

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS LATERANENSIS

ACADEMIA ALFONSIANA

INSTITUTUM THEOLOGIAE MORALIS

STUDIA MORALIA

IV

1966

COMMENTARIA
IN CONSTITUTIONEM PASTORALEM
GAUDIUM ET SPES
CONCILII VATICANI II

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SEAN O'RIORDAN, C.S.S.R.

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL'S PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

*Reflections on Part I of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church
in the Contemporary World*

SUMMARIUM

1. Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo huius Temporis est ex se documentum *pastorale*, ut ipse titulus indicat: sed doctrina eius pastoralis continet et exprimit nucleum *anthropologiae theologiae*, ope cuius Concilium Vaticanum II novo modo pertractat quaestiones, « Quid est homo? » et « Quid Ecclesia de homine sentit? » (art. 10-12). Haec anthropologia theologia implicat philosophiam *dynamicam* hominis et utraque *psychologiam dynamicam* personae atque communitatis humanae. Articulus considerat hanc psychologiam prout in Parte I Constitutionis exponitur.

2. Notae conceptus psychologici vitae personalis et socialis qui theologiam Constitutionis insinuat sunt sequentes:

a) Homo apprehenditur in *exsistentia sua psychologica concreta et totali* (cf. art. 3). Itaque vita et activitas *corporalis* hominis explicite honoratur (cf. art. 14:34).

b) Vita personalis et socialis *dynamicice* exponitur, nam « genus humanum a notione magis statica ordinis rerum ad notionem magis dynamicam atque evolutivam transit » (art. 5).

c) Vita humana tamquam *historia videtur* (cf. art. 2:4:5:40:44) et quidem tamquam historia *dramatica* (cf. art. 4:13). Hodie praesertim « iam de vera sociali et culturali *transformatione* loqui possumus, quae etiam in vitam religiosam redundat » (art. 4).

Sic loquens Concilium participat suamque facit psychologiam *modernam* (dynamicam atque evolutivam, non mere quidditativam et staticam) vitae personalis et socialis hominis. Et sic invenit punctum « collo-

quii » et « vivi commercii » inter Ecclesiam et homines huius temporis (art. 3:44).

3. Nunc melius intellegere possumus ea quae Constitutio tradit « de humanae personae dignitate » (cap. I), « de hominum communitate » (cap. II), « de humana navitate in universo mundo » (cap. III), et denique « de munere Ecclesiae in mundo huius temporis » (cap. IV). Notatur influxus psychologiae *dynamicae* in modum quo haec argumenta concipiuntur et exponuntur sive in genere sive quoad themata particularia (e.g. quoad « iustam libertatem etiam in re religiosa »: art. 26). Sed notantur quoque aliquae insufficientiae in pertractatione quae vult esse *dynamica* nonnullorum thematum, e.g. thematis conflictus et perturbationis in ordine sociali (art. 25).

I

The Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World promulgated by the Second Vatican Council at its close — on December 7, 1965¹ — is pastoral in the present-day sense of the term. It is a contribution, and a very important one, to the dynamic theology of ecclesial action² — to the theology of the fulfilment of the Church³. It proclaims Christ and the Church to the world, and, as we shall have occasion to observe, proclaims the world to the Church. It summons the Church to effective presence and action in the contemporary world: it *exhorts* her to be really and fully herself as the People of God in the heart of humanity now. « Mindful of the Lord's saying: 'By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (Jn. 13:35), Christians cannot yearn for anything more ardently than to serve the men of the modern world ever more generously and effectively.

¹ « It is symbolically important that the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Declaration on Religious Freedom were promulgated on the last working day of the Council, so that the Council concluded on a note of concern for others » (R. MCAFEE BROWN, a Protestant observer at the Council, in W. M. ABBOTT, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* [New York 1966], p. 309).

² Cf. P. LIÉGÉ, Introduction to F. X. ARNOLD, *Serviteurs de la foi* (Paris 1957), p. xv.

³ This is K. RAHNER's definition of pastoral theology. Cf. K. RAHNER and others, *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie* I (Freiburg 1965).

Therefore, holding faithfully to the gospel and benefiting from its resources, and united with every man who loves and practices justice, Christians have shouldered a gigantic task demanding fulfillment in this world. Concerning this task they must give a reckoning to Him who will judge every man on the last day»⁴.

The exhortatory character of the Constitution marks it throughout. True, it is possible to describe the first part of it as «chiefly doctrinal in nature» and to say that the second part «contains many important doctrinal points, but is primarily pastoral in tone, as the headings suggest»⁵. But even the primarily doctrinal first part is couched in proclamatory and exhortatory terms — consciously and deliberately so, as the Proœmium to the whole Constitution indicates. «This sacred Synod proclaims the highest destiny of man and champions the godlike seed which has been sown in him. It offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs» (art. 3). This means that it would be a misplaced criticism of the Constitution to say that it fails, even in the «chiefly doctrinal» first part, to set forth a clearly and fully articulated theology of man or to complain about its stylistic form, which is oratorical rather than propositional and discursive. We must keep in mind the *pastoral* (not dogmatic) nature of the Constitution as a whole — a point explicitly stressed in its concluding pages. «Undeniably this conciliar program is but a general one in several of its parts — and deliberately so, given the immense variety of situations and forms of human culture in the world. Indeed, while it presents teaching already accepted in the Church, the program will have to be further pursued and *amplified*, since it often deals with matters in a constant state of development. Still, we have relied on the Word of God and the spirit of the gospel. Hence we entertain the hope that many of our proposals will be able to bring substantial benefit to everyone, especially af-

⁴ CCCW (Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World), art. 93. Throughout I use the translations given in ABBOTT, *op. cit.* (cited as DV) with modifications made for the sake of greater accuracy.

