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When I Disagree with Church Teachings Wednesday, February 12, 2014 9:15 AM COR
Center Morning Enrichment

I would like to begin today's talk, which has to do with our feeling with the Church and sometimes not feeling with the Church about its teachings, I would like to start with the issue of faith itself. **In Scripture faith is described as a kind of trust, trust in a God who loves us and is slowly building a community to represent his own wisdom at work in the world.** That is the prayer Sister Madelyn made this morning, that we be the face of Jesus in the world. Well, even before Jesus, the whole idea of a covenant community was to be the face of God in the world and to exemplify the wisdom of God by its laws and morality and goodness and uprightness.

The fact of the matter is **from the very beginning** things did not go smoothly. The history of the Old Testament is the history of all kinds of conflicts, **all kinds of problems.** We have never been without them. Sometimes people want to go along with the idea of justice or peace or general thriving as long as it concerns them personally, but they're not willing to advance the peace, justice, and general thriving of others. But God continues to elicit trust in him and his ways. And **Jesus comes to redirect or refocus the lives of the people** because he found that in his day the people's focus was on the wrong things. Today in the gospel was an example. He says it's not what goes into you that makes you unclean. That was the basic understanding of kosher law. He says what comes out of you makes you unclean. That's turning the understanding of the Law at that time on its head.

In Jesus' own understanding he comes "to find the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But even in his earthly life he has to **reevaluate his own understanding of his mission.** And he is forced to first by the Syrophenician woman—by Syrophenician we mean not Israelite, not Jewish, of

gentile origin. When she asked for his help he says, “Well, it is not right to give the food of children to the dogs,” which is a pretty crude statement. But because of her persistence he changes his mind. Also the Roman centurion, not of his flock at all, but he decides to go along and to help the Roman centurion. And then in his parables, at least as we have them from the evangelists, he has such images as the Good Samaritan, reinterpreting the whole idea of what a Samaritan is. He reinterprets some fundamental laws like sabbath rest. When his men are hungry and they pick grain to eat it, they are accused of breaking the sabbath, which technically they were, and he says, “Well, the sabbath is really made for us; we aren’t made for the sabbath.” So **he is constantly reinterpreting the tradition that he comes from and**, I would say, even more importantly **the Temple**. Throwing the moneychangers out of the Temple is a very graphic example of his sense of order and right. It’s very different from the sense of order and right that is all around him and is approved of by the leaders of his religion.

So these changes that he is creating bring up a question, “Well, are you really from God?” And that question he refuses to answer in so many words. He says to his questioners, “Well, tell me this: do you think John the Baptist was from God? Was his baptism from God?” And they won’t answer him because it’s too complicated. So in this way **Jesus does not give answers. Jesus raises questions.** He does not give answers. That’s something we have to keep in mind.

So to follow him, however, is to give an answer out of ourselves that, yes, this person is worth following; yes, this man is from God, and we do have to pay attention. So **trust is of the essence of following Christ and the Christian body of the Church.** This **trust is a personal commitment to Jesus**, as is quoted in the Fourth Gospel. “You have faith in God, now have faith in me also.” **It includes surrender, obedience, enlightenment, and acceptance.** And it doesn’t happen necessarily all at once.

In contrast to faith, which is those things I just mentioned—I will mention them again: surrender, obedience, enlightenment, and acceptance—in contrast to that we have faith understanding. **Faith understanding** is just that: **it is the work of our mind trying to understand what is the meaning.** So it's always concerned with meaning. This may not be so obvious because the language of faith is myth and poetry. **Myth and poetry is the language of faith because myth and poetry is the language of intuition and feeling.** And faith is a matter of intuition and feeling.

It is not a matter of measurement or actually experience in the sense of something that can be re-experienced. That's the very idea of rationality and **that's the idea of modern science.** It's concerned about something that can be measured and experienced again and again and again to be validated, to be proven. But not religious experience. Faith experience cannot be.

There is such a thing as mystical experience, which is very different and very important—mystical experience. But mystical experience does not occur to everybody. St. Thomas Aquinas was one of the greatest intellects of the Church. Before he died he had some kind of mystical elevation. I don't even call it an experience. It's actually a change in the mind itself; it's a transformation of the mind. He said, "Everything I have written is straw"—"Everything I have written is straw." So he underwent a transformation. I would say it isn't simple that there is a mystical and a non-mystical, but **there are various degrees of transformation within the mind and intellect of a believer.** So faith understanding has many, many levels.

