Eighteenth-Century Forerunners of Vatican II: Early Modern Catholic Reform and the Synod of Pistoia

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EARLY MODERN CATHOLIC REFORM
AND THE SYNOD OF PISTOIA

by
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ABSTRACT
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FORERUNNERS OF VATICAN II:
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AND THE SYNOD OF PISTOIA

Shaun L. Blanchard
Marquette University, 2018

This dissertation sheds further light on the nature of church reform and the roots of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) through a study of eighteenth-century Catholic reformers who anticipated Vatican II. The most striking of these examples is the Synod of Pistoia (1786), the high-water mark of “late Jansenism.” Most of the reforms of the Synod were harshly condemned by Pope Pius VI in the Bull Auctorem fidei (1794), and late Jansenism was totally discredited in the increasingly ultramontane nineteenth-century Catholic Church. Nevertheless, many of the reforms implicit or explicit in the Pistoian agenda – such as an exaltation of the role of bishops, an emphasis on infallibility as a gift to the entire church, religious liberty, a simpler and more comprehensible liturgy that incorporates the vernacular, and the encouragement of lay Bible reading and Christocentric devotions – were officially promulgated at Vatican II.

The first chapter describes the nature of Vatican II reform as ressourcement, aggiornamento, and the development of doctrine. The “hermeneutic of reform,” proposed by Pope Benedict XVI and approved of by John O’Malley, is put forward as a way past the dead-end of “continuity” and “discontinuity” debates. Chapter two pushes back the story of the roots of Vatican II to the eighteenth century, in which a variety of reform movements, including the Catholic Enlightenment, attempted ressourcement and aggiornamento. The next two chapters investigate the context and reforms enacted by Bishop Scipione de’Ricci (1741–1810) and the Synod of Pistoia, paying special attention to their parallels with Vatican II, and arguing that some of these connections are deeper than mere surface-level affinity. Chapter five considers the reception of Pistoia, shows why these reforms failed, and uses the criteria of Yves Congar to judge them as “true” or “false” reform. The final chapter proves that the Synod was a “ghost” present at the Council. The council fathers struggled with, and ultimately enacted, many of the same ideas. This study complexifies the story of the roots of the Council, the nature of Catholic reform, and the manner in which the contemporary church is continuous and discontinuous with the past.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shaun L. Blanchard

I have been fascinated with the Second Vatican Council since hearing older people argue about quite it vehemently. I am grateful that, while I was an undergrad at North Carolina, Prof. Yaakov Ariel encouraged me in my study of Vatican II and modern Catholicism. During masters work at Oxford, I found welcoming and sympathetic mentors in Prof. Johannes Zachhuber and Fr. Philip Endean, SJ. They encouraged and challenged me as I delved into the Jacques Dupuis controversy, Dominus Iesus, and conciliar interpretation. To the Dominicans at Blackfriars I owe a debt of gratitude. The year I spent at Blackfriars was certainly the most formative of my life.

While at Marquette University, I explored Dignitatis humanae with Dr. Pat Carey, Lumen gentium and the nouvelle théologie with Dr. Susan Wood, and the hermeneutics of Vatican II with Fr. Joseph Mueller, SJ. Fr. Mueller’s meticulous engagement with my dissertation, especially the Acts of Vatican II and of Pistoia, has been invaluable. His passionate and selfless dedication to teaching represents the best of the Jesuit Order. Dr. Mickey Mattox has been a constant support and encouragement, and I am grateful to him for also examining this dissertation.

Reading Lodovico Muratori’s Della regolata devozione dei cristiani (1747) with Prof. Ulrich Lehner was a pivotal moment. Muratori seemed to have all of the qualities I admired in twentieth-century ressourcement figures. This set me on a path, accompanied at every step by Dr. Lehner and his groundbreaking historical work, of pushing back the story of the Council into the eighteenth century. Dr. Lehner’s encouragement, constant contact, and total availability turned an awfully difficult task into an enormous pleasure.

The generosity of the Smith Family Fellowship revolutionized this project. In the 2016–17 academic year and again in 2017–18, I was able to hold in my hands the sources of eighteenth-century Catholic reform. I travelled around the UK to investigate the English Cisalpine movement and their connections with continental Catholic reform. I was hosted by Ushaw College and Durham University, and Prof. Paul Murray, Prof. Lewis Ayres, and Dr. James Kelly made Ann-Marie and me feel like colleagues and friends. This work in the UK aided my dissertation and has also produced several articles and conference presentations. I am confident it has provided the foundation for my second monograph. I also travelled to Germany to research episcopalism in the Trier archives. Profs. Bernhard and Hannah Schneider were gracious hosts and have become dear friends. I also examined the correspondence of Archbishop John Carroll in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and this work has resulted in a book chapter and a second article under review.
Most importantly, the Smith Fellowship allowed me to travel to Italy. I went to Modena, where I visited the parish and house of Lodovico Muratori. I attended Mass in the Church of San Benedetto in Pistoia, which was once named San Leopoldo, and where Scipione de’ Ricci and 250 other clerics gathered for the famous synod of 1786 and issued a startling challenge to the papacy and the status quo. I stood at de’ Ricci’s grave in his family villa in Rignana (near Greve in Chianti) and examined prints and paintings which the proprietor inherited. I am grateful to the custodians of these sites for their generosity, openness, and patience with my Italian. Most importantly, the Smith Fellowship allowed me to spend a month in the State Archives in Florence and Vatican Secret Archives in Rome, examining the writings of de’ Ricci, of the Synod, and of the committee of cardinals and bishops appointed by Pope Pius VI to investigate the Synod. This archival work has allowed my dissertation to make an original contribution to English-speaking scholarship. I am grateful to all the library staff and archivists who aided me in the US and abroad.

My parents, John and Dawn, imparted to me a love of learning and of the university. Most importantly, they have been been relentlessly encouraging about my decision to become an academic. I thank also my siblings and their spouses and children – Janel, Nick, Madeleine, and Fiona, Gabriel and Sarah – for their love, good humor, and kindness. I would be remiss not to thank the many friends and mentors who were involved in some way in my project who have not yet been mentioned: Prof. Ormond Rush, Eric DeMeuse, Prof. Matt Gaetano, Luke Togni, Prof. Matthew Levering, Prof. Gavin D’Costa, Fr. Matt Olver, Fr. Joseph Chinnici, Marianna Woolwine, Patricia Psuik, Prof. Gemma Simmonds, Gale Prusinski, Tom Marek, David Geddes, Jakob Rinderknecht, Prof. Alec Ryrie, Julia and Andrew Meszaros, and every other conversation partner or reader of his manuscript. I thank Msgr. John Wall for introducing me, years ago, to Vatican II through regaling me with his stories from his days at the North American College in the early 1960s. My wife, Ann-Marie, has been my most ardent supporter and my best friend. To her I dedicate this work.

Finally, I give thanks to the Triune God and to my Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?
A Note on Archival Sources

The most important collection of archival sources for the study of Riccian reform and the Synod of Pistoia are in the Archivio di Stato in Florence (ASF). The Carte Ricci collection includes 109 folders, full of mostly unpublished material. Almost all of Bishop Scipione de’Ricci’s letters to Grand Duke Peter Leopold have been published in the three-volume work cited below (Lettere). The Carte Ricci also contains drafts of the Synod documents and reports of the proceedings, numerous unpublished letters of de’Ricci (a great number transcribed in folders 45–54), and collections of his homilies and pastoral letters.

A second pivotal collection of sources is in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV). The collection Sinodo di Pistoia has 48 folders of material, much of which concerns the reports of the various committees established by Pope Pius VI to investigate the Synod. Pietro Stella has published some of the most important documents in the ASV collection in Il Giansenismo in Italia II/I: La bolla Auctorem Fidei (1794) nella storia dell’Ultranomtanismo; Saggio introduttivo e documenti (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1995). On page xv–xvi, Stella provides an inventory of these 48 folders.

I have consulted a great deal of the material relevant to this study in both archives. Whenever I cite materials from the Carte Ricci (ASF) or Sinodo di Pistoia (ASV) collections that have been published, I will cite the published version for the convenience of the reader.
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<tr>
<td>AAB</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Birmingham (UK)</td>
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<td>AAS</td>
<td><em>Acta apostolicae sedis: Commentarium officiale officiale</em>. Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticani, 1909–.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABPSJ</td>
<td>Archives of the British Province of the Society of Jesus</td>
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<td>ASF</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato (Florence)</td>
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<td>ASV</td>
<td>Archivio Segreto Vaticano</td>
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All Vatican II documents, cited in Latin or English translation, come from the Vatican website (www.vatican.va).
INTRODUCTION: HOW FAR BACK DO THE ROOTS OF THE COUNCIL GO?

The sources of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), the history of the road to the Council, and the nature of theological reform and development have been the object of much scholarly energy since 1965. To this day, the meaning, significance, and interpretation of Vatican II remain contested, and these debates have great importance for the Catholic Church and for Christian ecumenism. While studies exist for linking the Council to the thought of the Patristic period, as well as to movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hitherto the connection of Vatican II to the post-Tridentine but pre-nineteenth century church has been almost completely overlooked.¹ This dissertation seeks to demonstrate, through a set of particularly clear examples, that we must push the roots of Vatican II back into the eighteenth-century in order to fully understood the Council and the nature of Catholic reform.

It is widely acknowledged that Vatican II was a product of a variety of twentieth-century reform movements. Among these was the liturgical movement associated with figures like Lambert Beauduin OSB (1873–1960), Dom Prosper Guéranger OSB (1805–75) and the Benedictines of Solesmes, the Benedictines of Collegeville, Minnesota, and the ecclesial acts of Popes Pius X and Pius XII.² Another such reform movement was the biblical renewal

¹ One recent exception is Ulrich Lehner’s On the Road to Vatican II: German Catholic Enlightenment and Reform of the Church (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016). Lehner made similar claims in an earlier volume as well: “the Catholic Enlightenment of the 18th century can be seen as an anticipation of Vatican II that tried to bring the Church up-to-date while still respecting the doctrines of the Church, the teachings of the Councils and the opinions of the saints.” See “The Many Faces of the Catholic Enlightenment,” in Ulrich Lehner and Michael Printy, editors, A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1–61, at 6. In the same volume, Michael Printy argues that “the Second Vatican Council embraced—or at least seemed to embrace—many of the calls of the Catholic Enlightenment. And even when it did not, its rhetoric of openness implied that the old rejection of Enlightenment and modernization tout court was a thing of the past.” See “Catholic Enlightenment and Reform Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire,” in ibid., 165–213, at 208.

² See Pius X’s motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini (1903); Pius X’s decree Quam singulari (1910); Pius XII, Mediator Dei (1947); Pius XII, De solemni vigilia Paschali instauranda (1951).
championed by Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855–1938) and the Dominicans of the École biblique in Jerusalem, stimulated by the encyclicals Providentissimus Deus (1893) of Leo XIII and Divino afflante Spiritu (1943) of Pius XII (and perhaps stagnated by backlash against Modernism). In addition, Vatican II was influenced by a Christocentric spiritual renewal embodied by figures like Romano Guardini (1885–1968). Many of the figures that played central roles at Vatican II as periti were at the cutting edge of Catholic reform in the 1940s and 50s as the vanguards of the controversial nouvelle théologie circle, which was influenced by the momentum of the liturgical, biblical, and ecumenical movements. Sometimes common narratives of the influences on Vatican II also include figures like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) and Modernists such as George Tyrell (1861–1909) and Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1925), but the exact relation between the thought of these figures and the Second Vatican Council remains contested.

The story of the roots of Vatican II is often pushed back into the nineteenth century to include the thought of Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–90), and chiefly his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, since Dei verbum 8, through the pen of Yves Congar,

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4 These figures include the Jesuits Jean Daniélou (1905–74), Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), and Henri Bouillard (1908–81), and the Dominicans Yves Congar (1905–95), Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990), Henri-Marie Féret (1904–92), and Louis Chandelier (1898–1981). See Jürgen Mettepeningen, Nouvelle Théologie—New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

5 Hubert Wolf, Antimodernismus und Modernismus in der Katholischen Kirche: Beiträge zum Theologiegeschichtlichen Vorfeld des II. Vatikanums (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1998). Gerard Loughlin argues that exponents of the nouvelle théologie in some important ways were the successors of the Modernists, and that this was a positive development. See “Nouvelle Théologie: A Return to Modernism?” in Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal, 37–50. Andrew Meszaros is critical of perceived similarities in “Revelation in George Tyrrell, Neo-Scholasticism, and Dei verbum,” Angelicum 91 (2014): 535–68.

6 Ian Kerr persuasively situates Newman as a forerunner of the Council in Newman on Vatican II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Newman’s ideas on conscience were also important at the Council. Yves Congar reports that Cardinal Heenan (Westminster) made an intervention (Acta IV/1, 295–96) in the debate over Dignitatis humanae quoting Newman (“conscience first, then the pope”). See the entry on 17 September 1965 in My Journal of...
seems to have had a Newmanian form of doctrinal development in mind (the nature of doctrinal development was controversial on the eve of the Council). Sometimes the theologians of the German Tübingen School (founded 1817) are also identified as setting Catholic thought on the road to the Council. Chronologically, however, the “backstory” of the Council almost never reaches back beyond the nineteenth century, at the earliest. This dissertation will show that going back no further than this point renders the story incomplete, and that in order to adequately explain the roots and influences of Vatican II, and the nature of Catholic reform, the eighteenth century must be considered.

The Jansenist-influenced Synod of Pistoia is a particularly clear example that helps fill this lacuna, and it demonstrates that eighteenth-century Catholics anticipated Vatican II by attempting ressourcement and aggiornamento. By aggiornamento (“updating”) I mean an aspect of reform that initiates a theological response to new events and situations. This response could be pastoral or disciplinary, or it could involve doctrinal development. By ressourcement I mean an aspect of reform that involves a searching of historical texts and data in order to reapply the wisdom of the past to the present. It is widely recognized that ressourcement and aggiornamento encapsulated the work of the Council and were its animating principles. At the beginning of the Council, Pope John XIII (1958–63) explicitly called for aggiornamento, a term rightly associated

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the Council, trans. Mary John Ronayne OP and Mary Cecily Boulding OP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 778. See also p. 243 for an evocation of Newman on conscience. Congar asserted that the “conspiratio Pastorum et fidelium” mentioned in proclamations of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and Assumption is an “expression borrowed indirectly from Newman” (pp, 266–67 note 2).

Chadwick’s From Bossuet to Newman is central; for the Newmanian influence on Dei verbum 8, see Andrew Meszaros, “‘Haec Traditio proficit’: Congar’s Reception of Newman in Dei verbum, Section 8,” New Blackfriars 92 (March 2011): 247–54.

The earliest group or figure Maureen Sullivan cites as a forerunner of the Council is the Tübingen School. See her The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007). Jurgen Mettepenningen also begins his story of the influences on Vatican II with the Tübingen School in Nouvelle Théologie, 16–17.
with him, and the ressourcement agenda of the nouvelle théologie permeated the final documents. Both kinds of reform are apparent in the theological and pastoral agenda of many eighteenth-century Catholics, of which the Synod of Pistoia provides an important test case.

By addressing the roots of Vatican II and the nature of reform, this dissertation contributes to the intra-Catholic debate over the proper hermeneutic of the Second Vatican Council. The debate over the interpretation of the Council is often perceived to turn on “continuity” with past Catholic tradition and teaching or “rupture” from the past and “discontinuity” with it. This work points to a way out of this entrenchment and polarization by taking as its point of departure Pope Benedict XVI’s Christmas 2005 speech to the Roman Curia, which sketched “a hermeneutic of reform.” This “reform” is neither static continuity nor revolutionary rupture; it includes “continuity and discontinuity on different levels.” John O’Malley, an avid (and progressive) participant in these debates, and an author of perhaps the most influential English survey of the council, picked up this concept of a “hermeneutic of reform” (rather than simply “of continuity” or “of discontinuity”) as a potential way out of the impasses that the debate over conciliar hermeneutics has faced. This dissertation seeks to further articulate this third way of interpreting the council. Vatican II was neither in complete

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10 See chapter one, 70–75.


continuity with the past nor in essential discontinuity with pre-conciliar Catholic thought and practice. I will instead argue that Catholic theology should consider the Council as an instance of “true reform,” (borrowing Yves Congar’s language) which encompasses continuity with past instantiations of true reform and discontinuity with some elements of past thought and practice, as well. The consideration of failed reformers from within the Catholic tradition renders the nature of “continuity” and the story of Vatican II reform more complex.

A hermeneutic of true reform applied to Vatican II proves its validity by identifying the seeds of true reform at that council in preceding generations, and thus necessitates historical study. This hermeneutic of true reform has to prove its validity through such historical study for two reasons. First, if one claims Vatican II is a council of true reform, and true reform constitutes continuity and discontinuity on different levels with past doctrinal teaching and past Catholic theologies, then investigating past doctrinal teaching and past theologies has inherent value for interpreting Vatican II. Secondly, a hermeneutic of true reform applied to Vatican II necessarily proves itself through historical investigation because Vatican II understood itself, very explicitly, to be in direct historical succession with past Catholic teaching and thought.13 While such studies exist for linking Patristic thought to the Council, as well as movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hitherto a connection to the post-Tridentine but pre-nineteenth century church has been overlooked. This lacuna will be partially addressed by pointing to eighteenth-century reform movements that influenced Vatican II.

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13 Dei verbum 1; Lumen gentium 18; Gaudium et spes 59; Sacrosanctum Concilium 21.
An “Incipient Revolution” in the Eighteenth-Century Catholic Church

In September of 1786, a relatively insignificant Tuscan diocese held perhaps the most famous diocesan synod of modern times. Under the leadership of Scipione de’Ricci (1741–1810, bishop of the combined see of Pistoia-Prato, 1780–91) and Pietro Tamburini (1737–1827) of the University of Pavia, the Synod of Pistoia promulgated decrees on almost every element of Christian and ecclesial life, far exceeding the practical needs of a single Italian diocese. The Synod’s resolutions concerned issues as wide-ranging as ecclesiology, grace and predestination, theologies of the seven sacraments, the place of the religious orders, relations between church and state, Bible reading, the veneration of Mary and the saints, the celebration of the liturgy, regulations regarding processions, feast days, devotional life, stipulations regarding marriage, and indulgences.

De’Ricci intended the Pistoian Synod to lead to other diocesan synods around Tuscany, and then to a national council of the Grand Duchy. This, he hoped, would eventually be duplicated around the Catholic world, leading to a wholesale reform of Catholicism. The Pistoians always insisted they were following the lead of the Council of Trent and heroes of that

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14 Particularly since the middle of the twentieth-century, the Synod of Pistoia, its historical context, its place in the international network of late Jansenism, and its condemnation by the papacy have been thoroughly studied by historians, especially Italians. The work of Pietro Stella, Mario Rosa, Claudio Lamioni, Carlo Fantappiè, and Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves are of particular significance. Charles A. Bolton, Church Reform in 18th Century Italy: The Synod of Pistoia, 1786 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969) is still the only monograph on the Synod of Pistoia in English. Other helpful overviews of the Synod in English include Mario Rosa, “Italian Jansenism and the Synod of Pistoia,” Concilium 17 (1967): 34–59; Ludwig von Pastor, The History of the Popes, vol. 39, trans. E. F. Peeler (St. Louis: Herder, 1952), 127–56; Owen Chadwick, The Popes and European Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 419–31. For bibliographic information on some of the most important studies, see chapter three, section 1. See also the bibliography of this dissertation for an extensive list of sources.

15 For studies of de’Ricci, see chapter three, 152–53 (esp. 153n5).

16 For studies of Tamburini, see chapter four, 190.

17 The synodal Acts are discussed in detail in chapter four.
era like St. Charles Borromeo. Yet many of the Pistoian reforms also appear ecumenically sensitive, and some of them strikingly anticipated twentieth-century reforms and the Second Vatican Council. The Synod exalted the office of the bishop, and it proclaimed the pope to be a servant of unity rather than a monarch. It saw infallibility as a charism given to the entire body of believers. The decrees also recommended Bible reading for all, in the vernacular. They discouraged, even banned, devotions that were not Christocentric or biblically based. The Synod deemphasized and reinterpreted indulgences. It taught the priesthood of all believers, and it declared active participation of lay people at Mass a right and duty. While the Synod acknowledged that the time was not ripe for celebrating the liturgy entirely in the vernacular, it noted that the participation of the congregation should be aided through the translations of texts, the simplification of the rites, and some use of the vernacular. The Synod of Pistoia praised the Grand Duke’s abolition of the Inquisition (in 1782), and it implied religious liberty, or at least toleration, in pregnant phrases like the assertion that “the heart is not reformed with prison and fire.”

The Acts of Pistoia were unmistakably Jansenistic in outlook and reflected the “late Jansenist” embrace of an Erastian enlightened despotism. Especially striking for a bishop educated in Rome and leading a diocese geographically close to the Papal States, de’Ricci’s Synod was brazenly anti-papal and anti-curial. “Pistoian” theological thought and ecclesiastical policy was a cocktail of various strains of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reform

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18 Chapter four explores these and other reforms proposed by the Synod in detail. The cited text is in the Decree on Faith and the Church §14 in *Atti*, 81.

19 For works on eighteenth-century Jansenism and Jansenism in Italy, see chapter three, 152n2.

20 The terms “Riccian” or “Pistoian” for signifying the reforms of de’Ricci and those of the Synod of Pistoia are common in the literature. “Pistoian” and “Riccian” are essentially synonyms, since the reforms of the Synod and the thought of de’Ricci overlap almost completely.
movements of varying degrees of orthodoxy: from moderate kinds of reform inspired by “Third Party,”21 Gallican, and Catholic Enlightenment ideas to the most radical strains of Jansenism, Richerism, and Erastianism. De’Ricci’s highly provocative actions were made possible by the support of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Peter Leopold (1747–92) of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine, brother to the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II and son of Empress Maria Theresa.22 Both Joseph II and Maria Theresa were noted for their reforms, which were influenced by German episcopalism, the Catholic Enlightenment, Jansenism, and the Third Party thought exemplified by Lodovico Muratori (1672–1750).23 The Synod of Pistoia is the best test case of eighteenth-century reform to focus on for this study not only due to its striking similarities with some Vatican II reforms, but also because it saw the convergence and culmination of the tendencies of so many reformist currents of its day

Jansenists such as those of the Church of Utrecht completely embraced the Synod, while certain elements of the Pistoian program were praised by others who were not Jansenists, like some of the English Cisalpines.24 Ultramontanists and many other Catholics rejected the Synod’s aggressive elements and overt Jansenism. Political and pastoral considerations delayed the papal condemnation of Pistoia, but when it came it was sweeping and severe. Pope Pius VI’s apostolic constitution Auctorem fidei (1794) censured 85 propositions of the Synod, of which eight were deemed heretical.25 Even before this condemnation, however, de’Ricci’s brother bishops in

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22 On Peter Leopold and Leopoldine reform, see chapter three, 152–53.

23 These eighteenth-century reform movements are discussed in detail in chapter two.

24 On these diverse receptions, see chapter five, 281–303.

25 Normally Auctorem fidei is referred to by the more generic term “bull.” Denzinger (arts. 2600–2700) includes all of the censured propositions, but only a small excerpt of the introduction. On the full document and its genesis, see Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei.
Tuscany had rejected many elements of Pistoian reform at an episcopal convocation in Florence in 1787. The cautious Grand Duke hesitated to push through de’Ricci’s reforms with state power, and the people of Pistoia and Prato rioted twice to show their disapproval, mainly of liturgical and devotional changes. These events, cemented by Peter Leopold’s accession to the imperial throne in Vienna in 1790 as Leopold II and de’Ricci’s resignation of his See in 1791, signaled the demise of Pistoian reform.

If the decade 1780–90, punctuated by the French Revolution of 1789, saw the end of one political era and the beginning of another, it also saw “an incipient revolution in the Catholic Church,” of which late Jansenism was the main ecclesio-political player. It was in this decade that a number of reformist tendencies, ranging from the moderate to the radical, “came to fruition.” The great success of the late Jansenists was their triumph, through the might of the Bourbons and other political forces, over their old enemy, the Jesuits, who were suppressed in 1773. The decline of the moderate reformist Third Party, the increasingly bold Erastian pretensions and anti-papal policies of many Catholic sovereigns, and the continued vitality of Jansenist and conciliarist thought made this decade especially ripe for radical, anti-ultramontane Catholic reform. In the judgment of S. J. Miller, the Synod of Pistoia and the efforts of Scipione de’Ricci “constitute perhaps the nearest to victory that Enlightened Catholicism came.”

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27 Ibid.

The Synod of Pistoia and Vatican II: Beyond Intriguing Parallels?