⁵ D. R. CAMPION in DV, p. 186.

ter they have been adapted to individual nations and mentalities by the faithful, under the guidance of their pastors»⁶.

The Constitution, then, aims at bringing «substantial benefit» (*validum adiutorium*) to the Church and to all men. This is a work of pastoral theology. The doctrinal elements embodied in the Constitution, both in its first part on «The Church and Man's Calling» and in its second part on «Some Problems of Special Urgency», are selected, formulated and proclaimed with a view to the *good* of the Church and of humanity, not with a view to elucidating doctrinal *truth* as such. Still, of course, the doctrinal content of the Constitution, stated or implied in the context of its pastoral teaching, is rich, fresh and significant, as in the case of its stress on conjugal love in marriage (art. 49 and 51) or on lay activity as the special form of ecclesial action by which «the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city» (art. 43)⁷. The doctrinal nucleus of a contemporary theology of man can be clearly discerned in the Constitution, underlying and shaping its pastoral exhortations and recommendations.

This nucleus of theological anthropology contained in the document and undoubtedly destined to provoke further doctrinal work in the same sphere implies also a fresh and constructive philosophy of man. In fact the Constitution borrows many points explicitly from modern philosophies of existence and of personalism, weaving them into the texture of its pastoral theology⁸. Accompanying all this and interwoven with it we find a distinctive *psychology* of personal and social life. The Constitution operates with a type of *awareness* of the actual functioning of the human psyche that deserves to be examined separately, since its adoption in a major official document of the Second Vatican Council marks a decisive advance in the Church's humanity and humanisation today. The pre-Conciliar criticism of *actual* theology and the

⁶ CCCW, art. 91. Cf. also the explanation of the nature of CCCW given in the official footnote to the title.

⁷ MCAFEE BROWN considers that in regard to lay activity and involvement CCCW may prove to be more significant than the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (DV, p. 313).

⁸ Cf. D. R. CAMPION in DV, p. 185; A. REGAN, *The «Image of God» in the Dialogue with the World* in the present volume.

actual Church on the grounds of insufficient humanity found theological as well as psychological expression — rightly so, since psychological inhumanity, in whatever degree it may be present, is also and necessarily a theological and pastoral defect in the Church's life⁹. The Council was well aware of this criticism, took it seriously, and strove to renew and adapt many aspects of the Church's life in answer to it¹⁰. The resulting process of humanisation in the Church's understanding of herself and of humanity as a whole can be traced right through the Conciliar documents. It emerges with particular clarity, however, in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World, above all in the first part of this document wherein, not only theologically and philosophically but also psychologically, the Council poses to itself the questions: «What is man?» (art. 10:12) and «What does the Church think of man?» (art. 11).

The Council's pastoral answers to these questions mingle theological, philosophical and psychological elements in a composite whole. All these elements do in any case merge into each other: no rigid lines of division can be established between them. They have to be seen, not as distinct entities brought together by an external unifying force, but as different aspects of the one reality — man in his concrete existence, individual and social. Still, the psychological aspect of human life is different from the theological or philosophical aspect of it: it is different *as* an aspect — as a standpoint from which to view a living totality which can also be viewed from the theological or philosophical standpoint. In this article I aim at identifying and synthesising the psychological insights contained in the first part of the Constitution — insights which, taken together, give us the Council's empathetic understanding of man. This understanding of and insight into man in his personal

⁹ «Men want a humanity without God because, as Yahweh expressed it to Samuel, 'they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them' (1 Sam. 8:7). Part of the reason, also, is that we have too often presented them with a God who lacks 'philanthropy', with a theology which did not call at once for an anthropology, with a first commandment which could very well do without the second...» (Y. CONGAR, *Christ the Image of the Invisible God* [1959], reprinted in *Jesus Christ* [London 1966], p. 45). See also R. HAUGHTON, *On Trying to Be Human* (London 1966).

¹⁰ The mission of the Church, as redefined by the Council, will «show its religious, and by that very fact its *supremely human*, character» (CCCW art. 11).

and social life serves as a substratum for the document's philosophy and theology of man. In this way the psychological aspect of the Constitution assumes great importance for the appreciation of its philosophical and theological aspects. At the same time we shall notice the limitations of the Constitution's psychology, with corresponding limitations in its anthropological philosophy and theology. To point out these limitations will be a service of the Constitution's own purpose, since, as we have noted, it expressly declares the incompleteness of its «programme» (*propositio*) which must therefore «be further pursued and amplified» (art. 91).