One thing that is very important is **it is the responsibility of the disciple to promote one's own faith understanding.** It says in Mark that "Jesus spoke to the crowds only in parables so that seeing they would not perceive and hearing they would not understand," which sounds mean. But what it really means is it's up to the crowds to try to understand. The search for

meaning is **a personal responsibility**, and Jesus doesn't come to the crowds and give them meaning. What Jesus does to the disciples is he mentors them. **Jesus mentors the disciples.** That means he encourages them; he is a model for them. He **models** in himself what he wants from them, and then he **encourages** and sometimes actually **scolds**. In this morning's gospel he scolded them for not understanding what he had said. He was teaching about what is pure and impure. He says, "What comes out of you that's impure, not what goes into you." Again, turning the teaching of the rabbis on its head. They didn't get it and he really scolded them in private. He took him aside, which he often did, and then he scolded them for not understanding. He scolded Nicodemus for not understanding. He said, "You are a teacher in Israel and you don't understand these things," when he was talking about a transformation that Nicodemus had never experienced: being "born again" or "begotten from above." But **Jesus expected people to work on what he said. So that's where faith understanding comes in.**

In the history of the real world, especially because the Church was born into a culture that was dominated by Greeks, by the Greek culture, the mytho-poetic expression of Scripture was not allowed to sit just as it was, but it was analyzed by the reason, the reasoning faculty, the intellect. So the **Greek thought** started to think about and wonder about and try to express in some sort of orderly, logical way what is the meaning of this mytho-poetic expression we call Scripture, which is the product of intuition and feeling. And so we get to creeds by mixing these two things together. **A creed is a logical attempt to express in a rational way what is ready intuitive and expressed ordinarily in poetry or myth**—"myth" here not being something untrue, but something that is dramatic and expressive in a nonliteral way.

Out of this, then, comes a whole body of teachings that many people wanted to be quite certain and complete. But the certainty and the completion of the teachings has never quite

prevailed. There have always been problems with the body of teaching because language itself, whether it's poetic or whether it's rational, is always changing. **Language changes**, therefore, the meaning behind the language gets lost and has to be re-expressed in some other way. And because the leading sources of new insights are really the mystics, and not everyone can follow them exactly, **we have a problem of getting bodies of teaching that the Church as a whole can accept and embrace that will serve everybody**. Well, that is a very tall order. So we have had problems; we shouldn't be surprised.

Getting back to faith, **faith is a matter of choice. It's a matter of free will, whereas faith understanding is a matter of intellect**. So will and intellect aren't the same thing. They both are faculties of soul. They are essential to who we are as human persons, but they are different. What we must say about intellect and will is **they are beyond the realms of like and dislike**. And any spiritual school of thought at all will always take its disciples, its students, beyond like and dislike. Like and dislike is just simply too relative. So we have to go beyond like and dislike.

We have to go beyond memory because **memory is not at all reliable**. St. Teresa of Avila goes into the idea that we have a lot of hurts in our memories, and what we have to do is we have to understand our memories or we have to relearn our memories knowing that during whatever trauma we experienced Christ was with us. We may have been ignorant of Christ, but he was there. So that's what now today has been called the "healing of memories." It has to do with relearning what really happened in my life according to the presence of Christ or with reference to the presence of Christ in my life.

Also we have to **go beyond our own feeling and experience** because our own personal feelings and our own personal experience is too limited. So for this reason many modern rationalists—rationalists are people that only care about reason—don't care about myth and

poetry. **Rationalists**, especially from the time of the Enlightenment, **have simply abandoned all religion and all religious creeds**. They don't care. They don't need it. It doesn't fit into their personal experience, so it's not meaningful, which is rather sad in my personal opinion, but it's actually a very prevalent attitude today. On the other hand, if you had only a person concerned with intuition and feeling and didn't ever ask the reason for anything and didn't seek the meaning for anything and sought no insight, then you would have **a romantic, and that's not exactly very productive either**. I mean, we do have romantic individuals in the life of our Church, but that's not necessarily a helpful way to go either.

