is God's will to have two great men of the Old Testament as witnesses in the fight against the Antichrist – one representing the graces prior to the Deluge and the other representing the graces after the Deluge, and since it is admissible to conjecture that St. John could also return to the world in order to represent the graces of the New Testament, if there were to be another chastisement for humanity of such proportions that it could be compared to a Deluge, one could admit the hypothesis, based on analogous reasons of expediency, that there could be another man who would represent the graces of this new era. There is, among us, the certainty that – according to the warnings of Our Lady at Fatima – God will chastise the world in universal proportions; such a chastisement has already been compared by Saints (for example, St. Louis Grignon de Montfort) to a deluge of fire. Therefore, this disciple deemed that *the hypothesis would be admissible* that that Dr. Plinio, who is playing an unparalleled role in the fight against the revolution, could be such a representative.

At any rate, this was a conjecture of a private nature, about which I naturally conversed with others, but which in no way was generally broadcast in any ponderable part of the TFP. This was spoken of as were a thousand other matters, and it would take all the malevolence of Mr. O.F. to focus his telescope on this particle of dust, trying to see in it the dimensions of a star...

Someone could perhaps be shocked at the hypothesis that I raised, considering that no proportion exists between such a grandiose perspective and the mission that falls to Dr. Plinio in this fight of our days against the revolutionary hosts. I respond that this is a question of personal appraisal, in which it is licit for each one to honestly judge in accordance with the facts that he possesses. What is important is to know if this perspective is in accordance with the orthodoxy of Catholic Doctrine or not, because this is what is at stake and not whether the hypothesis is extravagant or improbable. And, by the facts that I have presented, this conjecture – and it is no more than a conjecture – is entirely acceptable in terms of Catholic Doctrine. The one who raised this hypothesis should not, therefore, be accused of heterodoxy, nor should those who consider it with acceptance or simply with benevolence.

Thus do I respond that the letter writer's accusation is false and that this hypothesis is not excessive because:

- a. It does not deal with a "conclusion," but with a simple conjecture;
- b. There is an obvious exaggeration in branding as "crazy" a conjecture inspired by analogous hypotheses admitted by theologians; it was, moreover, an opinion that was voiced only in an intimate circle and without any pretensions of presenting it as anything but a firm personal opinion;
- c. It is not based on the vision of the Mountain of the Prophets of Anne Catherine Emmerick, but on reasons of expediency that are not referred to, nor even insinuated, there.

7. 'THE JUDAIC CHAIR OF ELIAS'

Among "so many other thing ... to condemn or to correct," the letter writer points to "the Judaic chair of Elias placed in the *Eremo* of Elias (a chair used by the Jews in an exclusively Judaic ceremony)" (Letter 83, p. 24).

In the *first place*, I should say that what exists at the *Eremo* of Elias in homage to the Prophet of the old Testament is not a chair, but a throne. This throne is a faithful facsimile, somewhat larger in size, of the throne of Pope St. Gregory the Great, which exists in Rome in the *Chiesa di San Gregorio*. A simple comparison of the photographs of the throne of the Holy Pontiff that can be found in albums or magazines (or the photographs that were taken *in loco* by two renowned cooperators of the TFP, Mr. Nelson Fragelli and Mr. Paulo Henrique Chaves) with the facsimile found in the garden of the *Eremo* of Elias reveals the scrupulous fidelity of the copy to the original. The throne of the prophet Elias, unlike chairs, is sculpted in stone, and its weight is approximately 850 kg (1,875 lbs).

In the *second place*, this throne is quite conspicuously not placed in a synagogue or around any table in the house of Jews, but it is exposed in plain open air in a garden; because of this, it could not play

any part in any Judaic ceremony. In effect, only two feasts in the Israelite religion could foresee an empty place in homage to Elias. One is the ceremony of circumcision, which takes place in the synagogue, where there is a bench with two places: The seat to the right is reserved for Elias and the one to the left is occupied by the sponsor of the child to be circumcised. The other ceremony takes place in the homes of the Israelites on the night of *Pessah* (Passover). The whole family sits around a table to celebrate the first liberation of Israel from the hands of the Pharaoh. At this table a chair and a cup of wine are reserved for the Prophet Elias. These facts are found in the book *Elias, le Prophète (Elias the Prophet)* (Bruges: Études Carmelitaines, Desclée de Brouwer, 1956, vol. II, pp. 252, 254).

On the contrary, this facsimile of the throne of the great warrior Pope was dedicated to the Prophet Elias, patron of the *Eremo* and archetype of all warrior apostles, as a symbol of a continuous prayer asking that he obtain from Our Lady an abbreviation of our present days and that She free the Catholic Church and Christian Civilization from the gnostic and egalitarian Revolution, of which the Judaic-Masonic element is a principal agent.

In addition to this, the throne, according to the plan of the *Eremo*, will be to the side of a statue of Our Lady, still to be concluded. This in itself is profoundly contrary to Judaism, which does not believe in the Word Incarnate or in Our Lady, Mother of God. Such a statue, which has been in the process of being modeled in clay during these last two years, is almost finished, needing only a small retouch job on the face. It is a copy of the statue of Our Lady printed on the cover of issue n. 100 of *Catolicismo*, which published the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. When the model is ready, it will be cast in marble dust, and this statue will be placed upon a stone column that is also being sculpted *pari passu* with the statue. The clay model of the statue and the sculpted column can be found in the *Eremo* of Elias, being worked by Mr. Siqueira Campos, for anyone who desires to see them.

In the *third place*, it is not the exclusive homage of the Jews to dedicate a throne to some absent personage whom one wants to honor. The proof of this is the teaching of Sacred Scripture, according to which God prepared thrones in Heaven that would be occupied by the predestined (Apoc 3:21). If there is a celestial throne (at least in the metaphysical sense of the word) for each one of the predestined, there would be, *a fortiori*, one for Elias. Should Elias reside in some place that is not Heaven, his throne would be vacant in Heaven, awaiting his occupation. Analogously, therefore, the members of the *Eremo* of Elias want to pay homage with an evocative throne to the great Prophet who, according to a firmly established tradition of the Church, will return to this earth to continue his mission. Thus he has in Heaven, where he will go, the throne that God prepared for him; and on Earth, where he will still visit, he at least has a throne that exists in the TFP.

I conclude, saying that the accusation of the letter writer is false because the throne at the *Eremo* of Elias is not a chair, nor is it possible – for reasons of Faith and for practical reasons – to carry out any Judaic ceremony on it, nor would it be a tribute that is exclusively Judaic to dedicate a throne to one who is absent.

Now, let us look at the coherence of the position of the letter writer. A little before, he rose against veneration to Dona Lucilia because she was not canonized. Now, he rises up against homage to the Prophet St. Elias, whose public cult is accepted by the Church.

Thus, Mr. O.F. is only looking for any pretext to malign the TFP and create an atmosphere of mystery around it.

8. MENTAL RESERVATIONS

The letter writer says: “It can be understood how this simulation reached such a degree since the freedom to practice mental reservations is so greatly upheld” (Letter 82, p. 22). And later, he repeats: “Mental reservations (shameless lies) ...” (*ibid.*, p. 24)

Mr. O.F. only echoes an accusation that already appeared in the French *Rapport* in 1979.

The subject of mental reservations was duly analyzed in the corresponding *Refutation* (pp. 155-158), published by the French TFP. It says this concerning mental reservations:

“As a habitual method of acting, we do not consider it legitimate, *ad instar* all Catholic moralists. As an exceptional recourse, in view of an also exceptional contingency, mental reservation can be used. And it can even constitute an act of charity, if it involves not saying something to a person that would do him harm, even though it be the truth. ...

“Other hypotheses where moralists admit the use of mental restriction are in cases of legitimate defense (*lato sensu*), (defense of one’s life, honor, reputation, etc.), as well as in cases where to express the truth would bring about a greater evil than if it were not told” (*ibid.*, pp. 156-167).

One can clearly see from the group of letters that Mr. O.F. wrote and that I have analyzed here that the letter writer and his informers were seeking to find any and every kind of action in the TFP that could be wrongly interpreted. As a consequence, certain questions that he and his informers asked were probably answered with mental restrictions. In this way charity was preserved by avoiding a categorical rebuff, and the TFP was also defended against the obvious bad will of those who posed the questions.

To employ evasions or mental restrictions with Mr. O.F. and his agents would be, according to moralists, the exercise of the right of legitimate defense.

It can thus be concluded that there is nothing contrary to Morals in employing, in thesis, mental restrictions, nor in the fact that some persons in the TFP may have applied them in relation to the letter writer. Moreover, it is false that mental restrictions would necessarily revert to lies.

9. THE PRACTICE OF ‘UNDERLINING’

This subject provides a striking example of the malevolence and deformation of so many of Mr. O.F.’s interpretations. According to him, “underlining” is a technique used to hide the true objective of the TFP, which would not be to give glory to God and to Our Lady, but to glorify its founder...

It would also be used to veil the true meaning that is given to many phrases in the daily life of the TFP (Letter 83, pp. 22-24).

The reality is quite different, and various reasons of a diverse nature contributed to the birth within the TFP of the practice of “underlining,” which, as one will see, has nothing esoteric or contrary to Catholic Doctrine about it.

A. When Dr. Plinio does something outstanding in the direction of the TFP, through modesty he avoids referring to himself and attributes to the entity as a whole that which is due primarily or exclusively to him. In this way he uses expressions such as “the TFP book,” “the TFP manifesto,” “the TFP event,” “we of the TFP,” etc.

During “*Praesto Sum*” meetings on Sundays, the director of the meeting, upon reviewing the activities of the TFP during the week, noted that many times the “we” and the “TFP” used in these expressions could often only justly be applied to Dr. Plinio, the true and principal author of these works or actions. At a certain moment, the director of the meeting came to say: “The ‘we’ here is understood to be ‘underlined.’” The listeners understood and smiled.

From this custom spread in the TFP meetings of calling attention to one or another phrase by saying “underline this.” That is, the phrase is applied to Dr. Plinio himself.

There is nothing more just than for members and cooperators of the TFP in good conscience to attribute to Dr. Plinio that which he is, in fact, the author. It is a question of justice, one of the cardinal virtues, as the Catechism of Catholic Doctrine teaches us.

B. With time, and with the elasticity of language so characteristic of the Brazilian spirit, this “underlining” came to be practiced in relation to other phrases that, analogously, could be applied to Dr. Plinio. In this way, from a “underlining” *stricto sensu*, it passed to an analogous underlining, in which there is also nothing opposed to Catholic Doctrine.

Thus, when Dr. Plinio would make a eulogy of some Saint, emphasizing this or that virtue, the listeners would “underline” the phrase, that is, they would attempt to see how that virtue is also practiced by Dr. Plinio. That disciples should consider and admire the virtue of their masters, seeing in them imitators of the Saints, is a perfectly just practice and one recommended by the Church for progress in the spiritual life.

Would it be legitimate to reflect upon the resemblance of the virtues in the lives of the Saints and of the Just on this earth in relation to the divine virtue of Our Lord Jesus Christ or to the sublime virtue of the Mother of God? There would be nothing more legitimate, since all virtue is only such to the degree that it participates in the virtue of our Savior and Redeemer.

Would it also be legitimate to consider phrases that our Lord said about himself as analogously applicable to the Saints? There is also nothing that prevents this, because it was the Son of God Himself Who said: “The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (Jo 15:20). Because of this, Tertullian rightly exclaims: “*Christianus alter Christus.*”

Thence came the practice of making these analogous applications from passages of the life of Our Lord or Our Lady to Dr. Plinio.

Perhaps because it has not occurred to anyone to make such applications to the letter writer –who, unhappily, has for some time ceased to be an exemplary member of the TFP – he, filled with resentments and prejudices, sees mysterious meanings in the practice of “underlining,” meanings which absolutely do not exist.

C. The practice of “underlining” offers another interest from the point of view of the formation of the younger generations.

In effect, for decades Dr. Plinio has been the object of a continuous defamatory campaign made by our adversaries. This campaign is carried out in two ways. On the one hand, a campaign of silence is pursued in almost all the organs of the media. When this silence becomes unsustainable, a campaign of defamation against the TFP is organized, which either explicitly or implicitly touches upon Dr. Plinio.

It is important, therefore, for the formation of the youngest cooperators to provide them with the elements they need so that they will not be harmed in their formation by this dual campaign. And this can only be done by showing them how this campaign lacks all foundation and how the direction of the TFP is delivered to moral and intellectually qualified and operationally competent hands.

This expediency is present in the informative and formative action directed and in large measure carried out personally by a former student of Mr. O.F., Mr. João Clá Dias, whose profoundly religious, jovial, and understanding spirit manifests itself above all at the meetings of the *Eremo Praesto Sum*.

And this is reason enough to provoke the ire of Mr. O.F.

10. THE ‘EXTERNAL’ FINALITY OF THE TFP: TO COMBAT COMMUNISM

Always on the track to find facts or words that would justify that TFP is concealing a hidden end, Mr. O.F. thinks that he has found a decisive argument in the phrase of an outstanding director of the TFP: “The combat of Communism is the *external* reason for being of the TFP” (Letter 83, p. 23, my emphasis). And the letter writer adds: “The one who said this atrocity was not an *enjolras*. It was Mr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito Filho, a member of the National Council and in charge of the Press Service of the TFP” (*ibid.*).

It is obvious that such a phrase was employed in an everyday conversation and, therefore, with the degree of imprecision that is natural and even human to find in many expressions of everyday language.

The phrase in question can have various benevolent and obvious interpretations. But Mr. O.F. immediately sustains as indisputable the malevolent interpretation that, curiously enough, he does not even go to the trouble to explain. I have already shown that this system of inexplicit accusations makes up part of the method used by Mr. O.F. in launching his libel.

As a system of accusation, it is the most inadequate that one can imagine: *First*, to admit the principle that the words of an everyday conversation should be interpreted with absolute rigor; *second*, to draw from this such enormous conclusions as those that Mr. O.F. presents in his letters.

Despite the unsuitability of this method, I go on to analyze the phrase itself in order to show that its normal and first meaning is not that which Mr. O.F. attributes to it.

To state that the *external* reason for being of the TFP is to combat Communism obviously implies admitting that there is also an *internal* reason for its being. Because the opposite of external is internal.

The members and cooperators of the TFP being Catholics, they necessarily have the salvation of their souls as the principal finality of their lives. Called by Providence to fight in defense of the Church and Christian Civilization in a general way, and in a special way against Socialism and Communism, the members and cooperators of the TFP are fully aware that this fight should produce a double fruit: one, completely interior, which is their sanctification, achieved by their fulfillment of the will of God; the other, the exterior effect of their action, which would be the setbacks they cause to Socialism and Communism. These fruits are related, but distinct.

For publicity purposes, easy to understand, the statutes of the TFP and its work speak to the public only of the second fruit, the only one of interest to the public. This, then, is the quite natural explanation of the phrase of Prof. Paulo Corrêa de Brito Filho.

Mr. O.F. is perfectly aware of the authenticity of the “external” action of the TFP. He is so much aware of this that he warns in his letter of rupture that his words should not be understood as a threat of a defamatory publicity campaign - which, as he imagines, could destroy the entity. And he immediately adds, by way of justification: “*To destroy the TFP today would be to give the victory to Communism in Brazil*” (Letter 83, p. 24, original emphasis). He acknowledges, therefore, that the great enemy that Brazil has to confront, and against which the TFP represents a barrier, is Communism.

Permit me to make a collateral observation: How could God bless the external apostolate of the TFP to the point that it represents a barrier to Communism – as the letter writer acknowledges – if its true end is something else, something clandestine, unspeakable, hidden?

Mr. O.F. must have been spinning in a whirlwind of confusion for concepts so clear to be jumbled in such a way in his mind.

11. ‘ORCHESTRATED CULT’

* “The emphasized phrases of the proclamations, hailed by frenetic ‘ohs,’ what sense do they have?” (Letter 82, p. 22).

* “How many things to change! The ‘ohs’...orchestrated claque ...a conspicuous claque unworthy of a counter-revolutionary auditorium, which reduces us to the level of an assembly of democratic students. ‘Ohs’ that transform our meetings ... into something similar to the crusille ‘*rolhos*’ and ‘*ul-treyas*’ or the gatherings in television studios where not even ‘*oles*’ are lacking” (Letter 82, pp. 24-25).

* “The fact that ‘oh’ is shouted when you say something sublime or when you say that tomorrow is the day after today does not offset the disgrace of substituting Our Lady for whoever it may be” (Letter 82, pp. 25-26).

* This would be the final “proof” that Dr. Plinio would have replaced “his glory as a paladin of the Church and a soldier of Our Lady for the false prestige of an absurd cult (Letter 83, p. 26).

* Mr. O.F. ends with an appeal to Dr. Plinio: “Do not permit that the whole cause be destroyed by an orchestrated cult and by your delirious theses. Do not permit this ‘immense sin’” (Letter 82, p. 26).

The generalized use of these “ohs” would prove, therefore, that there is cult to Dr. Plinio in the TFP, that this cult is “absurd,” and that it would constitute an “immense sin.”

I will enter into the analysis.

A. The “ohs” are exclamations of admiration directed to the one who speaks or to that which is being said.

If the exclamations refer to what is being said, the question of cult can immediately be dismissed, and it is not necessary to examine the hypothesis.