II

The first thing to be observed about the Constitution's psychology of personal and social life is its resolute acceptance of man in his *total, concrete existence*. This is explicitly stated in the Preface (Prooemium). «The pivotal point of our total presentation will be man himself, one and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will» (art. 3). Man's humanity is not to be dissected into pieces and parts, some of which come within the province of the Gospel while others are reckoned as alien or irrelevant to it. *All* that is human, the entire «world of men», has been redeemed by Christ (art. 2), and consequently all that is human engages the concern of the followers of Christ. «Nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts» (art. 1). This «pivotal» vision of man leads directly to the positive psychological (as well as theological and philosophical) acceptance of the body and bodily life expressed in art. 14. «In body and soul man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world. Thus they reach their crown through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator (cf. Dan. 3:57-90). For this reason *man is not allowed to despise his bodily life*. Rather, *he is obliged to regard his body as good and honorable*, since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day»¹¹. The «world of men» embraces also the creative activity of man, individual and collective — «that monu-

¹¹ Italics mine. Throughout I italicise phrases in CCCW that have a particular significance from the psychological standpoint.

mental effort by which men throughout the course of the centuries strive to better the circumstances of their lives » (art. 34). Accordingly, even in accomplishing the most everyday tasks, men and women « *can justly consider* that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work, consulting the advantages of their brother men, and contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan » (ibid.). The positive psychology of man, of human life and human labour, embodied in the whole of the first part of the Constitution amounts to a definitive exclusion of dualism from the psychological thinking of the Church — that unscriptural dualism, deriving ultimately from Hellenistic psychology, which exalts man's soul or spirit at the expense of his body and regards involvement with the material world by 'servile' labour as a captivity or punishment or humiliation of the sovereign and transcendent spirit. The « pivotal » rejection of this psychology of man in Part I of the Constitution and the firm establishment in its place of an integral psychology of « man himself, one and entire » prepare the way for the document's treatment of the « problems of special urgency » discussed in Part II — fostering the dignity of marriage and the family (chapter 1), the proper development of culture (chapter 2), socio-economic life (chapter 3), the life of the political community (chapter 4), and the fostering of peace and the promotion of a community of nations (chapter 5). The psychological aspect of all these themes is handled in accordance with the integral psychology of man proclaimed in the first part of the document, though with some indecisiveness and obscurity on issues where philosophical and theological considerations suggest an attitude of compromise and temporisation¹².

The second characteristic of the psychology of man outlined in Part I of the Constitution is its *dynamism*. Man is not considered there as a static, unchanging entity — the « rational animal » of traditional psychology — but as a being in *conscious* process of change, especially nowadays. « Today », says the Introductory Statement to the document, « the human race is passing through a new stage of its history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon man himself,

¹² E.g. in the passage on the « ends » of marriage, art. 50.

upon his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and to people. Hence we can already speak of a true social and cultural transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well » (art. 4). The « social and cultural transformation » in question is not limited to the external environment of human life: it affects the very psyche of man — « his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and people ». Man is changing *as man*: his *mind* is in a condition of change and agitation¹³. « Thus, the human race has passed from a more static concept of reality to a more dynamic and evolutionary one »¹⁴. In the process accepted values are called into question, especially by young people, impatient or even rebellious in their distress (art. 7). Nevertheless the psychosocial evolution of man at the present time has a providential place in the accomplishment of God's design for him. « God's Spirit, who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this evolution » (art. 26).

Thirdly, the Constitution assigns a *historical* character to the integral, dynamic, psychological life of man. A pattern of progress and development emerges from and gives significance to the processes of change that mark this as well as other aspects of his life. Man's life is « history » (art. 5) and the world is « the theater of the history of the human race » (art. 2). The Church knows « how richly she has profited by the history and development of humanity » (art. 44). Sin disturbs « the mystery of human history » (art. 40) which is none other than « the mystery of man » himself (art. 10:22). Today « the human race is passing through a new stage of its history » (art. 4) — a stage which we apprehend aright when we « recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics » (ibid.). The Constitution uses the word 'dramatic' again in describing the disruption by sin of man's relationship to God, to himself, to his fellow-men and to all created things. « Man is

¹³ « Hodierna animorum commotio et in vita condicionibus immutatio » (art. 5).

¹⁴ Ibid. The article notes the part played in this change of mentality by science and technology, including « biology, psychology, and the social sciences ». Cf. also art. 54.

split within himself. As a result, all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a *dramatic struggle* between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of *battling the assaults of evil* successfully, so that everyone *feels as though he is bound by chains*.... Sin diminishes *man himself*, blocking his path to *fulfillment* » (art. 13).

Human psychological life, then, as depicted in the first part of the Constitution, is a historical totality, dynamic and dramatic in character, and it is passing today through a veritable transformation. There is nothing original about this presentation of the psychological life of man. It has been said repeatedly in modern times by psychologists of various theoretic allegiances,¹⁵ by scientific phenomenologists of all kinds,¹⁶ and even by logicians like Susanne K. Langer who take philosophy to be « the pursuit of meanings » or « a proces of making sense out of experience, rather than adding to experience itself as factual learning and experimental investigation do »¹⁷. She writes:

« We live, today, in an anxious world. Later generations will probably see our age as a time of transition from one social order to another, as we find the Middle Ages a "middle" between the Graeco-Roman civilization and the full-fledged European. But we cannot see the present that way, because what we are moving toward does not yet exist, and we can have no picture of it... We feel ourselves swept along in a violent passage, from a world we cannot salvage to one we cannot see; and most people are afraid.

The deluge of novel experience that has overtaken us in the past two or three generations is, of course, widely recognized as the source of our general disorientation. Everybody knows how the social, economic, and physical aspects of life have changed — how artisan labor has given place to machinery, how new modes of travel and communication have revolutionized the social structure, bringing the most primitive cultures into direct contact with the most civilized, and how modern war and modern commerce, being

¹⁵ Cf. J. A. C. BROWN, *Freud and the Post-Freudians* (London 1961); J. H. VAN DEN BERG, *The Changing Nature of Man* (New York 1961).