Human experience provides the grist, so to speak, of the mill of the soul. In other words, what we go through, what we experience, what we sense, what we think about, what we strive for, what we want, what seems to be important, how we try to measure all this, this is all grist for the mill of the soul. **St. Thomas describes faith as an act of the will accepting or receiving divine revelation**. But divine revelation is not private or individual. It belongs to the community of the Church, so in the Catholic tradition faith understanding has a communal conscience. **Faith understanding has a communal conscience; it is not simply an individual thing; it belongs to the whole community**.

This is also true of the Orthodox Churches, but it's not true of all churches, for example, Baptists. Baptists don't believe in any communal conscience, only in the individual conscience. Fundamentalists are also individualists, pure and simple; so are many Evangelicals. Some Protestants do have a broader sense, a communal sense, but it's usually not a universal one. For example, in the Congregational Church the communal consensus or the communal conscience belongs to the concrete community one belongs to. In Presbyterianism it could belong to a chain of communities scattered throughout a whole country or even beyond, but specific ones, those

ones that happen to agree on certain set principles, which they choose. Episcopalians believe theoretically that an entire nation is guided through the ministry of bishops. Lutherans are both united and divided by synods. So those are different ways of thinking about community. But in each case **the universal communal conscience is not well attested to outside of the Catholic Church.** I would include the Orthodox as Catholic.

Part of being a Catholic is trusting acceptance of the communal conscience of the whole Church. However, this is **not static.** It's a similar issue in philosophy when you say, well, truth is a correspondence between the knower and the known. But the known keeps changing, so the knower has to keep changing. So **faith understanding is expressed in concepts, which are called "doctrines," which may incorporate certain categories not found in Hebrew or Aramaic society.** Therefore they are not original. **They don't really belong to Scripture.** They are something that came in because **the Church found itself in a different kind of culture.** So the translation from one to another can't stop; you have to keep moving. Frozen concepts lack life and do not attract anyone. So they may be true, but they wouldn't be attractive. And Paul VI made it very clear in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that **the Church's teaching has to be attractive.** To make it attractive is the work—that's the work of evangelizing.

Differing opinions or views may become in some cases divisive and, in fact, have often become divisive. For this reason the pastoral leadership of the Church has been often, as it were, somewhat against any sort of differences. They want everybody together. The authority of the pope and bishops are supposed to guide, protect, and facilitate the process. **Sometimes the process of understanding gets stopped in favor of the status quo because the goal of unity** is, let's say, people want the goal too fast, too soon. Sometimes rather substantial changes occur in the Church's communal conscience.

A perfect example of this is during the time of John Paul II. **John Paul II one day just said, “Well, we don’t believe in limbo.”** Well, limbo had become a doctrine of the Church. It was not official dogma. It wasn’t something people had to believe, but was widely believed, and it was the reason why so many people wanted to baptize their babies very young, in fact, immediately when they were born because, in case they didn’t live, the babies would never go to heaven if they weren’t baptized. That was the reason why people did that, why we had infant Baptism, at least why it became so prevalent. But John Paul simply said, “Well, we don’t believe in that.” It was in response to the question of: what happens to the souls of babies who are aborted? So he said, “Well, we believe that they go directly with God.” Well, that isn’t what the Church ever said before. That isn’t what St. Augustine said. That isn’t what St. Francis Xavier thought when he went over to India and China. He thought if he didn’t baptize people, they wouldn’t go to heaven and said so. But then John Paul says, “Well, no, we believe they go right to heaven”. **So here is a change.** Well, this change did not come from a visit from an angel. John Paul, no doubt before he was ever pope, had been thinking about this, as many people had. **So this leads to an understanding that if no one could disagree with any teaching, then growth would stop.** Obviously it didn’t stop because John Paul himself didn’t agree with that teaching, that received tradition.

Usually growth happens over a long period of time. I will give you an example of something that took a long time a little later. But we can’t ever forget the communal conscience at work. Now when John Paul made this statement a few people who you would call very traditionalist were startled, but everyone else said, “Oh, yeah! We knew that.” So thinking has to always start somewhere. It starts with **someone realizing that something isn’t quite right.**

The human person makes judgments about right and wrong, true and false, through the faculties of intellect and will. **The intellect seeks insight into meaning and seeks to put order into everything by creating a coherent whole of all that is experienced and known from whatever source.** The problem is this: once the intellect works and puts together a coherent whole, it doesn't want to let go of the whole. That's not only true in religion; that's true in science. Einstein was not accepted at first. People said, "Oh, that can't be right. That contradicts Newton." Newton wasn't accepted at first because he contradicted the people before him. Max Planck was not accepted, was ridiculed, and definitely all those that promoted an understanding of quantum mechanics. So **people don't want to let go of what they think is right**, naturally. We shouldn't criticize them.