If they are directed to the one who speaks, according to the logic of the letter writer, it could be said that there is cult not only to Dr. Plinio, but also to other persons. For, at the meetings that Mr. João Cla gives, the usage of these “ohs” is also habitual. In his absence, Mr. Wellington Silva Dias directs the meetings at “*Praesto Sum*,” which are always hailed with “ohs”; Mr. Fernando Antunez is frequently besieged by groups of youths who want to hear facts from the daily life of Dr. Plinio and the TFP, which are received by “ohs”; yet other cooperators of the TFP who make up his personal advisory group, Mr. Gugelmin, Mr. Clarindo, Mr. Amadeu, for example, are greeted by “ohs” when they have related something curious or interesting, be it relative to the person of Dr. Plinio or be it in reference to the actions of the diverse TFPs. From what I know, even among the youngest men, when one tells another some significant fact, this “oh” can normally be heard. Yet it would be absurd to see in all these acts a cult to these persons.

One should keep in mind here what was said in Chapter VI about the real meaning that the expression *cult of dulia* has in the language of moralists, where it refers to religious as well as civil cult: a manifestation of the acknowledgment of the outstanding excellence of someone. This meaning should not be confused – as Mr. O.F. does – with the frequent sense that the word “cult” has in everyday vocabulary, that is, the special homage rendered by the faithful to one who has died and is declared to be enjoying the glory of Heaven and the beatific vision of God (and who is inscribed by the Church in the catalogue of the Saints or Blessed). The latter can have with the faithful a completely spiritual contact, by which all that is made known in one way or another to the soul of the faithful is like a divine message.

Mr. O.F. confuses and jumbles these concepts:

- a. If the *cult of dulia* is understood as the acknowledgment of the religious or civic excellence of some mortal who is still a pilgrim in this life, subject to all the risks and restrictions that this life presents to each one – a poor mortal who does not enjoy the beatific vision or possess in himself the glory of those who live in Heaven – then I have already shown that the cult of *dulia* constitutes a concept so vast that it could encompass the acknowledgment of this superiority: This is a daily fact of well ordered earthly life, and it is exercised within the TFP in due

proportions not only in relation to Dr. Plinio, but to others who stand out for their dedication, learning, or actions.

- b. If the common and current meaning of the word *dulia* is understood, then I affirm that it would be absurd to interpret these “ohs,” so inconsequential and trivial, as an expression of the *cult of dulia*...

B. If the exclamation “oh” were in itself an expression of cult to the person who is speaking, how would the letter writer explain that the youths not only use “oh” but also other exclamations. For example, they frequently say “ah!” when their hopes are frustrated. Or when something bad is described, they say “ih!” And when they discern a dangerous maneuver of the adversary, they exclaim “eh!” And so on. Thus, during their meetings, there is frequently the use not only of the admiring “oh,” but also the desolate “ah,” the restrictive “ih” and the cautious “eh.” All these exclamations, which alternate with a certain disorder, are characteristic of this generation, whose difficulty in verbal expression is notorious and the object of study of specialists throughout the world. All these exclamations, then, would be directed to Dr. Plinio, but would be far from reflecting cult...

The accusation of cult, based on the exclamation “oh,” suffers, therefore, from a radical lack of internal coherence; for this reason, the accusation dissolves only to be disintegrated, sparing the one who responds the small task of refuting it.

C. After this assertion, the letter writer imagines himself to be a critique of ambiances. And supposing himself to possess the proper sense of decorum and respect (which he would have avariciously economized upon in drafting his three letters), he exclaims: “A clique ... unworthy of a counter-revolutionary auditorium, which reduces us to the level of an assembly of democratic students.”

I examine the end of the abyss to which the letter writer points in horror: an assembly of democratic students. University students would always constitute a milieu, ambience, and group that, in some aspects, one can call legitimately democratic. Its components come, in the majority of cases, from social levels that are not aristocratic, but those which constitute one of the most picturesque and vibrant aspects of an organic society.

One sees, therefore, that, from this angle, students and democratic are, in this sense, words that are somewhat redundant. And the expression “democratic students” is, for all practical purposes, almost synonymous with students.

In the thinking of the letter writer, this would reach the height of degradation: the level of an assembly of students. Now, since the majority of cooperators in the TFP are made up of university and secondary level students, as well as youths from offices and factories, what is wrong with them having the level of students? Would the letter writer wish for people of simple origins, the common people, to begin to assume noble airs so that there would be an assembly of aristocratic students?

One sees, therefore, that there is nothing at all wrong with the fact that at their meetings, the younger boys assume the air of that which they are, which is, students. And at the meetings of the older ones, to which a good number of the younger boys have access, it would fall to the President of the TFP, to the National Council, or to the group of older members to express their opinion about the comportment

of these youth. Now, at these meetings, Dr. Plinio, as well as the National Council, as well as the older members, all look with benevolence upon this behavior of the younger boys ... even when their vivacity disturbs the meetings. Who, then, would be this “we” in whose name the letter writer speaks?

One can also see a contradiction. During the years that he was in charge of the behavior of the members of the group whom he directed in the TFP, he favored great hullabaloo, merrymaking, singing, and nights of beer-drinking. He also instilled in the new members his admiration for the pirates of the 17th and 18th centuries, praising one who even dedicated an internal restaurant to them. He explained all this as filling a need for the vitality of the youths. All this was accepted by Dr. Plinio and by the older members not without circumspection or doubt, but also with a sympathy that, in the more acute cases, reached a benign tolerance. Why can the same explanation not be given now as fulfilling a need for the vitality of the common people? Why would the explanation not apply now for even younger youths, coming in general from the same humble ranks of society?

This is all the more so since – it is important to note – the dominant note in the ambiances surrounding Mr. O.F. used to be one of lighthearted banter and comedy. However, today, the gravity of the themes, their logical development, and the consequences drawn from them confer to our meetings a seriousness that only the eyes of the most superficial observer could be blurred by such “ohs” and similar exclamations.

12. CONCLUSION OF THIS CHAPTER

This serious analysis of the eleven scattered accusations of the letter writer thus concludes that one is so vague as to be incapable of being refuted: “There are things about the Creed and the Gospels in the TFP.” And the ten others are false: that in the TFP there is the fear that someone could “overshadow” Dr. Plinio; that the reading of newspapers is considered superfluous and prejudicial; that it is only important to study the life of Dr. Plinio; that the Mountain of the Prophets cited in the book of Prof. Martini would be gnostic; that the “crazy conclusion” was reached in the TFP that Dr. Plinio would be reserved to return at the end of the world with Enoch and Elias; that the throne reserved for the Prophet Elias would be Judaic; that the undue use of mental restriction leads people in the TFP to the practice of lying; that the “underlining” reveals the practice of cult; that the external finality of the TFP, which is to combat Communism, covers up a hidden end; and that the use of the exclamation “oh” reveals a cult.

Therefore, all of these accusations analyzed in this Chapter are false.

13. FINAL CONCLUSION

Having thus examined the diverse subjects explained here, it is not difficult for one to note that the accusations of Mr. O.F. are not true, be they considered from in their central nucleus or in the scattered accusations that he makes.

* * *

FINAL WORDS

1. It can be asked of what worth is an accusation, like the one of Mr. O.F. that Dr. Plinio and the TFP are perhaps not Catholic, when there is no truth in his object, where the proofs are nonexistent or false, the witnesses are in general anonymous, and when there is no intellectual integrity on the part of the accuser nor an absence of self-interest and passion. It is difficult – it is impossible not to conclude that it is of absolutely no worth.

And, suffering from this complete absence of truth and total lack of credibility, the accusation of Mr. O.F. leaves that sphere inhabited by serious subjects and dashes headlong into the morass of detraction. By the lack of truth in the object, as well as the absence of proofs and of witnesses in the demonstration, any accusation is defective, and any denouncement is equally defective through lack of integrity on the part of the denouncer. Nor can it be an adequate private grievance because of the lack of personal disinterest and passion: It is, therefore, pure detraction.

2. The only merit of the “O.F. affair” was, by exclusion, the proof of the innocence of Dr. Plinio and the TFP in relation to the accusation that they are not Catholic. Consonance with the principles and the customs of the Church manifested themselves not only in that which Dr. Plinio was aware of and that which in fact represents his thinking, but even in that of which he was not aware in one or another practice or opinion of some members or cooperators of the TFP.

If it took 30 years of observation and investigation by Mr. O.F. and his informers to make such a detraction by way of these accusations, one can with justice give thanks to God and to Our Lady who have so ordained that such orthodoxy and consonance with the spirit of the Church should exist in Dr. Plinio and in the TFP. And, Dr. Plinio in truth merits the illustrious eulogy that the Sacred Congregation of the Seminaries and Universities made of his work in a letter dated December 2, 1964, signed by Cardinals Pizzardo and Staffa: “The most faithful echo of the Documents of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church.”

Here, Dr. Plinio, I come to the end of my analysis, which throughout I sought for objectivity in the facts, clarity in concepts, and the defense of the truth. By thus defending the truth, your honor remains safeguarded. And the accusation reverts to the glorification of your work, truly unparalleled in our days.

*

I repeat here, at the end of this work, my proposal to redress your good name, Dr. Plinio, and also that of the much loved and most respectable Dona Lucilia.

Receive, I entreat you, this small homage of the effort of one month of studies as the most elementary duty of justice that I can render to you.

I end here with this hope:

“Quando tempo for e em melhor modo [When the time may come, and in a better way]

Há de me ouvir Senhor o mundo todo” [The whole world shall hear me, O Lord]⁵⁷

As one most honored to be able to be called your son,

In Jesu et Maria,

Atila Sinke Guimarães

* * *

⁵⁷ Luis de Camões, who dedicated this phrase to the Count of Linhares, *apud* Prof. Othoniel Motta, conference *Camões, o lyrico* in *Os Lusíadas*, São Paulo-Rio: Wesizflog Irmãos, 1917, p. 387.

AN ANTI-TFP COMMENTARY

Study by
Gustavo Antonio Solimeo
Concerning an Opinion About a Litany

Analysis by
Fr. Victorino Rodriguez, O.P.

Concerning the litany to Dona Lucilia R. Corrêa de Oliveira (cf. letter of Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, Chap. VIII, 2), Mr. O.F., ignoring the fact that this litany had been criticized and prohibited by the leadership of the TFP for four years, sent a letter on October 26, 1983 to Castro Mayer, former Bishop of Campos. In his response, dated November 4, 1983, the Prelate issued a gravely deprecatory opinion against the entity, alleging reasons that went far beyond the notice merited by the comported litany.

In turn, a study by TFP member Gustavo Antonio Solimeo showed the lack of justification in the doctrinal reasons and canonical documentation that His Excel. Bishop Mayer presented as basis for his opinion, as well as the intrinsic unsuitability of the inquiry itself, which did not clearly state exactly which facts the Prelate was being asked to give his opinion on.

After an attentive reading of this study by Gustavo Antonio Solimeo, a theologian of illustrious renown in the universal Church, Father Friar Victorino Rodriguez OP, elaborated a serene and learned Analysis, transcribed on the following page. Father Victorino Rodriguez is a former Professor in the Departments of Theology in San Esteban and the Pontifical University of Salamanca, a current professor contracted by the Superior Counsel of Scientific Investigations of Madrid, an Ordinary of the Roman Pontifical Academy of Theology, as well as an author of numerous important philosophical and theological works. In his *Analysis*, he states that, in the study by the TFP member, he can find “no theological, moral or canonical error,” and finds it an adequate response to the “somewhat vague” observations by Bishop Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer.

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ANALYSIS

I have attentively read the *Study of Señor Gustavo Solimeo concerning an opinion about a litany*. In the work (which contains 39 pages, all signed by me and by João S. Clá Dias, representative of the Brazilian TFP), I found no theological, moral, or canonical error.

I find it to be an adequate response to the somewhat vague and incomprehensive responses of Msgr. Castro Mayer, due to the animosity of the consultant or whatever it might be.

On my part, I would say these two things:

First: That several of the invocations are somewhat ingenuous, some excessively exaggerating the practices in the Group, and others somewhat ambiguous, and thence poorly understood. Because of all this, it appears to me good that Dr. Plinio has prohibited them.

Second: Notwithstanding, I think it is exaggerated to label some of these invocations as heterodox or blasphemous, not taking into account the relative nature of the language employed in them. While God is Light and the Fountain of light, this does not exclude others from participating in and diffusing this light; while Mary is the Universal Mediatrix, this does not exclude secondary mediators, just as the Mediation of Mary does not obstruct the Principle Mediation of Christ.

On page 1, lines 9 and 10, I note the attribute of the C.I.C. [*Code of Canon Law*] from the year 1917 to St. Pius X, it being that of Benedict XV. When he defends the title of “Doctor of the Church” for Dr. Plinio, it would perhaps be necessary to distinguish this title: The title applied to certain canonized saints; the title conceded by the Pontifical Universities; the title that Bishops have by right, even without the university title; and the true doctor in Christian doctrine, with or without the title.

Madrid, June 7, 1984

Fr. Victorino Rodriguez y Rodriguez, O.P.

Professor of Theology

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LETTER OF MR. ORLANDO FEDELI TO BISHOP ANTONIO DE CASTRO MAYER

São Paulo, October 26, 1983

Your Excellency Most Reverend
D. ANTONIO DE CASTRO MAYER,

Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ!

I want to present you with a litany made in the TFP to Dona Lucilia Corrêa de Oliveira, to request your opinion in respect to it:

Litany of Dona Lucilia

Lord, have mercy on us.
 Christ, have mercy on us.
 Lord, have mercy on us.
 Christ, hear us.
 Christ, graciously hear us.
 God the Heavenly Father, have mercy on us.
 God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have mercy on us.
 God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
 Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.
 Dona Lucilia, pray for us.
Manguinha, pray for us.
 Mother of Dr. Plinio, pray for us.
 Mother of the Doctor of the Church, pray for us.
 Mother of our Father, pray for us.
 Mother of the Ineffable, pray for us.
 Mother of us all, pray for us.
 Mother of the Axiological Principle, pray for us.
 Mother of the Temperament of Synthesis, pray for us.
 Mother of all purity, pray for us.
 Mother of the Transphere, pray for us.
 Mother of Seriousness, pray for us.
 Mother of the Counter-Revolution, pray for us.
 Restorer of Temperaments, pray for us.
 Fountain of Light, pray for us.
 Generator of Innocence, pray for us.
 Consolation of Sr.. Dr. Plinio, pray for us.
 Mediatrix of the Grand Return, pray for us.
 Mediatrix of all our graces, pray for us.

Dawn of the Reign of Mary, pray for us.
 Dona Lucilia of the Smile, pray for us.
 Dona Lucilia of the Flashes, pray for us.
 Flower more beautiful than all, pray for us.
 Our refuge, pray for us.
 Our consoler, pray for us.
 Our succor in the Bagarre, pray for us.
 Cause of our perseverance, pray for us.
 Vessel of logic, pray for us.
 Vessel of the Metaphysical, pray for us.
 Martyr of isolation, pray for us.
 Queen of serene suffering, pray for us.
 Queen of the '*jeitinho*,' pray for us.
 Queen of Serenity, pray for us.
 * Dona Lucilia, our Mother and our Lady, help us.
 * Dona Lucilia, our greatest Mediatrix before Our Lady, help us.
 * (Ejaculations added after denouncements of the litany)
 Pray for us, O Mother of the Doctor of the Church,
 So that we might be worthy of the promises of Sr. Dr. Plinio.

Memorare

Remember, O most blessed Dona Lucilia, that never was it known, etc.

*

I ask Your Excellency:

- 1st - Are these prayers licit or contrary to the *Code of Canon Law*?
- 2nd - Are they in accordance with the doctrine of the Church?
- 3rd - Can one attribute titles exclusive to Our Lady to any person whatsoever?
- 4th - Is this in accordance with the practice and the spirit of the Church?

Requesting your authorized opinion,
 I take my leave, asking your blessing.

Orlando Fedeli

* * *

RESPONSE OF BISHOP ANTONIO DE CASTRO MAYER TO MR. O.F.'S REQUEST

OPINION

Concerning the litany above to Dona Lucilia, I want to say:

1. I never knew of its existence. Only now have I become aware of it, although it be indirectly.
2. Considered in itself,

It ignores various decisions of the Holy Church;
It contains errors against the Faith;

It consequently involves grave consequences for the piety of those who would habitually make use of it.

- a. It constitutes a pious exercise of cult to a person not canonized or beatified, conditions which should be taken into consideration even in exercises of private cult.
- b. It touches on blasphemy, since it attributes to another the invocations that the Holy Church joins together to emphasize the singular excellence of the sanctity of the Mother of God;
- c. Several of the invocations involve grave errors against the faith, such as to call Dona Lucilia the Fountain of Light (the light par excellence is God Our Lord), Mediatrix of all our graces, and others. The same can be said about the prerogatives attributed to the corollary of these invocations, such as “ineffable” (only God); Doctor of the Church (as if he were “the” Doctor of the Church, etc.)
- d. It is prejudicial to those who make use of it, above all habitually, because it imperceptibly deforms actual concepts of the truths of the Faith, such as the “*unimoda*” transcendency of God, the structure of the Holy Church, the unique place of Mary Most Holy in the plan of Redemption, etc.

Responding to the final questions:

1st resp: The Litany is not licit, and is contrary to Canon Law.

2nd resp: No.

3rd resp: No.

4th resp: No.

Campos, November 4, 1983, St. Charles Borromeo
Doctor of the Church,
Antonio de Castro Mayer, Bishop

The following is added as a postscript and is handwritten:

Canonical documentation that supports my observations:

- a. General warning: Canon 1261 § 1;
- b. Litanies need approbation even for private cult: Canon 1259 § 2; see commentary of BAC;
- c. Cult only to persons canonized or beatified: Canons 1255 and 1256;
- d. Danger to the faithful: Canon 1261 § *in fine*.