¹⁶ P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN is the best-known of these. Cf. especially his *The Phenomenon of Man* (London 1959).

¹⁷ *The Growing Center of Knowledge*, in *Philosophical Sketches* (Baltimore, Md., 1962), Mentor ed. 1964, p. 135.

worldwide, have mixed up all races and religions and tongues in a bedlam of fantastic adventure. These facts need no reiteration »¹⁸.

To point out, however, that there is nothing new in the psychological picture of man given us in the fundamental or first part of the Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World is irrelevant to the psychological significance of the Constitution. This lies in the fact that the document *accepts* a dynamic interpretation of human psychological life and accepts too all the problems, psychological, philosophical and theological, that necessarily go with such an interpretation. A direct reference to these problems is made in the Preface. « Though mankind today is struck with wonder at its own discoveries and its own power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of his individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity » (art. 3). The Constitution frankly and humbly acknowledges that, while the Church « guards the heritage of God's Word and draws from it religious and moral principles », she does so « without always having at hand the solution to particular problems » (art. 33). In other words, she *herself* shares in the anxiety of the age and bears its « anxious questions » within her own bosom. She too is involved « in a bedlam of fantastic adventure » in common with « all races and religions and tongues », as Susanne K. Langer expresses it. Her approach to men on these issues must therefore be collaborative and 'conversational', not oracular or dictatorial. « Giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole People of God gathered together by Christ, this Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with the entire human family with which it is bound up, as well as *its respect and love for that family*, than by engaging with it in *conversation (colloquium)* about these various problems » (art. 3). The Church has need of the world's help (art. 44), just as the world has need of the Church's help (art. 43). There has to be « a *living exchange* ... between the Church and the diverse cultures of peoples. To promote such an exchange, the Church requires special help, particularly in our day, when things are changing very rapidly

¹⁸ Art. cit., p. 141.

and *ways of thinking are exceedingly various*. She must rely on those, whether they are believers or unbelievers, who live in the world, are versed in different departments and branches of knowledge, and have an intimate grasp of them» (art. 44). The fact that the Council *identifies* the Church with the historical, dynamic, problematical psychological life of our time, while maintaining her transcendence over the time as the bearer of God's word, constitutes the really significant fact of the exposé of contemporary human psychology given in the first part of the Constitution. It marks a definite break with the «more static concept of reality» favoured by the Church's theology and psychology in the past — a concept which, in modern times, tended to cramp and diminish the humanity of the Church, being alien to the increasingly «dynamic and evolutionary» concept of reality that governed the thoughts, feelings, aspirations and efforts of the earthly city of men¹⁹.

III

Chapter I of the first part of the Constitution deals with «the dignity of the human person». This phrase, constantly used in the document,²⁰ has a theological and philosophical significance, but it carries a psychological significance also in so far as it denotes man's *awareness* of personal dignity in himself and in his fellow-men. This awareness is located in man's sense of his «interiority» (*interioritas*) whereby «he outstrips the whole sum

¹⁹ Noting the growth of a «sharper critical faculty» in modern man, CCCW points out the value of this for the «purification» of religion from magical and superstitious elements and for the development of «a more personal and active» commitment in the realm of faith (art. 7).

²⁰ Cf. art. 21:23:26:29:31:39:40:41. The concept is a key one in the Council's theology. E.g. the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis humanae personae*) makes the dignity of the human person the basis of its doctrine on «the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in matters religious». The Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (*Perfectae caritatis*) presents religious obedience as respecting and developing the dignity of the human person (art. 14). The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) stresses the fact that «the profession of the evangelical counsels ... does not detract from the genuine development of the human person. Rather by its very nature it is most beneficial to that development» (art. 46).

of mere things » (art. 14). Man returns to « these depths » (*haec profunda*) within himself when « he enters into his own heart » (ibid.). The subsequent paragraphs deal with the dignity of the human intellect (art. 15), of moral conscience (art. 16) and of human freedom (art. 17), but hardly with the dignity of interiority *as such*, with the result that the psychology of personality and personal life given in them does not measure up adequately to the requirements of a « dynamic and evolutionary » concept of personality. The treatment is mainly traditional, static and schematic. Art. 18 on « the mystery of death » is more existentially conceived. « It is in the face of death that the riddle of the human condition becomes most acute ». But the point might have been made that it is in the face of death that the *realisation* of the human condition becomes acute. Man becomes fully aware of himself *as man* in knowing that he will die. This awareness gives its full depth, intensity and dignity to his interiority. It also confronts his interiority with an enigma — « the *riddle* of the human condition ». But this riddle emerges in his consciousness subsequently to and in dependence on the primary activation of interiority effected by the factual realisation: « One day I shall die ». This is not merely an existentialist thesis: it is a powerful constitutive fact of human psychology resulting, as Susanne K. Langer has shown, from man's power of symbolic conception and abstraction. It is a strictly logical clarification of experience.

« Probably the profoundest difference between human and animal needs is made by one piece of human awareness, one fact that is not present to animals, because it is never learned in any direct experience: that is our foreknowledge of death. The fact that we ourselves must die is not a simple and isolated fact. It is built on a wide survey of facts that discloses the structure of history as a succession of overlapping brief lives, the patterns of youth and age, growth and decline; and above all that, it is built on the logical insight that *one's own life is a case in point*. Only a creature that can think symbolically *about* life can conceive of its own death. Our knowledge of death is part of our knowledge of life » ²¹.