Historians, especially Italians, have thoroughly researched the Synod of Pistoia because of its significance in a pivotal time of religious and political upheaval in Tuscany and throughout Europe. However, the similarities between the Synod’s theological and pastoral program and the reforms of Vatican II have also interested theologians and church historians. Many have noted these similarities briefly, especially the liturgical parallels. Charles Bolton, author of the only monograph on the Synod of Pistoia in English, stated that “a good deal” of the Pistoian agenda “has been accepted in the work of Vatican Council II – what John XXIII liked to call the aggiornamento.” In her study of Jansenism as ressourcement, Gemma Simmonds recognized Pistoia as a forerunner of Vatican II.


31 Bolton, Church Reform, ix.

Jozef Lamberts has analyzed the Pistoian decrees on liturgy and devotions in the light of similar twentieth-century reforms. “When looking at the totality of all these texts one is astonished about the many bright, striking proposals which can be seen as precursors of the liturgical renewal in the 20th century.”\(^{33}\) Lamberts has especially highlighted the parallels between Pistoian liturgical thought and Vatican II’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.\(^{34}\) He also compared the Synod’s radical devotional reforms with the increasingly negative attitude towards many popular devotions in the 1960s.\(^{35}\) The historian S. J. Miller made a similar observation, bemoaning the fact that de’Ricci was unable to find a path to compromise. Had de’Ricci united his efforts with more moderate reformers, like Archbishop Antonio Martini of Florence (1720–1809), Miller believed that the Catholic Church “might have developed a style of reform that would have avoided the exaggerated Ultramontanism of the nineteenth century or the frequently manic practices that grew out of a misreading of the work of Vatican Council II.”\(^{36}\)

Albert Gerhards has gone the deepest in this line of inquiry, examining the Synod in light of Vatican II in some detail in two essays.\(^{37}\) He paired five Pistoian decrees, all condemned in *Auctorem fidei*, with nearly identical theses of the Second Vatican Council. These five censured...
Pistoian decrees asserted the necessity of lay participation at Mass (condemned in Auctorem fidei 28), decreed that each church should have only one altar (§31), gave preference to a simplified, vernacular liturgy pronounced in a loud voice (§33 and §66), and proclaimed the necessity of lay Bible reading (§67). Similar or even identical ideas were approved at Vatican II. Gerhards concluded that the parallels between the Synod and the Council are unmistakable (unübersehbar), and he offered a critical appraisal of why the Synod failed, pointing out, among other things, the Jansenist milieu in which the calls for reform at Pistoia emerged. While accepting that the Synod has a positive message for the contemporary church, Gerhards sees only similarities between Vatican II reform and Pistoia reform, but no real continuity (Gemeinsamkeiten ohne Kontinuität).

Despite their merits, all of these studies have hitherto passed over the critical fact that the council fathers at Vatican II were aware of these uncomfortable similarities, and there was brief but pointed debate over Pistoia and Auctorem fidei at Vatican II. This dissertation demonstrates that the Synod of Pistoia, and the culmination of a variety of eighteenth-century Catholic reform efforts it represented, was a “ghost” on the council floor, that is, a key moment in the church’s collective memory which influenced the drafting of conciliar texts and the subsequent debate.

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38 Gerhards, “Die Synode von Pistoia 1786 und ihre Reform des Gottesdienstes,” 506–7. These parallels, along with others, are discussed in more detail in chapter four. On the liturgy see especially 226–39.


41 This debate is explored in detail in chapter six.

42 I take this image from Francis Oakley. See The Conciliarist Tradition: Constitutionalism in the Catholic Church 1300-1870 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21. On his intriguing use of the image of the “ghost of Bellarmine,” see chapter six, 327n1.
over them. Thus, while the myriad parallels between the two ecclesial gatherings are indeed intriguing, the Synod of Pistoia and eighteenth-century Catholic reform are part of the story of Vatican II reform itself. Although the goals of many eighteenth-century Catholics failed in their own day, their attempts are relevant to the greater story of church reform, and provide critical insights into the manner in which the Catholic Church is semper reformans. While there are indeed stark discontinuities between these eighteenth-century reformers and the twentieth-century movements that culminated in the reform program of Vatican II, there is also a connection deeper than mere surface parallels. This dissertation investigates both the theological and historical significance of the Synod of Pistoia and other eighteenth-century reformers and argues that they anticipated Vatican II and, on some issues, actually influenced the Council itself. Studies of this kind are important for understanding Vatican II and the nature of Catholic reform.

The Legacy of the Synod of Pistoia and Radical Eighteenth-Century Reform in Catholic Consciousness

A ten-day synod of a late-eighteenth-century Tuscan diocese whose decrees were never fully implemented and an almost two-hundred-year-old papal bull may seem obscure objects of reflection at Vatican II. But the Synod of Pistoia and Auctorem fidei were not in fact obscure to the council fathers. The Synod of Pistoia cast a long shadow, in its own day and beyond. Throughout Catholic Europe and America, the Synod was bemoaned as schismatic or heretical or praised as bold, necessary reform. While the papacy continued to face political turmoil and change in the period from Pistoia to Vatican II, Auctorem fidei soon ceased to be of serious political importance, but it became a key doctrinal document for forming an “ultramontanist sense” in nineteenth-century Catholic clergy.43 Pietro Stella even states that there is not a single

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manual of moral theology, dogmatics, canon law, or liturgy from 1850 until 1950 that did not make reference to the condemned propositions of Pistoia.\textsuperscript{44}

This development posed a significant problem for Catholics who sought certain reforms. While the Pistoian liturgical decrees were not condemned as heresy, the vehemence and specificity of the condemnations in \textit{Auctorem fidei} caused great anxiety to future Catholic liturgical reformers, like Antonio Rosmini (1797–1855). In 1832, Rosmini authored the famous \textit{Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa} (\textit{On the Five Wounds of Holy Church}). The first wound was a highly clericalized worship which the laity did not adequately understand or participate in (Rosmini bluntly called this “the division of the people from the clergy in public worship”).\textsuperscript{45} Rosmini was so concerned about the similarities between Pistoian reform and his own proposals that he had to openly address \textit{Auctorem fidei} in his book. While Rosmini advocated for increased intelligibility of religious rites and lay participation in them, the legacy of the Pistoians meant Rosmini felt he could not openly advocate for a totally vernacular Mass.\textsuperscript{46} Rosmini’s opponents were also well aware of the similarities between his agenda and Pistoia’s, and consequently accused him of Jansenism.\textsuperscript{47} The book was not published until 1848 and was placed on the Index.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa}, 75–77, §22 on Rosmini’s attempts to respect \textit{Auctorem fidei}. Note 12 cites \textit{Auctorem fidei} §33 and §66. He repeats his adhesion to the “that most wise Bull,” against his critics, “protesting and solemnly declaring” that his proposed reforms do not fall afoul of §33 or §66 in a letter of 8 June 1848 to Giuseppe Gatti, printed in the appendices, 299–333, at 324–25.

of Forbidden Books in 1849. The condemnation of Rosmini, in fact, was cited at Vatican II to try to shut down debate on the incorporation of the vernacular into the liturgy. The example of Rosmini, a major nineteenth-century Catholic reformer, whom Pope Francis recently called a “true…persecuted prophet,” shows the enduring significance of the brief but poignant experiment with liturgical reform by the Pistoians.

In the Dogmatic Constitution Pastor aeternus (1870) of the First Vatican Council, ultramontanism triumphed in the definition of papal primacy and infallibility not only over the remaining French Gallicans, but also over the episcopalist and conciliarist ecclesiologies of the eighteenth century which had once seemed so strong. One of these liquidated ecclesiologies was that of the Pistoians. It is widely acknowledged that, while clearly repeating the papal

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48 While it was removed in 1854, it was placed back on the Index in 1887 before being taken off once more before the abolition of the Index. See Alfeo Valle’s introduction to Rosmini, Delle cinque piaghe, 7–46, at 28–36. This episode shows that Auctorem fidei continued to assist in the construction of an “ultramontanist sense.”

49 See the intervention of Cardinal Antonio Bacci in Acta I/1, 408–11 (24 October 1962): Iam praeclarus vir Antonius Rosmini [in Della cinque piaghe] asseveravit linguam latinam diaphragma esse inter celebrantem et populum; sed libellus ab Ecclesia iam reprobatus est (408). Bacci also cited Trent (Sess. 22, chap. 8, can. 9), Pius XII’s Mediator Dei, and John XXIII’s VETERUM SAPIENTIA. For the Acts of Vatican II, see Acta Synodalia Concilii Vaticani Secundi, 25 vols. (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanus, 1970–96) (cited in this dissertation as Acta).

50 See Pope Francis’ “Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae,” 4 April 2014, available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140404_forbidden-to-pray.html: “I'm thinking of someone now, at this moment, not far from us, a man of goodwill, a true prophet, who in his books reproached the Church for falling away from the path of the Lord. He was immediately summoned, his books were placed on the index, they took away his platform, and this is how his life ended, not so long ago. Time passed and today he is a blessed. But how, one could object, ‘how can he be a heretic yesterday and a blessed today?’ Yes, yesterday, those in power wanted to silence him because they didn't like what he had to say. Today, the Church who, thanks be to God, knows how to repent, says: no, this man is good! Even more, he is on the road to sainthood: he is a blessed.”

51 On some of these ecclesiologies, see chapter two, 104–14.

52 Francis Oakley called this process the ultramontane “politics of oblivion.” See The Conciliarist Tradition, 13, 14, 16. The reaction to eighteenth-century “heresies” was so strong at Vatican I that the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, retrieved by the Pistoians and other Jansenists, was considered suspect. “It is interesting and rather pathetic to note that when the Roman Catholic Church condemned all Jansenist teachings, the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ — so thoroughly pauline, and orthodox — became suspect. In fact at the First Vatican Council in 1870 the definition of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ was rejected as Jansenist.” See F. Ellen Weaver, The Evolution of the Reform of Port-Royal: From the Rule of Citeaux to Jansenism (Paris: Beauchesne, 1978), 104n95.
prerogatives of Vatican I, Vatican II also sought to balance the unbalanced ecclesiology of *Pastor aeternus*. Doing this, however, required *ressourcement*, a process of remembering, and this process awoke many ecclesial “ghosts,” one of them the specter of Pistoia.

There were other, more immediate reasons why the council fathers at Vatican II were aware of the Pistoian legacy. First, the standard collection of magisterial texts, edited by Heinrich Denzinger, immortalized the renegade synod by including all 85 condemned Pistoian propositions listed in *Auctorem fidei*, instead of just providing a brief excerpt as it did with other similar decrees. In fact, the coverage of *Auctorem fidei* in the 1952 edition of Denzinger in use by the council fathers is the longest dedicated to any single act of the magisterium in that collection.

Second, many council fathers most likely also remembered Pope Pius XII’s reference to Pistoia and its dangers issued just a few years earlier in the 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei* (“On the Sacred Liturgy”), a landmark in the history of liturgical renewal. The “illegal council of Pistoia,” Pius XII wrote, was driven by an “exaggerated and senseless antiquarianism”; it promulgated “a series of errors” that did “grievous harm to souls.” Pius XII contrasted genuine and organic *ressourcement* with Jansenistic primitivism, the latter of which he saw in Pistoia and for which he wanted to ensure his own reformist efforts were not mistaken.

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53 Denzinger (1952), 1501–96. For example, the brief *Super soliditate* (1786) condemning J. F. van Eybel’s *Was ist der Papst?* (which Denzinger lists under the heading “against Febronianism”) occupies only entry number 1500. The excerpt from *Super soliditate* is only about 650 words in English translation, compared with nearly 11,500 words in the English translation of *Auctorem fidei*. *Super soliditate* was by no means an irrelevant or obscure dogmatic document. It was evoked many times at Vatican II, most notably in a footnote to an early draft of *De Ecclesia*. See *Acta* II/1, 248, note 38. The Council Fathers cited *Auctorem fidei* from the 1952 Denzinger numbering system (hence the bull began at §1500, rather than §2600 in the new numbering system).

54 *Mediator Dei* (1947), 63–64. This English translation is available online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p_xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei.html.
Third, the Pistoia conflict included some of the key names of an ecclesially and politically turbulent era. On one side was the reforming Grand Duke, Peter Leopold, and the late Jansenists who led the Synod, like de’Ricci and Pietro Tamburini. On the other were the censors, Pope Pius VI and Cardinal Gerdil of Savoy, the principal author of *Auctorem fidei*. These famous figures from the era of the French Revolution would have been well known to many of the council fathers, especially the Italians. Finally, Pistoia was convened uncomfortably close to Rome and the Papal States. This assemblage was not the resistance of enlightened English “Cisalpines,” entrenched Gallicans, or troublesome German intellectuals, but the project of a Grand Duke resident in Florence and a bright Italian bishop educated in Rome, from the old and respected family of St. Caterina de’Ricci (1522–90). This Italian assault on the papacy proved to be traumatic for the Curia and ultramontanist theology, of which fact the pages of Denzinger are ample witness. In addition, ecclesiastics were unlikely to forget the episode, since it was associated with the painful memories of international Jansenism and the Civil Constitution crisis in revolutionary France (1790).

Due to the momentum that many of the Synod’s reformist goals enjoyed on the eve of Vatican II, the memory of Pistoia became a reference point for Catholic reform: how was one to reconcile many common reformist goals with *Auctorem fidei*, which seemed to reject many of these goals? *Auctorem fidei*, in fact, was the most discussed eighteenth-century doctrinal document at the Second Vatican Council, usually evoked during the contentious debates

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55 For Cardinal Gerdil’s involvement in the drafting of *Auctorem fidei*, see chapter five, 287–88.

56 For the connection between Pistoia and the French Constitutionalist clergy, see chapter five, 297–300.

57 For example, the desire to support liturgical reform while maintaining the validity of *Auctorem fidei* and the illegitimacy of Pistoian reform is reflected in reforming acts of the magisterium like Pius XII’s *Mediator Dei* (1947), §63–64, discussed above, page 16. Such a struggle was also present in the work of Yves Congar and Antonio Rosmini. On Rosmini, see pp. 14–15, above; on Congar, see chapter five, 322–23.
surrounding ecclesiology and in particular those concerning the relationship between the episcopacy and the papacy.

The Path Through This Dissertation

This dissertation seeks to interpret Vatican II through a hermeneutic of true reform aided by a *ressourcement* reaching back to the eighteenth-century. The first chapter, “A Hermeneutic of True Reform: Interpreting Vatican II,” argues that reform at the Council consisted of *ressourcement, aggiornamento*, and the development of doctrine. Four areas in which Vatican II sought to reform the church are highlighted – ecclesiology, religious liberty, liturgy and devotions, and ecumenism. Four distinct paradigms for conciliar interpretation are profiled, highlighting the persistence of differing (sometimes conflicting) interpretations of Vatican II.

I argue that the best hermeneutic for the Council, advanced by Pope Benedict XVI and praised by John O’Malley, is a “hermeneutic of reform,” which sees continuity and discontinuity on different levels. Then, I explore the nature of “true reform” in light of the work of Yves Congar and his four conditions of true reform.\(^{58}\) I will show that Congar employed innovative and orthodox criteria with which to theologically evaluate reform movements. I will argue that true reform, which is continuous and discontinuous with the past, incorporates both *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*, as Vatican II tried to do.

The second chapter, “Ressourcement and Aggiornamento in the Eighteenth Century,” shows that the roots of the Council must be pushed back beyond the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries and into the eighteenth-century. Catholics of this period anticipated Vatican II by engaging in *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*. Both kinds of reform are apparent in the

\(^{58}\) On Congar’s four conditions, see chapter one, 82–92.
theological and pastoral agenda of the Catholic movements this chapter profiles. The Catholic Enlightenment is indispensable for understanding eighteenth-century Catholicism, and many church historians have cast the Pistoian movement as an aggressive attempt at enlightened Catholic reform. Other networks and ideologies which extensively overlapped with Pistoianism and impacted the synodal decrees include Gallicanism, Richerism, Febronianism, and Josephinism. Jansenism, an extremely significant phenomenon in eighteenth-century Catholicism, found its ostensible raison d'être in debates over divine grace, but it evolved into a multifaceted and complex reform movement that sought to change l'état des choses (to use the language of Congar).59 The chapter closes with an examination of a loose network of moderate reformers that particularly flourished during the pontificate of Benedict XIV (1740–58).60 The reformer par excellence of this “Third Party,” Lodovico Muratori (1672–1750), deeply impacted reform-minded Catholics of the eighteenth century, including the Pistoians. Muratori emerges as a clear eighteenth-century forerunner of Vatican II who was not a Jansenist.

Chapter three, “Radical Reform in Tuscany: Scipione de’Ricci and Late Jansenism,” examines Riccian reform in Tuscany leading up to the Synod of 1786. It highlights the importance of de’Ricci’s education and his coming of age when anti-papal and anti-Jesuit polemics were widespread and increasingly bitter. Then, it profiles de’Ricci’s reform agenda, which asserted an episcopalist and anti-ultramontane ecclesiology, a Christocentric reform of liturgy and devotion, and Jansenist doctrine. This agenda was greatly aided by Grand Duke Peter

59 In the English translation of Congar’s seminal Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église (originally published in 1950), l'état des choses is rendered “state of affairs.” Congar argued that reform must extend beyond abuses but not to dogma. The critical area in between, which reform must impact, is l'état des choses. See Yves Congar, True and False Reform in the Church, trans. Paul Philibert (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011 [1968 ed.]), 160–62.

60 The “Third Party” is a term coined by the French historian Émile Appolis, and it is used to designate an international network of moderate eighteenth-century Catholic reformers, a center party between Jansenists and traditionalist zelanti. The programmatic text is Appolis’ Le tiers parti catholique au XXVIIIe siècle: Entre jansénistes et zelanti (Paris: A et J Picard, 1960).
Leopold’s promulgation of fifty-seven Erastian “Ecclesiastical Points” (*Punti ecclesiastici*), which provided a roadmap for the Synod of Pistoia.

Chapter four, “The Synod of Pistoia: Radical Forerunner of Vatican II,” examines the Acts of Pistoia in detail, particularly highlighting the Synod’s ecclesiology, inchoate conception of religious liberty, liturgical theology, and Christocentric devotional prescriptions. Simultaneously, the condemnations of the bull *Auctorem fidei* will be considered, where relevant, as well as the Jansenist (and other) foundations of Pistoian reform. Numerous parallels with Vatican II will be pointed out, and the chapter argues that these similarities run more deeply than the surface level. In some cases, they involve shared sources and profound theological affinities.

Chapter five, “The Spirit of Pistoia: The Reception and Failure of a Bold Reformist Vision,” explores the aftermath and the reception and rejection of the Synod in Italy and throughout Europe. It seeks an explanation of why de’Ricci’s reform failed, focusing on the rejection of Pistoian reform by the majority of the Tuscan bishops and many of the faithful of Pistoia-Prato. These reflections culminate in a theological evaluation of Pistoianism with the aid of Yves Congar’s conditions for true reform in the church. Alongside Congar’s opinion of late Jansenism (formulated before Vatican II, in 1950), these conditions help illuminate why Catholic reformers were so uneasy with the legacy of Pistoia and similar movements. This chapter further examines the parallels between the Synod and certain postconciliar ideas and practices.

The final chapter, “The Ghost of Pistoia: Evocations of *Auctorem Fidei* at Vatican II,” shows how the legacy of the Synod and *Auctorem fidei* impacted the drafting of conciliar documents and subsequent debates. Pistoia is cast as a “ghost” (one among many) present on the council floor. The evocations of Pistoia at the Council show the effect of eighteenth-century
Catholic reform on Vatican II and the contemporary church. This influence is described as both positive and negative. At issue was the question of whether or to what degree *Auctorem fidei* would exert a “controlling function” over the debate on ecclesiology at Vatican II.61

The Vatican II debates involving the memory of Pistoia exemplified a conflict over the hermeneutics of past magisterial statements and of the targets of their critiques. Members of the conservative “minority” used *Auctorem fidei* to insinuate that certain ideas (e.g., episcopal collegiality) at least had roots in condemned eighteenth-century movements. In order to deal with these past conflicts which were resurfacing in the debates, the conciliar “majority” had to investigate not only the papal censure of Pistoia, but the event of the Synod itself and the historical world in which it occurred. These debates at Vatican II deepen our understanding of conciliar reform, and illuminate the manner in which the Council is continuous and discontinuous with past Catholic teaching and theology.

In the conclusion I will argue that, far from representing a rupture in the history of the church, or the result of only one century of preparation, Vatican II was also the fruit of long-gestating reform that stretches back at least to the eighteenth-century. Elements of the “true reform” at Vatican II are clearly present among the Third Party, which Muratori represented *par excellence*. Many of these elements of true reform were received by late Jansenists and the Pistoians, who made their own contributions, but also mixed in some damaging and false notions. While many of these reform elements had to be rediscovered during an age of ultramontane ascendancy (ca. 1832–1958), they were never totally absent, and lay latent in the collective consciousness of the Catholic Church, reemerging at Vatican II.

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61 For the notion of a “controlling function,” see chapter six, 331n14.
A New Narrative of the Precursors of Vatican II

A new, deeper narrative of the precursors of Vatican II helps us to interpret the Council in two ways. First, it illuminates the “hermeneutic of reform” as opposed to the exhausted narrative alternatives of continuity or discontinuity. By examining movements and individuals in the eighteenth century who advocated for true reform (normally also mingled with false reforms), we can see an unbroken, if oscillating, line of reform reaching back from Vatican II into the eighteenth century. Secondly, we can more fully understand the debates at the Second Vatican Council by better understanding the goals, successes, and failures of eighteenth-century reformers. The Pistoians are apropos here most obviously, since Auctorem fidei figured prominently in some conciliar debates. In these ways, this dissertation interprets Vatican II through a hermeneutic of true reform aided by a ressourcement reaching back to the eighteenth-century.

At the time of the Synod of Pistoia, it would have been difficult to foresee the almost total triumph of ultramontanism in the nineteenth century and its eventual dogmatic enshrinement at the First Vatican Council in 1870. In the 1790s, the Catholic Church was reeling under the various waves of the Revolution, the papacy was besieged, and the pope was intermittently in French custody. Partly because of these tumultuous events, the Synod of Pistoia and many other reforms of the Enlightenment era were received in the church, widely so from at least 1850, as, at best, rebellious and ill-advised and, at worst, sources of heresy.

However, many of the concerns of these eighteenth-century reformers remained alive, weakened and attenuated as they were throughout the nineteenth century, into the era of the twentieth-century ecclesial reform movements. Among these concerns was the desire for a simpler and more comprehensible liturgy, which included the introduction of the vernacular. A
more Christocentric devotional and liturgical life was sought, alongside a proper contextualization, but not elimination, of devotion to Mary and the Saints. The centrality of the Mass rather than private devotions was asserted, and lay Bible reading encouraged. Various ecumenical hopes and sensitivities were present. Efforts, whether moderate or radical, to elevate the theological and juridical status of the local bishop, alongside a needed reform of the Curia, and a desire to limit the authority of the papacy in favor of more conciliarist models of church governance remained central.

Since Vatican I rather resoundingly settled, in favor of the papacy, some major ecclesiological questions fiercely debated during the centuries-old struggle between ultramontanism and various forms of conciliarism, one might imagine that this settlement ensured “a rapid descent into oblivion” of these other theologies. While such a view is true to a certain extent, the ecclesiological debates of the post-Vatican I period shifted to highlight different facets of the same questions, sparking fresh considerations which culminated in the renewed ecclesiological vision proclaimed by Vatican II. These new debates, and particularly the debates at the Council regarding the relationship between the office of bishop and the papacy, reached back to the Gallican and conciliarist past. One ghost that was awakened in this process of remembering was the resilient ghost of Pistoia. This present study of failed eighteenth-century Catholic reform will help us better understand the meaning and achievements of Vatican II for today’s church.

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62 Oakley, Conciliarist Tradition, 216.
CHAPTER I: A HERMENEUTIC OF TRUE REFORM
INTERPRETING VATICAN II

Introduction: Vatican II Contested

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) is widely seen as the most important event in the life of the Catholic Church since the Council of Trent (1545–63). Vatican II enacted and inspired sweeping reforms in the world’s largest body of Christians. Like Trent, Vatican II was a council of reform and renewal, reassertion and change. The Council issued a great deal of doctrinal teaching, pastoral exhortation, and disciplinary changes in sixteen documents: four “constitutions” (two of them called “dogmatic” and one “pastoral”), three “declarations,” and nine “decrees.”¹ These sixteen documents, approved by the overwhelming majority of the world’s Catholic bishops, touched virtually every element of ecclesial life and Catholic thought: the theology of divine revelation, the reform of the liturgy, ecclesiology, the relationship between the papacy and the college of bishops, devotional life, evangelization, clerical education, the life of the laity, and more. In a far more extensive way than any previous council, Vatican II commented on the church’s role in political life and its stance toward other religions and other bodies of Christians. Running to almost 37,000 words in English translation, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes – a unique document in

Catholic conciliar history both for its style, length, and breadth and type of subject matter – provided a roadmap for the church’s engagement with modernity.