But change will happen anyway. This is called a "paradigm shift." We are undergoing a paradigm shift today in regard to science. Physics—there are certain very big things that can't be explained by the contemporary paradigm, for example, do you know what it is? Dark matter, have you ever heard of that? Dark matter cannot be explained, and dark energy, which is some sort of anti-gravitational force. It's not part of the paradigm, but it's definitely there. It's going to somehow eventually cause a paradigm shift. Well, **in our Church there is a paradigm shift as well in regard of many formerly certain ideas:** about nature, about reality, or about our relation with God—some things are shifting. I wouldn't say our relation with God necessarily, but that's already changed quite a bit in the last fifty years, because up until fifty years ago—you might not remember this, but the element of fear was a very pronounced issue, and that has definitely shifted.

We have to keep in mind that **the mysteries of faith will never be fully understood, and all the mysteries are intertwined.** So in a way **there is really only one mystery.** Now let's take

limbo as an example. It may seem like a small matter, but it is related to something else called “original sin.” It is also related to the practice of infant Baptism. Now in regard to infant Baptism, I just heard a little quote from Mark Twain. Someone asked Mark Twain if he believed in infant Baptism. He said, “Believe in it? Hell, I’ve seen it!” That’s a good play on words and the term of “belief.” “Believe in it? I’ve seen it!” Of course the question was not did he see it, but did he think it was of value. So the word belief has lots of different meanings. The Church had permitted infant Baptism from early on, but it only became a norm at the time of St. Augustine because of this idea of original sin, which was a defect in the soul that prevented a soul from going to heaven and seeing God face-to-face. **Will the change in the limbo teaching reflect a change in the attitude toward infant Baptism? It remains to be seen; it may.**

Another doctrine related to original sin is the doctrine of **Mary’s Immaculate Conception**. Fifty years ago progressive theologians like Hans Kueng were calling such doctrines into question. What the Immaculate Conception means is that Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother without this stain of original sin. St. Thomas Aquinas thought about that and said, no, it’s impossible. St. Thomas Aquinas said the Immaculate Conception was impossible, but that is not where the Church went. So you can see that controversy was very old. Today the doctrine, however, is seen as an affirmation of **the power of grace to transcend time and embrace people** beyond the narrow box of the Church, unbeknownst probably to Pius IX, who promulgated it. It’s become—you see in order to figure it out because the Church says there is no grace without Christ, Mary was conceived before Christ in the body, so then people said, “Oh, well, we have to realize that **the grace of Christ is not limited to the time of Christ and after, but could go before because in God there is no time**, which is true. Well, if that’s true, well, then **God’s grace could be working in all cultures at all times**. So actually it’s called for a

growth in the understanding of grace, not envisioned, I am sure, by Pius IX himself. Mary's unique quality was that she always cooperated with grace. As such she is the beginning of a new order of creation. So this doctrine has, in a sense, lead to **a fuller understanding of grace.**

A similar kind of **development has occurred with the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary.** Ironically, this dogma was proclaimed in 1950, only three years after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which hadn't been read yet. Many of the scrolls show such stories is the *Assumption of Moses*, the *Assumption of Abraham*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, which no one knew about, I do believe, in 1950. So it was **a way of talking in this mytho-poetic expression about some sort of ascension into another realm**, perhaps of mystical transformation, something like that. The Book of Kings, of course, does speak of Elijah ascending into heaven in a whirlwind. Genesis implies the Enoch did not die, but went directly to God. **How do we square that with other assumptions that before Christ the gates of heaven were shut?** There are problems with thinking that everything said is universally valid. So these are genres of religious expression not unique to Mary necessarily in the religious traditions of Israel.