Miss Langer develops further her analysis of human awareness

²¹ *Man and Animal: The City and the Hive*, in *Philosophical Sketches*, p. 99.

of death and *therefore* of life in terms of her own science, symbolic logic:

« The momentous difference between us and our animal cousins is that they do not know they are going to die. Animals spend their lives avoiding death, until it gets them. They do not know it is going to. Neither do they know that they are part of a greater life, but pass on the torch without knowing. Their aim, then, is simply to keep going, to function, to escape trouble, to live from moment to moment in an endless Now.

Our power of symbolic conception has given us each a glimpse of himself as one final individuation from the great human stock. We do not know when or what the end will be, but we know that there will be one. We also envisage a past and future, a stretch of time so vastly longer than any creature's memory, and a world so much richer than any world of sense, that it makes our time in that world seem infinitesimal. This is the price of the great gift of symbolism » ²².

But, though the price is high, it earns an immediate high reward in the form of individuation, personalisation, self-realisation. Miss Langer continues:

« In the face of such uncomfortable prospects (probably conceived long before the dawn of any religious ideas), human beings have evolved aims different from those of any other creatures. Since we cannot have our fill of existence by going on and on, we want to have *as much life as possible* in our short span. If our individuation must be brief, we want to make it complete; so we are inspired to think, act, dream our desires, create things, express our ideas, and in all sorts of ways make up by concentration what we cannot have by length of days. We seek the greatest possible individuation, or development of personality. In doing this, we have set up a new demand, not for mere continuity of existence, but for *self-realization*. That is a uniquely human aim » ²³.

Once it has been established in the human psyche, the process of individuation and the urge towards self-realisation raise the question and « riddle » of the human condition of which the Constitution speaks. But the document has missed out the personalising force of the foreknowledge of death, which is its pri-

²² Art. cit., p. 100-101.

²³ Art. cit., p. 101.

mary and fundamental force in psychological life. This is a defect in the Constitution's psychology which the potent modern science of symbolic logic helps remedy — even more effectively than does existentialist thinking, which logicians accuse of irrationality and self-contradiction²⁴. To say this is only to be faithful to the spirit of art. 44 of the document, where the Council declares the Church's need to learn from the world in regard to the Church's own concerns. And of course the mystery of human life and death is very much the Church's concern. It concerns her theologically (cf. art. 18) and concerns the world psychologically and philosophically. There is much room here for «conversation» (art. 3) and «living exchange» (art. 44) between the Church and the world in building up complementary «dynamic and evolutionary» concepts of reality (art. 5).

The section on atheism (art. 19-21) in chapter I of Part I of the Constitution takes account of the psychological roots of atheism. They can be reduced to the quest, in one form or another, for self-realisation by man as man (cf. especially art. 20). Faith in God is felt as a barrier to, or at least as unnecessary for, this self-realisation — a feeling which often stands in a reactive relation to the falsified religious attitudes of believers who «conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion» (art. 19). The remedy for atheism is authentic Christian teaching and living in all departments of life, especially the spirit and practice of brotherly charity (art. 21). Ultimately the message of the Church is «in harmony with *the most secret desires of the human heart...* Far from diminishing man, her message brings to his development *light, life and freedom*» (ibid.). In the concluding article of the chapter (22) the «mystery of man» is directly related to the mystery of Christ, the risen bestower of life upon us, «so that, as sons in the Son, we cry out in the Spirit: Abba Father!» This new life is psychologically effective in that «through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His gospel, they overwhelm us» (ibid.).

²⁴ See SUSANNE K. LANGER's criticism, *The Growing Center of Knowledge*, in *Philosophical Sketches*, p. 145-147.

IV

Personal life is necessarily incomplete without interpersonal relationships. These are already mentioned in the Introduction to the Constitution (art. 6), and in chapter I, art. 12, the companionship of man and woman in marriage is said to «constitute the primary form of interpersonal communion. For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential».

«The Community of Mankind» forms the specific subject of chapter II. It consists in «a community of persons» which requires «a *mutual respect* for the full spiritual dignity of the person» (art. 23). The interdependence of the human person and of human society is stressed (art. 25). On the one hand «the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person». On the other hand «social life is not something added on to man», for it is «through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through *fraternal dialogue*» that man «develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny». In dealing with disturbances in the social sphere of life art. 25 tends to over-moralisation. It grants that these «result in part from the natural tensions of economic, political, and social forms», but adds that «at a deeper level (*penitius*) they flow from men's pride and selfishness, which contaminate the social sphere also». This general attribution of social disharmony to human sinfulness is a static, conventional concept, not borne out at all by research into the dynamics of psychosocial life. Conflict enters as a quite normal element into the social relations of mankind quite apart from the personal sinfulness of the people concerned. A whole lot of conflict is generated by pathological elements in the human psyche, individual and collective, as psychiatric experience shows at every turn; and moral goodness in the personality is no barrier whatever against the intrusion of this calamitous factor into the social life of psychotic or neurotic persons²⁵. An enormous