Vatican II was intended by Pope John XXIII (1958–63) and many like-minded Catholic leaders to have an enormous impact on the life of the Catholic Church. There were many reformist impulses swirling in the first half of the twentieth century, and some council fathers (that is, those Catholic bishops invited to attend and to vote at the Council) and their scholarly advisors, called periti, attempted to instantiate the ideas that had been expressed in the biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and patristic movements which had begun to gather momentum in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. Seen by many at the time of his election as a stop-gap pope, John XXIII had, in fact, daring aims for the Council he surprisingly called. He spoke explicitly of ecumenism as a main conciliar focus. In his announcement convening the Council (25 January 1959), after having stated that doctrine and discipline would be reaffirmed, the pope said Vatican II would give “a renewed cordial invitation to the faithful of the separated communities to participate with us in this quest for unity and grace, for which so many souls long in all parts of the world.” The Council would also seek “the enlightenment, edification, and joy of the entire Christian people.” John XXIII’s call for a combination of ad intra renewal with ad extra mission marked the conciliar project.

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2 For the most important statement of the pope’s ambitious goals, see Pope John XXIII’s seminal address to open the Council (11 October 1962) in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis: Commentarium officiale* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1909–) (henceforth: *AAS*) 54, 791–92.

3 *Peritus* is Latin for “expert.” *Periti* were usually priests of great theological, historical, or canonical acumen. Among the *periti* were a host of major twentieth-century Catholic scholars including Karl Rahner, Hans Küng, Yves Congar, and Joseph Ratzinger.

4 For these movements, see the Introduction, 1–2.

While there was a great deal of optimism after the Council in many quarters of the church, this optimism quickly gave way to disputes over the proper interpretation and implementation of the Council’s teaching, and its “spirit.” By the 1970’s, many, including Pope Paul VI, believed the church was facing a very serious crisis. For some, the optimism and “fresh air” the Council initially promised had never really been allowed to get off the ground; the opportunity for further growth and reform had been missed, or intentionally impeded by the papacy or other conservative forces. For others, the Council, or a distortion of its message, had unleashed energies which were seriously wounding Catholicism. Some lay the blame in a faulty interpretation of the texts or in a reliance on their nebulous “spirit.” For a small minority, the Council itself was to blame. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre epitomized this perspective in his work *J’accuse le Concile!* For most, however, the struggle was how to interpret and to implement the Council in a rapidly changing world, a Council whose texts and spirit they saw as welcome and basically good. To this day, Vatican II – its meaning, significance, and interpretation – remains hotly contested, and these debates have great importance for the future of the church.

In this chapter, I will first describe how Vatican II reformed the Catholic Church. What Catholic theology means by “reform” must be defined at the outset. While I will mention the

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6 Paul VI was very frank about the seriousness of the crisis he saw facing the postconciliar church. See, for example, his famous “smoke of Satan” comment, during his homily on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (29 June 1972, the ninth anniversary of his coronation). This *fumo di Satana* was, “il dubbio, l’incertezza, la problematica, l’inquietudine, l’insoddisfazione, il confronto.” The Italian text is available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1972/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19720629.html.

7 See below, section 2.2.


9 Marcel Lefebvre, *I Accuse the Council!* (Kansas City, MO: Angelus Press, 1982 [French original: 1976]). In the foreword, a letter dated 18 August 1976, Lefebvre spoke of “the poison which has spread throughout the whole Church as a result of the reforms of this pastoral Council and of their application is contained in its equivocations and its ambiguities” (page x).
many areas of ecclesial life and thought that Vatican II sought to reform, I will pay special attention to four: liturgy and devotions, ecclesiology, religious liberty, and ecumenism. I focus on these reforms because they were central to the conciliar agenda and because I will examine their eighteenth-century roots in later chapters.

Second, I will establish that Vatican II is contested, that this contestation is deeply influenced by understandings of history, and particularly understandings of church history. These debates are important not only for historical study but for contemporary theology as well, for the contestation of Vatican II has major consequences for the church. I will describe four very broad and general paradigms for the interpretation of Vatican II: 1) Traditionalist suspicion or rejection of the Council (I call this the “Traditionalist Paradigm”); 2) acceptance or celebration of the Council, but with a prioritization of the sixteen final texts, an emphasis on doctrinal continuity, and an understanding of the Council as primarily a promulgation of a body of teaching (the “Text-Continuity Paradigm”); 3) acceptance or celebration of the Council, but with a prioritization of the spirit of the Council, an insistence on doctrinal change and innovation, and an understanding of the Council as primarily an “event” (the “Spirit-Event Paradigm”); 4) progressive suspicion or rejection of the Council (the “Irrelevance Paradigm”). Obviously, mainstream Catholic debate on the Council tends to feature positions two and three, so I will focus mostly on mediating between these two. In describing these paradigms, I will show how judgments about history, especially about the role of the church in history, are intimately related to an evaluation and interpretation of the Council. I will argue that there are unresolved (but not insurmountable) tensions between the exponents of positions two and three, and that a “hermeneutic of reform” can help overcome these tensions.

A point of departure for overcoming this polarization is Pope Benedict XVI’s speech to
the Roman Curia on Christmas 2005, which proposed a hermeneutic of reform for reading the Council. This hermeneutic neither admits doctrinal rupture nor does it insist on static continuity. It is a hermeneutic of “continuity and discontinuity on different levels.”

John O’Malley, author of perhaps the most influential English survey of the Council, and often perceived as a standard-bearer of the progressive camp I describe as the Spirit-Event Paradigm, picked up this concept of a “hermeneutic of reform” as a potential way out of the impasses that the debate over conciliar hermeneutics has faced. The conciliar hermeneutics of Joseph Ratzinger and John O’Malley differ in important respects. As we will see, the former pope and the Jesuit professor from Georgetown are good scholarly representatives of the Text-Continuity and Spirit-Event paradigms, respectively. Thus, it is promising that both celebrate a hermeneutical key – one of “reform” – which sidesteps an unhelpful binary to argue for “continuity and discontinuity on different levels.”

The third part of this chapter will explore what a hermeneutic of true reform actually is, and how it can be seen to operate in history. To achieve this, I will be aided not only by Ratzinger and O’Malley, but by two of the most important Catholic reformers of the twentieth century – the Dominican Yves Congar (1904–95), and Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881–1963), Pope John XXIII (1958–63). One of Congar’s great works, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* (originally published in 1950), and the four conditions of true reform it puts forward, will provide my roadmap for constructing a hermeneutic of true reform that I will use to critically evaluate some eighteenth-century Catholic reforms in later chapters.

10 For the Italian original of Benedict XVI’s speech of December 22, 2005, see *AAS* 98 (2006): 40–53. An English translation is available on the Vatican website at https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_rom_an-curia.html. I quote from this translation of Benedict’s Italian address, which is without pagination.

The goal of this chapter (and this dissertation) is not to offer ways in which specific doctrinal or interpretative conflicts can be overcome – on, say, ecclesiology or the church’s relationship to other religions – but to point to a hermeneutic of true reform which can aid conciliar interpretation and deepen reflection on the nature of Catholic reform through a ressourcement which reaches back to the eighteenth century.

1. Vatican II’s Reform Agenda

1.1 – What is Reform?

Reform can be broadly defined as “change for the better” – mutatio in melius. Two important qualifications emerge. First, reform is different from revolution. Reform re-molds (literally, re-forms) or improves something that already exists it, without discarding it. Thus, Catholics could argue that, in the encyclical Ut Unum Sint (1995), John Paul II called for a reform of the papacy – adapting or improving an existing idea or institution in light of new circumstances or deeper reflection. However, someone who does not agree with the existence of episcopal or papal offices at all could not reform the papacy. Such a person would have to call not for the reform of Catholicism but for ecclesiological revolution.

Second, when I argue that Vatican II was reforming the church, and that reform is “change for the better,” I am not arguing that all of the reforms of Vatican II, or even the ones I highlight, were necessarily implemented correctly or that they necessarily actually benefited the church. I do claim, however, that many of the council fathers supported these ideas as reforming,

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12 Ibid., 517. O’Malley notes that “this definition presupposes, as well, that reform entails a self-consciously undertaken effort within an institution to effect change. It is thus different from changes that come about because of decisions taken by others.” Thus, Dignitatis humanae was a Catholic reform in the area of religious liberty and church-state relations. The American Constitution’s protection of religious liberty, although supported and embraced by some prominent American Catholics, was not.
even if they did not use that word. For example, the overwhelming majority that voted for *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen gentium* did so because they thought that the ideas in these documents would improve the church. Some documents or ideas might be poorly phrased, obscure, or irrelevant for contemporary problems facing the church. The postconciliar church might have read or implemented the Council incorrectly or backtracked on it. I cannot, at present, adjudicate between these various possibilities. But I am assuming that, at least in the texts themselves, the Council was one of true reform – that is, that the ideas in the documents, if understood and implemented correctly, would indeed positively impact the Catholic Church. This is the position of the postconciliar magisterium, and the shared ground between the two mainstream Catholic positions on the Council which I will discuss in section two.

1.2 – *Aggiornamento*

What, broadly, did Vatican II reform entail? It included three main kinds of reform, whose boundaries are fluid and often overlap with each other: *aggiornamento*, *ressourcement*, and the development of doctrine.\(^{13}\) First, John XXIII famously called for *aggiornamento*, for updating, letting in “fresh air.”\(^{14}\) This updating was not simply disciplinary or administrative changes, either for pastoral or practical reasons. Virtually all agree, whether they bemoan it or celebrate it, that a deeper *aggiornamento* occurred at the Council, and indeed, was called for by John XXIII: the Catholic Church made peace, or at least attempted to make peace, with certain

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\(^{13}\) Vatican II commentators normally point out all three of these types of reform. See Vorgrimler, *Commentary*, vols. 1–5; Alberigo, *History*, vols. 1–5; O’Malley, *What Happened* (which pays special attention to these categories in the introduction); Matthew Levering and Matthew Lamb, eds., *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

\(^{14}\) It is commonly reported that in announcing the Council, John XXIII said his intention was to “open up the windows of the Church to let in fresh air.” However, this seems to be based on oral testimony, and is not in any published primary text. See, for example, Joseph Gremillon, *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Teaching Since Pope John* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), 1.
elements of modernity. This involved an updating of political, cultural, and theological ideas. Some argue, as we will see, that this updating involved change in doctrine and the reversal of past teachings; others assert the contrary. However, all agree that aggiornamento did indeed occur at the Council. Aggiornamento can, and often does, rely on traditional ideas, but it is a progressive dynamic. It implies that the church must adapt, at least sometimes, to new ideas and attitudes, and that the church can learn from such ideas and attitudes (including, in the 1960s, from modernity) and those outside the Catholic Church – including non-Catholic Christians, the followers of other religions, and even the non-religious.

1.3 – Ressourcement

Second, reform occurred at the Council in the form of ressourcement. This French neologism came to be strongly associated with the nouvelle théologie, but calls for ressourcement in the Catholic Church came, with varying emphases, from a number of quarters.\(^\text{15}\) Ressourcement is an aspect of reform that involves a searching of historical (biblical, patristic, magisterial, etc.) texts and data in order to reapply the wisdom of the past to the present.

It was Pius X, deeply conservative in theological matters, who began the long process of a papal ressourcement of the liturgy, taking as a motto Revertimini ad fontes (“return to the sources”).\(^\text{16}\) Ressourcement took many forms before the Council. There were movements inspired by a return to the original sources in a number of areas: patristic, liturgical, biblical, and

\(^{15}\) There is an abundance of literature on twentieth-century ressourcement. A helpful recent collection of essays is Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, eds., Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). The term itself was coined by Charles Péguy (1873–1914) and popularized by Congar. See True and False Reform, 39–40n35.

\(^{16}\) See Congar’s discussion in True and False Reform, 295. Pius X’s episcopal coat of arms called for reform but with a different emphasis: Instaurare omnia in Christo.
Thomistic ressourcements took shape.\textsuperscript{17} The ecumenical movement in the Catholic Church was certainly heavily influenced by ressourcement theology. While these movements were distinct, they had porous boundaries, and often influenced each other. By the time of the Council, many theologians (figures like Ratzinger and Congar) identified with ressourcement as a general principle, as a general way of doing theology and pastoral practice. In fact, Congar actually defined ressourcement not first and foremost as a historical task but as a spiritual one: it is “a recentering on Christ and the paschal mystery.”\textsuperscript{18} With this in mind, the excitement many of the council fathers had about the Christocentrism of \textit{Dei verbum} as in itself a victory of ressourcement makes sense.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Ressourcement} is progressive insofar as it can challenge the status quo and call for something to replace it. However, it is conservative insofar as this challenge is a turning to the past and to the foundations of the faith – scripture, the Fathers, the liturgy – as sources for desired reforms. The call for ressourcement can be inspired by contemporary problems, but it looks to the past for help with these problems.

1.4 – Development of Doctrine

Third, reform occurred at the Council in the form of the development of doctrine.\textsuperscript{20} The idea that doctrine could develop was rejected by most early modern Catholic theologians. It was


\textsuperscript{18} Congar, \textit{True and False Reform}, 295.

\textsuperscript{19} On the Christocentrism of \textit{Dei verbum}, see below, 35–39.

\textsuperscript{20} While a small minority of interpreters argue against this assertion, their claims are tendentious. The Council itself explicitly claims to develop doctrine (\textit{Dignitatis humanae} 1). “The council intends to develop (\textit{evolvere}) the doctrine of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and the constitutional order of society.”
totally antithetical to the Gallican tradition, and the immutability of doctrine was a primary claim wielded in anti-Protestant polemic. Because of the work of Newman and others, the concept of development became the established way of explaining doctrines that were not explicit in scripture or the earliest Christian sources (the Marian dogmas of 1854 and 1950 loom large here). The notion of development itself is embedded in Dei verbum, and defined in §8.

Development, however, is a fundamentally conservative type of reform, like ressourcement and unlike aggiornamento. By its very nature, development brings to light elements implicit in an existing doctrine or idea. The most conservative council fathers at Vatican II recognized at least some form of the development of doctrine. This is not to say that there are not different theories of the development of doctrine – some more conservative (restricted to syllogistic development) and some more radical (allowing for more innovative leaps or apparent reversals). The Council canonized no particular theory, although Dei verbum 8 was clearly reliant on Congar, who depended on Newman. According to §8, “the tradition

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23 For example, Vatican I’s Dei Filius chapter four (De fide et ratione) references this syllogistic form of development (see Denzinger 3020). It was drafted by Joseph Kleutgen, SJ (1811–83), and intended to rebut the thought of Anton Gunther and Georg Hermes. See Mark McGrath, “The Vatican Council’s Teaching on the Evolution of Dogma: A Study in Nineteenth Century Theology” (PhD. diss. Angelicum, 1960), 116–17.

24 Andrew Meszaros has convincingly shown that the Congar-inspired passage (Dei verbum 8) draws heavily on Newman. See “Haec Traditio proficit’: Congar’s Reception of Newman in Dei verbum, Section 8,” New Blackfriars 92 (March 2011): 247–54.
which comes from the Apostles develop[s] in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit.” This doctrinal development occurs through “contemplation and study” (the work of believers and theologians), through the “penetrating understanding” that experience brings, and through episcopal preaching. Development is a means by which “the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth.”

While by no means exhausting everything that could be said about reform at Vatican II, aggiornamento, ressourcement, and the development of doctrine provide a strong conceptual grid for understanding the conciliar project. These three concepts are particularly useful when taken together. Employed as a triadic grid, they can shed light on different aspects of the same reform. Consider, for example, the teaching on de iure religious freedom in Dignitatis humanae.

Clearly, an aggiornamento occurred. The church was coming to terms with the fact that many societies were irrevocably religiously pluralistic, that political and cultural ideas had changed drastically, and that twentieth-century totalitarianism had viciously attacked religious freedom. But there was also a ressourcement, a recovery of earlier Christian attitudes about the liberty of the human person and peaceful principles of non-coercion. Pope Benedict XVI called the Council’s teaching a recovery of “the deepest patrimony of the Church.”

Finally, the Council clearly did what it claimed it was doing; that is, it developed doctrine. In the Council’s words, it developed the doctrine of recent popes, mainly Pius XII and John XXIII, who are cited a combined fourteen times (there are only fifteen non-scriptural footnotes). Keeping this three-fold conceptual framework for Vatican II reform in mind, I will examine the triumph of this reformist orientation at the Council, and how it expressed itself in Dei verbum, particularly through

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prioritizing ressourcement. Then I will examine four areas in which the Council reformed the church: liturgy and devotions, ecclesiology, religious liberty, and ecumenism.

1.5 – A Reformist Orientation: The Triumph of Ressourcement in the Constitution on Revelation

While a conservative group of council fathers wanted the Council to confirm the status quo and clearly condemn modern errors, a majority emerged that was inspired by John XXIII’s notion of aggiornamento, sympathetic to the various ressourcement movements, and supportive of a new tone and style of conciliar teaching.26 This emergence of a reform-minded majority in the Council’s first session was illustrated in the rejection, on 20 November 1962, of the Theological Commission’s draft text (“schema”) on divine revelation, which reflected the prevailing neo-scholastic method and theology of the day.27 The final document, eventually promulgated as Dei verbum (1965), the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, reflected the majority’s desire for a ressourcement – a “return to the sources”: scriptural, patristic, and liturgical.28

Before Vatican II, debate raged over an important aspect of knowing God’s self-revelation, namely, the relationship between the Bible and tradition. There were those who shared the desire of Josef Geiselmann (1890–1970) to revisit the “sources” debate through a

26 O’Malley identifies this shift in tone as itself one of the major innovations of Vatican II. The uniqueness of this style in conciliar history is clear. See What Happened, 11–12.

27 It was also judged by some fathers as unecumenical and excessively negative. O’Malley narrates this “turning point” in What Happened, 141–52. There are important interventions from council fathers in Acta I/3, 27–54. The text of the Theological Commission’s original schema (“On the Sources of Revelation”) is available in Acta I/3, 14–26.

28 The commentary of Joseph Ratzinger, who was intimately involved in these debates at the Council (and a primary architect of Dei verbum), helpfully explains the Constitution’s “new view of the phenomenon of tradition” in his commentary in Vorgrimler, Commentary 3:155–272, at 155–56. See also Helmut Hoping’s commentary in Herders Kommentar, 3:697–831.
ressourcement of the tradition, and those who interpreted the Tridentine decree to have basically settled the matter in favor of the “partim-partim” view (and duplex fons – “two sources” of revelation). This latter persuasion was displayed in the first schema on revelation prepared by the Theological Commission, headed by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani (Prefect of the Holy Office and an influential member of the conciliar minority). The rejection of this draft, which explicitly taught the partim-partim view, was considered a great success for the growing number of council fathers who wished for a document that was more historically conscious, personalistic, and ecumenically sensitive; many of these fathers also sought to avoid the persistent charge that Catholicism subordinated scripture to tradition or the magisterium.

These are precisely the concerns that Dei verbum addressed. While it has obvious continuity in many elements with the first schema, the final text also contained key shifts and developments. Although the majority did not wish to “canonize” the new view (by explicitly rejecting the partim-partim, two-source theory), it was clear that they wished to move “beyond” the formula of Trent and thus rejected the Theological Commission’s first draft, which many felt was ossifying at best, and canonizing a false theory at worst. The ressourcement theologians

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29 This is not to say that all those who wished to revisit the debate shared Geiselmann’s belief in the material sufficiency of scripture. Ratzinger calls the debate over “qualitative completeness” in the context of the material sufficiency of scripture an “unreal controversy.” See Ratzinger in Vorgrimler, Commentary, 3:186.

30 The Tridentine “Decree on the Reception of the Sacred Books and Traditions,” is in Denzinger 1501–8. The relevant passage (§1501) does not in fact teach that revelation is contained partly in scripture and partly in tradition (partim-partim) but simply that it is contained in “written books and unwritten traditions.” I briefly detail the background of this debate, at Trent and on the eve of Vatican II, in Shaun Blanchard, “The Minority Report at Trent and the Vatican Councils: Dissenting Episcopal Voices as Positive Sources for Theological Reflection,” New Blackfriars 98 (2017): 147–156, at 150–53. See Ratzinger’s discussion in Vorgrimler, Commentary, 3:155–57, 170. “Only by going back to the comprehensive reality of the deeds and words of God is it possible to do away with the positivistic idea of the duplex fons” (170).


32 The ambiguous phrase “goes beyond,” is Ratzinger’s. See Vorgrimler Commentary 3:187. Vatican I’s Dei Filius chapter two (1870) had repeated the Tridentine formula almost verbatim. See Denzinger 3006.
had a heightened historical sense but also an ecumenical, reforming desire to clearly exalt scripture. They were influenced by Romanticism, Newman’s theory of development, personalist philosophy, and even Karl Barth. Although ecumenism is not a theme of Dei verbum per se, a number of speeches complaining about the first schema, and the relationes of subsequent drafts make it clear that ecumenical concerns were central. This new articulation emphasized God’s revelation fully residing only in the person of Christ, not in any doctrinal data. Along with this emphasis came a shift towards a personalistic approach to revelation: God speaks to His creation to unfold His self-communication (culminating in the person of His Son), and His creatures respond personally to the divine initiative in faith and prayer. This personalistic approach constitutes an option different from a view of the gospel as a “new law” (nova lex) added to the foundation of “natural theology.” This personalistic view of Christ and revelation was also influenced by “kerygmatic Christology,” associated with reformers like Romano Guardini.

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33 “It becomes clear how much Catholic theology has benefitted in the last fifty years from the theology of Karl Barth, which itself was influenced by the personalistic thinking of Ebner, Buber, and others.” Ratzinger in Vorgrimler, Commentary, 3:170. An important commentary written by a key conciliar peritus that partially indebts a new articulation of the theology of revelation to a Reformed Protestant is ecumenically momentous. Such an attribution would have been utterly unthinkable in the aftermath of Vatican I. On Barth and the Council, see Donald W. Norwood, Reforming Rome: Karl Barth and Vatican II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

34 There is some explicitly ecumenical content: Dei verbum 22 expresses openness towards collaborating with non-Catholic Christians in producing and disseminating jointly-approved Bible translations.

35 See above, page 36n27.

36 Dei verbum 7. “For the mystery of God is ultimately none other than Christ himself – it is the person (Col 1:27).” Ratzinger in Vorgrimler, Commentary, 3:171.

37 Ibid., 3:181.

38 Robert Krieg argues that Guardini’s kerygmatic approach – which focused on encountering Jesus as personal Lord and Savior – ultimately came to fruition at Vatican II, over the primacy given by neo-scholasticism to “the deposit of faith” or Liberal Protestant historical-critical approaches. Romano Guardini: A Precursor of Vatican II (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 137–60.
The replacement of the Theological Commission’s schema with *Dei verbum* was important not just for its contribution to the technical debate on the relationship between scripture and tradition. The Christocentric dynamism of the developing schema served as a touchstone for the reformist energy of the Council as a whole. *Dei verbum* made many important affirmations. It recognized the reality of doctrinal development. This recognition was a result of accepting the hard facts of history, but *Dei verbum* 8 also featured a contemplative Marian role in development attributed to all praying believers (Luke 2:19, 51 is cited here), as well as a role for the teaching charism of the episcopacy. This formal acceptance at Vatican II of the idea that doctrine can develop and the church can grow in understanding revelation was essential grounding for the Council’s reformist program, for example, in ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*), salvation outside the church (*Lumen gentium* 16–17), religious liberty (*Dignitatis humanæ*), and the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). When tradition is seen as a living hermeneutic that norms ecclesial life, and a growing understanding of the gospel and the Christian life, the church can more effectively justify applying the principle of *semper reformanda* than when tradition is seen mainly as discrete doctrinal data.\(^{40}\)

A complete consideration of Vatican II reform is, of course, well beyond the scope of this chapter. Keeping in mind the grounding *Dei verbum* provided, I wish to examine Vatican II reform in four areas, roughly (but not exclusively) corresponding to four documents: 1) the reform of liturgy and devotions (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*); 2) ecclesiological reform (*Lumen gentium*); 3) religious liberty (*Dignitatis humanæ*); and 4) ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*). I

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\(^{39}\) *Dei verbum* 8; Andrew Meszaros ‘’Haec Traditio proficit’’.

\(^{40}\) *Semper reformanda*, a phrase often associated with the Reformation, does not appear in the Vatican II documents. However, *Unitatis redintegratio* 6 speaks of “continual reformation” (*perennem reformationem*). A similar and strong formula appears in *Lumen gentium* 8, which speaks of the Church as “at the same time holy and always in need of being purified” (*sancta simul et semper purificanda*).
chose these themes because they are central to the conciliar project and because in later chapters I will trace the eighteenth-century roots of these reforms. These four areas are particularly interconnected with one another, and they are important shapers of a certain ecclesial orientation, one that is missional, dialogical, and otherwise ad extra in focus. In each of these four areas, there has been important postconciliar debate and development. In what follows, I will sometimes reference postconciliar matters, but my main concern is with Vatican II itself.