* * *

**STUDY ON AN *OPINION*
ABOUT A LITANY**

Gustavo Antônio Solimeo

STUDY ON AN *OPINION* ABOUT A LITANY

Gustavo Antônio Solimeo

The *Opinion* of His Excellency Antonio de Castro Mayer, reigning Bishop of Campos, is about the litany composed in the year 1977 in honor of the deceased Dona Lucilia Ribeiro dos Santos Corrêa de Oliveira, which was recited privately initially only by its authors, two cooperators of the TFP who were then quite young (it was later recited as well by other cooperators of the entity). This *Opinion* is completely lacking in basis. In a hasty postscript, made *a posteriori*, he mentions only canons 1255, 1256, 1259 § 2 and 1261 § 1 from the *Code of Canon Law* of St. Pius X (*Code* of 1917), under the heading: *Canonical Documentation that Supports my Observations*. As one will see, none of the cited canons refers to the matter in question, that is, the *licitness* of whether litanies and other prayers can be composed to persons not canonized or beatified (1st question), the *orthodoxy* of the invocations of the litany in question (2nd question), the *legitimacy* of applying the other titles given to our Lady (3rd question), and the *conformity* of all this with the practice and the spirit of the Church (4th question). Neither do they have any relation to the accusations of illicitness, blasphemy, and heterodoxy enunciated in the *Opinion*.

Neither were any documents of the Popes or the Roman Congregations cited, nor the common and constant thinking of Church Doctors (canonists, moralists, theologians and liturgists) to justify his affirmations. Thus, the *Opinion* amounts to no more than these affirmations, which express a strictly personal point of view -- a point of view that is, nonetheless, worthy of consideration due to the respectability of the person who holds it. Here I will attempt to demonstrate, *data venia*, that such affirmations find no basis in any canonical, liturgical or dogmatic documentation, nor in the judgments of Church Doctors.

I. IF THE LITANY IS CONTRARY TO CANON LAW

1. VAGUE AND GENERIC CHARACTER OF THE *OPINION*

One can divide the *Opinion* into four parts: I) General observations; II) Affirmations about specific points; III) Response to the final questions of the inquiry; IV) *Post scriptum* with canonical documentation.

The *Opinion* begins with the following general observations:

“Considered in itself (the litany):”

1. “It ignores *various* decisions of the Holy Church;”
2. “It contains errors against the Faith;”
3. “It *consequently* involves grave *consequences* (*sic*) for the piety of those who would habitually make us of it.

I observe in passing the vague character of n. 1: “It (the Litany) ignores *various* decisions of the Holy Church.” “Various decisions”: How many? Which ones? In what matter (liturgical, canonical, doctrinal)? From the beginning one sees that this *vague* and *general* note acts as the characteristic tone present throughout the whole *Opinion*.

Having made this *charge* against the litany as a whole and “considered in itself,” the *Opinion* presents what should be the specification of these general accusations:

“a. It constitutes a pious exercise of cult to a person not canonized or beatified, *conditions* which should be taken into consideration even in exercises of private cult” (our emphasis).

This sentence is poorly constructed, because the second proposition has no connection to the first. By substituting the word “circumstance” for “conditions,” perhaps the thinking of the Author of the *Opinion* would become clearer:

“a. It constitutes a pious exercise of cult to a person not canonized or beatified, a *circumstance* which should be taken into consideration even in exercises of private cult.”

The thinking now becomes clear: The litany would constitute, according to the *Opinion*, a pious exercise of worship (cult) that did not take into consideration the circumstance that the person honored had not been canonized or beatified. By not taking this into consideration, the litany would constitute an exercise of cult where the person not canonized or beatified would be tributed honors reserved by the Church for the cult of Saints and the Blessed. Whence the conclusion: “*The litany is not licit, and is contrary to Canon Law.*”

2. CONFUSION CONCERNING THE CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC CULT & PRIVATE CULT

The *Inquiry*, as well as the *Opinion*, falls into a not uncommon confusion concerning the concepts of *public worship* (cult) and *private worship* (cult): that is, that an act of *public cult* is every manifestation of devotion practiced in front of another person or in groups, and that *private cult* would be that which someone exercises in a private place, individually or in some very small group, almost in secret and clandestine. Or, if it is practiced in a Church, the person is alone.

Catholic doctrine says something quite different, and the Canon Law is quite clear in this respect.

Public cult is worship offered in the name of the Church by persons lawfully deputed for this function and through acts which, by the institution of the Church, are to be offered only to God and the Saints and Blessed (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1256). It is the official worship of the Church, and, for this reason, it is regulated. In a contrary sense, *private worship* is that which is exercised by individuals in their own private name, and which, because of this, is not officially regulated.

The primary requirement for the cult to be *public* is not, therefore, that it be *practiced publicly*, but that an official representative of the Church exercises it by means of certain determined acts: For example, the Breviary that the Priest prays in his room is an act of *public worship*, because he does it in the name of the Church: It is the whole Church that prays through his lips. Even the Rosary that the members and cooperators of the TFP pray on the sidewalks in front of the Oratories in its various Seats, as well as in the streets, constitutes an act of *private worship* practiced in *public*.

Private worship can be *individual*, as in the case of someone who prays his Rosary alone, or in *groups*, as when the faithful join together, for example, for the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, even in the presence of or under the direction of the Parish Priest and within the very confines of the mother church (thus the Way of the Cross is an act of *private cult*, that is, non-official, as the Priest does not mediate as *minister of the Church*, but only as *director of the pious exercise*, which does not require the office of priest). *Public worship*, then, is different from *private exterior worship* practiced in public.⁵⁸

3. A FALSE PREMISE: ‘CULT ONLY TO A PERSON NOT CANONIZED OR BEATIFIED’

As a consequence of this confusion of concepts, the *Opinion* departs from a *false premise*, implicit in item “a” that we have cited, and completely explicit in item “c” of the *post scriptum*: “c. *cult only to persons canonized or beatified – canons 1255 and 1256.*”

What is the tenor of the cited canons?

Canon 1255 § 1. “The worship which is due to the Most Holy Trinity, to each of the Divine Persons, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, even under the Sacramental Species, is *cultus latriae*; that which is due to the Blessed Virgin Mary is *cultus hyperduliae*; that which is due to others who reign with Christ in heaven is *cultus duliae*.”

§ 2. “To sacred relics and images also there is due a veneration and worship which is relative to the person to whom the relics and images refer.”

A simple reading of the canon shows that one cannot draw from it the conclusion that the *Opinion* purposes to reach.

In effect, § 1 of the canon in no way affirms that cult is due “only to persons canonized or beatified,” as one reads in the *Opinion*. The words of the canon are clear: The cult of *dulia* is due “to the others reigning with Christ in Heaven,” without specifications as to beatification or canonization. And this is the unanimous feeling of theologians and canonists: One can venerate not only the Servants of God inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints and Blessed with *private cult*, but also all those who can reasonably be believed to have been saved, especially those who die with the reputation of sanctity or martyrdom and if graces or miracles have been obtained through their intercession, without excluding baptized infants who die before attaining the use of reason.

And § 2, concerning worship of sacred relics and images, also contains no restrictions whatsoever in relation to persons not canonized or beatified.

It was not fitting, therefore, to invoke canon 1255 in the case at point.

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⁵⁸ Cf. Chollet, cols. 2410-2411; Jombart, cols. 861-863.

Nor does Canon 1256 “support” the observation above that cult is due “only to canonized or beatified persons.” This canon simply completes the definition we have already seen of *public cult* and, in contrast to it, also that of *private cult*:

Canon 1256. “If worship is offered in the name of the church by persons lawfully deputed for this function and through acts which, by the institution of the church, are to be offered only to God, and the saints and blessed, the worship is public, otherwise, it is private.”

The Legislator, in defining *public cult*, indirectly excludes those who are not canonized or beatified, which it makes direct and express in canon 1277 § 1 (not included, by the way, in the *Opinion*). But, at the same time, it implicitly admits the legitimacy of *private cult* for “others reigning with Christ in heaven” who have not yet been canonized or beatified. And this is also the *common and constant* judgment of theologians and canonists, as we will later see.

From this, the following can be drawn:

CONCLUSION: Canons 1255 and 1256 do not permit the affirmation that “The Litany is not licit, and is contrary to Canon Law.”

4. THE CHURCH RECOMMENDS INVOKING ALL THE ‘SERVANTS OF GOD REIGNING WITH CHRIST, AND TO VENERATE THEIR RELICS AND IMAGES’

To completely clarify the matter, it is indispensable to know canons 1276 and 1277, ignored by the *Opinion*:

Canon 1276. “It is a good and useful thing prayerfully to invoke the Servants of God who are reigning with Christ, and to venerate their relics and images; but all the faithful should with filial devotion honor about all others the Blessed Virgin.”

According to doctors and profound Authors, the counsel to “prayerfully invoke the Servants of God who are reigning with Christ and to venerate their relics and images” is not limited to those who have been canonized or beatified, but extends as well to those who are not.

The next canon reads:

Canon 1277 § 1. “Only those servants of God may be honored with *public worship*, who are by authority of the Church numbered among the saints and blessed.”

This canon is also perfectly clear: *Public worship* can be rendered only to canonized or beatified Servants of God; those who have not been canonized or beatified are, therefore excluded. However, here also there is no prohibition of rendering to the latter the honors of *private worship (cult)*.

The opinion of canonists is also unanimous on this point: With *private worship (cult)*, one can venerate those whom one has the moral certainty are saved.⁵⁹ (2).

Yet the *Opinion* completely ignores these two canons that establish to whom *public cult* is due or can be rendered (to God, Our Lady, the Saints, and the Blessed) and, in an indirect way, to whom *private cult* can be rendered (to the Servants of God not beatified or canonized).

Therefore, the affirmation that one can render “cult only to persons canonized or beatified” finds no basis neither in canons 1255 or 1256, cited inappropriately in the *Opinion*, nor in canons 1276 and 1277 § 1, which regulate the matter, but which were ignored in the same *Opinion*.

From this we can draw the following conclusion:

CONCLUSION: *Canons 1276 and 1277 § 1 also do not permit the affirmations that “The litany is not licit, and contrary to Canon Law.”*

5. LITANIES DO NOT NEED ECCLESIASTIC APPROVAL TO BE RECITED

Another groundless presupposition from which an erroneous conclusion is drawn is contained in the *post scriptum*:

“b. *Litanies need approval even for private cult: Canon 1259 § 2 - see commentary of BAC.*”

A. *More confusion of language and concepts*

First of all, it is necessary to observe that the *Opinion* falls into a confusion of language and concepts about “*public cult*” and “*public recitation*,” “*private cult*” and “*private recitation*.” Therefore, even though letter “b” of the *post scriptum* speaks of “*private cult*,” it nonetheless refers to a canon and a “commentary of the BAC” regarding only *public recitation* and *private recitation of litanies*, without any reference to *cult*, public or private. From this, one can infer that the *Opinion* understood the word “worship” (*cult*) in the sense of “act of worship” or, more precisely, that of “Recitation.” Letter “b” of the *post scriptum* should read, then, in the following way: “b. *Litanies need approval even for private recitation.*”

The concepts should not, however, be confused. *Worship (cult)* comprises all the forms of honoring, reverencing, and venerating someone (acts, gestures, words); *recitation* includes only one of these forms: to pray aloud or sing prayers, supplications, or invocations.

Neither should the concepts of *public cult* and *public recitation* be confused. It has already been shown of what *public cult* and *private cult* consists. It remains to be seen how *public recitation* and *private recitation* are defined.

⁵⁹ Concerning the legitimacy of private cult to persons not canonized or beatified, as well as to their images and relics, see also: Alonso Moran, II, nn. 699 and 720; Beste, pp. 625, 646; Cocchi, L. III, p. III, nn. 91e., 114a; Coronata, II, nn. 831, 856, 857; Jombart, col. 862; Martins Gigante, II, nn. 127, 131; Naz, III, n. 107; Regatillo, II, nn. 124-25; Sipsos-Galos, p. 595; Vermersch-Creusen, II, n. 602; Wernz-Vidal, IV, nn. 455, 487.

For the purpose of gaining indulgences, the Holy Apostolic Penitentiary established the following criteria, applicable to *pious exercises* in general (and, therefore, also to the *recitation* of prayers): “It is said that pious exercises are practiced publicly only when they are realized in *common*, in *churches* and *public oratories*, or in *semi-public oratories* that can legitimately be used for such” (*Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, Preces et pia opera*, Typis Polyglotis Vaticanis, 1952, p. IX, n. 7).

For the specific case of litanies, the Sacred Congregation of Rites defined as *public recitation* those litanies that the faithful make *in common* (together) in *churches* and *public oratories*, even if a minister of the Church does not mediate in such, that is, in his official character. The only litanies that can be recited in this form are litanies approved by the Holy See, that is, those that are contained in the Breviary or in the Roman Ritual: the litanies of the *Most Holy Name of Jesus*, the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, *Our Lady (Litany of Loreto)*, *St. Joseph*, and *All Saints* (Decrees of March 6, 1894 and June 20, 1896). The rest of the litanies (of the *Holy Ghost*, the *Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*, *St. Michael the Archangel*, *St. Anne*, and of others) can only be recited *privately*, that is, outside of churches and public oratories, as long as they are recited individually and not in groups. Some authors, however, seem to admit that these dispositions are only applied to recitation *during liturgical functions* and that, outside of them, any litany approved by the Ordinary can be recited publicly in churches or public oratories.⁶⁰ (3).

B. Ambiguity as well as confusion

In addition to confusion, the *Opinion* presents a not insignificant amount of *ambiguity* on this point, in indicating a text from *Canon Law* and an unidentified “commentary of the BAC” as “*canonical documentation* that supports my (his) observations.” The first impression given is that the “observation” present in this passage of the *Opinion* would be covered in both texts, or that, at least, the second would in some way substantiate the first.

C. Neither canon 1259 § 2 nor the “Commentary of the BAC” supports the Opinion

In reality, whoever reads the text of canon 1259 § 2, not having at hand the “commentary of the BAC,” finds no basis therein for what is affirmed in the *Opinion*, concerning the need for ecclesiastical approval for litanies to be recited privately. I will suppose, then, that such basis is found in the indicated commentary, since the commentators on the *Code of Canon Law* customarily present the complementary legislation (pontifical documents, declarations from the Roman Congregations or the Pontifical Commission of Interpretation of the *Code*, etc), which fill in the vacuums in the Code or clarify and provide an authentic interpretation of obscure or faulty canons. It could occur, then, that this commentary is referring to one of these documents.

However, whoever reads the commentary to canon 1259, contained in the well-known bilingual edition of commentaries to the *Code of Canon Law* published by the BAC (Library of Christian Authors in Madrid), to which the *Opinion* is presumably referring, does not find there any “canonical documentation” whatsoever that “supports” the affirmation that “litanies need approval even for private recitation” (or private worship [cult]). The commentary limits himself, based on a document from the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary, to clarifying the meaning of the expression “*recite publicly*” contained in the cited ca-

⁶⁰ Cf. Cocchi, L. III, p. III, n. 94b.

non 1259 § 2; he does not, then, concern himself here with the question of whether or not ecclesiastical approval is needed for litanies recited privately.

The *Opinion* would find even less basis for support in the “commentary of the BAC” contained in volume II of the *Commentaries to the Code of Canon Law* (in four volumes), to which one could surmise that the *Opinion* is perhaps referring.

As a consequence, the *Opinion finds no substantiation whatsoever, either in canon 1259 § 2 or in the “commentaries of the BAC,”* as I will show in a more detailed analysis of the cited texts.

Canon 1259 § 2 does not “support” the Opinion

Canon 1259 § 2 reads: “The Ordinary of the place cannot approve new litanies for *public recitation*.”

According to canon 18, “If the words of the law in the text and context are clear, they are the sole norm of interpretation.” Now, the canonical text in this case leaves no margin for doubt, and no commentators on the *Code* see in this paragraph anything more than what is expressed with all clarity: a restriction, as far as concerns litanies, that belongs to the general faculty of the Ordinaries to approve prayers and pious exercises.⁶¹

In case the meaning of the words of the ecclesiastical law is unclear, the same canon 18 disposes: “Only in case the text remains obscure may recourse be had to the other norms of interpretation. These are: a) parallel passages of the *Code*; that is, where the *Code* treats of the same matter under another aspect. ... b. the purpose and circumstances of the law. ... c) the mind, or intention, of the legislator.”

Such parallel passages in the *Code* (that is, those that treat of the same or similar matters) establish the need for approval only for such prayers and other pious exercises (including litanies) that will be exercised publicly in churches and oratories, or are destined for publication. They make no dispositions for prayers and pious exercises (including litanies) that will be exercised privately, or that will be printed for individual use (cf. canons 1257, 1259 § 1, 1261, 1385 and 1390).

Therefore, the affirmation that “litanies need approval even for private cult (Recitation)” finds no basis of support in canon 1259 § 2, nor in any parallel passages in the *Code*.

The “Commentary of the BAC” also does not “support” the Opinion

As I have already said, the *Opinion* ambiguously attempts to “support” its observations with a canonical text and a commentary. It has just been shown that the canonical disposition does not “support” what the *Opinion* affirms in this passage, nor does any other provision of the *Code of 1917*. It thus becomes obvious that the *Opinion* must be supported by the unidentified “commentary of the BAC.” However, since the referred to document would “support” the affirmation of the *Opinion* (which it does not do,

⁶¹ Vermeersch-Creusen. After citing c. 1259 § 2, they comment: “Consequently, the general faculty enjoyed by the Ordinary to approve prayers is restricted, in respect to litanies” (II, n. 580). Cf. also Cocchi, L. III, p. III, n. 94b; Coronata II, n. 834b; Regatillo, II, n. 105; Martins Gigante, II n. 108; Sipos-Galos, p. 584.

as already shown), a simple commentary does not constitute “canonical documentation,” as the *Opinion* suggests: That which has legal value is the canon and not the commentary of an interpreter, however erudite and authorized he might be.