²⁵ The magnitude of the problem of emotional and mental illness in the genesis of human conflict is shown by the fact that in all countries with a developed health service more than half the available hospital beds at any one time are occupied by psychiatric patients. On the relevance of this problem to human and

amount of conflict derives also from the clash of interests in human life — interests which are apprehended as quite legitimate by the contending parties, as far as each one's particular interest is concerned. The Church's own history is full of such conflicts between *good* people, each one pursuing the good as he sees it. A dynamic psychology of social conflict will actually register virtue as well as vice as a source of disharmony in human affairs, for virtue in its own way comes not to bring peace but the sword²⁶. What we can and should work for in human life is the reduction and containment of social disharmony of one kind or another, so that it may not get in the way of overall social progress. It may even help on that progress — in which case it is what social psychologists call 'benign' (as distinct from 'malignant') conflict²⁷. It is of course quite true to say, as art. 26 says, that «every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and in fact of the general welfare of the entire human family». But even the universal inducement of this mentality in mankind will by no means result in the peace of Utopia, for there will still be quite legitimate differences of opinion as to what in fact constitutes the *legitimate aspirations* of particular social groups or the *general welfare* of mankind as a whole. Complete peace between men is an eschatological hope to be realised *beyond* the spatio-temporal world and *beyond* history — not *in* history or *in* the world of our time (or any time).

The dignity of the human person is taken up again in art. 26 in the context of furthering the common good of mankind. The interiority of the person is here given more direct consideration than in art. 14-17 of chapter I. Man has a right among other things «to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of his own conscience, to protection of his private life, and to *rightful freedom, inclusive of freedom in the religious sphere*». The interior values of love and freedom are mentioned in conjunction with the more exterior ones of

Christian living in general cf. F. J. BRACELAND and M. STOCK, *Modern Psychiatry: A Handbook for Believers* (New York 1963).

²⁶ Cf. Matt. 10, 34-37; Luke 12, 51-53: 14, 25-26.

²⁷ CCCW itself urges human institutions, both private and public, to «fight resolutely» against «any kind of slavery, whether social or political» (art. 29).

truth and justice as constitutive of social order (ibid.). The interior line of thought about personality is further developed in art. 27 on «reverence for the human person». «Everyone must consider his every neighbour without exception as another self... In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of absolutely every person, and of actively helping him when he comes across our path». This reverence and love must extend also «to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political or even religious matters. In fact, *the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through such courtesy and love*, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them» (art. 28). The word 'even' put before 'religious matters' in this article (*vel etiam religiosis*) has its own psychological significance. The Council has to take account of a religious mentality that would *deny* the relevance of «reverence and love» to our attitudes towards those who differ from us precisely in religious matters. Hostility and hatred would, in this way of thinking, be the appropriate attitudes towards 'heretics'. This static psychology of religious difference is rejected, and a dynamic psychology of reverence and love for «the *person* in error» is put in its place by the Constitution, for such a person «never loses the dignity of being a person, even when he is flawed by false or inadequate religious notions» (ibid.).

The essential equality of all men forms the theme of art. 29 and this consideration leads to a strong emphasis on social justice (art. 29:30); but the psychological *awareness* of human equality is not directly expounded here. *Consciousness* of human dignity and a *sense* of human responsibility are, however, stressed in art. 31. «Hence, the *will* to play one's part in common endeavors should be encouraged in everybody. Praise is due to those national procedures which allow the largest possible number of citizens to *participate* in public affairs with *genuine freedom*». This article concludes on a note of genuine interiority in considering social responsibility and participation. «If every citizen is to *feel inclined* to take part in the activities of the various groups which make up the social body, these must offer advantages which will *attract* members and *dispose* them to serve others. We can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are

strong enough (valent) to provide coming generations with *reasons for living and hoping* ». The final article of this chapter (32) relates the theme of human solidarity to the « communitarian character » of the People of God in the Old and New Testaments.

V

The theme of « Man's Activity throughout the World », which forms the subject-matter of chapter III of the first part of the Constitution, raises various psychological points which are dealt with as they arise — the meaning and value of human activity (art. 33-35) and the rightful autonomy « of men, of societies, or of the sciences » (art. 36). As to the first: the document assigns a truly personal and interpersonal function to human activity as a fulfilment of man in his individual and social life (cf. especially art. 35). As to the second, the Council declares: « We cannot but deplore *certain habits of mind*, sometimes found too among Christians, which have not sufficiently attended to the rightful independence of science. Through the conflicts and controversies sparked by them, they have led many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed » (art. 36). A footnote refers to Mgr. Pio Paschini's *Vita e opere di Galileo Galilei*, published (after being long delayed) by the Vatican Press in 1964. Scientists will welcome the Council's words about scientific freedom; but they will naturally look to see what *actual* force those words will have in future in the attitude of the Church towards science. The remainder of this chapter is taken up with the theology of human activity, which art. 38 presents as finding its perfection in the paschal mystery.

VI

Chapter IV, the final chapter of Part I of the Constitution, deals with « the Function of the Church in the Contemporary World ». It is an effort to sum up the considerations of the preceding three chapters by way of direct preparation for Part II of the document. The chapter begins: « Everything we have said about the dignity of the human person, and about the human

community and the profound meaning of human activity, lays the foundation for the relationship between the Church and the world, and provides the basis for *dialogue* between them» (art. 40). The communion of the Church with all mankind is expressly stated. «The Church, 'at once a visible assembly and a spiritual community' (*Lumen Gentium*, chap. I, art. 8), goes forward together with all humanity and *experiences the same earthly lot which the world does*» (ibid.). She «believes she can contribute greatly toward making the family of man and its history *more human*». She «*gladly holds in high esteem* the things which other Christian Churches or ecclesiastical communities have done or are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal». At the same time «she is *firmly convinced that she can be greatly and variously helped by the world* in the matter of preparing the ground for the gospel. This help she can gain from the talents and industry of individuals and of human society as a whole» (ibid.). Four articles (41-44) follow on some general principles governing «mutual exchange and assistance» between the Church and the world in matters of concern to both.