Unfortunately, I cannot consider many other important conciliar reforms and developments in areas such as evangelization and missiology, the relationships among the church, the political order, and modernity (especially in Gaudium et spes), the salvation of non-Christians, interreligious dialogue (especially with Jews), or education.

1.6 – The Reform of Worship and Prayer: Liturgy, Devotions, and Bible Reading

The first document actually approved by the Council, Sacrosanctum Concilium (4 December 1963), initiated a sweeping reform of the liturgy. Mostly notably, the Constitution on the Divine Liturgy granted permission for an increased use of the vernacular in the Mass (§36), which was sweepingly implemented. This almost-universal change to the predominance of the vernacular over Latin in worship was the most tangible Vatican II reform and had the most profound effect on the life of the laity. Massimo Faggioli has argued that the early approval of Sacrosanctum Concilium (most documents were not passed until the third and fourth sessions, in

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41 Sacrosanctum Concilium was promulgated on the same day (December 4, 1963) as Inter Mirifica (the Decree on the Media of Social Communications). The Constitution is available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_1963_1204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

42 The Catholic sociologist Mark Massa makes this claim for U.S. Catholics in The American Catholic Revolution: How the ’60s Changed the Catholic Church Forever (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1.
the autumns of 1964 and 1965) provided the blueprint for the entire Council, and that this deep liturgical reform implied ecclesiological reform.\textsuperscript{43}

Regarding devotional life, and specifically devotions to Mary and the saints, \textit{Lumen Gentium} 66–69 sought a careful and moderate reform intended to preserve robust traditional devotions while more clearly highlighting their necessary Christocentric foundation. In continuity with Trent, \textit{Lumen gentium} 67 calls for the cult of Mary and the saints to be “generously fostered” but also “exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word to abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God.”

The council fathers themselves made two rather strong statements, by omission, regarding the cult of Mary, both of which had ecumenical import. First, the majority rejected attempts by the minority to proclaim the dogma that Mary is the “Mediatrix of all graces,” a well-established (if maximalist) Marian title. Second, attempts to gain approval for a separate conciliar schema on Mary were also rejected. Instead, a lengthy section on the Blessed Mother concludes \textit{Lumen gentium} (§52–69).\textsuperscript{44} Our Lady, according to \textit{Lumen gentium}, is the foremost member of church; she is one of us, albeit a preeminently holy and special intercessor, as well as a type of the whole church. Vatican II deliberately placed Mary \textit{inside} the church, as a disciple of the Lord—the disciple \textit{par excellence}. However, \textit{Lumen gentium}’s Marian theology is by no means minimalist: she is called “God’s Mother…exalted above all men and angels” (§66).

Vatican II’s vision for devotion to Mary and the saints is warm and robust, while also implicitly

\textsuperscript{43} Faggioli’s thesis is also a comment on contemporary tensions in the Catholic Church and not just history. He has argued that recent attempts to revive the “Tridentine” Latin Mass (by new ecclesial movements and by others taking advantage of Pope Benedict’s 2007 \textit{motu proprio Summorum Pontificum}) implies a rejection of the ecclesiology of Vatican II. See True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012).

\textsuperscript{44} Chapter eight is titled “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church.”
taking on board intra-Catholic and ecumenical calls for reform, moderation, and a clear Christocentric foundation to all piety and prayer (§66).

_Sacrosanctum Concilium’s_ emphasis on scripture’s role in worship (§7, 21, 34, 55) coupled with _Dei verbum’s_ exhortations regarding lay Bible reading (§21–26) serves as a crowning achievement of twentieth-century biblical reform in the Catholic Church. While it is a myth that lay people were not encouraged to read the Bible until Vatican II, it is undeniable that the Council placed an emphasis on personal scripture reading and biblical immersion that was unprecedented in the post-Tridentine Church. _Dei verbum_ accords to scripture what I have called elsewhere a prima facie primacy.45 The structure of the document itself suggests this primacy – the final 16 articles (of 26 total) are concerned exclusively with scripture.46 Crucially, the magisterium is “not above (non supra) the Word of God, but serves (ministrat) it” (_Dei verbum_ 10).47 While this idea would, of course, never have been denied in Catholic theology, stating it explicitly in a conciliar document is a key ecumenical affirmation. This prima facie primacy does not give private scriptural interpreters (much less historical-critical exegetes) the final

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45 See Blanchard, “Minority Report,” 152. I avoid the term “supremacy” as it could connote competition, where the mind of the church clearly presupposes a harmony and organic mutuality. “Primacy” (i.e., firstness) entails the exaltation of scripture without the connotation of competition. Competition could also unhelpfully imply discrete otherness rather than distinction.

46 Chapter three is on “Sacred Scripture, Its Inspiration and Divine Interpretation”; four and five are on the Old and New Testaments; six is titled “Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church.”

47 _Dei verbum_ 10: “Quod quidem Magisterium non supra verbum Dei est, sed eidem ministrat.” _Ministrare_ can mean to wait upon, carry out for, or serve. It implies service to a master or leader. While Catholic theology has always sought to avoid competitive language in the discussion of scripture, tradition, and magisterium, nowhere does _Dei verbum_ say or imply that scripture “ministers to” or “serves” tradition. The language of Yves Congar on this matter is much more explicit than _Dei verbum_ (and more explicit than my suggestion of a prima facie primacy of scripture): “Scripture has an absolute sovereignty; it is of divine origin, even in its literary form; it governs Tradition and the Church…. [I]t contains evidence from human witnesses who have now disappeared in the form in which they gave it. It is thus superlatively qualified to act as the unalterable ‘witness’.” See Yves Congar _Tradition and the Traditions: The Biblical, Historical, and Theological Evidence for Catholic Teaching on Tradition_, trans. Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (San Diego: Basilica Press, 1966 [trans. of _La Tradition et les traditions_, 1960]), 422. See also Joshua Brotherton, “Revisiting the _Sola Scriptura_ Debate: Joseph Ratzinger and Yves Congar on the Nature of Tradition,” _Pro Ecclesia_ 24.1 (2015): 85–114, at 88–95.
determinative say in evaluating Catholic doctrine (see §23). However, the Catholic faithful, clergy, and exegetes are encouraged to turn directly to scripture for spiritual nourishment and for religious instruction (Dei verbum 22, 25). The remarkable statement that the church venerates scripture “just as she venerates the body of the Lord” (§21) supports this interpretation. Through scripture, especially its public proclamation in the liturgy, the faithful come into contact with Christ in a way that is analogous to the Eucharistic Real Presence (§21). The last six articles teach that the prayerful study of scripture is of paramount importance not just for preachers but for all the faithful since “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (§25, quoting St. Jerome). In light of various late medieval and early modern Catholic approaches to Bible reading, an ecumenical council implying that one will have a deficient understanding of Christ without sufficient personal contact with the scriptures is a remarkable reform, and it accords Bible reading an unprecedented status in the post-Tridentine Catholic Church.48

1.7 – Ecclesiological Reform: Renewed Episcopacy, Commissioned Laity

Although perhaps not as immediately tangible as the liturgical reforms at and after the Council, Vatican II’s ecclesiological reform was profound. The council fathers staged another chapter in the bitter and complicated struggle, stretching back at least to the High Middle Ages, over defining the precise relation between the primacy of the pope and the authority of bishops in their respective dioceses and in the collective unity of the episcopate. While John XXIII originally intended the Council to be primarily pastoral, it “also became a doctrinal council” which sought “to remedy Vatican I’s one-sided legacy on papal primacy isolated from the

48 On this development, see Jared Wicks’ treatment in “Scripture Reading Urged vehementer (DV No. 25): Background and Development,” Theological Studies 74 (2013) 555–80. Wicks shows the impact of the Catholic biblical movement on Dei verbum, as well as Catholics taking seriously the critiques of Protestants through ecumenical dialogue.
episcopate and to harvest the rich growth of theology concerning the Church from 1920 to 1960."\(^{49}\)

These ecclesiological debates yielded the documents *Lumen gentium* (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 1964) and *Christus Dominus* (Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 1965).\(^{50}\) *Lumen gentium* strongly reasserted the primacy of the pope, his infallibility, and his authority over each and every particular church and Catholic believer (§18–19, 22–25), which was all taught at Vatican I. However, the ecclesiological Constitution, influenced by *ressourcement* theology, sought to balance these grandiose papal prerogatives by situating them within a strong reassertion of the centrality of the episcopacy as a college. *Lumen gentium* taught that episcopal consecration is the fullness of the sacrament of Orders (§21),\(^{51}\) that the college of bishops succeeds the college of the Apostles and that this episcopal college, always united to the pope, possesses full and supreme power in the universal church (§22). There are, therefore, two *loci* of supreme ecclesiastical authority in the Catholic Church: the pope, and the college of bishops, which includes, and is headed by, the pope. Nevertheless, episcopal authority is *de iure divino* – it comes directly from God and is part of what Christ established when he founded the church. However, the college of bishops always includes the pope who

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\(^{50}\) I discuss both of these documents in detail in chapter six.

\(^{51}\) *Lumen gentium* 21: “And the Sacred Council teaches that by Episcopal consecration the fullness of the sacrament of Orders is conferred, that fullness of power, namely, which both in the Church’s liturgical practice and in the language of the Fathers of the Church is called the high priesthood, the supreme power of the sacred ministry.” The formula *Docet autem Sancta Synodus* signifies an act of solemn teaching, although not a definition of dogma. Compare *Lumen gentium* 18, where, while the Council “proposes again to all the faithful as something firmly to be believed” (*cunctis fidelibus firmiter credendum rursus proponit*) the doctrine on papal primacy and infallibility, it teaches, declares, and professes (*docet et declarat... profiteri et declarare constituit*) the doctrine on the episcopacy in chapter three.
probably the fiercest of the Council. It was a main factor leading to the tensions of “Black Week” (14–21 November 1964) and to the controversial Nota explicativa praevia, which was appended to Lumen gentium consequent to the intervention of some minority council fathers who impressed upon Pope Paul VI the possibility of problematic interpretations of the doctrine of collegiality.\textsuperscript{53} Related to the doctrine of episcopal collegiality, however, is a diffuse understanding of the charism of infallibility. Lumen gentium 25 teaches not only that the pope and an ecumenical council can teach infallibly, but that the bishops dispersed throughout the world can as well, when they are united in this teaching. Precisely how such an event could be ascertained to have occurred, however, is not described.

While it was primarily teachings concerning the episcopacy which caused such heated debate over Lumen gentium, a renewed theology of the laity was also central to Vatican II ecclesiology. It was greatly significant that the chapter on “the People of God” (chapter two), that is, all of the baptized, was placed before the chapter on the ordained hierarchy. This

\textsuperscript{52} The vote of 30 October 1963, approving these teachings regarding the episcopacy (along with the reinstatement of the permanent diaconate) was a pivotal moment for the agenda of the majority and the shaping of Lumen gentium. On the “five questions” the Council Fathers voted on, see Gerard Philips, “History of the Constitution,” in Vorgrimler, Commentary 1:105–37, at 115–17. See also O’Malley, What Happened, 184.

redactional choice was a symbolic statement that the hierarchy is part of the People of God rather than something set over it. The role of the laity was a central preoccupation of Vatican II and has been celebrated in the reception of the Council across a wide ideological and theological spectrum. While the laity do not have the same juridical role as the hierarchy, they too participate in ecclesial infallibility, according to Lumen gentium 12, which teaches that the People of God as a whole “cannot err in matters of belief.”

By tackling thorny problems from the past and seeking to engage modernity with a renewed theology of the laity, Vatican II showed deep concern with ecclesiological reform and rejuvenation. These reforms were possible only because of engagement with history. The council fathers and their periti asked (and, sometimes, answered) difficult questions: did the legacy of Vatican I need to balanced, and, if so, how? What was the ecclesiology of the early church and the patristic period, and what elements of those periods are normative or should be retrieved? What is the nature of a church that is not above history but in it, a church that is on a journey?

1.8 – Religious Liberty: “Decisive for the History of Humanity”

Especially critical for the ad extra focus of Vatican II was the Council’s endorsement of de iure religious liberty – that is, the position that the human person has a God-given right to civil religious freedom. While the conceptual framework to argue against religious coercion by the church and/or the state certainly existed in scripture, tradition, and (increasingly by the mid-

54 Different interpretations of what a renewed theology of the laity actually is are apparent when one contrasts works such as Francis Cardinal Arinze, The Layperson’s Distinctive Role (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013) with Paul Lakeland, The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church (New York: Continuum, 2003).

55 Chapter seven of Lumen gentium (§48–51) is on the eschatological character of the “pilgrim Church” (Ecclesiae peregrinantis). See also §6–9; 14, 21, 62, 68.
twentieth century) magisterial texts, de iure religious freedom had been repeatedly condemned by the magisterium, with particular vehemence from the time of the French Revolution to the early twentieth century. Thus, one reason why Dignitatis humanae remains so significant for Catholic theology, in addition to its affirmations on its main subject, is that it evinces the most striking doctrinal development of any conciliar document. While much of the innovation in the Council is not specifically identified as such in its texts, Dignitatis humanae boldly proclaimed that it set out not just to reconfirm past teaching, but “to develop the doctrine of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and the constitutional order of society” (§1).

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56 The American Jesuit John Courtney Murray, one of the principal architects of Dignitatis humanae, made his arguments from early Christian tradition and political philosophy but also from a developing line of thought he saw arising in some of the teaching of Leo XIII. This thread in papal teaching was picked up and strengthened by Pius XI and Pius XII. During his controversy with Joseph Fenton, Murray made a great deal of some writings and allocutions of Pius XII, especially the allocution Ci Riesce (which is cited in Dignitatis humanae, note 34). Ci Riesce, 6 December 1953, is in AAS 45 (1953): 802. John XXIII, especially in Pacem in Terris (1963), but also in Mater et Magistra (1961), provided further evidence that the papal magisterium was developing in the direction of religious freedom as a principle. See, for example, Murray, “Leo XIII: Separation of Church and State,” in Theological Studies 14 (1953): 145–214; Joseph Clifford Fenton, “The Teachings of Ci Riesce,” American Ecclesiastical Review 80 (1954): 114–23. A good overview of these debates, sympathetic to Murray, is in Donald E. Pelotte, John Courtney Murray: Theologian in Conflict (New York: Paulist Press, 1976). For an account of Murray’s unpublished lecture on 25 March 1954 on Ci Riesce, and the rebuttal of Fenton, see pp. 44–49.

57 The censures of religious liberty vary in details in the following documents, but contain fairly consistent principles: Pius VI, Quod aliquantum (1791, condemning the French National Assembly’s principle of religious freedom); Pius VI, Auctorem fidei (1794, condemning the Synod of Pistoia’s arguments against religious coercion by the church); Gregory XVI, Mirari vos (1832, against Lamennais); Pius IX, Quanta cura and the attached Syllabus of Errors (1864, condemning modern “liberalism”); Leo XIII, Immortale Dei (1885, asserting the traditional view of church-state relations, albeit with some developments); Pius X, Vehementer nos (1906, condemning the French Third Republic’s separation of church and state).
After long and protracted debate, some of the most heated of the Council, the declaration *Dignitatis humanae* was overwhelmingly approved on 7 December 1965, during the final session. The thesis of the document was in the following affirmations in article two:

This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom (*ius habere ad libertatem religiosam*). This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion (*immunes esse a coercitio*) on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right...is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.

The significance of *Dignitatis humanae* is difficult to overstate. Peter Hünermann called it “a decisive document in the history of humanity.” Whether they approved of the document or not, all of the council fathers were well aware of its ecumenical importance. This importance extended not only to the realms of dialogue with non-Catholic Christians, but also to interreligious relations and to the world at large. Particularly germane to our discussion, however, is the ecumenical dimension. In fact, the first draft on religious liberty (November

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58 By a vote of 2,308 to 7. However, opposition was much higher in the vote on the immediately previous draft than in that on the final version. Nearly three out of ten fathers (many of them Spanish and Italian) had some reservations about that draft, either voting “no” or “yes with modifications” (*non placet or placet juxta modum*). A concise treatment of the phases of voting (there were multiple drafts of the document over several sessions) is available in Brian W. Harrison’s article, “Pius IX, Vatican II, and Religious Liberty,” *Living Tradition* 9 (1987), accessible at http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt9.html#II.


1963) was initially chapter five of the Decree on Ecumenism. Pietro Pavan, who, alongside John Courtney Murray, was a main architect of *Dignitatis humanae*, explained why the Secretariat for Unity was so supportive of a declaration on religious liberty.

Many non-Catholics are opposed to the Church or at least suspect it of Machiavellianism, because it demands freedom for itself in those political communities where Catholics are in the minority, while refusing the same freedom to non-Catholics in political communities where Catholics are in the majority. Hence it was essential for the Church to state its view on religious freedom unequivocally. Unless this was done, a larger and deeper development of the ecumenical movement would be difficult, perhaps even impossible.\(^{61}\)

In the mind of those in favor of *Dignitatis humanae*, unless the Catholic Church clearly proclaimed the religious liberty of those who were not members of it, ecumenical progress would be difficult or impossible.

The proclamation of religious freedom was the result of a long process of doctrinal development, a fact which, as we have seen, the council fathers explicitly acknowledged. This development had elements of *aggiornamento*, specifically of coming to terms with key aspects of modern liberalism, accepting a changed situation in many parts of the world in church-state relations, and reflecting on the great damage that religious coercion had done under the Fascist and Communist regimes of the twentieth century.\(^{62}\) But the development was also a result of *ressourcement*, of reflection on very ancient Christian principles in scripture and tradition. I have already noted that in his Christmas address to the College of Cardinals in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI called *Dignitatis humanae* a recovery of “the deepest patrimony of the Church,” by which

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\(^{61}\) See Pavan, “Declaration on Religious Freedom,” in Vorgrimler, *Commentary* 4:51. This was also the argument of a *relatio* of Bishop de Smedt (Bruges).

he meant the scriptures, the church fathers, and the practice of the first Christians.\textsuperscript{63} This recovery was a proposal for a great Catholic reform, and one that postconciliar theology and official teaching has celebrated and deepened.\textsuperscript{64}

1.9 – \textit{Ecumenism and the Call to “Continual Reformation”}

As we have seen, ecumenism was an explicit goal of John XXIII as he convened the Council, and a goal that Paul VI emphasized as he opened the second session.\textsuperscript{65} The ecumenical movement in the Catholic Church had continued to gather steam, especially since the 1940s, but the official attitude towards ecumenism through the 1950s remained guarded, although there was already more openness than the very negative attitudes of the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{66} While the Decree on Ecumenism, \textit{Unitatis redintegratio}, is the central statement of the Council on ecumenism,\textsuperscript{67} we have already seen how other conciliar documents made major ecumenical contributions in their own right. The ecumenical importance of the principle of \textit{de iure} religious freedom was made explicit in the debate over \textit{Dignitatis humanae}. The Christology of \textit{Dei verbum}, its articulation of the relationship between scripture and tradition, and the central importance it placed on Bible reading were important ecumenical advances as well. The

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\textsuperscript{63} See page 35, above.

\textsuperscript{64} John Paul II in particular celebrated \textit{Dignitatis humanae}, deeply marked as he was by the conciliar experience, \textit{ressourcement} theology, and the twentieth-century Polish struggle against Soviet communism. See Herminio Rico, \textit{John Paul II and the Legacy of Dignitatis Humanae} (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002).

\textsuperscript{65} See Paul VI’s words on 29 September 1963, under the heading “Unitatis Redintegratio inter universos Christianos,” available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/la/speeches/1963/ documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19630929_concilio-vaticano-it.html.

\textsuperscript{66} The development from total rejection to limited openness on the part of the magisterium can be seen by comparing \textit{Mortalium animos}, a 1928 encyclical of Pius XI (\textit{AAS} 20 (1928): 5–16) to the Instruction of the Holy Office of 20 December 1949, “De motione oecumenica” (\textit{AAS} 42 (1950): 142–47).

\textsuperscript{67} See the commentary of Werner Becker (on the history of the Decree) and Johannes Feiner (on the text itself) in Vorgrimler, \textit{Commentary} 2:1–164.
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liturgical reform initiated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* addressed some of the major Protestant criticisms of Catholic worship: that it was too remote and inaccessible, too clerical, and insufficiently biblical.68 The call for an expanded lectionary (§51) helped propel a movement that ended up inspiring the Common Lectionary shared by many Protestant churches, which ensures that they and Catholics go through very similar multi-year paths of Sunday readings on the Bible’s witness to salvation.

*Lumen gentium* was of particular ecumenical significance.69 Approved on the same day as *Unitatis redintegratio* (21 November 1964), the Constitution on the Church contained the doctrinal framework that undergirded the Decree on Ecumenism and made it possible. The Constitution upheld traditional Catholic ecclesiology by stating that the only Church of Christ was present in the Catholic Church as a visible society (*Lumen gentium* 8). However, the manner in which this presence was affirmed was inclusive, rather than exclusive:

This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society (*societas*), subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.

This famous formulation, that the Church of Christ *subsistit in* the Catholic Church, does not backpedal on traditional Catholic claims regarding the fullness of Christian truth and structures residing in the Catholic Church.70 However, it leaves open the question of which ecclesial truths and realities might be present in other Christian communities and churches. An earlier draft of *Lumen gentium* (at that time called the schema *De Ecclesia*), had the more exclusive formula:

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68 My purpose is not to argue that the pre-Vatican II liturgy was or was not these things, just to acknowledge that the conciliar and postconciliar reforms were widely perceived by Protestants to help correct these issues.


70 *Unitatis redintegratio* 3 also reaffirms the traditional Catholic claims.
“therefore this Church...is (est) the Catholic Church,” a formulation that leaves open far fewer ecumenical avenues than does the _substitit in_ phrasing.\(^71\) While there has been significant postconciliar debate about the precise meaning of the passage,\(^72\) as well as postconciliar magisterial developments and clarifications,\(^73\) Vatican II clearly recognized that ecclesial elements existed outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church, and that these positive elements impelled towards ecclesial unity. _Lumen gentium_ makes this clear in §8 and §15, the latter of which lists the following elements of goodness and truth in the beliefs and practices of some or all non-Catholic Christians and their communities: honoring and following the Bible, sincere religious zeal, believing in the Triune God, baptism and other sacraments, retaining the episcopate, celebrating the Eucharist, cultivating devotion to Mary, the life of prayer, unity founded in the work of the Holy Spirit among them, the witness of martyrdom, and a desire for ecclesial unity. These positive affirmations in _Lumen gentium_ are the foundation upon which the Decree on Ecumenism rests. But _Lumen gentium_ did not just indicate areas of commonality, it called for reform in how the church’s devotional and theological life is presented. “Let [Catholics] assiduously keep away from whatever, either by word or deed, could lead separated brethren or any other into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church” on Mary (§67).\(^74\)

\(^71\) Aloys Grillmeier in Vorgrimler, _Commentary_ 1:150.


\(^73\) John Paul II’s encyclical _Ut Unum Sint_ (1995), “On Commitment to Ecumenism,” teaches (§11) that “the elements of sanctification and truth present in the other Christian Communities, in a degree which varies from one to the other, constitute the objective basis of the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church. To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them.” See also the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) document “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” _AAS_ 99 (2007) 604–8. Also of importance is the CDF Declaration _Dominus Iesus_ (2000), _AAS_ 92 (2000) 742–65, esp. §16–22.
Unitatis redintegratio develops many of the themes present in Lumen gentium and other conciliar documents. In its own right, the Decree also did two things of great importance. It formally committed the Catholic Church to the path of ecumenical dialogue, a path to which, before the Council, there was at most limited (but growing) official openness. This commitment is borne out in the entire document and summarized in the introduction (§1).\textsuperscript{75} In addition, Unitatis redintegratio 6 effectively proclaimed the principle Ecclesia semper reformanda.

Christ summons the Church to continual reformation (perennem reformationem) as she sojourns here on earth. The Church is always in need of this, in so far as she is an institution of men here on earth. Thus if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated – to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself – these can and should be set right at the opportune moment.\textsuperscript{76}

The passage is critical for three reasons. First, the use of the word reformatio, which had fallen out of favor in the Catholic Church, is significant. In fact, this is the only instance in the entire Vatican II corpus in which the term is applied to the church. Second, while a recognition that the church “in so far as she is an institution of men” needs constant moral and disciplinary reform was in no way controversial, the next clause, that this “reformation” might extend to the formulation of doctrine, was deeply significant. While the document is clear that this reform does not and cannot alter the deposit of faith, the Council is here calling for something more than just the curtailing of abuses and disciplinary overhaul.\textsuperscript{77} Third, the passage (taken in its entirety) cites

\textsuperscript{74} See also Lumen gentium 15, which has Mother Church exhorting her sons to “purification and renewal” so that the unity of Christians might be achieved. Here Lumen gentium (as in §8) uses the term renovatio, a word from the Western historical lexicon of church reform. See its use in this sense in Unitatis redintegratio 4 and 6. On the background of this term, see O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 518, 521, 539.