Without a doubt, the opinions of doctors (that is, of the “true experts in the science of Law”) carry weight as an element in the interpretation of some obscure text; but this does not occur in the present case, where the text is perfectly clear. They also have their role concerning determined matters where an expressed law does not exist, in laws given for similar cases, or to the cases or to resort to the usage and practices of the Roman Curia (cf. canon 20). However, in such cases, they should have recourse to the “*common and constant teaching of learned authorities*” (ibid). “The opinion is *common* when it is admitted by the majority of learned authorities; it is *constant* when it does not suffer interruption (with corrections) in time,” teaches Cabrerós.⁶²

Thus, the vague and imprecise reference (“see commentary of BAC”) can in no way be alleged to be the “common and constant teaching of learned authorities”...

We can add here by way of parentheses a side note to further emphasize the ambiguity and imprecision of the *Opinion*.

The minimum that one could ask in matters of such gravity and in an opinion of such responsibility would be a precise indication of the “canonical documentation that supports my (his) observations.” This could include at least an indication of the name of the Author of the commentary, as well as the title of the work where such a commentary could be found. For the well-known BAC (acronym for the Library of Christian Authors - *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, published by Editorial Católica S.A., Madrid, under the auspices and elevated direction of the Pontifical University of Salamanca) has more than one work containing commentaries to the *Code of Canon Law of 1917*.

Thus, with the impossibility of knowing for certain to which “commentary of the BAC” the *Opinion* is referring, this analysis, for the greater security and tranquility of the reader, will examine the commentary contained in the only volume of the *Code of Canon Law and Complementary Legislation* (the well-known *Código Bilingüe y Comentado*, with its various editions), as well as the commentary which appears in volume II of *Commentaries to the Code of Canon Law* (4 volumes, 1963-1964), both published by the BAC. The two commentaries are by the authorship of the eminent professor of the text of the *Code* at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, Fr. Sabino Alonso Moran, O.P. It will be supposed that one of these two is the “commentary of the BAC” to which the *Opinion* refers the reader.

The first, dated earlier, says the following:

“(Canon) 1259: Applying to litanies that which the Holy Penitentiary establishes for pious exercises in general, we can affirm that these can be prayed *publicly* when these two conditions are verified: a) that they be prayed in community, and b) that they be prayed in churches and in public oratories, or in semi-public oratories (when involving persons who are legitimately performing functions in them). Outside of these cases, it is understood that they be prayed *in private* (see *Enchiridion indulgentiarum, Preces*

⁶² Cabrerós, *Código Bilingüe y Comentado*, c. 20; cf. *ibid*, *Derecho Canonico Fundamental*, pp. 280-282, 285-287.

et Pia Opera, 1950, p. IX, n. 7); and it then suffices that they be approved by the local Ordinary, according to the provisions of § 2 of this canon.”⁶³

In a hasty reading, the final phrase of this commentary could give the impression of offering some basis for what the Opinion affirms. By saying that “it *suffices* that they be approved by the local Ordinary,” one could think that the commentator is affirming that they need some form of approbation.

After an attentive and deliberate reading of the commentary, however, this impression is not sustained, since the commentator adds the following: “*according to the provisions of § 2 of this canon.*” This signifies that the preceding affirmation (“It suffices that...”) should be understood in conformance with the tenor of § 2 of canon 1259. As shown above, this paragraph makes no dispositions about litanies being *recited in private*, but only upon those *to be prayed publicly*. And this, in order to assert that the Ordinary cannot approve them.

It is certain that the canon admits in an indirect way that the Ordinary *can* approve litanies to be *prayed privately*; by not including such litanies in the prohibition contained in it, §2 of canon 1259 firmly sustains the prior legislation that gave this faculty to the Ordinary (7). But neither this paragraph, nor the prior legislation, affirms in any way that litanies, in order to be recited in private, *need* this approval. Therefore, it is in this sense that the “commentaries of the BAC” should be understood, the commentaries which presumably support the *Opinion*.

It is noteworthy to add that the aim intended by the commentator was not that of clarifying whether or not the litanies need ecclesiastical approval *to be prayed in private*, but only to clarify the meaning of the expression “*to pray publicly*” contained in canon 1259, § 2, applying to the case of litanies the conception of *public recitation* and *private recitation* that the Holy Apostolic Penitentiary establishes for pious exercises in general in establishing the requisites needed to gain certain indulgences.

Thus it is that the only legal text outside of the Code cited in the commentary by Friar Sabino Alonso Moran is that of the Holy Penitentiary, which does not treat of the need for approval of litanies recited in private. If some other document exists on this matter, it certainly would not be omitted by this eminent Spanish canonist, since details are not slighted in matters such as these...

But, in any case, a simple affirmation made in passing in a commentary that does not treat *ex-professo* the matter at issue cannot be qualified as “*canonical documentation*,” as the Opinion would seem to indicate.

*

Passing to the second “commentary of the BAC,” contained in the *Commentaries to the Code of Canon Law*, the objective that the Professor of Salamanca in the prior commentary had in mind becomes even clearer.

The commentary can be divided into two parts: The first refers to § 1, and the second to § 2.

⁶³ Alonso Moran, *Código Bilingüe y Comentado*, c. 1259.

The first part says: “*Rights of the Local Ordinary in the disposal of pious exercise* (c. 1259).” This canon refers to acts of private cult, that is to say, to prayers and pious exercises that are not contained in liturgical books and, consequently, lack official approval.

“New forms of devotion – notwithstanding the prescriptions of the Tridentine Council (Sess. 25, *De invocat., venerat. et reliquiis Sanctorum et sacris imaginibus*) and of the Popes, reproduced in canons 1259, 1261 and 1279, those favoring novelties have striven to introduce new forms of devotion and cult (worship), some of them ridiculous, and others needless repetitions or corruptions of those that already exist, not without the great astonishment of non-Catholics, thus providing subject for their sharp criticisms; this leads the S. C. of the Holy See to publish on May 26 of 1937 (AAS 29, 1937, 304) a decree exhorting the Bishops to oblige the strict observation of the aforementioned prescriptions, energetically extirpating existing abuses and solicitously guarding that new ones should not be introduced.”

This part of the commentary refers to the following canonical text, (which was not, however, cited in the *Opinion*):

Canon 1259 § 1: “Prayers and exercises of piety are not to be permitted in *churches or oratories* without the revision and express permission of the Ordinary of the place, who in difficult cases shall refer the whole matter to the Holy See.”

The second part of the commentary is, then, that which should have been invoked in the *Opinion*, viewed in reference to § 2 of c. 1259. It is necessary here to repeat the canonical text: “The Ordinary of the place cannot approve new litanies for public recitation (c. 1259, § 2).”

Now let us look at the second commentary by Friar Sabino Alonso Moran: “As declared by the Sacred Congregation of the Rites on March 6, 1984 and on June 20, 1896 (DA nn. 3820 and 3916), only the litanies contained in the *Breviary* or in the recent editions of the *Roman Ritual*, approved by the Apostolic See, can be prayed *publicly in church* and *public oratories*. This measure understands any form of praying the litanies in the aforementioned places, whenever it is done by various persons in common, even without the mediation of a minister of the Church as such.”⁶⁴

As one sees, in neither the former more longwinded commentary nor the latter more elevated work does the illustrious Professor of Salamanca make any reference whatsoever to the *necessity* for ecclesiastical approval for litanies to be recited *privately*, citing only the complementary documentation referring to the *public recitation* of litanies.

A reading of the commentary makes it even more obvious that canon 2159 § 2 does not in the least apply to the case being examined here, that is, that of a *litany* composed and prayed privately, outside of churches or public oratories – because the referred-to canon concerns only the exigencies concerning prayers (including litanies) and other pious exercises realized publicly in churches or oratories.

According to the cited Authors, this approval is required for recitation in *churches* and *public oratories*, but not for *semipublic oratories* or, much less, for *private oratories*.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Alonso Moran, II, n. 702.

⁶⁵ Cf. note 59.

6. NEED FOR APPROVAL FOR THE PRINTING AND PUBLISHING OF PRAYERS

The *Code* of 1917 also requires ecclesiastical approval for the publication or dispersal of books or pamphlets of prayers. Canon 1385 establishes: “1. Even though published by laymen, the following require previous approval: ... also books and booklets of prayers or devotion, or of instruction and training in religion, morals, asceticism, mysticism, and the like, even though they seem to favor piety.”

Here it becomes necessary to explain the sense of some of the terms of canonical language: *Approval* is the act by which the ecclesiastical Authority declares whether or not the book, booklet, or pamphlet is in conformance with Catholic doctrine. *Permission* is the authorization for publication. *To print* is to reproduce a text or picture through the typographical process, or some other mechanical production of assimilation. *To publish* is to take the responsibility of ordering that the printed text be made public, that is, *to make it available to the public*. The canon requires prior approval only for publishing, and not for printing. Thus, according to the unanimous voice of canonists, prior approval is not required to print a text or multiply it in some way (mimeograph, xerox, photograph, etc.) for *individual use* or for *restricted circulation*.⁶⁶

All this leads to this conclusion:

CONCLUSION: *Canon 1259 § 2, cited in the Opinion (and parallel places in the Code), and canon 1385 § 1 n.2, not cited in the Opinion, do not permit the affirmation that “The litany is not licit, and contrary to Canon Law.”*

7. A CANON THAT IS NOT APPLIED TO THE SIMPLE FAITHFUL

The *post scriptum*, or addendum, to the *Opinion* twice mentions the same canonical proviso:

“a. General warning: Canon 1261 § 1”;

“d. Danger to the faithful: canon 1261 § 1 *in fine*.”

What does the legal text say?

Canon 1261 § 1. “Ordinaries of places must be watchful that the provisions of the sacred canons regarding divine worship be sedulously observed and especially that, in divine worship, whether public or private or in the daily life of the faithful, no superstitious practice be introduced, and that nothing be admitted which is foreign to the faith, or out of harmony with ecclesiastical tradition, or has the appearance of base profit seeking.”

The *passive subject* of this canon, that is, those to whom the law was directed, are the Ordinaries of a place, and not the faithful. Thus, the canon does not oblige, prohibit, or permit anything to the latter.

⁶⁶ Cf. Cocchi, L. III, p. IV, nn. 59-60; Coronata, II, nn. 952-953; Martins Gigante, II, 231-232; Regatillo, II, 250-252; Sipos-Galos, pp. 630-631; Vermeersch-Creusen, II, 722-725.

Consequently, the simple faithful cannot violate this canonical provision, which can be violated only by Ordinaries of a place.

The *object* of the canon is the obligation of vigilance imposed on the *Ordinaries* of a place in relation to divine cult (worship), public as well as private, so that the dangers that they could give rise to can be avoided. The object is not, then, an obligation of deference for the faithful to the norms that the Ordinary might eventually speak upon the matter (such is contained, indirectly, in canon 2331 § 1, which ordains punishment according to the gravity of the guilty of those who obstinately disobey the Roman Pontiff of the proper Ordinary when they legitimately order or prohibit something).

Canon 1261 § 1 cannot, then, be invoked in such a way as to say that the litany is in discordance with the norms of Canon Law and other laws and customs of the Church, and that it wounds orthodoxy. Should this have actually occurred, the Opinion should have invoked the Documents of the Supreme Pontiffs or those of the Sacred Congregations, or those texts from the *Code of Canon Law* that it would have infringed. However, it should have never mentioned a canon that, by its very nature, cannot be applied directly to the faithful, as suggested by the *Opinion*.

Moreover, as noted above, the litany in question had been prohibited and removed from circulation in the TFP ambiances, not because it contained something against the Faith or Canon Law, but because of the inadequacy and impropriety of some of its invocations.

Whence, the following:

CONCLUSION: *Canon 1261 § 1 does not permit the affirmation that “The litany is not licit, and contrary to Canon Law.”*

8. IT IS LICIT TO COMPOSE LITANIES IN HONOR OF PERSONS WHO ARE NOT CANONIZED OR BEATIFIED

From the analysis made here, one can arrive at the following conclusion:

GENERAL CONCLUSION: *None of the Canons referred to in the Opinion permit the affirmation that “The litany is not licit, and contrary to Canon law.” The Opinion lacks, therefore, any canonical basis.*

From all that has been said, it follows that *it is licit to compose litanies in honor of persons who are not canonized or beatified*, and to recite them privately, for as the Law establishes, “That which is not prohibited juridically is permitted or is licit juridically: there is juridical liberty to do it.”⁶⁷ (11).

⁶⁷ Jimenez Urresti, commentary to canon 65 in the *New Code* in AA. VV., *Code of Canon Law*.

II. IF THE LITANY TOUCHES ON BLASPHEMY

Continuing the analysis of the *Opinion*:

“b. It (the litany) touches on blasphemy, since it attributes to another the invocations that the Holy Church joins together to emphasize the singular excellence of the sanctity of the Mother of God.”

1. SERIOUSNESS OF THE BLASPHEMY

This affirmation that the litany “touches on blasphemy” is a most serious one, since, as Father Antonio Royo Marin O.P. observes, “St. Thomas says expressly that *blasphemy* is a sin more serious than *homicide*, because it transgresses directly against God Himself, while homicide is a lesser sin because it is committed against *one’s neighbor* (II-II. 13, 3 resp. 1).”⁶⁸

From the point of view of Canon Law, this affirmation has most serious consequences, since blasphemy is considered by the Code as a *crime* against religion that “should be punishing according to the prudent discretion of the Ordinary” (c. 2323).

A. *Concept of blasphemy, according to canonists and moralists*

Canonists and moralists conceptualize blasphemy in the following way: “Blasphemy is every spoken or written word, every act or gesture, *made to express injury or insult to the Divinity*, be it directly, as well as indirectly, injuring the Blessed Virgin or the Saints. It can be *heretical* if it involves a heretical expression; *imprecatory* if it desires an evil to God; *contumelious*, or simple, if it is only an injurious expression. The law encompasses all the genres of blasphemy.”⁶⁹

For what reason, according to the *Opinion*, does the litany touch on blasphemy?

“It (the litany) touches on blasphemy, since it attributes to another the invocations that the Holy Church joins together to emphasize the singular excellence of the sanctity of the Mother of God.”

For it to be blasphemy in this case, it would have been necessary that the attribution to another of the exalted titles of the invocations to Our Lady would have implicated an injury to the Blessed Virgin, which did not by any means take place, as will be shown further on.

B. *Criteria that characterizes the sin and the crime of blasphemy*

It would not be superfluous to review here the criteria outlined by a renowned moralist so that we might know just what expression would constitute a blasphemy: “In practice, in order to know if a determined expression has or does not have the sense of blasphemy, it is necessary to be aware of the follow-

⁶⁸ Royo Marin, I, n. 410.

⁶⁹ Garcia Barberena, IV, n. 494; cf. Sipos-Galos, p. 856; Royo Marin, I, n. 408.

ing things: 1) the intention of the that which was said or done; b) the natural sense (meaning) of the words; c) the common understanding of the persons in the locality.”⁷⁰

This is the criteria to determine if there was the sin of blasphemy in some act, gesture, or writing. The criteria to know if there was a *crime* of blasphemy is given by the *Code of Canon Law* itself:

Canon 2195 § 1: “A crime or delict in ecclesiastical law means an external and morally imputable violation of law to which a canonical sanction, at least indeterminate, is attached.”

There are, then, three elements needed to constitute an ecclesiastical offense: the *material, or objective, element* (an external violation of the law); the *moral, or subjective, element* (criminal intent, or morally imputable violation); and the *juridical, or legal, element* (the penal law to which a sanction is annexed).

C. *Application of these criteria to the concrete case*

Let us now apply these criteria to the case of the litany in order to determine 1) if there were sin, or 2) if there were a crime.

* *Intention of that which was said or done*: It is obvious to all those who know the young authors of the litany and those who at times prayed it that none of these ever had the intention of injuring the Blessed Virgin by their applying to another the elevated titles of invocations employed by the Church to emphasize the singular sanctity of the Mother of God. They made this transposition simply with the intention of honoring the person to whom the aforementioned titles were applied.

Therefore, the first element for the *sin of blasphemy* to take place is lacking: the *intention to injure*.

Objection: The *Opinion* does not judge the *intentions* of those who composed or prayed the litany, but rather the act in itself: The transposition “considered in itself ... touches upon blasphemy.” Or, that is, there was *material blasphemy*, even if there might not have been formal blasphemy.

Response: If there was *formal blasphemy*, there was not the *sin of blasphemy*, which always supposes the intention. Nor, also, was there the *crime of blasphemy*, which always supposes a *morally imputable act*. And, if there was no *sin of blasphemy*, there cannot have been the *crime of blasphemy*, because “a crime does not exist except without grave sin.”⁷¹

Further on we will see that the mere application to another of the elevated invocations of Our Lady, of itself, constitutes nothing more than a *material blasphemy*.

* *The natural sense (meaning) of the words*: Taking the words that compose the litany in their natural sense, they can indicate impropriety of language and an impropriety of expression, and even

⁷⁰ Royo Marin, I, n. 408.