The first (41) deals with the assistance which the Church strives to bring to individual persons. The dynamic psychology of modern man is again accepted: he is «on the road to a *more thorough development of his own personality*, and to a growing discovery and affirmation of his own rights». What the Church has to offer him in this sphere is the revelation of «*the meaning of his own existence*, that is, the innermost truth about himself». God in Christ alone «answers *the deepest desires of the human heart*»; so «whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man». The secure anchorage of «the personal dignity and freedom of man» lies in «the gospel of Christ which has been entrusted to the Church», for the Gospel «announces and proclaims the freedom of the sons of God» and «has a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of choice». In the divine order established by Him who is «Lord both of human history and of the history of salvation» the «rightful autonomy» of man is «re-established and confirmed» in its own proper dignity. «Therefore,» says the text, «by virtue of the gospel committed to her, the Church *proclaims the rights*

of man. She acknowledges and greatly esteems the *dynamism* of this age by which these rights are everywhere furthered. But this movement must be penetrated by the spirit of the gospel and protected against every kind of false autonomy». Theoretically this is a thoroughly concrete, dynamic and historical concept and statement of the Church's position in regard to human freedom and autonomy today, especially when read in conjunction with the Council's Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis humanae personae*. But the contemporary humanist, whether believer or unbeliever, will naturally be more persuaded by the degree to which human freedom and autonomy are respected in the future *practice* of the Church than by any statement, however eloquent, of her theoretical position. He will wait to see how 'must' will be practically interpreted in the statement, « This movement must be ... protected against every kind of false autonomy » (*adversus omnem speciem falsae autonomiae tutandus est*). Will the Church keep that 'must' in the realm of the Gospel to be *freely* proclaimed and *freely* accepted and finally drop all force, constraint and intimidation from her protective armoury? If so, there will be peace and good will between humanism and the Church, and the way will be open for a real « mutual exchange and assistance » between them, as the Council desires (art. 40).

The next article (42) deals with the assistance which the Church strives to bring to human society. The interiority of socio-personal life is here fully recognised and the Church offers her willing service to it. « This Council... *looks with great respect* upon all the true, good, and just elements found in the very wide variety of institutions which the human race has established for itself and constantly continues to establish. The Council affirms, moreover, that the Church *is willing to assist and promote all these institutions* to the extent that such a service depends on her and can be associated with her mission ».

Art. 43 deals with the Christian contribution to human activity. The Council comes down categorically on the side of Christian involvement in the fulfilment of « earthly responsibilities ». Lay responsibilities in this sphere are dwelt on at length. As for bishops and priests, they « should remember ... that by their daily conduct and concern they are revealing the face of the

Church to the world. Men judge the power and truth of the Christian message thereby». Moreover «by unremitting study they should fit themselves to do their part in establishing *dialogue with the world and with men of all shades of opinion*». There is a humble acknowledgment of «how great a distance lies», even today, «between the message she (the Church) offers and the human failings of those to whom the gospel is entrusted. Whatever be the judgment of history on these defects, *we ought to be conscious of them, and struggle against them energetically*, lest they inflict harm on the spread of the gospel».

The final article of this group (44) deals with the assistance which the Church receives from the modern world. The Church, we are told, is not unaware of «how richly she has profited by the history and evolution of the human race». She has learned from them *to understand the nature of man better* and to preach the Gospel in ways adapted to the needs of men. Today too — in fact today especially — «she *gratefully understands* that in her community life no less than in her individual sons she receives a variety of help from men of every rank and condition», not excluding those «who oppose or persecute her».

This chapter and the first part of the Constitution end with a meditation on Christ «the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end» (Apoc. 22:12-13).

VII

This survey of the psychology of personal and social life contained in Part I of the Council's Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World shows clearly the *willingness* of the Church today as embodied in the Council to step into line with the dynamic psychology of the modern world. The Council *wanted* to make this psychology its own and to a very considerable extent succeeded in doing so. Thus the Church that confronts modern man in the Conciliar document that deals specifically with her relationship to him and his to her appears as a far more human Church than that of pre-Conciliar times. The Constitution has undoubtedly furthered greatly the humanisation of the Church in contemporary and intelligible terms.

At the same time we have noted occasional failures in the document to carry through adequately the passage from a static and obsolete to a dynamic and effective concept of the personal and social life of man. Moreover, we have observed that it is not the thought or language of the Constitution that will ultimately count in the life of the Church and the world today but the degree to which *effect* is given to the dynamic psychology, philosophy and theology of the document in the *actual* life of the Church. Modern man, whether in or out of the Church, attaches importance to words only so far as they are operationally translated into action²⁸. Any considerable failure on the Church's part in the coming years to live up to the proclamations of the Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World would have disastrous consequences both for the Church and for the world to which she is the divinely appointed bearer of God's word. She would have failed miserably and, worst of all, hypocritically in her mission to the world, and *that* failure would be most severely judged at the bar of history (cf. art. 43).