\textsuperscript{75} “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only.….Division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.”

\textsuperscript{76} Compare the affirmation in Lumen gentium 8: as including sinners and always needing purification, the church continually pursues penance and renewal (renovationem continuo prosequitur).
the different elements of “continual reformation” as pledges and portents of progress in ecumenism. These elements are the “Biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God and catechetics, the apostolate of the laity, new forms of religious life and the spirituality of married life, and the Church’s social teaching and activity” (§6).

2. The Council Contested: Four Major Positions on Vatican II

The Council sparked an enormous amount of debate and discussion in the church and the world, which continues to this day. Different hermeneutical approaches to Vatican II conflict with each other on major issues, and these interpretations affect the life of the Catholic Church in profound ways. These hermeneutics also affect the church’s interaction with the modern cultural and political order, with other Christians, and with non-Christians.

In this section, I posit four basic positions Catholics have taken on Vatican II. While there is much sociological reflection on the impact of the Council on normal Catholics in the pew (and on non-Catholics), I focus on Catholic academic and ecclesial receivers of the Council.

77 In his address opening the Council, John XXIII did not imply there were deficiencies in current doctrinal formulation per se, but he did argue that the Council could and should re-present church teaching without altering dogma. See Gaudet Mater Ecclesia 6 (11 October 1962), available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/la/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council.html. An English translation by Joseph Komonchak is available on his personal website: “What is needed is that this certain and unchangeable doctrine, to which loyal submission is due, be investigated and presented in the way demanded by our times. For the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our venerable doctrine, are one thing; the fashion in which they are expressed, but with the same meaning and the same judgement, is another thing” (this passage is marked §14 in Komonchak’s version, based upon the Italian). Available at https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-xxiii-opening-speech.pdf.


proposing four positions I risk a lack of nuance, since there are probably as many interpretations of the Council as there are interpreters. Making things even more complex is the fact that individual interpreters sometimes lack consistency, or, at least, their thought develops throughout their careers. Thus, the boundaries of any heuristic scheme must be understood to be tentative, porous, and only broadly descriptive. As we will see, some conservative interpreters straddle a rejection of the Council with acceptance on certain conditions (for example, on the condition that the Council was exclusively “pastoral,” that is, that it taught no new doctrines). Likewise, some progressive interpreters enthusiastically receive elements in the texts they see as positive, while they reject the conciliar project as abortive, hopelessly compromised, or incomplete. All these caveats aside, it still remains a useful heuristic to divide receivers of the council into paradigms.

These four paradigms are 1) the Traditionalist Paradigm: suspicion or rejection of the Council; 2) the Text-Continuity Paradigm: acceptance or celebration of the Council, but with a prioritization of the final texts, an emphasis on doctrinal continuity, and an understanding of the Council as primarily a promulgation of a body of teaching; 3) the Spirit-Event Paradigm: acceptance or celebration of the Council, but with a prioritization of the spirit of the Council, an insistence on doctrinal change and innovation, and an understanding of the Council as primarily an “event”; 4) the Irrelevance Paradigm: progressive suspicion or rejection of the Council. These precise groupings are my own, but are similar to those of Gavin D’Costa, Peter Steinfels, and Massimo Faggioli, and I am here indebted to their and others’ insights.

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80 See D’Costa’s chapter, “Interpreting the Interpreters,” in Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10–58. Intriguingly, he argues (pp. 14–15) that the “theological notes” tradition should be retrieved to clarify the precise disagreements between interpreters of the Council when the assertion that doctrine changed is debated. See pp. 15–18 for a summary of his four “types.”

One could boil down my four positions to the following assertions. The Traditionalist Paradigm: the Council erred or was dangerously ambiguous; it did too much. The Text-Continuity Paradigm: the Council’s texts are good and true documents, and we should interpret them primarily in the light of past tradition. The Spirit-Event Paradigm: the Council’s texts, but especially the new attitudes and orientations associated with the Council, can help the church positively transition out of a defensive mentality to face the modern world constructively. The Irrelevance Paradigm: the Council did not go far enough or was blind to basic problems facing the church. Most Catholic interpreters, including the vast majority of ecclesial leaders, basically approve of the Council and its texts (that is, they are Text-Continuity or Spirit-Event interpreters) but have different hermeneutical approaches and debate the level of continuity or discontinuity at the Council and the interpretation and implementation of it.

I have avoided identifying one position with exclusively favoring “continuity” and another exclusively with “discontinuity” or “rupture.” Traditionalist Paradigm Catholics often claim they are the only true party of continuity, but they seek to be continuous with the infallible “Tradition” of the church, which they claim Vatican II violates or at least risks seriously obscuring unless the Council is interpreted in a very restricted sense. Likewise, many Text-Continuity Catholics claim they in fact are the true defenders of continuity, while Spirit-Event Catholics often depict themselves as the true receivers of Vatican II and so claim they are continuous with the Council, while other positions are not. Some Text-Continuity Catholics see the Traditionalist and Spirit-Event Paradigms as two sides of the same discontinuous coin. But

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83 Richard John Neuhaus, the influential editor of the journal First Things, called O’Malley’s What Happened at Vatican II a manifesto of “the Lefebvrist Left” who, like the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), believed the Council had brought “a radical break from tradition” and “in effect, a different Catholicism.” See “What Really
it is important to point out that no one in the Text-Continuity or Spirit-Event Paradigm really advocates complete continuity or discontinuity with the past tradition. In that sense, the debate is really over in what sense the Council is continuous with the tradition or discontinuous with it.

All four of these positions are dynamic rather than static. For example, those who stress doctrinal continuity are seeking to explain changes they know were called for by the Council texts; they want to argue that such change is development rather than reversal (or they wish to properly contextualize or deemphasize that change, rightly or wrongly, by calling it “pastoral”). They might do so by reducing development to doctrinal insignificance or in ways that truly do recognize doctrinal development. It should also be pointed out that the best theologians who stress discontinuity are usually doing so on the presumption that there is an enormous amount of

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84 For example Ratzinger, the supposed champion of strict continuity, wrote: “If it is desirable to offer a diagnosis of the text [Gaudium et Spes] as a whole, we might say that (in conjunction with the texts on religious liberty and world religions) it is a revision of the Syllabus of Pius IX, a kind of countersyllabus….Let us be content to say that the text serves as a countersyllabus and, as such, represents, on the part of the Church, an attempt at an official reconciliation with the new era inaugurated in 1789.” See Principles of Catholic Theology (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987, 381–2).

85 A good representative of such an attempt is Gavin D’Costa. In Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims, D’Costa’s makes a strong case that the teaching in Lumen gentium and Nostra aetate on the church’s relationship to other religions is development rather than contradiction. See pp. 212–17 for his conclusions.


87 Joseph Ratzinger, who exemplifies the party of continuity, has throughout his career highlighted that the Council involved change and development, and not only at the pastoral level. For his early career, see Theological Highlights and his commentary on Dei verbum in Vorgrimler, Commentary 3:155–272. We have seen that, as pope, he recognized that Dignitatis humanae was discontinuous with some previous teaching.
continuity that makes the discontinuity at the Council interesting or important. Let us now examine these four general positions, focusing on how they account for and interpret reform at the Council.

2.1 – *The Traditionalist Paradigm: Conservative Suspicion or Rejection of the Council*

During Vatican II, a minority of council fathers publicly conveyed their deep misgivings about the general orientation of the Council and some conciliar texts. While this “minority” almost unanimously accepted the Council, a small group of critics coalesced around French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (1905–91), who formed the quasi-schismatic Society of St. Pius X. Lefebvre had been a very vocal member of the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*, a group of council fathers who were deeply concerned about the direction Vatican II was taking. They strategized to impede the majority as much as possible. Lefebvre’s postconciliar grievances echoed those of the minority and the *Coetus* at the Council. These included difficulties with episcopal collegiality and the new theology of the laity, serious misgivings with liturgical reform, and a sense that the ideas of the *nouvelle théologie* (which pervade many conciliar

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88 See, for example, O’Malley, *What Happened*, 302–5, on episcopal collegiality and papal primacy. See also O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 536–42.

89 At the time of the Council, Lefebvre was the Superior General of the missionary Congregation of the Holy Spirit. He died in Switzerland, where the first SSPX seminary was founded. His major works have been translated into English by Jaime Pazat de Lys and José Hanu: *I Accuse the Council* (Dickinson, Texas: Angelus Press, 1982); *Against the Heresies* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1997); *Religious Liberty Questioned* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2002).

90 The Society became formally schismatic in 1988 when John Paul II recognized the excommunication of Archbishop Lefebvre for his illicit ordination of four bishops (the excommunication was canonically automatic, since Lefebvre ordained bishops without papal approval). See John Paul II’s apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei* (2 July 1988), announcing the *latae sententiae* excommunications of all five bishops involved, available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_02071988_ecclesia-dei.html. I use the term “quasi-schismatic,” since the priests and laity involved with the Society were considered disobedient but were not excommunicated. However, in 2009, as a step towards reconciliation, Pope Benedict XVI had these episcopal excommunications lifted. See the “Decree Remitting the Excommunication ‘Latae Sententiae’ of the Bishops of the Society of St. Pius X,” of the Congregation for Bishops. Available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cbishops/documents/rc_con_cbishops_doc_20090121_remissione-scomunica_en.html.
documents) were Modernist errors in subtle disguise. De iure religious liberty unacceptably contradicted established doctrine, and these fathers had a strong suspicion that ecumenism and interreligious dialogue undermined conversion to Catholicism and were based on false irenicism. While postconciliar “Traditionalism” was and remains a relatively small movement, the rejection of the Council – or at least of its implementation – remains a serious issue for the postconciliar church. Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have tried to heal this quasi-schism with SSPX in different, and sometimes seemingly incompatible, ways. Under Pope Francis, an imminent reconciliation with SSPX is possible. If this occurred, there would be parishes and seminaries in regularized communion with the Holy See that currently hold to and teach the Traditionalist Paradigm. Therefore, that paradigm cannot be simply dismissed as totally marginal and unworthy of discussion.


92 “Traditionalism” is a general term that can refer to any number of conservative Catholic groups, ranging from small sedevacantist groups who reject the Council and the postconciliar popes completely, to religious orders and societies that are in full, regularized communion with the pope, but prefer (and sometimes exclusively attend) the Tridentine Mass. Many self-described Traditionalists do not reject Vatican II.


While taking place outside the mainstream of Catholic discussion, the SSPX crisis is important for three other reasons. First, it is a schism (at times *de facto*, from 1988–2009 *de iure*) that resulted from Vatican II. Schisms are always significant for a church that is Catholic and seeks unity in belief and practice. Second, the SSPX crisis has forced the church’s official teaching organs to attempt to clarify exactly what the Council taught, the ways in which it was or was not innovative, the level at which certain documents or teachings are binding, and, most importantly, how the Council can or ought to be understood as part of “Tradition.”

Third, the writings of Lefebvre illustrate, in a very clear and almost frenetic way, something that is true of every interpreter of Vatican II: interpretations of the Council always presuppose a narrative of history. For all interpreters, these historical narratives combine secular and ecclesiastical components. A Frenchman of deeply conservative convictions, Lefebvre saw Vatican II as part of a long story of societal decline stemming from two crimes of the eighteenth-century, Enlightenment and Revolution:

The parallel I have drawn between the crisis in the Church and the French Revolution is not simply a metaphorical one. The influence of the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, and of the upheaval that they produced in the world, has continued down to our times. Those who injected the poison [at and after the Council] admit it themselves.

Massimo Faggioli sees Lefebvre as “faithful to the idea of a chain of ‘modern errors’” – beginning with the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, moving to the eighteenth century Enlightenment and French Revolution, to nineteenth-century liberalism, and finally arriving at twentieth-century socialism and Communism. For Lefebvre and his allies this narrative came to

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95 On this process, see Senèze, *La crise intégriste*. A major concern of conservative and traditionalist interpreters of Vatican II is how the Council accords with “Tradition,” by which they understand perennial, authoritative moral and theological teaching, traditional liturgy, and pious practice.


97 See Faggioli’s discussion in “‘Narratives’ of Vatican II,” in *A Council for the Global Church*, 43–45.
a climax at Vatican II; it is therefore not at all surprising that they received the Council in the way they did. While an extreme case, the negative postconciliar reactions of traditionalists keenly illustrate the importance of history and historical narratives, both ecclesiastical and secular, for an interpretation of the Council. While to young ressourcement-minded Joseph Ratzinger, Dignitatis humanae’s defense of religious liberty was a retrieval of early Christian thought, to Lefebvre it was a Masonic coup in the heart of the faith, and irreconcilable with unchangeable Tradition.⁹⁸

According to Faggioli, what I call the Traditionalist Paradigm is “more and more influential in the Church,” and some apologists are “very close to some Roman circles.”⁹⁹ Given the possibility of an imminent reintegration of the Society of St. Pius X into fully regularized status in the church through what appears to be Pope Francis’ more flexible position on the doctrinal normativity of Vatican II as a condition for such reintegration, the Traditionalist Paradigm may soon become an officially tolerated doctrinal position, even if only implicitly.¹⁰⁰ Some other traditionalist Catholics, for example, Roberto de Mattei¹⁰¹ and Romano Amerio,¹⁰² retained full and regularized communion with the Holy See but see crippling deficiencies in the Council. I would classify these figures under the Traditionalist Paradigm because their issue is not only with the “spirit” and implementation of the Council, but with the texts themselves.

⁹⁸ See Ratzinger, Theological Highlights, 209–10.

⁹⁹ Faggioli, ““Narratives’ of Vatican II,”” 43.

¹⁰⁰ See page 59n93, above.

¹⁰¹ Il Concilio Vaticano II: Una storia mai raccontata (Turin: Lindau, 2010).

2.2 – The Irrelevance Paradigm: Progressive Suspicion or Rejection of the Council

To varying extents, this position can mirror, from a progressive standpoint, the postconciliar rejection of Vatican II by some traditionalists. Irrelevance Paradigm interpreters come in two main types; for convenience I will call them “methodological” and “doctrinal” critics. Methodological critics believe that the Council never had a chance for relevance because there was something defective in the basic theological methodology of the council fathers. D’Costa lists those who see the Council as “too late and irrelevant” often coming from liberationist, feminist, or postmodernist perspectives. Some liberation theologians blame the Council for still operating under “an individualist pietistic paradigm that failed to take seriously Marxism and the real challenges of justice and poverty.” These Catholics believe theology that does not come from a liberationist paradigm is thereby defective. Some feminist theologians argue that the proceedings were so male-dominated as to be flawed to the point of irrelevance. Some postmodern theologians argue that Vatican II was too late: by the 1960s the world was becoming postmodern, and the Council was only just beginning to grapple with modernity. Thus, the Council failed to adequately address the world of its time. All of these issues – justice and poverty, women in the church, and the challenge of postmodernity – have been addressed in postconciliar Catholic theology, and at least the first two were addressed at the Council itself, although, of course, how helpful conciliar thought is in these areas is keenly debated.


105 See the preface to the second edition of Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985 [1968]).

The second kind of Irrelevance Paradigm interpreters straddle the boundary of the Spirit-Event Paradigm (described below). Hans Küng is a good representative of these Catholics who have a strong “doctrinal” critique of the Council. These critics see the positive conciliar spirit as betrayed at some point – either during the Council itself, thus rendering the texts seriously defective, or at some point after the Council (or both). While they praise elements of Vatican II reform, I place these figures in this paradigm because they tend to locate serious, even crippling problems in the texts themselves, rather than just in their interpretation or in the postconciliar magisterium.

This doctrinal critique is still positive about the Council insofar as it identifies some conciliar ideas as laudable, even revolutionary. But, such positive elements were obscured and betrayed.

[The] major accomplishments [of Vatican II] were fatally weakened since the very beginning by excessive compromises between the reformers and the conservative forces in the Roman Curia and in the leadership of the Church….Vatican II was devoid of its major results even before its work was accomplished. What has happened after Vatican II is only the logical consequence of what had happened already at the Council.107

This perspective saw a “betrayal” of the Council in the compromises with the minority, in the actions of Pope Paul VI, in a postconciliar Curial revanche, at the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, or in the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.108

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108 See José Comblin, People of God, ed. and trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), especially chapter 1, “The People of God at Vatican II,” pp. 1–19, and chapter 4, “Reversal at the 1985 Synod,” pp. 52–62. At times, Comblin blames what he sees as a postconciliar revanche led by John Paul II, Cardinal Ratzinger, and the Curia (52–62), and he sees postconciliar teaching documents (Fides et ratio, Veritatis splendor) as part of a “retraction” of conciliar thought and a “return to the preconciliar conception of truth” (11). At other times Comblin sees crippling problems with the Council itself: “Not even the most advanced [council fathers], including Congar, were able to break free of the traditional schemes” (14). Comblin also faults Vatican II for retaining the distinction between ordained and laity (15). He sees Lumen gentium 31 as “not in accord with Christian reality” (16).
At times Küng celebrates the Council, at which he was a popular and controversial peritus, but at other times Küng blames the texts themselves for the predicaments he perceives postconciliar Catholicism to be in. In 1971, Küng published *Infallible? An Enquiry*, which was a bold challenge to infallibility tout court, not just papal infallibility. Küng felt his uncomfortable challenges needed to be made because he believed the reforms of Vatican II had come to “a standstill.” In this sense, Küng presents himself as a champion of Vatican II, trying to push the agenda of the Council forward. However, his work on infallibility was not about privileging Vatican II over Vatican I, but about challenging the entire concept of infallible teaching authority. Küng asked if chapter three of *Lumen gentium* was not “confirmation of the charge leveled by many at the Catholic Church and Catholic theology, that in it tradition gets the better of Scripture, and the teaching office in turns gets the better of tradition, because it decides what the tradition is and hence also what Scripture is?”

Answering challenges such as Küng’s and other “doctrinal” progressive critiques is an important task for Catholic theology. Likewise, Catholic theology must better account for the issues raised by “methodological” critics. However, the concern of this dissertation is to contribute to an adjudication of different models of church reform that accept the teaching of the Council, are interested in the continuity and discontinuity of the Council with past teaching, and seek the best ways to implement conciliar reform. Since the Irrelevance Paradigm faults the

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110 Although Küng rejects infallibility and is harshly critical of chapter three of *Lumen gentium*, he claims his ideal pope (he clearly has someone like John XXIII in mind) is totally compatible with Vatican II. See *Infallible*, 203.

111 Küng also finds *Dei verbum* to be “completely under the influence of unhistorical Counter-Reformation views.” See *Infallible*, 62.
Council for not being discontinuous enough with past teaching, I will have occasion to refer to it much less frequently than to the Spirit-Event and Text-Continuity paradigms.

2.3 – The Mainstream Ecclesial Debate: The Spirit-Event and Text-Continuity Paradigms

Mainstream Catholic theology not only accepts the Council, but tends to celebrate it. However, conflicting interpretations of the Council still dominate discussion. Nevertheless, there are very important foundations shared by the Spirit-Event and Text-Continuity Paradigms that could favor a rapprochement between them. Both paradigms normally recognize that aggiornamento, ressourcement, and the development of doctrine took place at the Council and were largely needed and positive. Both positions generally see Vatican II as not violating the normativity of scripture or tradition, for they see the Council as a valid (and valuable) part of the Catholic tradition. Both positions also normally recognize that postconciliar magisterial interpretations of Vatican II and developments of its teaching have some level of authority, although they may disagree about the precise nature of this authority and its normativity. I will consider these final paradigms side-by-side, since they share so much in common and often engage one another in debate.

One common way to debate the interpretation of the Council – sanctioned by some senior prelates, including popes – is to argue for a hermeneutic of the Council that stresses “continuity” with past teaching and avoids claiming the Council occasioned doctrinal “rupture” and “discontinuity.” In the party of continuity are figures like Joseph Ratzinger, Avery Dulles, S.J., and Archbishop Agostino Marchetto. The latter authored a “counterpoint” to Giuseppe

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112 This celebration usually sees the texts and the event of the Council as major achievements; the implementation of the Council and the postconciliar period are far more contested.
Alberigo’s landmark five-volume history of the Council. Figures such as John O’Malley, Massimo Faggioli, and the so-called “Bologna School” (epitomized by the Alberigo-led History of Vatican II project), have insisted that stressing “continuity” is too narrow and does a disservice to the positive novelty and discontinuity at the Council.

This clash of mainstream interpretative schools has also been described as pitting conservative vs. liberal, Communion vs. Concilium, neo-Augustinian vs. neo-Thomist, and ressourcement vs. aggiornamento. Of course, none of these pairs are always mutually exclusive or necessarily oppositional, but the pairings do touch on important differences. While helpful to some extent, such pairings suffer from a lack of nuance which is endemic to their brevity. Most importantly, as I have shown, neither group really advocates complete continuity or complete discontinuity. Nevertheless, there are very real and important differences in these


115 Faggioli describes broadly conservative and broadly liberal “macronarratives” about the Council in “‘Narratives’ of Vatican II,” 42.


119 For O’Malley and the Spirit-Event Paradigm, see page 57n87, above. For Ratzinger and the Text-Continuity Paradigm, see 56n83, above.
two main schools of conciliar hermeneutics. I will briefly profile these differences, before suggesting that a hermeneutic of true reform, rooted in the work of Congar, is a way out of interpretive impasses.

On my definition, Text-Continuity interpreters accept or even celebrate the Council, prioritize the sixteen final texts, emphasize doctrinal continuity, and understand the Council primarily as a promulgation of a body of teaching.\(^{120}\) The prioritization of texts as the privileged way of approaching the Council is highlighted even in the way books themselves are organized. For example, Matthew Levering and Matthew Lamb’s edited volume on the Council is sixteen essays, one on each document.\(^{121}\) This is not to say that historical methods are ignored, nor do I claim that these scholars are unaware of the compromises and cultural and political factors that influenced the final documents; it is clear from their writings that they are. But what is of supreme importance to these Catholics is the final conciliar document. The strongest reason for this approach is theological: only the final document, approved by the episcopal college and pope, is an authoritative product of an ecumenical council. Such documents have a very high degree of teaching authority and can convey teaching infallibly. Thus, while the Text-Continuity Paradigm may employ historical tools to interpret the texts or the event of the Council, theological considerations are primary.\(^{122}\)

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\(^{120}\) I have already mentioned Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), Avery Dulles, and Agostino Marchetto as representative of this hermeneutical position. I add Matthew Levering, Matthew Lamb, Gavin D’Costa, and John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla).

\(^{121}\) Levering and Lamb, eds. *Vatican II: Renewal Within Tradition*. See also their new volume on the reception of the Council, which is also, significantly, sixteen essays on the reception of the sixteen documents. See *The Reception of Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). See also Levering, *An Introduction to Vatican II as an Ongoing Theological Event* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017). Levering devotes four out of five chapters to the four Constitutions. He contrasts the hermeneutical approach of Robert Imbelli and Faggioli, favoring Imbelli.

\(^{122}\) Such a strongly theological perspective is clear in the 2005 Christmas Address by Pope Benedict on “true reform.” See page 29n10, above. D’Costa identifies this approach with his “Type 3” (with which he self-identifies). See *Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims*, 43.
Spirit-Event interpreters also accept and usually celebrate the Council. While by no means ignoring the text, they prioritize the “spirit” of Vatican II, insist positive doctrinal change and innovation occurred (“discontinuity”), and understand the Council as primarily an ecclesial “event” rather than a collection of texts. A major criticism that Spirit-Event interpreters level at the Text-Continuity Paradigm is that those who so emphasize continuity are unable to positively account for discontinuity. While many Spirit-Event interpreters are trained theologically and certainly concerned with theological interpretations of the final documents, they often approach the Council as a historical event that changed the culture and orientation of the Catholic Church. Just as it is for Text-Continuity works, this approach is apparent in the structure of the most influential books written by Spirit-Event interpreters. The Alberigo-led history is a chronological historical account that emphasizes the struggle for change. O’Malley’s *What Happened at Vatican II* is also a chronological historical account. It pays attention to the documents but is structured around the conciliar event itself, not the final texts.

2.4 – The Future of Vatican II: What is at Stake?