⁷¹ Martins Gigante, III, n. 313

extravagance. But none of them contain anything injurious to the Blessed Virgin, be it by affirmation or by negation.

* *The common understanding of the persons of the place:* In the ambiances where the litany circulated, the understanding of its words in no way was injurious to Our Lady.

Unfortunately, in this point of such great seriousness, the *Opinion* limits itself to a generic accusation, without pointing out - which would be gravely necessary - which of the invocations would constitute blasphemy against the Blessed Virgin. Thus, it is not given to know to what the *Opinion* is actually alluding since it pinpoints none of the 37 titles contained in the text, which the same *Opinion* accuses of attributing “to another the invocations that the Holy Church joins together to emphasize the singular excellence of the sanctity of the Mother of God.” Does it then, for example, call another person “conceived without original sin,” “Mother of the Creator,” “Mother of the Savior,” and other such titles “exclusive to Our Lady,” as the *Inquiry* says?

D. A Parallelism in the Inquiry Contigent to the Response

Here, we make the following observation: The *Opinion*, according to all indications, is responding in its “b” item to the third question of the *Inquiry*: “3rd – Can one attribute titles exclusive to Our Lady to any person whatsoever?”

Such a question involves a parallelism: The question already carries in itself the actual response. In effect, to say that a title is “exclusive to Our Lady” is already to say that it cannot be attributed to any other person. To question the licitness of this does not make any sense. It is obvious that the response could only be negative, not for canonical, liturgical, or dogmatic reasons, but by the simple imperative of logic.

One of the invocations is “Mediatrice of all our graces, pray for us.” Since this invocation is singled out later as heretical (it would involve “grave errors against the Faith”), it will be analyzed in its place.

Other invocations present some similarity or analogy to the invocations of the *Litany of Loreto*. Is this permitted? Is it in conformance with the laws and customs of the Holy Church?

2. IT IS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE CHURCH TO APPLY INVOCATIONS AND PRAYERS DIRECTED TO OUR LADY TO OTHERS

A. Adaptations of invocations from the Litany of Loreto

A pious manual, formerly in use in schools of the Religious of Sion, the *Nouveau Formulaire de Prières Dedic aux Enfants de Marie* (The New Manual of Prayers Dedicated to the Children of Mary), approved in 1845 by Cardinal Giraud, Archbishop of Cambrai,⁷² includes litanies of various Saints. In one of them, one can read the following:

⁷² *Nouveau Formulaire de Prières Dedic aux Enfants de Marie*, Paris: Librairie Bourget-Calas e Cie., 1897.

“Saint Anne, *refuge of sinners*, pray for us.”

“Saint Anne, *consolation of the afflicted*, pray for us.” (p. 759).

This is a transposition, as can be seen, of the invocations “*Refugium peccatorum*” and “*Consolatrix afflictorum*” from the *Litany of Loreto* where they are directed to the Mother Who is *par excellence the Refuge of sinners and the Consolation of the afflicted*. Would it constitute injury to the Mother of God and, therefore, blasphemy, to invoke in this way the one “who carried in her womb the Ark of the New Alliance and the true Gate of Heaven”? (Another invocation from the same Litany of Saint Anne).

In the litany of Saint Philomena, to whose intercession the holy Curé d’Ars attributed the portentous miracles and singular graces that he obtained from God, says:

“Saint Philomena, *virgin most faithful*, pray for us.”

“Saint Philomena, *consolation of afflicted hearts*, pray for us” (p. 763).

The first is a literal transposition, the second an adaptation, of two invocations from the *Litany of Loreto* (“*Virgo fidelis*” and “*Consolatrix afflictorum*”). Would it constitute an injury to the “*Queen of virgins*,” invoked at the beginning of the litany, to refer to one of her daughters in this form?

This last invocation (“*Consolatrix afflictorum*”) is also attributed to Saint Anthony in his litany:

“Saint Anthony, *consolation of the afflicted*, pray for us” (p. 741).

B. Adaptation of the *Memorare*

While the Opinion does not comment upon the *Memorare* to Dona Lucilia, whose first words are transcribed by the author of the *Inquiry* (“Remember, O Most gracious Dona Lucilia, that never was it known, etc.”), it is opportune to recall here that the practice of the prudent adaptation of prayers and exercises of piety directed to Our Lord or Our Lady, to the Saints, or even to Servants of God not canonized or beatified constitutes a practice included in the everyday life of the faithful.

It was, in fact, the *Memorare* that a Carmelite nun of Lisieux, Mother Isabel of the Sacred Heart, adapted in order to have recourse to the Servant of God Therese of the Child Jesus some years before the beatification of the great Saint of Lisieux: “*Souvenez-vous, o puissant petite Reine...*”⁷³

The well known *Goffine – Christian Manual* (*Goffine – Manual de Christão*) has a “Remember, O most chaste spouse of the Virgin Mary...” dedicated to St. Joseph (p. 800), which can also be found in the *Devocionário dos Padres Cooperadores Paroquiais de Cristo Rei*, edited in Madrid in 1956 (p. 170), as well as in the aforementioned *Manuel* of the Religious of Sion, edited in Paris in 1897.

⁷³ Mother Isabelle du Sacre-Couer died in 1914. St. Theresa was beatified in 1923 and canonized in 1925. Cf. *Novissima Verba*, Central Office of Lisieux, 1926, pp. 222-23; *Mother Isabel of the Sacred Heart – Carmelite Religious of Lisieux* (Translated from the “*circular*” sent to the Carmelite monasteries), Typ. America, Rio de Janeiro, 1923.

All this serves to show that it is not a novelty, but an old and widespread custom to adapt prayers and exercises of piety directed to Our Lord and Our Lady to other ‘Servants of God’ who reign with Christ, be they canonized or beatified – or not. The *Manuel* and the *Devocionário* contain as well the pious exercise to honor the *Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of St. Joseph*, a practice inspired by the devotion to the *Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of Our Lady*.

C. *Adaptations and paraphrases of the Hail Mary*

In the book, *The Month of October or of the Holy Rosary* by Canon Jose Marcellino de Souza Bittencourt, Parish Priest of the Cathedral of São Pedro, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, there is a complete transposition of the *Hail Mary* to St. Joseph, under the most significant title of *Hail Joseph*. (This book was honored by a letter of praise dated July 3, 1891 from Cardinal Rampolla, Secretary of State, in the name of Pope Leo XIII, and approved by a dozen Brazilian bishops, eight of whom granted indulgences in their dioceses to those who would use these pious exercises during the month of October.) The complete text of the prayer is the following:

“Hail o Saint Joseph, full of grace, the Lord and his Holy Mother are with thee, the just of the Evangelist art thou amongst all men, and blessed is the fruit of the womb of thy Spouse.

“Holy Joseph, foster Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen Jesus.”⁷⁴

And what should be said about the following bold paraphrasing of the *Hail Mary*, made by one of the most renowned hagiographers of this century to a person not canonized or beatified, the mother of St. Catherine of Siena?

“Blessed Lapa, holy Lapa! *Lapa blessed among women, blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Catherine!*”

Yet, nonetheless, in recognition of this book the author received a letter of praise and recommendation, written in the name of Pope Benedict XV by his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri...⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Nouveau Formulaire de Prières Dedié aux Enfants de Marie*, 3rd ed., p. 362. It is probable that the original version of this prayer was composed in French.

⁷⁵ Johannes Joergensen, *St. Catherine of Siena*, authorized translation by Maria Cecilia de M. Duprat, Petropolis: Editora Vozes, 1953; “*Imprimatur* by special commission of His Exc. and Most Rev. Dom Manuel Pedro Cunha Cintra, Bishop of Petrópolis. Friar Lauro Ostermann, O.F.M. / Petropolis, 7/2/1952.”

An excerpt of the letter of Cardinal Gasparri: “His Holiness manifests to you his paternal thanks for having dedicated your name and talent to celebrate the Saint of Sienna, desiring that your work serve as inspiration to those who, like the Sieneese Virgin, live in the world. ... May your work especially help youths of the feminine sex.” Joergensen also received a letter of congratulations from the Superior General of the Dominican Fathers, Friar Luis Theissling.

III. IF THE LITANY CONTAINS ERRORS AGAINST THE FAITH

1. *THE INVOCATION ‘FOUNTAIN OF LIGHT’*

A. *Vague and imprecise accusation...*

Continuing with the analysis of the *Opinion*:

“c. Several of the invocations involve grave errors against the Faith, such as to call D.L. [*sic*] fountain of Light (the Light par excellence is God Our Lord), Mediatrix of all graces, and others.”

The seriousness of the accusation would demand that it not be launched in such a vague and imprecise way. It would be indispensable that he should point out all the invocations that would involve “grave errors against the Faith,” and that he should show exactly what these errors might be. It does not suffice to generally affirm that “several” of them contain “grave errors,” point out two of them as representatives, and then simply add “and others,” without providing any more explanation about the nature of these supposed errors.

The first of these invocations, “fountain of light,” is simply the entomological meaning of the name “Lucilia,” something that the two youths who composed the litany read in a book, and this was the reason that they included it. Moreover, the invocation that was composed and circulated was “fountain of Light,” and not “fountain of **THE** Light,” a detail that should not be overlooked.

B. *....a faulty reasoning*

What was the error that the letter writer pointed to in this invocation?

“The Light par excellence is God Our Lord.”

The explanation is much too laconic, but, because of the conclusion that is drawn from it, one can surmise that the following reasoning was employed: “The light par excellence is God Our Lord”; the litany calls Dona Lucilia the “Fountain of the Light”; therefore, it calls her the “fountain of God.” Now, it would constitute a “grave error against the Faith” to call someone the “Fountain of God.” Thus, the litany “involves a grave error against the Faith.”

This having been the reasoning followed – and nothing indicates that it could have been other – the *Opinion* would be laboring under a *petition of principle*, a deficiency in reasoning that consists of placing that which would be proved as an antecedent. In fact, the *Opinion* makes the presupposition that the term “light” is used in the sense of “the Light par excellence,” that is, God, in order to prove that the expression “Fountain of Light” signifies “Fountain of God,” involving, consequently, a “grave error against the Faith.” Now, this is no longer to pronounce a judgment upon the litany “considered in itself,” as the *Opinion* proposes to do, but it is to judge it departing from presuppositions that will become even more clear as we proceed.

C. *The word 'light' can be applied not only to God, but also to creatures. Some examples.*

Returning to the matter, the word “light” does not express an attribute essential and exclusive to God Our Lord, and it can, like so many other divine attributes, be attributed, *mutatis mutandis*, to this or that creature.

Thus, there are numerous litanies and other prayers that apply the term “light” to Angels and Saints, without anyone having seen in this any “error against the Faith.”

For example, the *antiphon of St. Alphonsus* begins with the following words: “Light of the Earth, my beloved protector, St. Alphonsus, miracle-worker!” (*Goffine*, p. 805).

There is also the widespread *Litany of St. Michael*, which can be found, for example, in the book of prayers *Preces pro opportunitate dicendae* (Boa Imprensa, Campos, 1958, *Imprimatur* of Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer). In it, the Prince of the Heavenly Hosts is invoked as the “*Light of Angels*.” Examples are numerous: “St. Francis Xavier, *light of the infidels*,” “St. Anthony, *light of France*,” St. Louis (Gonzaga), *brilliant light of the Church*,” St. Bernard, *refulgent light* that dissipated error and confounded heresy” – invocations that are all found in the litanies of these Saints published by the *Formulaire* (pp. 677, 740, 746, 769).

Following the same line of reasoning of the Opinion, one could reach the absurd conclusion that whoever composed the “Hymn of St. Michael the Archangel” found in the *Goffiné* and the many who have prayed and still pray it consider the Prince of the Celestial Militia as being the Word Itself, because the first stanza says this:

“*O Light of the Father,*
In whom contrite hearts live,
With the Angels we praise you,
With our lips, which depend of you.”

It is obvious that the invocation “Light of the Father,” directed to the Archangel St. Michael, is meant here in a sense that is not the same as that of the *Creed* where it refers to the Word (“*Deum de Deo, Lumen de lumine*” – “God of God, Light of light”). Moreover, the “Hymn,” with its antiphon and “prayer,” are granted a “200 days indulgence, and a plenary indulgence once a month” (*Goffiné*, pp. 803-804).

The *Opinion* also falls into an error of heuristics (interpretation) that consists of taking as *univocal* (having only one meaning) words and expressions that are not like this. A word or expression can have a certain meaning when applied to one thing and a different meaning when applied to another.

Thus, the title “Light of the Patriarchs” is attributed to St. Joseph and to the Divine Holy Spirit in their respective litanies. If one were to apply here the principle of *univocity* of expressions (by which each word or expression has only one meaning, and, therefore, it means the same for all cases and individuals to which it is applied), as the *Opinion* does in this case, one could reach the absurd conclusion that St. Joseph is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, or, likewise, that the Paraclete is the Head of the Holy Family...

The proof that the expression is applied in diverse senses is that in the original Latin of the litanies, St. Joseph is invoked as “*Lumen Patriarcharum*,” while the invocation to the Holy Spirit is “*Illuminatio Patriarcharum*.” That is to say, St. Joseph is called “light” because he shines above all the Patriarchs, while the Holy Spirit is the “light” that illuminates the Patriarchs. This is a nuance of the language that is contained in the one same Portuguese expression, while in Latin it calls for two different expressions.

Nor would anyone say that St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort thought that Our Lady was a “god,” even though more than once the Saint used the expression “the divine Maria”...⁷⁶

The examples presented here show that deliberation and caution should be taken in interpreting unknown texts, above all should they contain poetic, figurative, or symbolic expressions.

La vérité est dans les nuances... (The truth is in the nuances.) To ignore the nuances and reduce everything to black and white can lead to one-sided and unjust simplifications, such as those that we have just seen – and will see more of – in the *Opinion*.

2. THE INVOCATION ‘MEDIATRIX OF ALL OUR GRACES’

A. A secondary mediation of the Saints would not oppose the Universal Mediation of Mary Most Holy

The other invocation of the litany that involves “grave errors against the Faith” is, according to the *Opinion*, the following:

“Mediatrice of all *our* graces.”

Perhaps the possessive “our” escaped the attention of the Author of the *Opinion*, a possessive that restricts the mediation of the person invoked to the graces that those who invoke her judge to have received through her intercession. The invocation, taken in this sense, which is the natural sense of the words and the intention of whoever pronounces them (see above the criteria presented by Fr. Antonio Royo Marin to know if some statement contains blasphemy or not) – this invocation, then, thus understood, would not be opposed in any way to the doctrine of the Universal Mediation of the Blessed Virgin: For She extends *all graces* to *all persons*, and not only the graces received by certain persons.

Nor is there any error against the Faith in having other *mediators* between God and men: In this resides the basis of cult to the Saints, and the doctrine that denies the usefulness and propriety of invoking the Saints so that they might intercede for us was condemned as *heretical* (Denz. 941, 952, 984, 998). Moreover, canon 1276 advises invoking the “Servants of God who reign with Christ,” and, in particular, the Blessed Virgin. The doctrine of the *Universal Mediation of Our Lady* – which all truly Catholic souls aspire to see proclaimed as dogma – is not opposed to the individual mediation of the Saints and pious

⁷⁶ *Traité de la Vraie Devotion a la Sainte Vièrge*, nn. 67, 164, 165, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1966, pp. 529, 595, 596.

persons, because all the graces obtained through their intercession necessarily pass through the hands of Mary.⁷⁷

As a consequence, a Saint can, in theory, be a *secondary mediator* of *all* the graces that one of the faithful might receive from God *through the Universal Mediation of Mary*.

B. A pious custom: to consecrate oneself to a Saint

Because of this, there has always existed in the Church the pious custom of consecrating oneself to some Saint. Thus, in the *Formulaire* already cited so many times, one finds this act of “Consecration to St. Louis Gonzaga”:

“Great Saint, whose angelic purity made you so pleasing to the eyes of God and so dear to the Queen of virgins, I place myself especially under your protection, and I choose you today, before the Heavens, in the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the whole Celestial Court, for my patron and *my intercessor before God*; It is, then, you whom I beseech, my protector and the guardian of my innocence, my guide and my counselor, in the choice of my state of life; you who are a complete model of all the virtues, obtain for me the grace of imitating your fervor, your purity, your modesty, and all the virtues that I should practice in my state of life. Deign to be, great Saint, my guardian angel throughout all my days and my guide in the way of salvation. Having particularly devoted myself to you by *this consecration that I make of myself to you*, o my amiable benefactor, may I experience the effects of your special protection during the whole course of my life, and above all that that terrible moment that will decide my eternity. So be it” (p. 747).

⁷⁷ In this respect, see the following passage from the famous *Treatise of the Blessed Virgin* (translation from the celebrated Latin *Mariologia*) of Canon Gregory Alastruey, ex-Rector of the Pontifical University of Salamanca:

“Question 3. *If, in addition to Christ and Mary, others can be called mediators.*

“It is indisputable that, outside of Christ and Mary, no one can be mediator in the reconciliation between God and men by cooperating in the objective redemption, which placates the offended God and merits the graces by which men return to divine friendship: However, in addition to Christ, the perfect mediator, and Mary, others can be called mediators since, through their merit, prayer, ministerial power, or some other way, they can contribute in dispensing to men the redeeming graces.

“Thus, the blessed in heaven, the *just on earth*, and, in general, priests cooperate in this way for the reconciliation of men with God, since they are actually able to mediate because they are united to God by the beatific vision, by *sanctifying grace*, or by the charisma of a supernatural power; they are, moreover, united to men by benevolence, by mercy, or by their ministerial duties.