While there are definite defects in the document's psychology of man, these are more than counterbalanced not only by the general dynamism of its psychology but also by its psychological insight on several points of detail. For example, its presentation of the inner relationship between personality and community in human life is fully in accord with recent scientific analyses in this field. Community is not something superadded to personality, on the ground of practical needs of collaboration or of domination of the strong over the weak or of dependence of the weak on the strong or other circumstantial factors of a similar kind. It arises from «our history, our commitments made for us before we were born, our relatedness to the rest of mankind. The counterpart of individuation from the great life of the stock is our rootedness

²⁸ «The true meaning of a term is to be found by observing what a man does with it, not by that he says about it» (P.W. BRIDGMAN, the Nobel Prize physicist: quoted by S.I. HAYAKAWA, *How Words Change Our Lives*, in R. THRUENSEN and J. KOBLER, ed., *Adventures of the Mind* [New York 1960], p. 256). On the modern operational concept of the relation of word to action see S.I. HAYAKAWA, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York 1949); S. CHASE, *Power of Words* (New York 1954); I. LEE, *Language Habits in Human Affairs: An Introduction to General Semantics* (New York 1941).

in that life, our involvement with the whole human race, past and present... The sense of involvement is our social sense... Human society rests on this feeling »²⁹. The Council is saying the same in other terms when it declares that the human person « *by its very nature* stands completely in need of social life » (art. 25: cf. art. 12).

Again the Constitution notes that today « there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on different meanings in different ideological systems » (art. 4). This is an important psychological complication of our time, one that is studied in detail in general semantics. Thus the Constitution uses the word 'community' and so does Communism; but the *meaning* of the word is by no means the same in the two usages. The problem has, however, a wider relevance. The words by which key concepts are expressed can take on different meanings in the *same* cultural system, with the result that both the words and the concepts mean different things to different people within the system. This inevitably creates a greater or less degree of uncertainty, confusion, agitation and conflict in the life of the people concerned. As Susanne K. Langer says of familiar words of American culture:

« When we speak of 'community', 'society', 'democracy', 'freedom', we do not mean what our predecessors meant by those terms, but we still say the things they said. A 'community' used to mean a more or less permanent group of individuals or families having special relations to each other that they did not have to families or persons outside the group. Can that notion be simply extended to humanity as a whole, the 'world community'? 'Freedom' used to mean freedom to act without restriction, as one saw fit, and take the consequences; do we mean anything like what the American pioneers called 'freedom' when we propose to give people 'freedom from want' or 'freedom from fear'? »³⁰.

Semantic and conceptual disarray is actually a major feature and factor of the confusion of our time. As Miss Langer says again:

²⁹ SUSANNE K. LANGER, *Man and Animal: The City and the Hive*, in *Philosophical Sketches*, p. 102-103.

³⁰ *The Growing Center of Knowledge* in *Philosophical Sketches*, p. 149.

« What few people realize is that the changed and still-changing conditions of life are only one thing — the most tangible thing — that keeps us in a state of nervous tension verging on hysteria. There is a deeper source of anxiety, below the surface of practical expectations and even of explicit thought: that is the growing inadequacy of words, and especially certain key words which have always functioned in our moral and political discourse, to express exactly what we mean in such discourse today...

What those symptoms reveal is a general frustration of our conceptual powers in the face of the new world, and that means, of course, inability to reason clearly about it; consequently we lack theoretical foundations to support any assertion about the things that concern us most urgently — human rights, loyalty, freedom, democracy, religion, nationality, culture. The cause of this bankruptcy lies in two conditions: the speed with which practical changes have overtaken the world, and the sudden expansion of thought. Both actual life and theoretical thinking have outrun our powers of imagination; so the average person — simple or sophisticated — is unable to picture the universe, or even to conceive what the near future is likely to be. The world image has collapsed » ³¹.

In such circumstances, continues Miss Langer, there arises in people « a nostalgic desire to return to doctrines rationally and suitably built up in the smaller frame of a more stable world before reason became confused. Then one hears the watchwords: 'Back to Kant!' 'Back to St. Thomas!' 'Back to Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras!' But we cannot go backward, except in dream. History moves forward, not backward » ³².

What we need today, then, is « not primarily a rebirth of good will, or a return to some ancient order of life » but « active, purposive, confident ideation... big ideas, abstract, powerful, novel — in short, modern — so that the human mind shall always encompass and control what human hands may reach » ³³.

The Second Vatican Council was aware of this need in the life of the Church. It did quite a lot of « active, purposive, confident ideation » in the theological and pastoral field. It launched many new « big ideas » into the life of the Church — among others the idea of the Church herself as the People of God, the idea of the

³¹ Art. cit., p. 142.

³² Art. cit., p. 151.

³³ Art. cit., p. 151-152.

liturgy as the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, the idea of authority in the Church as a service of the People of God, the idea of ecumenical openness, and a whole complex of creative ideas about personal and community life, derived from «scrutinizing the signs of the times» (art. 4), in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World. The psychological basis of this last body of ideas has been the subject of our study in this article. It is a basis which will have to be appreciated and accepted in the Church today before the theological ideas of the Constitution, and indeed of the Council documents as a whole, can be fully appreciated, accepted and put into effect in her life.

Roma, Academia Alfonsiana.