Faggioli begins his essay on the different interpreters of Vatican II with the famous “party slogan” of George Orwell’s *1984*: “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.” The implication is clear: the future of the Catholic Church is at stake in these debates. For the Traditionalist Paradigm, the only acceptable path

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123 This is a main motivation behind the work edited by David Schultenover *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* Elsewhere, O’Malley states that “to press continuity to the exclusion of any discontinuity is in effect to say that nothing happened. As applied to Vatican II, it reduces the council to a nonevent.” See “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 544.

forward is either the rejection and repudiation of the Council or at least its marginalization. The damage done by the texts and the spirit of the Council can only be undone by a return to immutable “Tradition.” The Council is part of the problem, likewise, for the Irrelevance Paradigm. Only by repudiating the allegedly individualistic, sexist, classicist, or clericalist elements of Catholic teaching, reaffirmed at the Council, or by going beyond the Council to a hypothetical “Vatican III” (for Küng, so that the disastrous dogma of infallibility can be repudiated) can the church truly flourish.125

Spirit-Event interpreters often worry that Vatican II’s vision, whether of text or of spirit, has not been fully implemented, especially in ecclesiology. “Synodality” and “collegiality” are primary concerns, and some feel that only now, in the papacy of Francis, are these important conciliar concepts really getting the institutional attention they deserve.126 Text-Continuity interpreters of Vatican II rarely express concern that the conciliar ecclesiological vision has not been fulfilled; they are normally more interested with emphasizing certain elements of conciliar teaching like evangelization or kerygmatic Christology. For many of them, John Paul II or Benedict XVI encapsulated the true spirit of the Council, which was a council of ressourcement, a reorganization of the church through a return to the sources in order to more effectively communicate the joy of the gospel to the modern world.

While Spirit-Event and Text-Continuity interpreters have much theological common ground, the differences in their beliefs regarding the orientation of the church to the modern world do illustrate substantial conflict in conciliar hermeneutics. On the matter of the church’s

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125 For the idea of a “Vatican III,” see Hans Kün, David Tracy, and J. B. Metz, eds. Toward Vatican III: The Work That Needs to Be Done (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). I am not suggesting that all of these authors are in the Irrelevance Paradigm, just that for Kün (at least) Vatican III would need to move beyond many troublesome doctrines Vatican II reaffirmed.

126 See the Conclusion of this dissertation.
evangelical vision in a religiously plural world, both positions accept the validity of doctrinal developments in *Lumen gentium* and *Nostra aetate* on the goodness and truth in non-Christian religions. Both positions see *Ad gentes* as a positive document. Spirit-Event interpreters tend to agree with theologians like Jacques Dupuis and Peter Phan that, while still perhaps retaining some elements of the old model of conversion and church-planting, the Council started the church on a path towards dialogue, one that recognized that the church was one path of salvation among many, even if all salvation is ultimately Christic in some sense. The church’s mission, then, becomes regnocentric: mission is interreligious dialogue and cooperation in building the Kingdom of God. This position sees Vatican II, then, as an event that injected a new spirit into the Catholic Church, one that has led to a quite different attitude toward missions and evangelization.\(^{127}\)

Text-Continuity interpreters, however, tend not to agree. While they recognize the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians as outlined in *Lumen gentium* 16, some read that passage more strictly, pointing out that it does contain, in its final third, rather somber warnings about those who do not know Christ. Text-Continuity interpreters also see the positive affirmations about non-Christian religions in *Lumen gentium* and *Nostra aetate* as not necessarily superseding previous, more negative content in past church teaching and, of course, in scripture. Consequently, while they teach that Vatican II reaffirmed the possibility of the salvation of the non-Christian, they also underline the Council’s calls for evangelization aimed at baptism and conversion. This position reads Vatican II, then, as developing doctrine and encouraging interreligious dialogue, but also as reasserting the traditional missionary mandate, which includes

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the call to baptize all nations. The Dupuis controversy, which featured a public spat between Cardinal Ratzinger and Cardinal Franz König of Vienna in the pages of The Tablet, perfectly illustrates this point, complete with each cardinal claiming loyalty to Vatican II. Against the regnocentric model many Spirit-Event interpreters put forward, Cardinal Ratzinger was the principal author of *Dominus Iesus* (2000), which rejected the popular regnocentric model when taken as a paradigm for mission.

Although there is much common ground and amicable debate between the Spirit-Event and Text-Continuity paradigms, disagreements about what Vatican II actually said, and about the course it set the church on are very deep. In the next section, I will argue that a hermeneutic of true reform, the basic terms of which appear acceptable to Joseph Ratzinger and John O’Malley, can help overcome impasses in the Catholic debate over Vatican II.

### 3. A Way Forward? Developing A Hermeneutic of True Reform

Although recognized, even by his critics, as having a subtle, theologically rich understanding of the Council, Joseph Ratzinger has been considered the main academic and ecclesiastical bulwark of the hermeneutic of continuity. This is why it was so significant when,

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129 Ratzinger was Prefect of the CDF at the time. See König’s “In Defence of Fr. Dupuis,” *The Tablet* (16 January 1999) and Cardinal Ratzinger’s reply in *The Tablet* (13 March 1999).

130 See *Dominus Iesus* 4, 18–19, 21.

as Pope Benedict XVI, he advocated a reading of the Council that recognized “continuity and discontinuity on different levels.”

While involving no change in Ratzinger’s personal theological reading of the Council, to contrast “discontinuity and rupture” not with “continuity” but with a “hermeneutic of reform” gives papal sanction to important elements of the hermeneutics governing what I have called the Text-Continuity and Spirit-Event paradigms. Benedict XVI clearly continued to see spiritual and theological continuity as primary and foundational. Nevertheless, Catholic theology and ecclesial life must be open to “renewal” and to doctrinal development at a level other than that at which this continuity is found. The Council achieved “renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God.” Consistent with this perspective, Benedict XVI sees as defective and reductive the notion of the Council “considered as a sort of constituent that eliminates an old constitution and creates a new one.” Such theories risk “ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church.”

However, Benedict XVI also recognizes discontinuity. The Council, he claims, needed to provide answers to the challenges of modernity. This response involved ressourcement that included genuine novelty and innovation. Rather than falling back on a wholly pessimistic narrative of decline (such as we saw in Lefebvre), Benedict XVI sees modernity in both positive and negative lights. Most importantly, modernity asks questions that demand answers. He

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133 The Pope mentions new challenges and ideas brought by Galileo, Kant, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, Marxism, and the two World Wars.
divides these questions into three “circles”: first, “the relationship between faith and modern science had to be redefined.” Second, “a new definition” of the church’s relationship with modern states which took account of pluralism was needed. Third, the “problem” of the toleration of religions for each other (especially of Christianity for other religions) required a “new definition.”

In Vatican II’s answers to these questions (which are really “a single problem,” the problem of modernity), Benedict XVI acknowledges that a “kind of discontinuity” emerged. However, this real discontinuity does not belie a greater “continuity of principles.” This is how, for the former pope, a “process of innovation” is possible that does not undo or betray the church’s tradition. “It is precisely in this combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels that the very nature of true reform consists.” In Benedict XVI’s scheme, the level of continuity is on that of principles and of the God-given constitution of the church, its inmost nature and identity as a subject. The level of innovation (discontinuity) seems to be on decisions regarding contingent matters, practical forms that depend on historical situations, and applying “basic decisions” to new contexts subject to change. As an example, Benedict argues that, while clearly discontinuous, at least with some nineteenth-century magisterial documents, *Dignitatis humanae* in fact “recovered the deepest patrimony of the Church” and is in “full harmony” with the teaching of Jesus and “the Church of the martyrs of all time.”

John O’Malley took interest in this address for two reasons. First, despite whatever points of disagreement they might have about the Council, O’Malley saw Benedict XVI’s definition of true reform as “difficult to improve upon.”

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134 O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 546. “This is a description in accord with ressourcement as its proponents at the council understood it, and it is, as far as it goes, in accord with how reform has been understood in the West in the past millennium.”
ressourcement, aggiornamento, and the development of doctrine, his scheme accounts for all three positively.135 Second, O’Malley was intrigued that Benedict XVI, who was so well known to have disapproved of conciliar interpretations that included “discontinuity” actually included the word in his definition of a “hermeneutic of reform.”

Theologians and historians now have license to address the council with a category that formerly was virtually off limits. In so doing they can assess in each instance and “at different levels” the degree present, respectively, of continuity and discontinuity. They will thereby be able to judge and then to tell us just how wide and deep (or how narrow and superficial) the reform of Vatican II was.136

O’Malley exaggerates how “off limits” any talk of discontinuity was, insofar as discontinuities of certain kinds have always been acknowledged, even by Benedict XVI.137 O’Malley is right, however, that Benedict XVI has provided conciliar interpreters with a robust account of change within a broader continuity of principles. This hermeneutic of reform allows for a rapprochement between the mainstream positions (Text-Continuity and Spirit-Event) I have described above, and it could also have some effect on the Traditionalist and Irrelevance paradigms as well, by demonstrating to the former a robust, Catholic theory of reform that is rooted in church tradition, and to the latter by emphasizing the church’s ability to change, develop, and address new problems.

As proposed by Benedict XVI, a hermeneutic of reform depends on theological commitments, specifically on the assertion that the “one-subject Church…one holy, catholic, and apostolic, journeying on through time,” is a gift given by the Lord.138 This is not, properly

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135 Ibid, 545. O’Malley recognizes such blurring is difficult to avoid and that it is not always problematic since the documents themselves (and the historical realities) often blur the three.

136 Ibid, 546.

137 See page 56n83, above.

138 Benedict XVI, “Address to the Roman Curia.”
speaking, a historical claim, but a theological claim about God, Christ, and the church. However, this claim is intimately bound up with history because the church militant is on a journey in history, not above or outside of it. Thus, a hermeneutic of reform must be historical in nature. To understand Vatican II as a council of true reform, one must study the Council and its reception (historical events in themselves) as well as what happened before the Council: secular history including political, philosophical, and cultural developments, acts of the Catholic magisterium, Catholic reform movements, ecumenical theology, Catholic historical theology, etc. Much Vatican II scholarship pays great attention to these historical dimensions.\footnote{See O’Malley’s chapter “The Long Nineteenth Century,” in \textit{What Happened}, 53–92. Such a historical approach is apparent in Alberigo, \textit{History}, vols. 1–5.} The centrality of history for a hermeneutic of reform is apparent in Benedict XVI’s address as well. In the pope’s brief statement, a statement of a theologian and pastor rather than a historian, he sees the relevance of Galileo, Kant, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, Marxism, and the two World Wars for the interpretation of Vatican II through a hermeneutic of true reform. The centrality of history is recognized even by the enemies of the Council. Contrasting sharply with Benedict XVI’s use of a historical narrative to justify \textit{Dignitatis humanae} as true reform, Lefebvre sums up his famous opposition to religious liberty in the following terms:

Where, in point of fact, did this conception [of religious liberty] come into force? In the tradition of the Church or outside the Church? Clearly it has made its appearance among the self-styled philosophers of the 18th century: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire. In the name of the dignity of human reason they tried to destroy the Church by causing the massacre of innumerable bishops, priests, religious and laity.\footnote{See Lefebvre’s conciliar intervention of September 1965, in \textit{I Accuse}, 69–72, at 69.}

For Lefebvre, then, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution have immediate relevance for interpreting Vatican II. In order to refute Lefebvre, one could not simply argue intra-textually. One would also have to challenge his broader framework of church history, development, and...
reform. This challenge would necessitate not only theological work, but rigorous historical work as well. Both the historical and theological task would be in the service of discovering the meaning of Vatican II.\footnote{In fact, Gilles Routhier argued that a main goal of Benedict’s hermeneutics is to bring SSPX back to regular communion. See “The Hermeneutic of Reform as a Task for Theology,” \textit{Irish Theological Quarterly} 77.3 (2012): 219–43. Because of the reaction of the SSPX to the Allocution (extensive commentary and debate), O’Malley agrees with Routhier. See O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 544n53.}

For support in his hermeneutical project, Benedict XVI points back to John XXIII, whom he shows held “unequivocally” to a hermeneutic of reform as well.\footnote{See Benedict’s “Address to the Roman Curia.”} I concur with Benedict XVI on this point, and I will briefly examine the influence of historical knowledge (chiefly the legacy of Charles Borromeo) on John XXIII’s notion of reform and, in more detail, on that of his contemporary Yves Congar, whose work proposes a robust foundation for a coherent hermeneutic of true reform.

3.1 – \textit{John XXIII and Ressourcement: The Influence of Trent and Borromeo}

John XXIII is the pope of aggiornamento, a term he popularized by associating it with the conciliar project. However, Pope John was also a historian who took the Tridentine reform as a central inspiration. In this sense he was engaged in ressourcement as well, and he had an implicit, albeit strong, hermeneutic of reform. While Trent and Vatican II are often contrasted, to the point that Vatican II is sometimes celebrated as ending the Counter Reformation,\footnote{Jared Wicks, “Tridentine Motivations of Pope John XXIII Before and During Vatican II,” \textit{Theological Studies} 75.4 (2014): 847–62. Wicks notes (848) that John XXIII explicitly stated the Council’s adherence to Trent and Vatican I in his opening address to the Council. See John XXIII, “Gaude Mater Ecclesia” (October 11, 1962), \textit{AAS} 54 (1962): 786–96, at 792. For Trent and Vatican II, see Joseph A. Komonchak, “The Council of Trent at the Second Vatican Council,” in \textit{From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations}, eds. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 61–80. See also O’Malley’s contrast in “Trent and Vatican II: Two Styles of Church,” in ibid., 301–20.} John XXIII in fact saw himself as continuing the work of the great Tridentine reformers, especially
Charles Borromeo. For Angelo Roncalli, the Tridentine legacy was one of dynamism and reform. Consequently, it held sources worth returning to. Through a close study of John XXIII’s education, academic and ecclesiastical labors, and acts as bishop and Patriarch of Venice, Jared Wicks has shown the pope self-consciously wished to “promote certain characteristics of the [Tridentine] era…about which he was well informed.”

In 1954, less than a year after his appointment as Patriarch of Venice, Roncalli conducted pastoral visits throughout his diocese. In his own words, he conducted them “in the spirit of the Council of Trent.” Following several years of these pastoral visits, Roncalli convened a diocesan synod in 1957. Its goal, in Roncalli’s words, was aggiornamento. Roncalli took from Charles Borromeo this pattern of strong episcopal leadership combined with consultation and deliberative synods, all in the service of institutional renewal and spiritual rejuvenation. Roncalli studied Borromeo closely, edited records of the great Milanese Archbishop’s career, and lectured

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145 Ibid, 848. Wicks also relies on the journals of Roberto Tucci, head editor of La civiltà cattolica during the Council, who had nine audiences with John XXIII during the Council, and wrote that the pope wished for Vatican II to “give new impulses and new dynamism to the church spiritually, pastorally, and in its missionary action, as did occur after the Council of Trent, which he [John XXIII] knew well and admired.”


147 “Have you not heard the word aggiornamento repeated many times? Here is our church, always young and ready to follow different changes in the circumstances of life, with the intention of adapting, correcting, improving, and arousing enthusiasm. In summary, this is the nature of the synod, this is its purpose.” Roncalli in Pace e vangelo, vol. 2 (1956–1958), 503n826. Cited in Wicks, “Tridentine Motivations,” 850.
and published on other elements of Tridentine reform. For Roncalli, Borromeo was a “colossus of pastoral sanctity” and the finest example of a church reformer.

Eighty days before he was elected pope, Roncalli penned an introduction to the final volume of the acts of Borromeo’s visitation to the diocese of Bergamo, a volume which he had edited. This commentary presents Roncalli’s optimistic yet humble principles of ecclesial reform, which he would soon pass on to the Second Vatican Council:

From the complex whole and from the particular points of these papers, a final impression springs forth, namely, a fact about the Catholic Church throughout all the variations of persons and eras of history. It did have times of defective adherence to its principles, when it gave in to compromises in accord with our weakened human nature and was in danger of decline and weakened resistance. But it has as well always looked toward its own renewal and toward recapturing its youthfulness, enlivened by a holy passion for authentic spiritual advancement. This positive reality of the church, as enlightened by evangelical truth and seeking superior values, gives to souls and to whole peoples guidance and encouragement for living and acting well.

Like Borromeo, Roncalli believed that the best way to reform a diocese was through a synod. In 1959, John XXIII announced that he would not only hold a synod of the diocese of Rome, but an ecumenical council for the entire church. As Wicks has shown, the objectives of both were in many ways contained in the Acts of Borromeo’s diocesan visitations, some of which Roncalli had painstakingly edited.

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148 Roncalli taught church history in his home diocese in Bergamo, beginning in 1906. For a publication on Tridentine reform, see his “Il cardinale Cesare Baronio,” La scuola cattolica 36 (1908) 3–29. Roncalli spent years editing the Atti of Borromeo’s pastoral visit to the diocese of Bergamo. See Roncalli, ed., Gli atti della visita apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), 2 vols., (Florence: Olschki, 1936–1957). For a detailed study of this work, see Max Vodola, “John XXIII, Vatican II, and the Genesis of Aggiornamento: A Contextual Analysis of Angelo Roncalli’s Works on San Carlo Borromeo in Relation to Late Twentieth Century Church Reform” (Ph.D. dissertation, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, 2010).

149 This phrase from an article by Roncalli on Borromeo in La vita diocesana (journal of Roncalli’s home diocese of Bergamo), 4 November 1909. Cited in Melloni, “History, Pastorate, and Theology,” 279.

Wicks has shown that from 1960 to 1962 John XXII planned a “church-wide rejuvenation” like the one that followed the Council of Trent. The canonization of Gregorio Barbarigo, who epitomized pastoral renewal for Roncalli, began this period. On three occasions from 1960–62, the pope presented his personal vision for this church-wide renewal, one which was deeply indebted to his Tridentine sources. This vision focused on pastoral renewal through holiness that was to be achieved at the level of the local church.

3.2 – *The Influence of Congar on John XXIII and the Council*

Clearly, Roncalli was impressed by, and sought to imitate, past instantiations of effective Catholic reform. Of course, he was also influenced by contemporary reform movements. The effect of reading Congar’s *True and False Reform* on Roncalli is well known. In John XXIII’s opening address to the Council, “he described its goals in terms highly evocative of Congar’s description of authentic reform.”

It would be difficult to overstate the impact of Congar on the Council. Cardinal Dulles even called Vatican II “Congar’s Council” because of the French Dominican’s enormous influence not only on the multifaceted *ressourcement* movement which flowered at the Council, but also on the Council texts themselves. Congar recognized the “unparalleled success” of his theology at the Council. Through the prism of *ressourcement*, Vatican II addressed church

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151 Wicks, “Tridentine Motivations,” 858.

152 Ibid., 858–59. These three occasions were Pope John’s formal announcement of the convening of the Council at Christmas 1961, a radio allocation a month before the Council, and the famous opening address of 11 October 1962. There were, of course, important discontinuities between the Council of Trent and Pope John’s vision for Vatican II. Notably, Vatican II issued no anathemas.

153 Paul Philibert, “Translator’s Introduction,” in *True and False Reform*, x.

reform, ecclesiology, ecumenism, the laity, mission, and collegiality in ways that had close affinities with Congar’s thought.\textsuperscript{155} The centrality of Congar to the Council and to twentieth-century Catholic and ecumenical theology in general has been duly recognized.\textsuperscript{156} Congar’s thought on the nature of reform, however, is perhaps his most important contribution.\textsuperscript{157} It is “his idea of reform that dominates his entire œuvre and constitutes his most important and original contribution to theology.”\textsuperscript{158}

In his extensive body of work, True and False Reform is the closest that Congar came to writing a programmatic theological text. “If there is a theology of Congar,” he wrote, “that is where it is to be found.”\textsuperscript{159} Like John XXIII, later commentators have seen True and False Reform as a monumentally important book. Dulles described it as “a great work [that lays] down principles for an authentic Catholic reform.”\textsuperscript{160} The first edition of the text was published in 1950, and “badly misunderstood” by the Holy Office, who prohibited its translation or republication.\textsuperscript{161} Nevertheless, Cardinals Roncalli and Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Paul

\textsuperscript{155} Flynn in ibid, 219.


\textsuperscript{157} Congar’s pneumatology, ecumenical thought, theology of the laity, and theology of tradition are also of great significance.


\textsuperscript{159} Congar cited in Gabriel Flynn, ed., Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church (Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 101.


\textsuperscript{161} Philibert, “Translator’s Introduction,” True and False Reform, xi.
VI, the second pope to lead the Council) both read and admired the work. Indeed, “the two motives for reform that Congar presents in his book – authentic expression of the church’s permanent essence and adaptation of that expression to the contemporary situation – became for John XXIII the two main purposes of the council.”¹⁶² But after “most of its insights had found their way into the major documents of Vatican II,” Congar revised it for a second edition in 1968.¹⁶³

I have argued that a hermeneutic of true reform depends by its very nature on historical argument. While it rests on, and is animated by, deep theological commitments, it must turn directly to history. By searching through sacred and profane history, theologians can find and evaluate past instantiations of true reform, which include continuity and discontinuity on different levels, in order to re-center the church on Christ.¹⁶⁴ Congar was deeply committed to the kind of continuity that Benedict XVI described in his 2005 Christmas address: not a static commitment to every past verbal formula, but a commitment to the permanence of the Lord’s word abiding with the one subject-church journeying through history. He thought that submission to ecclesiastical superiors (strongly evidenced by Congar’s own life) and avoidance of any kind of schism were central to a program of true reform.¹⁶⁵ Congar also recognized the kind of discontinuity that Pope Benedict XVI outlined. True reform, according to Congar, is not

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¹⁶³ Philibert, “Translator’s Introduction,” True and False Reform, xi.

¹⁶⁴ Congar defines ressourcement as a re-centering on Christ in True and False Reform, 295.

¹⁶⁵ The four conditions of a true reform are called “Conditions for Authentic Reform Without Schism.” See Ibid, 197.
the reform of “dogma,” but it is not just the reform of abuses either. It seeks to reform or improve the prevailing state of affairs in the church (l’état des choses).\footnote{Ibid, 160–62.}

The triadic grid of aggiornamento, ressourcement, and the development of doctrine are all kinds of reform that were present in the work of Congar and at Vatican II, and they can all be understood within a framework of reform to bring about a new état des choses. Joseph Mueller defines this critical framework for understanding Congarian reform:

This expression [l'état de choses] refers to a certain particular crystallization of the Church’s life. It is, in other words, a certain coherent complex of historically contingent elements (practices, behaviors, attitudes, ideas, even the institutionalization of these) in the Church’s life, a complex lasting long enough to become habitual for most people and to define the way of being Christian for a whole era in a given geographical area.\footnote{Mueller, “Blindness and Forgetting,” 643. Mueller says that the “difference between U. S. Catholic life in general in 1955” and 1975 would constitute a difference between two états des choses according to Congar’s definition (643–44). For Congar’s explanation of l’état des choses, see True and False Reform, 160–69. See also the index entry for “state of affairs” (377).}

Vatican II was not just attempting to correct abuses or more thoroughly apply received standards, and this is abundantly clear in the four areas I have highlighted above. The Congarian idea of reform as a change of l'état des choses explains the Council’s desire for genuine change on issues like religious liberty and ecumenism, while remaining faithful to Catholic dogma and the church’s constitution. This is also what Pope Benedict XVI meant by “continuity and discontinuity on different levels.” The discontinuity – for the former pope, for Congar, and for Vatican II – clearly cannot occur at the dogmatic level. However, while the Council did not change the church’s God-given substance into something else, it clearly ushered in a new état des choses – its proponents and detractors would agree on this even while they may not use this terminology. The reformatio-renovatio language in Vatican II documents like Unitatis
redintegratio (§6) is about more than just correcting abuses. It is about setting the church on a new path, albeit one in essential continuity with her constitution and dogmatic affirmations.

The opposite of this reformist spirit, which is the resistance to all change, even necessary change, is the “temptation of the synagogue.”¹⁶⁸ A healthier perspective sees the church growing until the eschaton.¹⁶⁹ Congar follows Johann Adam Möhler’s helpful distinction between a *gegensatz* (contrast) and a *widerspruch* (contradiction). True reform can evidence contrast with what is being reformed, but contradiction with the tradition of the church can quickly lead to heresy.¹⁷⁰

Congar is an ideal theoretician for a hermeneutic of true reform because, although his work has great value for systematic theology, it is not traditional systematics. It is strongly historical while retaining immediate, contemporary theological and pastoral applicability. It bases on detailed historical argument theological and pastoral conclusions relevant to contemporary situations. I will draw on many of Congar’s insights, particularly when I critically evaluate the Pistoian reform movement in chapter five. My specific framework for these evaluations are the four conditions that Congar proposes for true reform, which I will introduce below. I will mention many of the historical figures Congar uses as examples to illustrate his points, but I will not critically evaluate here Congar’s treatments of these figures.¹⁷¹

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¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 124. While such a phrase could be interpreted in an anti-Semitic fashion, Congar was appropriately specific about what he meant by this phrase. See 147–160.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 147.