“However, this mediation presupposes that of Christ and that of Mary, by virtue of the fact that it exists and reaches us and without which it could not exist.

“Thus says St. Thomas: ‘Only Christ is the perfect Mediator between God and men, since, by His death, He reconciled the human race with God. In this way, when the Apostle said, *The man Jesus Christ, Mediator between God and men*, he adds, *Who gave Himself for the redemption of all*. Nothing, therefore, impedes that others could be called mediators between God and men *secundum quid*, provided that they cooperate in uniting men with God in a stipulated and ministerial way’ (III, q. 26, a. 1).

“And Estio adds: ‘If, in general, mediator is understood as all those who, in some way, take up the cause of someone with another in order to reconcile the latter with the former or to obtain something in his favor through supplication or merit, there is nothing improper in saying that there are many *intercessors and mediators between God and men on Heaven and on earth*’ (In 3, Sent., d. 19, § 6)” (Gregorio Alastruey, *Tratado de las Virgen Santisima*, Madrid: BAC, 1956, pp. 723-724).

It occurs to no one who invokes St. Louis Gonzaga as “my intercessor before God” to think that this would constitute an injury to Our Lady, Mediatrix of all Graces, nor that consecrating oneself to the Jesuit novice Saint would imply disdain for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Which Pope Pius XI consecrated the whole human race, or to the Blessed Virgin, to Whom so many souls (including the authors of the litany and those who prayed it) have consecrated themselves as slaves, according to the method of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort.

3. THE INVOCATION ‘MOTHER OF THE INEFABLE’

A. *Generalization, simplification, one-sidedness*

Continuing with the analysis of the *Opinion*, one can read in the same letter “C”:

“The same can be said about the prerogatives attributed to the corollary of these invocations, such as ‘ineffable’ (only God); Doctor of the Church (as if he were ‘the’ Doctor of the church, etc.)”

The same generalization, the same simplification, the same one-sidedness, the same parsimony in providing examples and explanations in matters, it is necessary to insist, of greatest gravity, because they involve the reputation of persons who have consecrated their lives to the defense of the Church and of Christian Civilization, touching them upon a point most sensitive to those who pride themselves on being Catholic: their orthodoxy.

B. *Injurious accusation*

Concerning the first of the “corollaries of these invocations” that would involve “grave errors against the Faith,” it should be noted that the *Opinion* understands the substantive adjective “ineffable” in a *univocal* sense that the word does not have: ineffable as “only God.” From this comes the conclusion that the authors of the litany and those who prayed it would have considered Dona Lucilia Ribeiro dos Santos Corrêa de Oliveira as “Mother of God,” an accusation that finds no basis in either the *text* or the *context* of the litany, but that confers completely with the absurd accusations of an anonymous story that was circulated in 1979 among French traditionalists, as well as in the Seminary of Écône, according to which Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira would have been treated as a “god” (R. p. 49). This same preposterous and injurious accusation is repeated, in one way or another, in an outrageous letter written to the Founder of the TFP by a former member of the entity, Prof. Orlando Fideli, the actual author of the *Inquiry* to which the *Opinion* of the reigning Bishop of Campos responds...

C. *The invocation analyzed in text and in context*

The text

The criteria given by Spanish moralist Fr. Antonio Royo Marin O.P. to know if a determined expression involves blasphemy can apply perfectly here in order to know if some expression “involves a grave error against the Faith.”

In the *first place*, it is necessary to be mindful of the intention of the one who pronounces it: What proofs does the *Opinion* present about the intention of those who composed the litany and those who

prayed it that it was their intention to invoke Dona Lucilia as the “Mother of God”? None. On the other hand, the author of the *Opinion* was not lacking years of close contact with all of them so that he could form a personal judgment in this respect.

In the *second place*, the *natural meaning of the words* should be taken. Let us look at what various dictionaries of good repute in four great neo-Latin languages have to say about the meaning of the adjective “ineffable”:

Portuguese: “*Ineffable*. (From the Lat. *ineffabile*) Adj. 2 g. 1. That which cannot be expressed by words; indescribable: And, pausing at the door, .. an *ineffable* smile on her face, the blind woman seemed to be following a mystic dream through the blue space’ (Coelho Neto Sertão, p. 195) 2. Fig. Charming, inebriating” (Aurelio Buarque de Holanda Ferreira, *Novo Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1975).

Spanish: “*Inefable*. (From the lat. ‘*inefabilis*,’ neg. of ‘*effabilis*’), deriv. of ‘*effari*’ from ‘*fari*,’ to speak: ‘FA-’; applied to ‘*alegria, delicia*’ and similar words). ‘Unspeakable.’ Of a nature so great that it cannot be expressed with words. (V. ‘Inexpressible’)” (Maria Moliner, *Diccionario de uso del español*, Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1982).

Italian: “*Ineffabile* (vc dotta, Lat. *ineffabile* (m), di in - neg. e *effabilis* ‘*effabile*’) agg. a. Ineffabile (vc dotta, lat. Ineffabile (m), of in - neg. And *effabilis* ‘*effabile*’) agg. a. That which cannot be expressed by means of words, especially in reference to pleasant sensations or feelings: goodness, kindness, Syn. Unspeakable, inexpressible. 2) Exceptional, extraordinary; Incomparable, especially for negative qualities)” (Nicola Zingarelli, *Il Nuovo Zingarelli – Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1983).

French: “Ineffable. adj. (lat. *ineffabilis*; from In priv. and *fari*, parler). That which cannot be expressed, inexpressible; ineffable joy” (*Petit Larousse Illustré*, Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1977).

English: “Ineffable. adj. (Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *ineffabilis*: in-, not plus *effabilis*, effable). 1. Beyond expression; indescribable or unspeakable: ineffable delight. 2. Not to be uttered; taboo: the ineffable name of the Deity” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1969).

As one can see, in the neo-Latin languages as well as in English, the adjective “ineffable” in no way designates a divine attribute that cannot be attributed to creatures as the *Opinion* leads one to believe, although in a most laconic manner: “ineffable as “only God.” Furthermore, this was not the meaning of this adjective even in Latin:

It has just been shown how the natural meaning of the expression “Mother of the Ineffable” in no way permits it to be interpreted as “Mother of God.” Or, that is to say, we have looked at the text of the expression.

The context

Considering the expression in its *context*, the same conclusion is reached. This is not because the invocation finds itself placed between two others, expressed in the genitive, which denotes a *mother-child* relationship, (“Mother of our Father” and “Mother of us all”, from which one could conclude that “Mother of the Ineffable” indicates the same relation. It is simply out of place: It should be next to the invocations that denote other relationships, as becomes evident, since the *mother-child* relationship would not make sense for such invocations as “Mother of the future centuries,” “Mother of the axiological Principle,” “Mother of the Temperament of Synthesis,” “Mother of Seriousness,” “Mother of the Counter-Revolution.” For no one could surmise that the youths who composed and recited the litany thought that “the future centuries,” “the Axiological Principle,” “the Temperament of Synthesis,” “all pure,” the “the Transphere,” “Seriousness,” and the “Counter-Revolution” were *persons* born of another person... Whence, it is concluded that the corollary of Mother is not always “child” in the invocations.

The Litany of Loreto itself, as well as other prayers to Our Lady, invokes Her as “Mother” without the corollary of the invocation – also expressed in the genitive like the litany in question – necessarily being Her Son. Thus, “Mother of good counsel” indicates the “Mother who gives good counsel”; “Mother of divine grace” signifies the “Mother who obtains divine grace for us” or the “Mother who is full of divine grace.” It is this type of relationship that should be seen in the invocations cited above, including the one that the *Opinion* accuses of involving “Grave errors against the Faith”: “Mother of the Ineffable.”

Finally, the *common understanding* of the listeners should be taken into consideration. In the circles of youths in which the litany was prayed, the invocation “Mother of the Ineffable” was simply understood as the one who, as a benevolent mother, obtains from God, through the mediation of Our Lady, graces to open the soul toward ineffable things, toward the “Ineffable.” The invocation meant nothing more than this.

4. THE TITLE ‘DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH’

A. *Illogical reasoning*

Before going on, it is necessary to observe that the *Opinion* did not always “consider the litany in itself” in order to conclude that “several of the invocations” and their corollaries “involve grave errors against the Faith.”

In the case of the expression “Doctor of the Church,” which appears as the corollary of several invocations, the *Opinion* implies a reasoning that Logic books would teach as follows: “To call someone ‘Doctor of the Church’ as if he were ‘the’ Doctor of the Church, involves a ‘grave error against the Faith.’ I say that the litany calls someone ‘Doctor of the Church’ as if he were ‘the’ Doctor of the Church. Therefore, the litany involves ‘grave errors against the Faith.’”

Since in fact this was not the reasoning, one cannot see how the *Opinion* could conclude that which it concluded. Where, in the text of the litany, is the basis for affirming that the meaning of the expression “Doctor of the Church” is that which the *Opinion* indicates (“as if he were ‘the’ Doctor of the Church”)?

B. *Lay Doctors of the Church*

As for calling Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira “Doctor of the Church,” why would this involve a “grave error against the Faith”? Would it be due to the fact that he is a layman and not an ecclesiastic? Neither Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa of Avila, both proclaimed Doctors of the Church, were ecclesiastics. Or is it the fact that he is still living? Look, then, at what Msgr. Francisco de Sales Brasil writes. After praising (deservedly) two ecclesiastics who figured as co-authors of the book *Agrarian Reform – A Question of Conscience*, the illustrious Bahian Priest wrote in respect to the Founder of the TFP: “Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a simple member of a Marian Congregation, a simple layman, whose religious science and orthodoxy – had he lived in the early years of the Church – would have perhaps won for him, with laurels of dauntless combativity, the title of Holy Father of the Church.”⁷⁸

For the illustrious and learned Bahian priest, there would be nothing against the Faith in comparing Dr. Plinio to the Fathers of the Church, even though he is a layman and still living.

5. GRAVE ACCUSATION LACKING ANY PROOF

The final topic of the *Opinion* assumes a gravity no less serious than those preceding it, and it would also require proofs that do not appear in the text:

“It (The litany, considered in itself) is prejudicial to those who make use of it, above all habitually, because it imperceptibly deforms actual concepts of the truths of the Faith, such as the ‘*unimoda*’ transcendency of God, the structure of the Holy Church, the unique place of Mary Most Holy in the plan of the Redemption, etc.”

Could there exist a text more subversive to the basic tenets of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Religion than a litany that would deform such “actual concepts of the truths of the Faith”? What would remain of Catholic in someone who would be deformed in this way by such a litany?

The litany in question was composed in 1977. The Author of the *Opinion* had already collaborated for five years with the TFP and had intense personal contact with the various ambiances that compose it, but without ever manifesting the least apprehension that in these ambiances the “actual concepts of the truths of the Faith” with respect to the “‘*unimoda*’ transcendency of God,” the “structure of the Holy Church” and the “unique place of Mary Most Holy in the plan of the Redemption” (as well as other such general conglomerates the “etc.” presents) were being deformed.

It is difficult to believe that the illustrious Author of the *Opinion* could live for such a long period of time in an ambience where similar deformations would have occurred without his having been aware of them. This would belie his due fame, recognized even by his adversaries, as a theologian astute in perceiving masked errors or uncovering them immediately in their first manifestations. It is even less conceivable to think that His Exc. could have perceived such abhorrent deformations and would have failed to personally alert Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, with whom he enjoyed a continuous friendship of close to a half century, or to have given a similar warning directly to the members and cooperators of the TFP in the uncountable plenary meetings where he directed conferences or informally addressed them. This

⁷⁸ Fr. Sales Brasil, *Em Defesa*, Salvador, 1961, p. 244.

would be to deny the merited renown of the zealous pastor of orthodoxy and his concern for the salvation of souls.

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Part III of the *Opinion* reads as follows:

“Responding to the final question:

“1st response: (to the question “Are these prayers licit or contrary to the Code of Canon Law?”) the Litany is not licit, and is contrary to Canon Law.

The *Opinion* does not say why the litany is not licit and in what way it would be contrary to Canon Law. It would be necessary for it to mention the canons of the Code violated by the composition and private recitation of the litany, as well as the other decisions of the Holy Church concerning cult to persons who are not canonized or beatified that are contained in Pontifical Documents and Decrees, Declarations and Instructions of the Roman Congregations, and especially the decisions of Urban VIII.

The improvised postscript, added *a posteriori* to the *Opinion* (*Canonical documentation that supports my observations*), mentions Canons 1255, 1256, 1259 § 2 and 1261 § 1, in which, as has been shown, there is nothing that refers to the matter.

With respect to the documents of Urban VIII that prohibit *public cult* be rendered to persons not canonized or beatified, the composition and *private recitation* of litanies are not included among the acts and practices proscribed by the Pontiff as constituting manifestations unsuitable for public cult to those upon whom the infallible judgment of the Holy Church has not yet been pronounced.⁷⁹

On the other hand, among the acts of cult that can be rendered to those not canonized or beatified, the canonists explicitly mention the composition and private recitation of litanies in their honor (according to the teaching of Benedict XIV).⁸⁰

What is proscribed, according to the common opinion of the canonists, is to invoke the Servant of God who is not canonized or beatified in litanies approved by the Holy See for public recitation, that is,

⁷⁹ The acts proscribed by Pope Urban VIII regarding the Servants of God who are not canonized or beatified are the following: to place in churches or oratories and in other public and even private places images of these persons with halos, resplendent in glory, or with another sign indicative of sanctity; to place their images, even without the aforementioned attributes, on altars; to place on their graves pictures, effigies, lamps, lights and *ex-votos* as testimony of the favors received (where it is the custom to light candles or oil lamps next to graves, this is not prohibited (*ex-votos* can be maintained in private places); to recount miracles, revelations, and other favors received through their intercession in biographies of them without the prior censorship of and permission from the Ordinary; to attribute to them the titles of “Saint” and “Blessed” in the proper sense (it is not prohibited to refer to them as “saintly (or holy) persons,” or to speak of their “saintly (holy) lives”) and use other such terms of common language) (cf. Urban VIII, Const. *Caelestis Hierusalem*, of July 5, 1634, § 1, in *Bullarium* ed. Taurinensis, vol. XIV, p. 436, Decrees of the Holy See of Benedict XIV, *De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione*, liber II, caput XI).

⁸⁰ Cf. De Meester, *Compendium juris canon.*, III, n. 1248, *apud* Sejourné, col. 976; Beste, p. 625.

those contained in the *Breviary* and in the *Roman Ritual*; the litanies of the *Most Holy Name of Jesus*, of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, of *Our Lady* (of *Loreto*), of *St. Joseph*, and of *All Saints*.

Moreover, in the public recitation of the litanies cited above, the invocation of no Saint can be added, with the exception of the name of the Founder in case of Orders who have the privilege to mention it in the *Confiteor*.⁸¹

To the second question (“Are they in accordance with the doctrine of the Church?”) the *Opinion* simply responds “no.” I have already shown the lack of foundation for this response.

To the third, (“Can one attribute titles exclusive to Our Lady to any person whatsoever?”)n, the *Opinion* also responds “no.”

The lack of logic of this question has already been noted: The question contains in itself the response. In effect, if a title is *exclusive* to Our Lady, it is obvious that it cannot be attributed to any other person. It has also already been shown that the litany in question does not attribute to another any title exclusive to Our Lady, as would be the titles “*Mother of God*,” “*Immaculate*,” and others.

To the fourth question (“Is this in accordance with the practice and the spirit of the Church?”) the response is also a simple “no.” In the preceding pages it was shown that “this” (to attribute titles to Our Lady – obviously not “exclusive” – to another person) is not only in accordance with the practice and spirit of the Church, but it is even quite common among the faithful, with examples appearing in manuals of piety that have edified many generations that have made use of them.

IV. CONCERNING THE MERIT OF THE INQUIRY

We have just analyzed the merit of the *Opinion*.

Some words should also be spoken concerning the merit of the *Inquiry*.

It is obvious that the whole *Inquiry* was conceived with the idea of eliciting a response that would indicate a substitution of Our Lady by the Mother of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira. Consequently, the tribute of the latter in the ambiances of the TFP would constitute an absurd act of *hyperdulia*, due exclusively to Mary Most Holy.

It has already been demonstrated how the *Inquiry* formulated a question that could only receive the response that he desired.

Into this enters a good dose of passion. It could even be asked if bad-faith did not enter as well.

In effect, a qualified inquiry should not omit any important fact, especially when this fact would be essential to the object of the inquiry: In this case, what should be considered is the position of the authors of the litany and of those who prayed it in relation to the Universal and necessary Mediation of the Blessed Virgin and the secondary mediation of a Servant of God not canonized or beatified. Although

⁸¹ Coronata, II, 834b; Regatillo, II, n. 105, Vermeersch-Creusen, II, n. 580.

secondary, joined to the grand and powerful universal Mediatrix, recourse to this mediation has nothing contrary to the Laws and the Doctrine of the Church, as I have already demonstrated.

It so happens that the parts of the litany that clearly show the doctrine of the excellence of the position of Our Lady and the secondary position of Dona Lucilia as intercessor next to the Intercessor were carefully omitted by the *inquirer*.

After the invocation to the three divine Persons and to the Trinity as One God, the authors of the litany placed, as is customary, invocations to Our Lady:

- “*Sancta Maria*, o. p. n. (ora pro nobis).
- *Sancta Dei Genitrix*,
- *Sancta Virgo Virginum*.”

The *inquirer* knew of this, because in a report that he had made in 1979 denouncing the existence of the litany to the Direction of the TFP, he included the first two of these invocations. Why did he omit them now? It is symptomatic that someone would be able to remember 37 invocations to Dona Lucilia, and yet righteously “forget” the ejaculations to Our Lady that precede them... How should this “loss of memory” be explained, except as bad faith?