Pope Pius XII taught that this doctrine meant that Mary enjoys the fullness of heavenly life with the resurrection of the body. But now some theologians ask if, since there is no time in eternity, which we must acknowledge, then would it not be right to think that all the blessed already enjoy resurrection? Why do we have to say there's a time where they have to wait? That's how speculations grow in the Church. In both cases **the doctrine whose purpose was to set forth Mary as unique and set apart, has had the effect of changing people's perception of God's will for all.**

Ordinarily a faithful Catholic accepts with his or her will everything that the Church teaches, even though much of it remains unclear and sometimes maybe even

incomprehensible. Accepting is an act of the will. It may happen that someone might become convinced that something the Church teaches is wrong. This conviction is not of the will; it is of the intellect. Since we are obliged to follow our consciences, which is the judgment of our intellect, when we are convinced something is wrong, we must not affirm it. In this way someone may come into conflict with a consensus teaching of the Church, that is, what has been handed down based on the consensus at that time. So our personal faith understanding may be in conflict, at least verbally, with the communal tradition that has been handed on.

There is a serious question, however, **whether one really understands the tradition. Some people really take words wrongly.** We have to be careful. **Do we really know what the Church is trying to say?** And that is something that opened up in the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s with Nouvelle Theologie, with the sort of renewal of the Church that returned to the sources. People said, “Oh, that’s really what we mean.” People didn’t know; it hadn’t been carried down exactly in the abstractions of the Neo-Scholastic theology. We have to find out really what is meant, and that could take a lot of work. The mere fact of renewal in the Church shows that traditional expressions must sometimes be changed precisely to say in a better or more understandable way what was originally intended. **Dogmas all have a purpose; they don’t exist in a vacuum. The articles of the creed were affirmations that Jesus brought healing and salvation to the whole of humanity. Early heresies were seen as denying salvation of the whole person: body and soul, or splitting the whole apart.**

Another idea that is very important in this regard is what Pope John XXIII called the **hierarchy of truths.** That means not everything has the same importance. **Not everything the Church teaches has the same importance.** For example, if one is convinced Jesus is not the

Messiah or not the Son of God or has not brought about redemption, that person would have no place in the Church. That doesn't make any sense. It is very high on the hierarchy of truth to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that he brought redemption, that he is from God. St. Paul says the cornerstone of the faith is the resurrection of Christ. So if someone denied that Christ was raised from the dead, that person would not be a Catholic or really a Christian. On the other hand, there are many doctrines or teachings that are not essential truths. They are more derivative in nature, which are teachings like, for example, limbo. They are bound to either change in their meaning or be dropped altogether.

We also have to **distinguish between the question of meaning and belief of the heart/will.** So I may know what a theological term means like "consubstantial" or "transubstantiation," but in order to know that I would have to have a philosophical or metaphysical background. If I don't have that background, I don't know what terms mean. But **if I don't know what they mean, I shouldn't deny them either. So if people say they don't believe something, sometimes they mean they don't understand it.** But if I say Jesus was a man just like any other man, no different from anybody else, then I'm rejecting an essential component of the Catholic communal conscience. I would it deceiving myself and others if I took Communion in the Church because that symbolizes substantial acceptance of the Church as a body of believers whose faith is revealed.

On the other hand, the **Church has historically utilized a philosophical concept which for centuries allowed her to dialogue with pagans and unbelievers,** but which today is accepted by very few. Do you know what I'm referring to? What concept did the Church use to deal with pagans and non-believers that pagans and non-believers would accept and be a basis for talk? **Natural Law,** Natural Law was not a Christian idea. It was a Stoic idea. It was based on various

Greek ideas and accepted in general by the intellectuals of both Rome and Greece. **The Church Fathers found that as a good basis for talking about all kinds of things.** It presupposes there is purpose in the world. Not everyone does today. **It presupposes there is a certain unwritten morality that we can discover through reason.** For better or for worse, it has been the basis for many issues stemming from human nature, especially questions about human sexuality and the purpose thereof. Whatever it is, Natural Law is not revelation. The future will doubtless bring some sort of new understanding of Natural Law, if indeed the concept is retained at all, but it probably will be, because there is some kind of purpose in nature, and even unbelievers can see that—“can” does not mean they do, but they can. It would be imprudent, however, to conclude that there is no purpose to creation or that human beings should just follow whatever they feel like. That would not even be being a spiritual person. But how this will be understood is not yet clear. This is where a paradigm shift is happening right now as people rethink all these issues.