¹⁷¹ I will evaluate how Congar deals with Jansenism in chapter five, in the context of Pistoian reform.
The reformer as a “prophet” is central to Congar’s scheme (169–95), but he was very wary that the powerful prophetic impulse, when unrealized, could become destructive, sectarian, and ultimately schismatic.\textsuperscript{172} “The Prophetic initiative” Congar wrote, “should not develop into a System” (215). By a “system,” Congar meant a moral, theological, or ecclesiastical state of affairs that becomes too separate from or opposed to the concrete Catholic Church. It is a great challenge for prophetic figures to avoid such a situation, because, “aware of [their] mission” and “captivated by [their] idea,” prophets are often “solitary, opposed to the given state of affairs” and “not fully at home in the concrete church” (215). Without much explication, Congar mentions Savonarola and his opposition to the extravagantly corrupt Borgia pope, Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503). Clearly, such tendencies in reformers can be overcome, for Congar also mentions Peter Damian, St. Bernard, and St. Francis. “Great reformers generally are simplifiers” who become obsessed with one thing. This obsession can be a strength, for it can yield a singular determination of the will, but such simplification can also be a great weakness, since it can lead to schism or even heresy. In this chapter and many others, Congar endorses as a model reformer the bold yet patient and obedient Dominican Jean-Baptiste Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–61), and he contrasts him with the brilliant yet ultimately apostate Hugues-Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854).

A critical observation Congar made is that, for the faithful, the church is a given, and rational critique comes second (217). Again relying on Möhler, Congar argues that heresy comes about when one considers the faith only as a collection of ideas, rather than concretely drawing

\textsuperscript{172} In the discussion of the four conditions, I will parenthetically cite page numbers from Paul Philibert’s English translation of True and False Reform.
on the totality of the Christian life (216). It is in this sense that pastoral considerations must be primary. Congar goes as far as to say that all “successful reforms were motivated by pastoral concern” (218–24). In contrast, reforms that “tried to create a system” failed (224–28). Those who approached the faith primarily in an academic sense – Renan, Döllinger, Loisy – turned out heretical or schismatic (220). Newman, on the other hand, took faith as a concrete reality, and his ideas about reform had some success. For Congar, Jansenism epitomized the failure to meet this condition of charitable pastoral solicitude for the church as it concretely is, for this movement veered from authentic reform into the “spirit of an alternative ‘system’” (226).

I will not evaluate here, however, Congar’s criticisms of what he calls “the Enlightenment,” “Reform Catholicism,” and late Jansenism, since these topics are addressed in chapter five.

Congar believed that the true reformer must be rooted in charity and have deep pastoral concern. He or she “will orient the prophetic spirit” toward “a renewal in the church” that adopts a “practical attitude that takes its point of departure from the reality of the church and aims to serve its development in charity” (227). In contrast, the false reformer, who might see exactly the same problems as the true reformer, goes awry by developing “an intellectual and critical attitude that takes its point of departure from a representation of ideas and develops into a system that seeks to reform the existing reality under the influence of this system” (227). Newman and Renan are contrasted as examples of these respective tendencies. In the conclusion of his treatment of the first condition for true reform, Congar gives a poignant summary of his thought, using Lammenais and Loisy as negative examples.

Ultimately, the problem is to know if, at the point of departure, someone accepts the concrete reality of the church as normative (while not rejecting the possibility of an infidelity or of a miscarriage of justice by the church itself) or if they make their own thinking an infallible criterion. The schismatic reformer is someone who, having made his principle for truth not the reality of the church but his own ideas and his own

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173 Congar does conclude the chapter with an approving quotation of a Jansenist, Blaise Pascal (228).
judgment, takes for his motto: “Remain as you are, and judge everything by your own thinking” (228).

3.4 – The Second Condition of True Reform: Remain in Communion with the Whole Church

The second condition, at face value, is something of a tautology: in order to enact an authentic Catholic reform, one must remain a Catholic. While Congar is making this obvious point (and all four conditions are meant to avoid schism), he is also arguing for a certain style and mindset which avoids isolation, pride, and sectarianism, which are the pathways to schism. Remaining in communion with the whole church is necessary for one’s theological ideas themselves to be authentically reforming because “the whole truth is only grasped in communion” (229), which is essentially the theme of the second condition. This condition overlaps substantially with the first, since both are intimately concerned with not allowing positive, needed reform to develop into the spirit of a “system” (226).

Of course, not all heretics, schismatics, or failed reformers actually had bad ideas per se. Many had, at least in part, very good ideas. Congar argues that “Pelagius had an authentically Catholic insight” (233), and he praises some central elements of the thought of Pascal, Arnauld, and Saint-Cyran (226–27, 234, 250–60). Congar sees Jansenism as an especially apt illustration of this point. There was much to commend the Jansenists (he only discusses seventeenth-century Jansenists in any detail); they drew from Augustinianism their “serious tone and generous spiritual energies” that had the “capacity to nourish an authentic reform initiative” (226). They identified real problems in the church of their day, were deeply religiously devoted, and committed to ressourcement. Congar especially admired Pascal (not an uncommon sentiment) but also Saint-Cyran, certainly a figure with less broad appeal.\textsuperscript{174} Saint-Cyran “articulated

\textsuperscript{174} On Saint-Cyran, see chapter two, 2.1.
essentially” what Congar himself explained regarding dynamic ressourcement as the key to true reform. However, Saint-Cyran “didn't stop there. With the Jansenist taste for going back to the past, he left out, both in his thinking and his practice, a consideration of the necessity to keep a living relation and a real obedience to the actual church” (259). In the discussion of the first condition of true reform, Congar argued that Saint-Cyran’s spiritual thinking was “first simply Christian in character and then increasingly harsh” turning into a new system, Jansenism, which opened the path to schism.175

In his bitter disappointment at condemnations from Rome, Pascal came “close to a spirit of schism” (260). “Sublime and prophetic” as he was, his attitude was “not entirely pure” (260), for he was certain that it was the pope and his enemies who had erred, not he and his circle. He appealed, then, from the earthly church to heaven, which he was sure held a different opinion of his writings: “[I]f my letters are condemned in Rome, what I condemn in my letters has been condemned in heaven. Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello—Lord Jesus, I appeal to your tribunal” (cited at 260).176

Congar does not argue that Jansenism failed to enact true reform because it advanced doctrinal error per se. In fact, Congar seems to accept what the Jansenists always claimed in their own defense: that they were merely repeating the theology of Augustine, “the most authentic and Catholic theology you might find” (233). However, in Congar’s view this would become problematic if one was to

175 Congar also laid great blame on Antoine Arnauld. “This spirit of ‘system’ finally triumphed in Arnauld’s work and, because of him, turned the movement into a sect….The piety of Port Royal and of Arnauld himself….is Catholic in its concrete lived reality...However, what was Catholic in this piety becomes devoured in Arnauld’s hands by the system of the theologian (doctor)” (226).

sever its vital connection with the life of the universal church, to isolate it from that life and allow it to develop in the abstract, if [one]...were to articulate its conclusions in a one-sided way, failing to relate and submit them to the totality of the church’s life, [one]...would end up with Jansenism. In a way, the orthodox statements of the year 415 found in Augustine’s writings, although materially the same, were no longer orthodox in the writings of Jansenius in 1652 (234).177

How is such an apparent contradiction possible? Surely a Christian conception of truth cannot allow for the same affirmation to be orthodox in one century and unorthodox in another. For Congar, the explanation lies in how a reformist movement relates that affirmation to the concrete church, the entire Catholica.

These fully Augustinian ideas were orthodox in Augustine’s thought because they were regulated not by Augustine himself, considering himself as his criterion or goal, but by the Catholica, that is, by the communion that kept them within despite themselves. So they had a positive orientation, an intention, and an active impulse to seek for Catholic harmony. Yet they became heretical in Jansenius, being affirmed for their own sake through an autonomous and abstract logic no longer governed by the living unity of the Catholica, but governed by the literal text of Augustine....[T]he Augustinianism of Augustine and the Augustinianism of Jansenius, even if they are materially the same in their details, are nonetheless formally different (234).

Two important points emerge here. First, Congar is arguing that it is critical for reform-minded Catholics to tolerate theological diversity, insofar as such toleration does not betray the gospel. According to Congar, Augustine could have maintained his view as long as he did not anathematize the Jesuits (Molinists), as the Jansenists did (234).178 Second, the process of theological reception of the church is central. Augustine’s anti-Pelagian theology was widely received and essentially canonized through processes punctuated by the Second Synod of Orange (529).179 The Jansenists, by contrast, were not content to be, as Cajetan urged, ut pars, a part of

177 The years Congar references refer to the mature Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings and to Jansenism considered on the eve of Cum occasione (1653), the papal bull of Innocent X condemning five propositions purportedly taken from Jansen’s magnum opus, the Augustinus (published in 1640). See chapter two, 2.1.

178 Of course, an irenic approach was very difficult (or impossible) for the Jansenists because they saw Molinism as in fact Pelagian or semi-Pelagian heresy.
the whole (235). According to Congar, Saint-Cyran got the *ressourcement* right, but he broke present links with the “actual concrete church” (259) and thus was not a true reformer.

Congar then undertakes a discussion of what it means to truly *sentire cum Ecclesia* (235–37). He wants to avoid emphasizing obedience too strongly, and he argues that the hierarchy’s role should be primarily to sanction positive reform and to check inauthentic reform. But quoting Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard (Archbishop of Paris, 1940–49), Congar notes that authority itself “sanctions more often than it creates” (240). In Congar’s view, reform comes more often from the “periphery” than from the “center” (237–42). By the “center,” Congar meant the hierarchy and established institutional church structures; the periphery included lay and local ecclesial movements (often headed by priests). Like all living things, the church is marked by “both continuity and progress,” but this progress must be “within continuity” (239). For Congar, it is the job of the hierarchy to guarantee this enclosure of progress within continuity. The “center” (hierarchy) has a consequent responsibility “to listen to the periphery” (261–64), and it is in this dynamic tension that true reform can operate. For Congar, the true reformer must be bold enough to challenge the church (especially the hierarchy) and must possess singular focus and drive, but ultimately be content to be just one small part of the church. He or she must be a

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179 Denzinger 370–97. The Synod was confirmed by Pope Boniface II in a letter to St. Caesarius, bishop of Arles in 531 (Denzinger 398–400).

180 Congar cites Suhard’s Address to Students, 7 April 1946, *Documentation Catholique* 7 (July 1946), col. 676.

181 He takes as notable exceptions the reform of Pope Gregory VII, missionary efforts by nineteenth- and twentieth-century popes, and the twentieth-century liturgical reforms initiated by the papacy (238). Congar notes, however, that the Gregorian reform in fact had local (Lorraine) and monastic roots.

182 In the seeming identification here of the center as the hierarchy, Congar’s ecclesiology evidences the need for further development. Surely the laity, through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist, are just as central to the divinely-constituted structure of the church as the hierarchy or the ordained.
“prophet” and “a person of initiative” and a “reformer,” but not an isolated “innovator” or a “revolutionary” (234).

3.5 – The Third Condition of True Reform: Have Patience with Delays

Congar’s third condition is simple and eminently practical. The French that Congar wrote is closer to “have patience with the time reform takes,”\(^\text{183}\) and refers to the frustrating setbacks and the reluctance to change that reformers often deal with. Given the profile of the prophets and reformers that Congar has given us (169–95), such inevitable delays and frustrations are especially trying because of the temptation of adopting a “boastful spirit” (269).\(^\text{184}\) Another reason it is so difficult for reformers to be patient is that their intentions are usually so good, even sometimes utopian. Often, however, reformers must submit their “intellectual” or “systematic” reforms to the pastoral reality that the church faces (267). This submission can be very painful, especially for the waiting it imposes. Congar’s thought on the apocalyptic and eschatological dimension of true reform bears quoting at length:

> Basically any reform is in some way a foretaste of the eschatological kingdom and its justice and purity.\(^\text{[T]}\)his is so because reforms have an aspect of judgment and condemnation bearing upon history and its insufficiencies.\(^\text{[O]}\)n the other hand, reforms have a positive tendency aiming to bring about a state of affairs which comes closer to perfection and purity. Revolutions and reforms are a sort of partial anticipation of the Apocalypse and of eschatology. Reformers always have a tendency not only to initiate things but also to rush their development. They not only want to clean up the field; they want to free it of every weed. The Gospel parable of the wheat and the weeds, however, teaches us to respect the period of waiting until the harvest for the growth of the seeds. It

\(^\text{183}\) I use Philibert’s translation. Congar’s formula was “La patience, le respect des délais.” See *Vrai et fausses réforme dans l’Eglise* (Paris: Cerf, 1950), 306–32. The section in *True and False Reform* is from 265–89.

\(^\text{184}\) This section (269–74) includes some very harsh criticism of the Protestant Reformers, including an uncharitable comparison of Luther to Adolf Hitler (269). Congar argues that Luther “had a kind of theological genius” but was ultimately “ruined by polemic” (270). Congar argues that hastiness impeded the sixteenth-century reformers. Michael Servetus published his refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity at the age of 20, and Calvin the first edition of the *Institutes* at 27. For a less polemical and more ecumenically sensitive consideration of Luther, see Congar, *Martin Luther: Sa foi, sa réforme: Etudes de théologie historique* (Paris: Cerf, 1983). This work contains valuable reflections on the nature of reform.
teaches us not to anticipate the harvest with impatient efforts to clean things up, lest “in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them” (Matt 13:29) (268).

Congar traces a link between impatience and the “intellectual and dialectical point of view” (274). He blames the Protestant rejection of monasticism on a certain narrowsness, an inability to see the whole and to receive things that are passed down (274). While it is clearly necessary for reformers to evoke history – Congar himself constantly evokes history – reformers who do so must guard themselves against the danger of “a certain narrowsness” that can arise from a selective or primitivist reading of history. Reformers must always remember that they are only individual persons (or at most a member of a subgroup) who only have “a certain limited awareness of facts and of history” (275). They are “linked to a particular moment of time and to a certain development of documentation and research” (275). For this reason, patience and humility are imperative.

Reformers can then feel themselves “persecuted” if their reforms are “blocked” by the church (276). Sometimes, the church has succumbed to the pitfalls of the “Synagogue” or “Pharisaism,” but at other times it is rightly hesitant, preferring caution in order to safeguard “the unity of the flock” (276). The church, Congar very rightly notes, does not like ultimatums from reformers (277). A reformer can exhort, write, and preach, but one cannot demand action by the church on any particular timeframe. In fact, the reformer is called not only to submission and patience, but sometimes to a kind of self-abnegation.

Nobody gives birth without pain. A number of saints have found themselves in prison, even in the cells of the Holy Office….Many people who have proposed something new or unaccustomed met, at least at the beginning, the opposition of those who wanted to hear only what they were used to hearing….Such persons remained patient and submissive, faithful on the whole both to their own spirit and to their church. Their

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185 By “Pharisaism,” Congar refers to the common stereotype of the Pharisees taken from the New Testament, that they were blind to the spiritual, deeper meaning of their religion, rigid, and excessively concerned with outward appearances and rules. See page 82, above, on the “Synagogue.” For Congar’s discussion of the danger of Pharisaism, see True and False Reform, 135–47.
difficulties finally stopped, and their work remains. By being more patient, reformers are ultimately more effective (284).

However, as always, Congar seeks balance. The hierarchy cannot be too patient. They must act eventually, and if the situation is an emergency, they must act immediately. Congar uses the example of the failure of church leaders to meet even the most reasonable demands of Jan Huss and the Bohemian Brethren in the fifteenth century (284). It is the job, sometimes, of the laity “to sound the alarm and to wake up their leaders, to speak prophetically to authorities, to tell the truth, and not to let the hierarchy live in a gilded illusory world of disastrous routine or false security” (283). Thus, while reformers must be patient, the hierarchy must not be too patient, otherwise unaddressed issues can “explode” (289). Congar applies to the hierarchy St. Paul’s command that fathers not provoke their children to wrath (Eph 6:4) (289).

3.6 – The Fourth Condition: Renewal Through a Return to the Principle of Tradition

Congar’s fourth condition is “genuine renewal through a return to the principle of tradition (not through the forced introduction of some novelty)” (291). Considering the weightiness of a concept like “the principle of tradition,” Congar’s treatment of this condition is relatively brief (291–307). However, there is much elsewhere in True and False Reform (and in the rest of Congar’s work) that is applicable to discerning the nature of the principle of tradition. I will be brief in profiling this condition, for two reasons. First, Congar’s main thesis is that an authentic return to the principle of tradition is ressourcement, which leads to development (293–305), concepts we have already explored. Since we have seen that there is wide agreement that this vision of Congar found its way into many of the key Vatican II documents, our past discussion of them contributes to understanding Congar on these points.

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186 See, e.g., Congar, Tradition and the Traditions.
Second, Congar makes some illuminating comments about relatively recent attempts at *ressourcement* and development that he judges to be inauthentic. He singles out the Modernists (whom he argues believed in “perfectibility”\(^{187}\) rather than development), eighteenth-century *Reformkatholizismus*, and the “Jansenists in Pistoia” (294), who are the subject of later chapters of this present study. He contrasts these false reforms with the true reform of some twentieth-century movements – liturgical, biblical, and patristic. A great deal of this *ressourcement* came from below,\(^{188}\) but some of it came from above, for example, Pius X’s and Pius XII’s liturgical reforms (294–95). I will return to Congar’s treatment of the Pistoians and eighteenth-century reform in chapter five.

While he criticizes “mechanical adaptation,” which is the attempt to uncritically incorporate something extrinsic to the church into the church’s life, Congar also critiques “mechanical fidelity,” which risks becoming “like the ‘Synagogue’” or the “Pharisees.” Congar sees *The Book of Concord* (published in 1580, a symbol of post-Luther Lutheran orthodoxy), the Jansenists, and some Thomists as falling into this “mechanical fidelity” (306). Congar deliberately criticizes Protestants, a Catholic sect known as heretical, and some contemporary Catholics as all having the tendency towards this error of mechanical fidelity. The broadness of his concern fits with an ecumenical preoccupation especially present in this chapter.

While it may seem as though Congar could also be thinking of the Catholic hierarchy by critiquing “mechanical fidelity,” he argues that what might seem like intransigence at an early stage can in fact clear the way for the later acceptance of the good fruit of a more mature

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\(^{187}\) This “perfectibility” refers to an excessively rationalistic and scientific mentality applied to areas of Christian life such as the liturgy and scriptural study.

\(^{188}\) While Congar sees much twentieth-century reform coming “from below” (i.e. not from popes, bishops, and the Roman Curia) it should be pointed out that most of the agents of this *ressourcement* that Congar has in mind were a highly educated elite within the church.
movement shorn of earlier, “hasty” ideas (305). Congar argues that the earlier, firmly negative attitude of the Holy See toward ecumenism in fact bore good fruit. The pope was right, in 1928, to reject a form of ecumenism that would have only ended in “syncretism” or a kind of blending (305). The Catholic Church in fact served the early ecumenical movement by challenging it to reconsider what Christian unity actually is. Congar believed that by 1950 the time was ripe for the Catholic Church to formally enter a movement which now understood unity to be something Catholics could accept: that is, full visible unity in faith (305). Again, Congar affirms the necessity of bold, reformist thinking that considers new solutions to new problems, provided these solutions are grounded in the principle of tradition, and drawn from revelation. But he also recognizes the role of the magisterium as a guardian, charged with gravely weighing new paths. Sometimes, this role puts it in sharp conflict with the most fervent reformers.

Conclusion: Vatican II, Reform, and History

Reform in the sense relevant for the interpretation of the Second Vatican Council consists of aggiornamento, ressourcement, and the development of doctrine. By its reforms, especially in the realms of the liturgy and devotions, religious liberty, ecclesiology, and ecumenism, the Council changed l’état des choses without changing the church’s innermost structures. These areas are especially relevant to what I will argue were eighteenth-century reforming forerunners of the Council. Vatican II was the most important Catholic reform event since Trent because this “reformist orientation” triumphed among the council fathers.

Four basic paradigms have molded the postconciliar debate over the meaning of Vatican II. The first rejected the Council and linked its ideas to harmful historical and theological developments. The second accepted the Council, emphasizing the text and doctrinal continuity.
The third also accepted Vatican II, but saw it more along the lines of event and spirit and emphasized innovation. The fourth rejected the Council as doing too little to change what was wrong with the church. This dissertation is concerned primarily with contributing to a rapprochement between the ecclesially mainstream positions (Text-Continuity and Spirit-Event), a rapprochement based on a hermeneutic that appears to be broadly acceptable to at least some main representatives of these two paradigms. Pope Benedict XVI’s “hermeneutic of reform” avoids speaking of Vatican II as static continuity or as revolutionary rupture. Benedict XVI correctly argued that this hermeneutic was the same basic paradigm that guided John XXIII, the pope of aggiornamento, who sought a ressourcement inspired by Tridentine reformers. Yves Congar influenced John XXIII, and Congar influenced Vatican II perhaps as much as any single theologian. Congar, a widely admired figure, provides the conceptual framework for a “hermeneutic of true reform” in his four conditions for judging reform movements.

To apply a hermeneutic of true reform to Christianity (a historical religion) and the Catholic Church, an institution that believes God works in and through visible sacraments, communities, and relationships to sanctify and save people, is to be deeply invested in history. While a valid Catholic hermeneutic of reform applied to the Second Vatican Council must be theologically grounded, reform will remain an abstraction unless it is applied to real historical events and people. As O’Malley writes, “what reform means in concrete circumstances is not self-evident. It is revealed only when tested against the historical phenomena it professes to describe.”

189 O’Malley also points out that what Benedict XVI provided was not a fully-formed “theological treatise,” and he did not and has not “fully elaborated” what a hermeneutic of

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189 O’Malley, “Hermeneutic of Reform,” 521. “Only by being grounded in historical reality can such a hermeneutic be helpful and make sense. When we deal with real historical happenings it becomes clear that an abstract idea like reform has meaning only in relation to them. If, on the contrary, reform is explained by further abstractions, it degenerates into a platitude or even a mask for an ideology.”
reform looks like. “Such an elaboration is, rather, the task the allocution opened up for theologians.”190 A great deal of theological and historical work on nineteenth- and twentieth-century forerunners of Vatican II has helped us better understand the Council and the nature of true reform. This dissertation aims to contribute to that task through a critical evaluation of eighteenth-century reformers who attempted aggiornamento and ressourcement, some of which affected the reforms of Vatican II. Understanding that the roots of the Council stretch back beyond the nineteenth century and into the age of Enlightenment and Revolution helps us understand the ways in which Vatican II reformed the church and the ways in which the Council stands in continuity and discontinuity with the Catholic past.

190 Ibid., 545.
CHAPTER II: RESOURCEMEMENT AND AGGIORNAMENTO IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter argues that the story of the roots of Vatican II must be pushed back beyond the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and into the eighteenth in order to fully understand the Council. In the Catholic Enlightenment and in a variety of movements of that century, many of them later condemned or marginalized by the church’s official magisterium, ressourcement and aggiornamento were attempted. After explaining the centrality of the Catholic Enlightenment for eighteenth-century church history, the chapter profiles four overlapping movements: Gallicanism, Richerism, Febronianism, and Josephinism. The chapter then examines a complex and misunderstood reform movement, Jansenism, which especially shaped Scipione de’Ricci and the Pistoians. Finally, a loose network of moderate Catholic reformers called the “Third Party” (neither Jansenists nor traditionalist zelanti) will be examined, focusing on an excellent representative of this stream of moderate reform, Lodovico Muratori. An examination of these various reforming groups suggests the roots of Vatican II should be pushed back to the eighteenth-century, and it properly contextualizes the dramatic efforts of the Pistoians at the end of that century.

1. The Catholic Enlightenment: Aggiornamento in the Eighteenth Century

This section will show that eighteenth-century Catholics anticipated Vatican II by engaging in aggiornamento and ressourcement. Both kinds of reform are apparent in the theological and pastoral agenda of many “enlightened” Catholics. The Catholic Enlightenment is indispensable to understanding eighteenth-century Catholicism, but as a diverse, multifaceted,
intercontinental movement spanning roughly from 1660 to 1815, it can be only briefly introduced. However, networks which thoroughly overlapped with the Catholic Enlightenment can provide a more focused study. For example, Jansenism evolved into a multifaceted and complex reform movement that sought to change l’état des choses, even though it found its ostensible raison d’être in debates over divine grace. The sections below will cast the Catholic Enlightenment as aggiornamento, and then highlight the activity of the many eighteenth-century Catholic reform circles including Jansenism, which attempted ressourcement.