This becomes even more obvious when one considers that the *inquirer*, also in 1979, knew perfectly well of the existence of an *Oremus* (to this Litany), of which he speaks in his already referred-to report. “I don’t remember anything about the *oremus*, except that it began in this way: ‘Wise and Immaculate Heart of Mary, who deigned [*sic*] to give us Dona Lucilia’ (it was more or less like this, perhaps with some different words).”

Yet the complete text of the *Oremus*, whose existence he admits having knowledge of and even mentions the first words, is the following (according to a report prepared by the authors of the litany on November 12, 1979):

“O Wise and Immaculate Heart of Mary, who deigned, in thy fathomless mercy to give us for mother and lady Dona Lucilia, concede to us the grace of receiving from Thee, through her intercession, a complete fidelity and surrender to Thy beloved Elect Son and our Father. So be it.”

As one sees, the doctrine of the Universal Mediation of Our Lady and of the *secondary mediation* of the Saints and pious souls is completely affirmed here.

It cannot be believed that the *inquirer*, who seems to have mounted in the TFP seat a quite efficient system of collection of information, could not have obtained the entire text of this *Oremus*. Could not his informants, who memorized such a long litany, have also memorized the *Oremus*? Be it as it may, it does not explain why he omitted it completely at the hour of making his *Inquiry*, whose objective was to get an *Opinion* that questions nothing more and nothing less than the *orthodoxy* of faithful Catholics!

Where is the observance of proper norms in this Inquiry?

One must conclude that the *inquirer* deliberately omitted for the illustrious Prelate the elements that would have prejudiced the response that he aimed to obtain. Thus, also, he abused the credibility of the Prelate, preparing a trap for him, against which he was not perspicacious enough to safeguard himself.

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Also biased is the observation of the *inquirer* that the invocation “Dona Lucilia, our greatest Mediatrix before Our Lady, help us” was “added after the denouncements against the litany” were made, as if to insinuate a “repair job” to safeguard the supposedly damaged orthodoxy.

This invocation, along with various others, was, in fact, added to the litany before the year 1979. But nothing can be concluded from this.

Besides, the doctrine of the Universal Mediation of Our Lady is sufficiently expressed in the *Oremus*, so that the introduction of the invocation in order to “fill” a supposed gap in the litany would be completely superfluous.

Thus, by reason of its vacuity, this imprecise and biased affirmation also falls to the wayside.

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The final result of the present notes cannot be other than that the *Inquiry* was unqualified and capacious and that the *Opinion*, allowing itself to be taken in by the impartial terms of the *Inquiry*, landed, without any serious base in the Laws and the Doctrine of the Church, just where the malicious inquirer desired that it should.

Finally, one last consideration: The litany was prohibited by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira on November 25, 1979, because of the extravagance of certain expressions and the impropriety of others, and it was no longer prayed. The *inquirer* was informed of the prohibition by the President of the National Counsel of the TFP himself at a meeting of November 26, and he expressed his satisfaction with the decision. Why resurrect a case that was resolved four years ago?

Why raise such a tempest over a teapot now?

Post scriptum: St. Charles Borromeo, whose feast is November 4, the date of the *Opinion*, is not a Doctor of the Church.

* * *

A CONCRETE EXAMPLE

HOW THE HOLY SEE ANALYZES THE WRITINGS OF CANDIDATES FOR THE HONOR OF THE ALTARS

When the Holy Church examines the life and the works of candidates for the honor of the altars, it submits them to a most rigorous analysis, where all possible obstacles to the beatification or canonization are raised and discussed. For this task, the figure of the “Devil’s Advocate” (whose true title is “Promoter of the Faith”) has become classic. The person is charged with bringing up even the least and, one might say, most irritating objections. It is an ungrateful but meritorious role, which thus makes patent to all the faithful (and also the unfaithful) that high degree of seriousness with which the Church inscribes a Servant of God into the catalogue of the Saints or of the Blessed.

The common man among the faithful has no idea of the rigor with which these examinations are made.

It seemed of interest to present here an excerpt from the process of canonization of the great Servant of God who was the little St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

The Sacred Congregation of the Rites submitted her writings to the examination of a Theological Censor (his name is not recorded) who issued *ex officio* a *Judgment* containing all the difficulties that these writings could offer from the point of view of their conformity to Catholic Doctrine. To these observations, the lawyers for the cause, Aloisio Toeschi and Adolfo Guidi of the same Sacred Congregation, responded brilliantly.

Both documents – from which we will transcribe various parts – are rich in teachings and show with what spirit the works of the Servants of God who are candidates for beatification should be analyzed. In particular, the Opinion of the lawyers for the Cause of little St. Therese show how not even the works of the greatest Doctors of the Church – being interpreted in *malam partem* (with a preconceived unfavorable opinion) – would receive safe conduct from inappropriate and unjust criticisms.

All this serves a useful purpose in the case of the present refutation. For it cautions the reader against the fundamental injustice, of which the three letters of Mr. O.F. provide example, that lies in systematically interpreting in *malam partem* all that he saw, heard, or was told with respect to what is said or done in the TFP.

* * *

**JUDGMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL CENSOR
ON THE WRITINGS OF
THE SERVANT OF GOD THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS**

Having been entrusted with the office of examining the writings of the Servant of God Therese of the Child Jesus and the Sacred Face, a professed sister of the Order of Discalced Carmelites of the Convent of Lisieux, in order to issue an opinion upon these same writings, I will attempt, as theological censor and as far as it lies within my powers, to uprightly fulfill this duty.

Toward this end, taking the oath before the Chancellor of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites, I have attentively and diligently read the writings of the Servant of God that were delivered to me.

These writings constitute four manuscripts (below follows the relation of the volumes and the material that each one contains).

I have found nothing in these writings that is contrary to an upright faith and good customs, or that is foreign to the common understanding and practice of the Church. On the contrary, there appears in them a most intense love for Christ, the vehement desire to suffer for Him, an ardent zeal for souls, as well as a most correct judgment with respect to the nature of Christian perfection and the need for humility in order to achieve this perfection. As a result of the attentive reading of these writings, the mind is illuminated, the heart is inflamed, piety increases, and fervor is renewed.

Undoubtedly (and these things we should not admire since the pious sister did not apply herself to the theological sciences) here and there can be found points that could present difficulties, since they are not completely in accord with the way they have been presented by approved Authors who deal with ascetic matters.

* Thus, in vol. I, p. 71, speaking about the day when she received Communion for the first time, the Servant of God writes: "Therese had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the depths of the Ocean. Only Jesus remained -- as Master and King. *For had not Therese begged Him to take away her freedom?* Freedom frightened her. ..." And, in vol. II, fl. 179, *verso* of her self-oblation, she asks of God: "I beg Thee to take from me the liberty to displease Thee." Now, to ask God to take away one's liberty seems censurable, because it is to request something against the order of Divine Providence, which gave us liberty that we might merit by it. It also is censurable if, by these words, the pious sister was asking God that she might no longer sin, because this would be the equivalent of confirmation in grace, which is, without doubt, a privilege, and we should not ask for privileges in prayers. Yet one can believe that the pious virgin only desired that God would not permit her to abuse her liberty by sinning, and she expressed these desires in inappropriate terms.

* In vol. I, p. 101, one also reads: "Faith and hope were no longer needed, for love made us find on earth Him whom we sought." It is not in conformance with the truth to say that faith and hope are not necessary while we are pilgrims traveling toward the Lord, because the love of charity *in via*, while uniting us intimately to Christ and making us taste in some way His presence, always demands faith, by which it is regulated. The words of the Servant of God can be properly explained in the sense that her

love for Christ was so ardent and sweet that she did not need, as do other mortal creatures, to have recourse to the motives of faith and hope in order to remain faithful in the service of God.

* Also in vol. I, p. 102, she writes about her confessions: “*I never said a word about what was going on in my soul. The path I trod was so bright and straight that I felt I needed no guide but Jesus. I considered spiritual directors were like mirrors which faithfully reflected the light of Jesus into souls, but I thought that God needed no intermediary where I was concerned. He dealt with me direct!*” And later, (*ibid.*, p. 183): “The good God, wanting to show me that only He was the director of my soul, made use of precisely this Priest who was so appreciated by me.” God can, without a doubt, direct a soul directly by Himself. Ordinarily, however, it is by a director of conscience that he leads one along the way of perfection; because of this the Saints always have recourse to the light of the confessor, manifesting to him the secrets of their hearts, as well as the graces received by God. To have the conviction that one does not need the direction of the Confessor and that one is directed immediately by God smells of presumption.

However we should not suppose such a presumption in the Servant of God, since many other documents clearly reveal that she was gifted with extreme humility, and that she submitted herself faithfully to the direction of her Superiors.

* Also, in vol. I, p. 183, we read: “Once -- and it was unusual -- I felt worried at the thought of approaching the altar. For several days there had not been enough Hosts and I had been given only part of one. That morning I foolishly thought: ‘*If I receive only half a Host today, I shall know that Jesus comes to me reluctantly.*’ I went up and, to my joy, the priest paused and *then gave me two separate hosts!* Was that not a gracious reply?” If such words give the idea that the reception of several hosts produce a greater effect of the sacrament, they are censurable: For the same grace is conferred whether one receives one or several hosts. However, since by the reception of several hosts, the species remain somewhat longer in the stomach, and if this longer permanence gave joy to the pious sister, there is nothing censurable in this.

* Also in vol. I, p. 193, addressing God, she says: “if Thy justice will vent itself, *it will not extend itself upon this earth* etc.” Such a manner of speaking, as it sounds, is not in conformance with the truth, since God exercises His justice not only in this world, but also in the next life, punishing sinners and rewarding the just. ...

* In vol. II, fl. 17, one notes an exaggeration when, writing to her father, the Servant of God says: “*Is there anyone whom God loves on this earth than my beloved little father?* Truly it is impossible to believe.” Now, in this life, no one can know whom God loves most.

* Also, in vol. II, fl. 18, in a letter to her cousin Maria Guerin, she says: “Think, therefore, that Jesus is in the tabernacle expressly for you, *only for you.*” It is true that one can say “Christ is present in the sacrarium expressly for you.” However, it is not true for one to say that He is present only for you, since Christ is present under the species for all. ...

* Also in vol. II, fl. 87 *verso*, she says to Celine: “Jesus says of Magdalen that the person who is forgiven more loves more, but one can say that with even more justification where Jesus *forgives sin in advance.*” This expression, to pardon sins even in advance, is ambiguous. It can lead to the error that sins are pardoned before they are committed. However, it seems that in the mind of the Servant of God, this signifies the preservation from sins in such a way that if the sinner for whom many sins are forgiven loves

God much, how much more would God be loved by the one who, by divine grace, was preserved from committing many sins.

* Also, in the same vol. II, fl. 92 *verso*, she says that the Jews asked our Divine Savior this question: "Master, where dwelleth Thou?" And Our Lord responded with these words: "The fox have their holes, and the birds of the sky their nests. But the Son of man has no place to lie his head." However, in the Gospels it is clear (Mt. VIII and Luke IX) that Christ pronounced these words after one of the scribes said to him: "Master, I will follow you wherever you will go."

* Also, in the same vol. II, fl. 112 *verso* and those that follow, there is a story that the pious sister composed on the occasion of the profession of her sister Celine to show the part that the Blessed will play in this festival. This is a pious fiction, where the Servant of God gives free reign to her talent. She imagines many things that do not, however, confer with the truth. Among others, speaking of the happiness of infants who died after baptism, she writes: "*Nothing will be heard but their shouts of joy, and Our Lady will be obliged to come to reestablish calm amidst the infantile band.*" And, later, alluding to the moment when her sister would utter her profession, she says: "At this moment, the Trinity will descend into the soul of my Celine, giving her *an innocence superior to that of Baptism.*" While Doctors certainly admit that the religious profession, similar to Baptism, pardons all the obligation of penance for guilt, one cannot say that the profession confers an innocence superior to baptismal innocence, except in the sense that the religious who make her profession, because of the intense love with which she offers herself to God as well as her prior merits, has a sanctifying grace in one degree superior to that of a recently-baptized infant. ...

* In vol. III, fl. 61 and following, one finds an account of the *flight to Egypt*. In it, there is an error, since she supposes that St. Joseph was warned by the Angel to flee to Egypt *while he was in Nazareth* and that *from this same city of Nazareth* he left with the Child Jesus and His Mother for exile. However, according to the account in the Gospel (Mt 2), the warning of the Angel was made in Bethlehem, and it was from this city that the Holy Family left for Egypt. Moreover, this whole account seems to have been taken from the Apocrypha. In that book it is said that a child afflicted with leprosy was miraculously cured there by the Child Jesus.

* In vol. IV, fl. 65 and those following, in the poetry where she narrates the glory that infants who die after Baptism enjoy in heaven, the Servant of God uses figures that do not correspond to the truth. Among others, she says that the knees of the Saints are the thrones of these infants.

Notwithstanding these observations, I affirm again what I said (at the beginning) about the writings of the Servant of God.

Such writings can be most profitable to the faithful to stimulate them along the way of perfection; they proceed from a soul totally consecrated to God and inflamed by His love, and whose only desire is to please Christ, the Spouse of Virgins.

Here, then, is all that, in the fulfillment of my duty, I have judged in the Lord necessary to report.

Rome, December 6, 1912.

(*Summarium ex officio* of the Process of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Sister Therese of the Child Jesus, professed sister of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites in the Convent of Lisieux, Bayeux and Liseiux phase, pp. 1-9).

* * *

RESPONSES TO OBSERVATIONS OF THE REV. FATHER PROMOTER GENERAL OF THE FAITH

Most Rev. Father ...

85. The most learned Theological Censor, after having attested that he could find nothing in the writings of the “Servant of God” “that is contrary to an upright faith and good customs, or that is foreign to the common understanding and practice of the Church,” as well as after having set forth other eulogies, added this as well: “Undoubtedly (and these things we should not admire since the pious sister did not apply herself to the theological sciences) here and there can be points that could present difficulties, *since they are not completely in accord with the way they have been presented by approved Authors who deal with ascetic matters.*”

86. Truly, this subtracts nothing from the virtues of the Servant of God. Because if the more informal and often times offhand and less accurate expressions would injure or diminish the virtues of those who had written them, then the sanctity of ecclesiastic authors and the very Fathers and Doctors (of the Church) would already be lost, since they surely were not in some way immune to such errors. Whence says Mechior Canus: “In effect, God desires that this happiness belong only to divine books (in such a way that they contain no faults or errors), as St. Augustine most profoundly and most truly taught. No one else, however erudite and holy he might be, does not at times mislead, at times interpret poorly, and at times even error” (*De Locis Theologicis*, vol. VII, chap. 2, concl. 2). To this St. Alphonsus adds his opinion, observing: “If we would want to scrutinize all the ambiguities that can be taken in *malam partem* (in a bad sense) in the most sensible authors, a thousand propositions could be found that would not pass (this test)” (*Raccolta de lettere*, Part I, Edit. Rome, p. 152).

87. Generally speaking, this would be sufficient for our case. In fact, the Censor himself explained some of the points that he noted as being in conformance with the thinking of the Master of our Law, Benedict XIV. In effect, he says that those who are designated to review the works of the Servants of God above all should consider the rules taught by learned Priests and Writers that are appropriate to apply to the reading. Of these rules, the first is that their sayings, to the degree possible, should be taken *in benigniorem partem* (in the most benevolent sense) (Benedict XIV, vol. II, chap. 28, n. 8). We will show that there is nothing censurable in some of these expressions of the Servant of God, while in others her poetic talent should be recognized.

88. The Censor explains in what sense these words of the Servant of God can be understood, “*I beg Thee to take from me the liberty to displease Thee,*” that is, that God would not permit her to abuse her liberty to sin. And this is proper, since her words that follow soar: “*If, through weakness, I fall at times, Thy divine Gaze will purify my soul,* etc.” The same thing that this Servant of God requested, St. Catherine of Sienna also requested, as Cornelius a Lapide points out (In Zach 9:17, *in fine*): “***How she would beg that her will and her heart be taken from her, and she would pray: Cor mundum crea in me Deus ... Christ, hearing her prayer, took her heart from her, etc.***” *This is recorded in the biography written by Raimundo, her confessor and later General of the Order of St. Dominic.*”

89. The Censor also explains these other words of the Servant of God: “Faith and hope were no longer needed, for love made us find on earth Him we sought.” Because whoever *adheres to the Lord*, that is, whoever is united to Him by a great charity, also lives in Christ – *unus spiritus est et vivit in eo Christus* – as testified by the Apostle St. Paul. For this reason the Censor writes: “The words of the Servant of God can be properly explained in the sense that her love for Christ was so ardent and sweet that she did not need, as do other mortal creatures, to have recourse to the motives of faith and hope to remain faithful in the service of God.” This is, in fact, magnificently confirmed in all the Acts.

90. It next notes her observation concerning a spiritual director. But this refers only to a small part of the childhood of the Servant of God, as one can see in the *Summarium*, p. 285, in Testimony IV: *Asked if the Servant of God, in the direction of her own spiritual life, sought the counsel of others, above all her spiritual superiors*, the reply was as follows: “When Sister Therese of the Child Jesus says in her Biography that the path she trod ‘was so bright and straight’ that she felt she needed no guide but Jesus, adding that she considered spiritual directors were like mirrors which faithfully reflected the light of Jesus into souls, but that God illuminated her directly, she did not establish by this the principle that she was always illuminated directly by God and had no need of the counsel of directors. She is speaking of one certain period of her life when effectively no darkness made her path uncertain. She is speaking of those two years that preceded her entrance into Carmel. But, in Carmel, the sun veiled itself for the Servant of God, and she avidly sought to be enlightened, lacking confidence then in her own lights. I saw her consult not only priests but, in the Convent, those who had authority over her, and even the older mothers, such as Mother Genevieve, our Foundress, Mother Heart of Jesus, former prioress of the Carmel of Coutances, and also follow my personal counsels.