Ultimately the burden of proof lies on the shoulders of those who do not agree with tradition. Respectful disagreement is possible, but it does require work. We cannot just base one’s understanding on feelings because feelings do not produce understanding. Feelings are very important. They are the basis of a lot of value. But they don’t necessarily translate into a meaningful, logical statement.

There are quite a few examples of strong loyal Catholics who have had to fight the authorities in the Church for various reasons, sometimes doctrinal, sometimes disciplinary, but they have prevailed. Many of them have been canonized. I shall give you some examples.

Thomas Aquinas, **Thomas Aquinas dissented about the ban on Aristotle.** See, at the time of Thomas Aquinas the teachings of Aristotle were considered so inimical to Christian faith that

they were forbidden and even philosophers were not supposed to study them. St. Dominic disagreed with that. **Dominic believed that Aristotle had the key to understanding nature**, and that if the Catholic faith and nature were put together, that we would defeat the Muslims intellectually. That was his goal. And Thomas agreed with that, **but the bishops didn't**. But Aquinas prevailed because he wouldn't give up his studies. And when there was a very major crisis, well, fortunately for him the pope sided with him. Now was that because the pope understood what he was doing? We are not sure, but we do know that the pope was a personal friend of his father.

St. Catherine of Siena stood up to the pope in Avignon. As you may know, the popes traditionally were in Rome but at some point they moved to Avignon, actually the bishop of Marseille was elected pope. On his way to Rome there was war in Italy. He never got there. He stayed in France. Pretty soon Avignon became the capital of the Church. Catherine of Siena was convinced that that was evil, sinful, that the pope had no business being in Avignon. On top of it, well, I will mention that the court there was very luxurious, that there was a great deal of luxury and excess of food and drink and money and all kinds of things. She was convinced that that was wrong. She went to Avignon and she spoke directly to the pope, although he didn't understand anything she said because she was Italian and he was French. But she had an interpreter. The pope was so astonished by her ferocity and her conviction that God had talked to her—she believed God talked to her; she said so—he was so convinced that he decided to move back to Rome. Well, the curia was furious, and they refused to go with. In fact, the day he left—he only had one or two people who would go with him—the day he left all the cardinals were out there crying because he was leaving. He went to Rome and Rome was a mess. Rome was overrun with crime and plague and it was terrible. But he went back because **Catherine of Siena was**

convinced that as the successor of St. Peter he belonged in Rome where St. Peter died a martyr, and that's where he should be there even if he dies a martyr. What she was really keying in on is that the pope is the Bishop of Rome; he is not somebody above bishops. **He has a primacy, but it's a primacy within the body of bishops. There is no order above bishop**, but that's what people had thought, and then they thought, well, he could be anywhere. The pope could live in Moscow. And she said, no, **he is a bishop and he has to be among the bishops and he has to be in the city Peter died in because that's whose successor he is as primate**. So in time she prevailed.

Third person, **Mary Ward**. The Council of Trent made some changes for the better, but they also made some very stupid decisions. One of them was concerned with religious orders of women that had been for years engaged actively in hospital work, teaching work, and so on. The **Council of Trent said** no more; **women should not do any work outside of the convent**. They should be put always in closure and you couldn't trust them to go out onto the street. Mary Ward said this is totally wrong and refused to follow the orders of Trent. Now many bishops really went along with this order of the Council of Trent, and they tried mightily to get her to go along with this, but she wouldn't. Her life was a long struggle, but she never gave into the authorities trying to enforce the Council of Trent **because she believed that it was not the will of God**—that simple. It was not the will of God, and she would not do what was against the will of God. **She formed her conscience in this case against the Council of Trent**. But in her favor was the whole tradition before Trent. So here Trent was changing something, and she said that change is wrong, and she eventually prevailed.

Galileo, Galileo was **opposed to a literal interpretation of the Bible**. At his time many people interpreted the Bible literally. Actually in the Catholic tradition there was a lot of

interpretations nonliteral, in fact, figurative was more common than not. But what had happened was—what? The Protestant Reformation, and in the Protestant Reformation the Protestants were always saying the Catholic Church doesn't defend the Bible; the Catholic Church doesn't teach the Bible. A lot of Catholics in reaction to that started to look at the Bible the way the Protestants did, literally. In fact, the pope said, Urban VIII, said I am sick and tired of the Protestants criticizing us about not defending Bible. This time I'm going to defend the Bible. The Bible says the earth does not move, therefore, Galileo is wrong. Well, it does; it's a psalm. It says, "God has established the earth and it does not move." Galileo said, well, it is moving and he perfected the telescope and he wanted to show some cardinals how there were moons of Jupiter, so the moons of Jupiter were going around Jupiter, so the earth was not the center of everything, and the cardinal would not look. He didn't want to change his mind, so he avoided the experience that would make him change his mind. In fact, they said that the telescope was devilish, a devilish invention. Galileo did not prevail in his own day, actually, because at that time he lived in Italy and Italy was both temporally and spiritually under the same authority of the Church, of the pope, and all of the authorities in the curia were all of the same cloth, and ironically they had all changed from being against Aristotle to being for Aristotle, as they had been against Aristotle in the time of Aquinas, now they are for Aristotle, and they used Aristotle against Galileo. You see the mind does not want to change its convictions. Galileo, however, in order to avoid worse problems **capitulated**, in a way. **He signed a statement** in which he agreed that the traditional view was correct, but then **he added under his breath, "E pur si muove," "And yet it moves."** Now the sad thing about Galileo is that **it really spoiled the relationship between the Church as a promoter of faith and science** that was just beginning at that time. So it got off on the wrong foot, and actually **soured for centuries, maybe even to this day, the relationship**

between science and faith, or so say some authorities. Could this have been prevented by a humble, open-minded magisterium? Probably, yes.

John Henry Newman, John Henry Newman **promoted the idea that the true faith resides in, this communal conscience, resides in the *sensus fidelium*** the *sensus* or *consensus fidelium*. Henry Newman was a convert from Episcopalianism, from Anglicanism. And it's amazing how poorly he was received by the people of his day, you might say, the leading lights of the Church, of the Catholic Church in England. They didn't like him. Why they didn't like him, I'm not sure; maybe he was too smart for them, but they were not very nice to him. But this idea in the *sensus fidelium* **in contrast to the magisterium of the pope and bishops**, well, people at that time thought that that was heresy, that the highest authority was the pope and bishops. He said, well, not really. It's really the sense of the faithful. Well, this battle went on for a long time. He claimed that in the fourth century most of the bishops, one of the popes, and some of the emperors were actually heretics. That is, they were Arians. They did not follow the teachings of the Council of Nicaea, so he said, and he went about to show it. Now what is that? We don't have to care. The point is he said that most of the bishops were off, that they didn't even know what they were saying. He also claimed that in the nineteenth century most Protestants were Monophysites. **A Monophysite is someone who says Jesus is divine but not really human.** That's what he claimed had become of Protestantism in the nineteenth century, and he himself said when he looked in the mirror found a Monophysite. That's the reason, the real reason, he became a Catholic, because **he realized that when it came to the essential belief that Jesus is both divine and human that isn't what the Anglicans believed**, nor did any Protestants in his evaluation. But he said that **it was the Catholic laity that have preserved the Orthodox faith, not the bishops, at least in the fourth century.** He claimed the bishops are brought into tow by

the laity, and this had not happened in Protestantism. They had just gone off. He was roundly condemned both by his former Protestant confrères, naturally, and by the bishops of England, strangely, but he was finally exonerated by Pope Leo XIII, who named him a cardinal. So **naming a controversial theologian a cardinal toward the end of his life is a way saying, well, now we accept you.** Oddly, Pope John Paul II said Monophysism really isn't a heresy, although it have been considered that for over a millennium and a half. He said it's just a misunderstanding. Well, of course probably most heresies are just misunderstandings.