“I know that she confided everything to the priests: Her fears of offending God, her desires to become a saint, the graces that she received from Heaven; she asked Father Alexis to approve her way of abandonment and confidence; she submitted to priests her Act of Oblation to merciful love; finally, she requested help and consolation from various persons in order that she might be led with prudence in her great test against the Faith.”

91. The Promoter of the Faith uses this same argument when he defends her other writings. Thus, the Censor himself, as if to revoke his observation, writes: “*We should not suppose* such a presumption in the Servant of God, since many other documents reveal that she was gifted with **extreme humility**, and that *she submitted herself faithfully to the direction of her superiors.*” This was what the defense sought to bring to light.

92. If the Theological Censor would have had in his hands the Process of the Ordinary, I believe that he would not have singled out the words of the Servant of God: “If I receive only half a Host today, I shall know that Jesus comes to me reluctantly.” Yet the Priest gave her two “separate” hosts. The distinction that the Censor makes is the following: “If such words give the idea that the reception of several hosts produce a greater effect of the sacrament, they are censurable, etc.” But that this is not what the Servant of God thinks concerning the consumption of various host is proved in the *Summarium*, p. 876: Turning one day to her sister, the Servant of God said: “I thank you for having asked that they give me only a particle of the Sacred Host. I have had much difficulty in swallowing. But how happy I felt to have the Good God in my heart!” In the other instance, one should thus be inclined to think that those words should be attributed to the grateful spirit of the Servant of God when, on an unusual and difficult to ex-

plain occasion, feeling herself repulsed by the divine goodness, she had the inopportune thought that “*Jesus comes to me reluctantly.*”

93. These words of the Servant of God are also singled out: “If Thy justice will vent itself, *it will not extend itself except on this earth* etc.” ... God, says the Censor, also exercises His justice in the next life. This is correct. However, the Servant of God was speaking of souls who were offering themselves to the justice of God as victims, and of whom God can ask penances for the sins of others. This, then, takes place in this world – “on this earth” – and not in the next life: “Thinking one day of the souls that offer themselves as victims for the justice of God in order to avert it, taking upon themselves the punishments reserved for sinners...” How could the Servant of God be ignorant of the fact, elementary in Christian catechism, that God exercises his justice over all in the next life? We say this upon the authority of Benedict XIV, who prescribes this counsel to Reviewers: “They should make their judgment on a writer based not on a particular, but upon the whole context of the writing” (vol. II, chap. 28, n. 9). ...

96. The love of children for their parents (we are referring to what she wrote about her father) obviously permits some expressions that, viewed in themselves, could seem excessive. Above all, such expressions can be permitted to the Servant of God, who knew well the supreme virtue of her father. “There are few fathers,” says another of his daughters (*Summarium*, p. 397), “who have such a right to the acknowledgment of his children. His whole life was but one of devotion filled with tenderness for us.” We know that the words that were singled out should not be taken in their strict sense. For even that acknowledgment of praise which the Church applies to each one of the Saints could also be called an exaggeration: “*Non est inventus similis illi*” (“No one like unto him could be found”), etc. How many times, overcome by admiration of something, do we not say: “*There is nothing more beautiful, nothing more sublime.*” Nonetheless, there were and will be many more beautiful and sublime things. Love cannot burn with a rigid rationality. What judgment would an excellent theologian make should he review a book by St. Bonaventure concerning the inspirations of love, wherein he says: “*In tantum me diligis Deus meus, ut te odisse videaris*” (You love me so much, my God, that it seems to me that I hate Thee)?

97. Continuing, the Censor writes: “In a letter to her cousin Maria Guérin, she says: “Think, therefore, that Jesus is in the tabernacle expressly for you, *only for you.*” It is true that one can say “Christ is present in the sacrarium expressly for you.” However, it is not true for one to say that He is present only for you, since Christ is present under the species for all.” This is correct. But did not the Servant of God know this? Did she not know that Christ is in the Sacrament of the Eucharist for her cousin, for herself, and for all? So that we do not fall into such an absurdity, we should follow this most simple solution, that is, to understand this word “*think*” in the most Italian sense of the word ‘*imagine – figurati.*’ It does not seem to me to be at all constrained to take the word in this sense. ...

98. I will add nothing to that which the Theological Censor observes on page 7 of his Judgment concerning the ambiguity of various words, highly esteeming his explanations there. Without a doubt the Servant of God would be referring to herself when she says that “*Jesus forgives the sins in advance.*” For she realized and confessed, as the Acts record, that her natural temperament was such that, were it not for the abundant assistance of the grace of an excellent education, she could easily have fallen: “She (the Servant of God) was convinced that she would not even attain salvation without a very special grace from God: ‘With a nature like mine,’ she writes, ‘I would have become very wicked, perhaps even damned, if I had been reared by parents who were careless about religion. ...’ She attributed her virtue to this preservation and looked upon it as a real pardon. In July of 1881, she wrote to me: ‘Jesus says of the Magdalen

that the person who is forgiven more loves more, but one can say that with even more justification when Jesus forgives the sins in advance.’ “ Later, she wrote: “He (Jesus) wills that I should love Him because He has forgiven me, not much, but everything. He has forgiven me beforehand, *preventing me from falling*” (*Summarium*, p. 410, *in fine*). From this one sees that the thinking of the Servant of God conforms perfectly with the explanation of the Censor.

100. Nothing but a fault of memory can be blamed concerning the two passages that the Censor points out, one referring to the response of Christ when one of the scribes said “Master, I will follow you wherever you will go, ” near the end of page 7, and the other, at the footnote on the bottom of page 7 and 8, which refers to the flight into Egypt. They are material errors, which should be attributed to some lapse of memory, to which even a most learned person can be subject. In the opinion of the most distinguished theologian, her narration of the *Flight* seems to have been taken from the Apocrypha. I confess that I do not understand how he can say *seems* in relation to what should be a fact: Because either it comes from this source or it does not. But if this is the case, I cannot help but doubt, nor can I believe that the Servant of God had made this reading directly. In reality, it is not easy to think that such gospels could be found in a library of sisters. Thus, I am inclined to think that she took these facts from some pious author, who in turn took them from these gospels. There is no hint in the Acts that indicates that the Servant of God ever enjoyed the reading of them ...

103. Two or three points (on pp. 7, 9) of the judgment of the Censor yet remain upon which we would like to make some quick observations. The first is that such things above all prove the poetic faculty of the Servant of God had in a high degree. No one of sound mind would require from poems a rigid rationality that corresponds completely to the truth. It is proper for poets to engage in fantasy, to adorn their thoughts with marvelous images, to soar to higher regions than those allowed by common, everyday language, even when employed in prose. And, in truth, true poetry does not require metric verse, nor regular voice, to which, according to Horatio, **we are accustomed to in these fingers (measurements) and ears (metaphors).**

104. Thus, it is that it is licit for the Servant of God to engage in “*multa imaginari*,” such as in the pious fiction of which the Censor speaks that appears at the beginning of page 8, where she speaks of the happiness of the infants who die after baptism: “Nothing will be heard but their shouts of joy, and Our Lady will be obliged to come to reestablish calm amidst the infantile band.” If the true ontology is absent from this image, it is nonetheless a charming and agreeable thought.

With respect to what she said about how her sister would acquire an innocence superior to that of baptism, we attribute this either to affection or to poetic exaggeration. We attribute it even more to the explanation of the Reviewer, which is the fact that the Servant of God would be an excellent witness “of the intense love” with which she (Celine) was offering herself to God, as well as her prior merits.

If it is not in conformance with the truth when, in her poetry, she speaks of the glory that infants who died after Baptism enjoy in heaven, where “the knees of the Saints are their thrones,” then would it perchance be in accordance with the truth when the Church sings of the innocent martyrs:

“You ... before the Altar itself: Do you entertain yourselves with palm and crowns?”

105. And the same should be said of that passage in which she poetically imagines her little brothers coming to meet her sister Celine: “The four little cherubim whose wings barely skimmed the earth come close and gaze enraptured upon their dearest sister; *they hope, by approaching her, to participate in the merits of her sufferings*, and in return they reflect upon her the immaculate light of their innocence and all the lights that the Lord has freely lavished upon them.” Since it does not seem dissonant that the *hope* of these infants can be explained in the sense of the expectation of a future meeting, it is licit to find that the Servant of God wanted to paint here with poetic colors an image of a certain participation of merits between the elect of God, a participation such as that of the perfection of joy and of glory.

106. We have touched rapidly upon these points made in the observations of the most erudite Theological Censor concerning the writings of the Servant of God. Among them are those which we would have willingly not concerned ourselves with, if we had not been invited to do so or had not the observations of the most worthy Promoter of the Faith obliged us to do this. Let Your Reverences tell us if they do not agree with us in some matter upon which we in fact conjecture, or if we have said something that seems to them unworthy of approval. ...

March 15, 1920

Aloísio Toeschi, Lawyer
Adolpho Guidi

Review: Carlos Salotti, lawyer, S. Cons. Assessor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and Vice-promoter General of the Holy Faith

(Positio super virtutibus, Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servae Dei Sor. Theresiae a Puero Jesu, Monialis Professa Ord. Carmilitar. Excalceatorum in Monasterio Lexoviensi, Rome: Typis Guerra et Mirri, 1920, pp. 1, 69-81, 91).

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Postfacio

QUAE CUM ITA SINT

Antônio Augusto Borelli Machado

Postfacio

QUAE CUM ITA SINT

Antônio Augusto Borelli Machado

Exactly one year has passed since Prof. Orlando Fideli broke ties with the TFP. During that time he has systematically and persistently been striving to defame this Society.

The accusations that he has used in this frustrated onslaught against the TFP consist substantially of the letter in which he announces his breaking with the Society, as well as two others, written earlier, but which he did not send until he sent the last letter announcing his separation.

The accusations contained in these three letters, which are the object of this present refutation, were not presented in a completely ordered fashion. In his impetuosity to defame, Mr. O.F. indiscriminately availed himself of all the information he collected without any spirit of selection of the “proofs,” without any serious doctrinary foundation, without even taking the care to adequately formulate his accusations.

Notwithstanding, these accusations are not lacking a certain architectural plan, implicit more than explicit.

The point that Mr. O.F. is most bent upon proving and that he judges himself most capable of making is that of the supposed illicit cult that would have been established in the TFP in relation to Dona Lucilia R. Corrêa de Oliveira, Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira’s mother who died in 1968, as well as to Dr. Plinio himself. Mr. O.F. disapproves of the devotion, completely private, that members and cooperators of the entity have to Dona Lucilia, as well as the manifestation of veneration and of respect to the person of Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira inside the TFP – and in ever growing circles around the TFP.

According to Mr. O.F., these cults, illicit in themselves, have increased to the point that they would have “dethroned” the Blessed Virgin in our association. Worse yet, in order to hide these cults from the eyes of the public, the TFP would use devotion to Our Lady as a cover. Thus, sacrilege would be the result of all the doctrinary and canonical “evasions” of the TFP.

Were these accusations just, the TFP would thus have gone astray and have been transformed into a monstrous entity, which should be persecuted and eliminated from the face of the Earth. And, toward this objective, Mr. O.F. was directing all his efforts.

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To give structure to the central edifice of his accusation, Mr. O.F. surrounds it with collateral accusations. If a mind could be persuaded with greater facility of the precedence of these other imputations, it would then be left impressed by the supposed illicitness of the question of cult, and thus the whole accusatory edifice of Mr. O.F. would be reinforced. Such is the “architecture” of his libel against the TFP.

The collateral edifices, which apparently serve to brace the central edifice but which actually are suspended from it, are the questions of inerrancy and the *Visions and Revelations* of Anne Catherine Emmerick.

The accusations that Mr. O.F. makes in this regard are grave and diffuse, but they seem to be able to be condensed in the following manner.

The writings attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerick, gnostic at heart, would have infiltrated the foul air of gnosis into the TFP and would indicate the occult direction now being taken in our entity. The lack of justification of this accusation and the artificiality with which Mr. O.F. convulsed this theme, obsolete in the TFP, have already been shown (cf. Letter of Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, chap. I).

The inerrancy of Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira would be the thesis inculcated in the TFP in order to give foundation to the adherence of members and cooperators of the entity to the thinking and directives of the president of its National Council and to the respect that they have for him. Mr. O.F. flies against this inerrancy, primarily questioning it with the Anne Catherine Emmerick matter, and then contesting it as a sophism without basis in Catholic theology, which supposedly would have been acknowledged by Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira himself at the end of a series of conversations with Mr. O.F. in January and February of 1983. The complete lack of justification for these allegations has also been quite exhaustively demonstrated (cf. Letter of Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, chapters II, III and IV).

In reality, the collateral accusations only take on some semblance of truth to the degree that someone can be impressed by the supposed illicitness of the manifestations of cult to Dona Lucilia and Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira. The common man is led to think that cult is only that which is paid to the Saints and the Blessed, elevated as they are to the honor of the altars. Mr. O.F. aspires to exploit this confusion and ignorance with respect to this theme – perhaps he himself being a victim of this superficial and erroneous idea. The perfect licitness, according to the Doctrine and Laws of the Church, of having recourse to the intercession of Dona Lucilia and of the manifestations of veneration and respect to Dr. Plinio were also demonstrated (cf. Letter of Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, chapters VI and IX). Thus, the whole accusatory edifice of Mr. O.F. crashes to the ground.

This is the conclusion of the attentive reader upon reaching the end of this volume.

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Another idea cropping up often in religious circles poorly informed about Catholic Doctrine, in Brazil as well as in other countries, is that the Christian virtue of humility is incompatible with the acceptance of any homage whatsoever. Without even questioning the licitness of these homages, many would be inclined to think that they should be spurned by truly virtuous and, as such, truly humble persons. The impressing group of biographical sketches that make up volume II of the present refutation show how persons eminent in virtue accept or reject these homages, according to whether it be for the greater glory of God and for the expediency of the salvation of souls,

A magnificent sermon of St. Augustine, reproduced in its entirety at the end of volume II of this Refutation, analyzes and resolves, from the doctrinary point of view, this apparent contradiction in the lives of the Saints.

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Mr. O.F., along with the approximately 30 person who follow him (half of whom are made up of cooperators who, through the years and at various times, had left the TFP) have devoted themselves to a lively verbal defamation of the entity on these grounds and perhaps other accusations. The objective of this defamation is to make persons of the TFP stand out conspicuously, which would obviously prejudice the work of the entity in the defense of Christian Civilization.

We owe a redress to the members, cooperators, correspondents, and friends of the TFP. Let them not be shaken by these denunciations, because the Catholic sense that guides them is what led them to discern immediately what was right. But, not having the time to devote to specialized studies, certainly they will appreciate finding here the information and clarifications that validate the position that their Catholic sense led them to take.

Thus the TFP does not intend to give the present refutation a broader circulation than among those milieus affected by the detraction. This present edition is not, then, destined for general circulation.⁸²

We know beforehand that the anti-TFP publicity trumpets of the center-left or the left will give grand scale repercussions to anything that is defamatory to this Society. If Mr. O.F. and his followers go this far, the TFP will know as well how to give this book the necessary publicity.

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Worth more than any formal defense of this present work is the testimony of the eminent Spanish theologian Rev. Friar Victorino Rodriguez OP, who, in an authoritative opinion, attests to the perfect orthodoxy of all that this set forth in this refutation. Thus, it is aberrant to launch against the TFP the very serious accusation of heterodoxy.

On our part, we do not desire to fail in the bad habit that some have of considering excluded from the Church those whom she does not exclude. We only want to reduce to silence those who attempt to upset our friends and prejudice our work in defense of Christian Civilization.

⁸² Why is Tradition in Action posting this work online in 2019, apparently contradicting this first policy? It is because in recent years an Internet onslaught of defamations against Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães, and Tradition in Action (TIA) has been launched, instigated by circles linked to the Priestly Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), repeating the exact same accusations that had been triumphantly refuted in 1984 and 1985. Since Mr. Guimarães played a fundamental role at that time in defending Prof. Plinio and Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), and since he holds due copyrights of his works – *Three Letters* and *Servitudo ex Caritate* – both in Portuguese and in English, he asked TIA to post this *Refutation* online. He hopes the other two authors who collaborated in Part I of this *Refutation* will not disagree with his decision. In such a case, TIA would have to delete the last 50 pages of this work.

Thus, the present study should be taken only in the sense of a legitimate defense in regard to the accusations of Mr. O.F.

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As the Letter of Mr. Atila Sinke Guimarães fully proved, the system of argumentation of Mr. O.F., as far as it be a system, showed itself to be inconsistent and null. In view of this, the TFP will refrain from confronting other protests and objections that might be brought up, since in them can be found the same unqualified system and the same feebleness of argumentation. The present refutation questions *a priori* the value of any future defamations.

Quae cum ita sint – that is, having set forth things as they are, the TFP is not interested in future polemics. It has more – and better things – to do.

São Paulo, May 31, 1984

By the Commission for Studies of the Brazilian Society for the
Defense of Tradition, Family and Property

Antônio Augusto Borelli Machado

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