Yves Congar, O.P., a Dominican from France suffered condemnation, silencing, and censoring for **championing the cause of ecumenism** in the days when the people in Rome didn't like ecumenism. He had been silenced. His work had been censored. He had been shifted from one position to another, **told to stop his work, but he didn't because he believed God was calling him to do it.** He was vindicated by Pope John XXIII, and **he became one of the most celebrated *periti* at Vatican II. He was made a cardinal by John Paul II.**

John Courtney Murray opposed the idea that the church and state should be connected. We are quite aware of the fact that in our country church and state has never been connected, but in Europe it was from the time of Constantine or shortly after Constantine, 381. In 381 the emperor decreed that the Catholic faith would be the faith of the empire. For the most part, the bishops thought this was a good idea; actually it wasn't. One of the first popes to acknowledge it wasn't was Pope John XXIII. But John Courtney Murray was working in the days of Pius XII. And according to them and according to all the popes and all the councils, society is just only when it recognizes the true Church and the true faith and gives the Catholic Church preference over all others, rather than treating all beliefs as equal. That was the Church's policy. Now it had been acknowledged throughout Europe until the Protestant Reformation; then it split into

Catholic countries and Protestant countries. In Protestant countries then it was the Protestant faith that was preferred. **But there's always a church and state connection.** It was only about 1980 that the country of Sweden said that you did not become part of the Church of Sweden by being a citizen of Sweden, but only by baptism—I think 1980. So that's not very long ago—so this unity of church of state. John Courtney Murray said this is really not very good, and it's not good for us. **Murray argued that this was, first of all, passé, but also that it is actually a better system to have Church and state separate. This way the state would have no say in religious or spiritual matters. Religious liberty became the first and foremost freedom.** He suffered silencing, censoring, harassment as well, but was, again, vindicated at Vatican II. He had a strange champion in Cardinal Spellman. Cardinal Spellman was largely considered very conservative, but not on this issue. There are all kinds of variations in the history of our Church. **His teachings became the cornerstone of much of the writings of Pope John Paul II, who most people consider as conservative, but actually incorporated many, many changes into his teachings.**

Other great theologians who suffered rebuke and condemnation include **Henri de Lubac**, who later became a cardinal; **Teilhard de Chardin**; **Dominique Marie Chenu**; and **Jean Danielou**, who also became a cardinal—all vindicated at Vatican II.

An issue that seethed in the Church for seven hundred years was—very strange to your ears, I am sure—taking interest on a loan. Luke says in one place that a person should be willing to lend and expect no return. So bishops and theologians made out of that a rule that said that any **interest on a loan, and interest meant anything in addition to the principle, was intrinsically evil; and they taught this for seven hundred years.** The Second Lateran Council in the twelfth century condemned the practice of demanding repayment anything above the

principle on a loan. Bishops and theologians, including Charles Borromeo, who wrote the section on what was called “**usury**”—anything in addition to the principle was called usury—he wrote the section on usury in the Roman Catechism from the Council of Trent. He was at that time the Archbishop of Milan.

St. Peter Canisius, who was the head of the Jesuits; Pope Gregory XIII; Pope Clement V; Pope St. Pius V; Pope Sixtus V; and St. Robert Belarmine, who was Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office all reiterated the judgment of the Lateran Council. As late as 1821 the Holy Office reiterated that interest on a loan was against both the natural and the divine law. Now what happened? Well, **I think the authorities realized no one was following this.** There is a little irony in the 1983 Code of Canon Law: it does say that **if a bishop has extra funds he doesn’t need, he should invest them.**

What we learn from all this is that **life is dynamic. Some traditional Catholics have sought security in unchanging and unchangeable doctrines.** In fact, this is often the connotation given to the word “dogma.” But nothing is unchangeable. However, we need to keep in mind that **the Church’s growth is organic, often slow, sometimes fast, but never taking place in one place or in one person only.** Again, we go back to communal conscience. What happens in one place, in one person only, is probably not the Holy Spirit. **Humility is an absolutely necessary quality if we are to discern the moving of the Spirit.** The world will always present plausible options that are ultimately false.

There have been **many ideas in the history of the Church, many people who have opposed the Church who are now forgotten,** or if they are remembered, it’s not their teachings that are remembered: Marsilio of Padua; or Savonarola; or Tertullian, a doctor of the Church originally, but who left the Church because he refused forgiveness to those who had broken under torture

and denied the faith. These people's ideas are extinct; that is, **their teachings are extinct**. Even contemporary theologians who have desired the limelight have really been pushed aside and failed to gain support from fellow theologians, when they wanted to go it alone. This is usually the recipe for disaster. **We cannot go it alone. We have to feel with the Church, think with the Church, communicate broadly, and express ourselves humbly, letting the Church fulfill its designated task as teacher of the faithful.**