The sixteenth century is rightly seen as pivotal to the study of Catholic theology. The seventeenth century is heralded as an age of brilliant spiritual writers, particularly in France (such as Bossuet, François Fénelon, Cardinal Bérulle, Blaise Pascal, and Francis de Sales).¹ And while the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are filled with figures and movements of central importance for Catholic theology, the eighteenth century is conspicuously neglected. Generally, the eighteenth century is at best marginal and at worst simply dismissed as a source for Catholic theology. When it is not ignored, the implication is that very little creative theology was being done.² While certain nineteenth- and early twentieth-century figures and movements are routinely cast as forerunners of Vatican II, such evaluations of the eighteenth century are difficult to find in histories of Catholic theology. In addition, prominent narratives in

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Enlightenment scholarship have seen the Enlightenment as a phenomenon achieved by Protestants, anti-clerical Catholics, or anti-Christian *philosophes*. That is, while there were Catholics who creatively interacted with Enlightenment thought, a Catholic Enlightenment per se is not recognized.³

This negative judgment or neglect of eighteenth-century Catholic theology often rests upon the assumption that Catholics did not engage positively with the Enlightenment. This view, which regards Catholicism and the Enlightenment as incompatible, has been propagated by many anti-Catholic Protestants and secularists as well as by Catholic traditionalists who saw nothing but error in the Enlightenment.⁴ On one hand, this perspective is understandable. Eighteenth-century Europe did witness seismic changes in politics, culture, science, and philosophy that were perhaps more obvious, at least at first glance, in the great Protestant nations (Holland, England, Scotland, Prussia) and among the anti-clerical and sometimes explicitly anti-Christian French *philosophes*. It is also true that the eighteenth-century Catholic Church was sometimes bogged down in internecine (and highly technical) theological debate.⁵ Reform attempts,


generally, were too often sluggish or abortive, and sometimes conducted by self-serving monarchs and statesmen with ulterior motives.\textsuperscript{6} 

However, especially in the last fifty years, historians have begun to retrieve the vitality, creativity, historical importance, and theological merit of eighteenth-century Catholic thought and its engagement with the Enlightenment. This retrieval has often taken the form of recognizing a Catholic Enlightenment that was within the sphere of what Jonathan Israel calls the moderate or mainstream Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{7} As early as 1980, Joseph Chinnici argued that “the fact that there was a positive Catholic response to the Enlightenment and that this response pervaded every major European country can no longer be doubted.”\textsuperscript{8} This recognition overturns the too-negative common narrative of the past. Moreover, recognizing a Catholic Enlightenment allows contemporary historians and theologians to interpret new philosophical, historical, and scientific learning in the eighteenth-century not as something which necessarily clashed with faith and religion but as something which, at least for certain groups and individuals, was born out of these. Once the Enlightenment is no longer seen only as the victory of irreligion and the relegation of faith to private sentiment, then the nineteenth-century ultramontanist view that Catholicism’s only appropriate answer to it was rejection and entrenchment becomes obsolete.\textsuperscript{9} 

Building on such revisionist historiography, this dissertation accepts a Catholic Enlightenment: an international, linguistically diverse, philosophically and scientifically

\textsuperscript{6} A commonly-cited example of the latter is the aggressive anti-papal and anti-Jesuit agenda of the Marquis de Pombal (1699–1782) in Portugal.

\textsuperscript{7} See Israel, \textit{Radical Enlightenment}.


rigorous, theologically original and (usually) doctrinally orthodox engagement between believing Catholics and the values and methodologies of the Enlightenment. The work of Bernard Plongeron, Ulrich L. Lehner, Jeffrey Burson, Bernhard Schneider, Michael Printy, and many others has shown that Catholic Enlightenment thinkers shared aims and goals with other religious Enlighteners and even with anti-clerical, secular, or anti-Christian *philosophes*, while continuing to attempt the harmonization of Catholic culture, doctrines, and faith with the new learning.

What was the Catholic Enlightenment, and how was it both “Enlightened” and “Catholic”? Lehner characterizes this notion as

a heuristic concept that describes the diverse phenomenon that mainly took hold of Catholic intellectuals in the 18th century and early 19th century. It combines a multitude of different strands of thought and a variety of projects that attempted to renew and reform Catholicism in the 18th century.

There were traits and persuasions that many Catholic Enlighteners had in common, like an openness to new historical and scientific methodologies. There were some ideas that virtually

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10 Sebastian Merkle is credited for first arguing for a Catholic Enlightenment, although he was sharply contested at the time (1908) by ultramontane Catholics, Protestants, and secularists. See *Die katholische Beurteilung des Aufklärungszeitalters* (Berlin: 1909). See also Lehner, “The Many Faces,” 3–4.


all came to agree on, such as the central role of the state in the reform of the church and of society. However, what was original and integral to the Catholic Enlightenment in all its phases was a desire “to show that Catholicism could be appealing to the academic and political elite, and that it was compatible with rationality, and able to embrace modern theories of economy, science, and constitutional changes.” Of course, such a position entails a sincere commitment to the Catholic faith, not only to personal spirituality or belief in God, but to a belief that God has been revealed in scripture and through Jesus Christ, and that the Catholic Church preserves, guards, and authoritatively teaches that saving truth. Excepting some fringe figures, Catholic Enlighteners held not only to a personal spirituality but also to dogma, while trying to reject narrow dogmatism.

Closely linked with these goals was a pervasive idea among Catholic Enlighteners that the life of common people could be enhanced, both spiritually and temporally, through religious and secular reform. Even though the ranks of the Catholic Enlighteners included some Jansenists and rigorous Augustinians, Catholic Enlighteners often had a profoundly positive view of the power of people and societies to change for the better. In the case of Catholic Enlighteners, reform was pursued along with an engagement with contemporary values and perspectives, and a positive but critical engagement with modern philosophy, science, politics, historical scholarship, and theology. This reform was nothing other than an attempt at aggiornamento.

Philosophically and scientifically, Catholic Enlighteners engaged with and learned from new thinkers like René Descartes (1596–1650), John Locke (1632–1704), Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), Isaac Newton (1643–1727), and

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14 This tendency came to an exaggerated zenith in Josephinism (discussed below, section 1.5) and in the late Jansenist and Erastian reforms in Tuscany before and at the Synod of Pistoia (see chapters three and four).

Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Many of these figures were also Protestants, and they all broke with older scholastic paradigms. Malebranche himself could be seen as an early Catholic Enlightenment philosopher. Other significant Catholic Enlightenment philosophers include the Wolffian Benedict Stattler (1728–97) and the erudite Spaniard Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676–1764). Some notable scientists include Ruggiero Boscovich, S.J. (1711–86) and Maria Gaetana Agnesi (1718–99). Church leaders like Prospero Lambertini (reigned as Pope Benedict XIV, 1740–58) also encouraged irenic attitudes toward Enlightenment philosophy and science. Lambertini was cautiously open philosophically (Voltaire in fact dedicated *Mahomet* to him in 1751), and his removal of Copernicus from the Index of Forbidden Books in 1757 had very positive repercussions for scientific work in Catholic circles.

Politically, Catholic Enlighteners were not afraid to challenge the status quo in an age which paradoxically combined powerful Enlightened despotism with democratizing impulses. Such innovation, however, took many different forms. The English “Cisalpine” priests Joseph Berington (1743–1827) and John Lingard (1771–1851), and John Carroll (1735–1815), the first American bishop-in-ordinary, relied on an Enlightenment anthropology to support democracy.

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and argue for universal religious toleration. Calls for the state to reform the church (and society) dominated the eighteenth century. Enlightened Catholic despotism also loomed large, especially in the final third of the 1700s. But some Catholic Enlighteners backed democratizing and even revolutionary governments partially for Erastian purposes. One of the most fascinating figures in this regard was the Abbé Henri Grégoire (1740–1831), bishop of the Constitutionalist Church of Revolutionary France. Grégoire’s ecclesiastical career ended in excommunication for championing a schismatic state church, but he is also remembered for his support of the Revolution, his stand for the rights of Africans, and his friendliness to the Jews.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Catholic Enlightenment was a profound deepening of historical scholarship. The early seventeenth century had seen Protestants pioneer historical-critical scholarship, but by the end of the century Catholics were catching up. They were led by a burgeoning French school and a variety of enlightened Benedictine congregations. The congregation of St. Maur (the Maurists) produced an explosion of rigorous historical-critical work led by Jean Mabillon (1632–1707). The work of the Maurists typified Catholic Enlightenment historical scholarship. They “answered the challenge of radical skepticism by affirming the right of criticism for judging historical traditions, but insisted that with such a methodology probabilities could be established that would lead to ultimate certainty

19 See Chinnici, “English Catholic Tradition and the Vatican II Declaration on Religious Freedom,” The Clergy Review 60 (1975): 487–98. For the Cisalpine movement, whose name evoked a physical and ideological location on “this side (north) of the Alps” (i.e. not ultramontane), see Chinnici, English Catholic Enlightenment.

20 See Grégoire’s De la littérature des nègres (Paris: Maradan, 1808).

21 An important Catholic exception is the work of Jean Bolland, SJ (1596–1665) and the Bollandists on the Acta sanctorum.


in historical judgments.”24 The Gallican historian Claude Fleury (1640–1723) made a landmark contribution with the “first large-scale history of the church.”25 Beloved by many Gallicans and Jansenists for his anti-ultramontane perspective, Fleury “actively supported an Enlightenment understanding of critical method…argued for a uniform style of reporting, the citation of original sources, and the primacy of factual data.”26 In Italy, the work of the Modenese priest and archivist Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) was unparalleled. Muratori was a preeminent but not unique example of how “Italian scholars laid the foundations on which the historical revival of the nineteenth century afterwards built.”27

Taken together, the response that Catholic Enlighteners made to the challenges of the eighteenth century was aggiornamento. The Catholic Enlightenment engaged positively with new developments in philosophy, science, politics, and history. This engagement was not uncritical, and a major reason for this fact was Catholic commitment to dogma, revelation, and the visible community of the church. This critical openness was mirrored in theology, as well. At various times and in various places, Catholic Enlighteners sought to reform the liturgy, to renew the study of the Bible and the church fathers, to encourage vernacular worship and scripture reading, and to recover conciliar governance in the church. Ad extra concerns were many: irenic dialogue with Protestants (proto-ecumenism), civil toleration of non-Catholics and non-Christians, and augmenting the cogency of doctrine for an educated class that was increasingly open in their skepticism.

26 Ibid.
27 Chadwick, The Popes, 395.
1.1 – *Suppressed Catholic Enlightenment Reforms of the Eighteenth Century*

In addition to the ultramontane ascendancy in the nineteenth century, another reason for the relative neglect of the eighteenth century in Catholic theological scholarship is that many reform movements of that period largely failed to instantiate, in any enduring and concrete way, their ecclesiological and liturgical ideas. Many of these movements were subsequently discredited by the papal magisterium, which gained more and more control of Catholic theology throughout the nineteenth century. The most important of these magisterially discredited reform movements is Jansenism.\(^{28}\) Jansenism overlaps significantly with Richerism, Febronianism, Josephinism, and Gallicanism (Gallicanism was not a reform movement per se, but a tradition that provided important theological grounding for many reformers). However, despite the setbacks that these movements faced at the end of the century and into the 1800’s, many of their ideas are still significant not only for historical study, but also for understanding Vatican II, since a number of their concerns resurfaced in the twentieth century. I suggest that they resurfaced because the official structures of the church had not adequately dealt with these concerns in areas like ecclesiology, liturgy and devotions, religious liberty, and ecumenism. The boundaries distinguishing these five movements are porous; each overlaps with others in some methods, goals, and perspectives. In their eighteenth-century contexts, these movements are sometimes seen by historians as particular instantiations of the Catholic Enlightenment.

\(^{28}\) By “magisterially discredited,” I refer to the existence of papal or conciliar teaching documents rejecting key tenets of each of these movements.
1.2 – Gallicanism: The Prioritization of Antiquity and the Consent of the Church

“Gallicanism” originally designated the ancient ecclesiastical policies of the Kingdom of France. The word can also refer to a school of Catholic theology, originating in France, which was prominent into the nineteenth century. Characterized by conciliarism, Gallicanism supported a form of church government that, while recognizing the office of the papacy as de iure divino, sought to assert both the jurisdictional and ecclesiastical authority of the king or the parlements alongside the theological authority of the college of bishops.29 The “ancient rights of the Gallican Church” were often cited by Gallicans to discredit papal or curial power over the affairs of the French Church. While Gallicanism is linked to a particular history of church and state relations and ecclesiological claims, it also fostered distinctive spiritualties and theological methodologies.30 Gallicanism was embodied par excellence by Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), the bishop of Meaux and court preacher for Louis XIV. Claude Fleury represented the summit of the Gallican historiographical tradition.31

Gallican method grounded theology in scripture and the church fathers and usually tried to settle disputes by appealing to an alleged doctrinal consensus in the early church. The Gallican approach was “an assiduous search for ‘pure doctrine’ in Fathers, councils, and popes” that was attuned to history and “eminently suited to distinguish essentials from accidentals.”32 For

29 Historians speak of royal, episcopal, and Parlementary forms of Gallicanism. The attitude of each of these Gallicanisms towards the papacy, however, was fairly consistent. “The king, the bishops, and the law courts each desired to have primary influence over French ecclesiastical affairs and to see the influence of the papacy restricted.” See David Hudson, “The Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques, Jansenism, and Conciliarism, 1717–1735,” The Catholic Historical Review 70.3 (1984): 389–406, at 405.


31 See above, page 105.

32 Chinnici, English Catholic Enlightenment, 8–9.
Bossuet, this way of doing theology arose first from his pastoral duty to preach the word of God to the people. This orientation recognized the reforming potential of a biblical and patristic ressourcement. Gallicanism’s preoccupation with the authority of scripture and the fathers and its distrust of certain modern developments in theology allowed it to critically question later developments and traditions without putting the faith itself into doubt as a result.

Combined with its political and ecclesiastical tradition of national independence, Gallicanism’s theological methodology made it especially suspicious of certain papal claims. However, this theological paradigm was not very well suited to understanding the development of doctrine. Their desire for the “pure doctrine” of the early church helped some Gallicans to seek rapprochement with Protestants. This proto-ecumenical tendency was explicit in Bossuet’s fascinating exchanges with Leibniz and in some well-meaning but ultimately abortive dialogue initiatives between Anglicans and Gallicans.

Gallicanism reached a symbolic high point in 1682, when a general assembly of the French clergy, convoked by Louis XIV and led by Bossuet, confidently proclaimed the four “Gallican Articles” against what they saw as overreaches of papal authority. However, the central tenet of Gallican conciliar ecclesiology, that doctrines could not be taught infallibly without the consent of the church was explicitly rejected in the definition of papal infallibility

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33 Ibid., 80.
34 For the classic Gallican rejection of the development of doctrine, see Chadwick, From Bossuet to Newman.
36 William Wake (1657–1737), Archbishop of Canterbury, led the way in these ventures. See Leonard Adams, ed. William Wake’s Gallican Correspondence and Related Documents, 1716–1731, 7 vols. (New York: Peter Lang, 1988–92). Of course, many Anglicans and Gallicans were suspicious of these initiatives.
37 The four articles (19 March 1682) and Pope Alexander VIII’s declaration of their invalidity in the Constitution Inter multiplices (1690) are in Denzinger, 2281–85.
at Vatican I. Yet, the presence of Gallican-trained bishops at Vatican I was an important check on excessive ultramontanism. Yves Congar even saw these bishops as “the vanguard of Vatican II,” since they sought to preserve collegiality and synodality in church governance, and saw infallibility first and foremost as a gift to the whole community of believers, not the prerogative of an individual. Gallicanism is of central importance to eighteenth-century Catholic reform because of its theological methodology, its historical rigor, and the effect it had on so many other reform-minded Catholics. Dale van Kley even argued that Richerist and Jansenist movements such as the Church of Utrecht and the Pistoians should be understood as international instantiations of a “radical Gallican enlightenment” which “spread to and polarized eighteenth-century Catholic Europe from the mid century until its end.”

1.3 – Richerism: “Ecclesiastical Democracy Detected?”

At the Tuscan Episcopal Convocation of 1787 in Florence, Scipione de’Ricci made an ingenious argument for why parish priests (parochi) should vote as “judges of the faith”

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38 This normally meant that doctrines were not considered infallibly taught unless they were unanimously held or promulgated in an ecumenical council. A papal teaching that was generally or unanimously received by the bishops could be infallible, but was not infallible simply because of the papal definition itself.

39 See Denzinger 1839. The definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreforable “of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church” (ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae, irreformabiles esse).


43 I borrow this title from the missive that the ultramontane English priest (later Vicar Apostolic) John Milner (1752–1826) wrote against the progressive Cisalpine layman Sir John Throckmorton. See Ecclesiastical Democracy Detected (London: J. P. Coghlan, 1793).
alongside their bishops. At the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), he noted, the distinction is made between seniores and apostoli. Whatever seniores meant in the passage (Acts 15:22, Vulgate), its inclusion makes clear that it was not only bishops (as successors the apostoli) who voted on matters of grave importance, such as the place of Gentiles in the church. The majority of the Tuscan bishops rejected the Bishop of Pistoia’s suggestion, disagreeing with his exegesis and fearing the presuppositions behind it. The ecclesiological tenets de’ Ricci harkened back to came from a form of radical Gallicanism called Richerism. Throughout the eighteenth-century Jansenists adopted this system eagerly.

Edmond Richer (1559–1631) of the Sorbonne was known for the alleged “ecclesial democracy” of his Libellus de ecclesiastica et politica potestate (1611). Richer himself did not advocate democracy per se in the church. On a standard Gallican foundation, he argued for the de iure divino rights of parish priests as “judges of the faith.” Consequently, he advocated for their active role in general councils, and he deemphasized the papacy, calling the pope the “ministerial head” of the church. Richer’s work was repeatedly condemned by both French and Roman authorities in his lifetime.

Richerism, however, was not effectively suppressed. It became increasingly widespread during the time of the “Appellants,” when Jansenists and others opposed to the bull Unigenitus

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46 See, for example, Richer, Libellus de ecclesiastica et politica potestate (Paris: n.p., 1660 [1611]), 103–105, 245.

47 Denzinger 2602.
(1713) appealed it to a (theoretical) future ecumenical council, a protest with deep ecclesiological implications. Louis Cognet argues that the number of Appellants (and their vehemence) revealed how strong Richerism had grown. Many parish priests and even some lay people “now frequently considered themselves as judges of the doctrine.” Nicholas Le Gros (1675–1751) was one of the main architects of an eighteenth-century Richerist theory of “ecclesial democracy” and supported such thought in part by appealing to Luke 10. Richerism also had a strong influence on the thought of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht.

Their formal act of schism, in 1724, was an assertion of the rights of their cathedral chapter to elect a bishop independently, if necessary, of papal approval. The Synod of Pistoia put Richerism into concrete action as over 250 diocesan priests, at least in theory, judged the faith alongside their bishop. The condemnation of the Synod of Pistoia in 1794 included multiple censures which touched upon Richerism.

1.4 – Febronianism: Curtailing Papal Power to Advance Ecumenism and the Rights of Bishops

Febronianism was a form of German episcopalism which stressed the rights of bishops and sought to limit the power of the papacy. Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim (1701–90), an auxiliary bishop of Trier, touched upon a number of neuralgic points in his work De statu

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48 See below, section 2.2.


50 Ibid. Le Gros’ most important work was Du renversement des libertés de l’Église gallicane dans l’affaire de la constitution ’Unigenitus’ (n.p.: 1716). The phrase “ecclesial democracy” is Cognet’s. On the importance of Luke 10 to Richerists, see chapter four, section 1.


52 See Denzinger 2602–3, 2609–12 (Auctorem fidei 2–3, 9–12). For these condemnations and the influence of Richerism on the Synod of Pistoia, see chapter four, section 1.
Ecclesiae, which he wrote under the pseudonym “Febronius.”

“More than any single event, the publication of Hontheim’s treatise…On the State of the Church and the Legitimate Power of the Roman Pontiff in 1763 brought historical canon law scholarship into a very public debate in Germany over the nature of the Catholic church.”

The roots of Hontheim’s arguments for limiting papal intervention in the German Church were in medieval conciliarism and in historical scholarship that repudiated the Pseudo-Isidorian decretales by which, it was alleged, the papacy had fraudulently gained ascendancy over bishops and their national churches. The Louvain canonist, Zeger-Bernard van Espen (1646–1728), who was sympathetic to Gallicanism and Jansenism, was an important inspiration for theologians and ecclesiastics of Febronian persuasion.

Hontheim called for the end to the interference of the Curia in local churches and of appeals to Rome. He asserted the supremacy of the ecumenical council over the pope and declared the ultramontane conception of the papacy a major ecumenical problem. Indeed, the subtitle of his work was A Book Composed for the Reunion of Dissident Christians. His argument for achieving a reunion, that Catholicism should revert to primitive simplicity and the

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53 See Ulrich Lehner, “Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim and his Febronius: A Bishop and his Censored Ecclesiology,” Church History and Religious Culture 88 (2008), 93–121. Hontheim’s main work is titled Justini Febronii jurisconsulti de statu Ecclesiae et legitima potestate Romani Pontificis liber singularis, ad reuiniendos dissidentes in religione Christianos compositus (Frankfurt: Esslinger, 1763).

54 Michael Printy, Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 26.


56 On the Febronian argument for the “rights” of the German Church vis-à-vis Rome, see Printy, German Catholicism, 25–54.
papacy should be cut down to size, seems naïve or insincere since it avoided discussion of soteriological divisions and *sola scriptura*.\(^{57}\)

Nevertheless, Hontheim’s work “successfully articulated the German dissatisfaction with the Holy See with vigorous conviction and summarized concisely the theses” of many past thinkers, successfully marrying medieval conciliarism with the Catholic Enlightenment.\(^{58}\)

Michael Printy summarizes the importance of *De statu Ecclesiae* for eighteenth-century reform.

[It was] the first salvo in the German Catholic Enlightenment, and was in many ways its most significant literary product. There was no *direct* connection between the program of the pseudonymous Febronius for Episcopalian autonomy from Rome and later, practical reform programs of the Catholic Enlightenment in the 1780s and 1790s in such areas as liturgical reforms or restraints on popular practices. However, the underlying concepts of the *De statu Ecclesiae* – the liberties of the German church and the papacy as an obstacle to German religious unification – formed the basis upon which the German Catholic reform program would build…[Febronius] galvanized a generation of educated German Catholics.\(^{59}\)

The Febronius controversy illustrates how various movements and ideologies overlap.

Hontheim’s ecclesiology was Gallican, and he reflected that paradigm and the Catholic Enlightenment in his dislike of scholasticism, his historical-critical method, and his preference for positive theology.\(^{60}\) Hontheim “flirted with Jansenism,” having spent formative years among Jansenists in Louvain; he clearly respected important elements of their theological project.\(^{61}\) It

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\(^{58}\) Lehner, “Von Hontheim’s *Febronius*,” 206.

\(^{59}\) Printy, *German Catholicism*, 26.

\(^{60}\) Hontheim cited Bossuet constantly. Lehner, “Von Hontheim’s *Febronius*,” 207. On Hontheim’s “loathing” of scholasticism, see 215n42.

\(^{61}\) Lehner, “Von Hontheim’s *Febronius*,” 211, 215n42.
was in this time that the modern meaning of the term “ultramontanism” was coined. Hontheim himself used it, although German translators changed the Latinism to “over the Alps.”

The memory of papal censures of Febronius was important for nineteenth-century ultramontanism. The pope finally persuaded the Archbishop of Trier to force Hontheim to retract in 1778, but the commentary that Hontheim published on his own retraction showed that the auxiliary bishop had in fact retracted nothing. De statu Ecclesiae had provoked a storm of refutations from ultramontanists, including many Jesuits and Alphonsus Liguori. While Febronius’ book had been placed on the Index in 1764 and the author had technically retracted, “the immediate effect of De statu Ecclesiae was an increase in the self-confidence of bishops.”

This confidence helped inspire the Rhineland archbishops to issue the decree of Koblenz (1769), and it proved a source of support for the episcopalist Punctuation of Ems (1786), the Synod of Pistoia (1786), and Josephinism in the Austrian Empire.

1.5 – Josephinism: Enlightened Christianity in an Absolutist State

Febronius gave episcopalist and anti-ultramontane ammunition to a reform movement that was already in full steam in Hapsburg lands. “Josephinism,” named for Emperor Joseph II (1741–90), was an Erastian instantiation of the Catholic Enlightenment. It advocated a wholesale reform of society. This phenomenon predates Joseph II’s time as sole ruler (1780–90), although

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64 Ibid., 231.

65 Ibid. The Koblenz Gravamina decree and the Punctuation of Ems asserted the traditional liberties (as they perceived them) of the German episcopacy against the pope, the Curia, and the nuncios.
that decade was particularly important. Certain tendencies of Josephinism actually predate his 
co-rule with his mother Maria Theresa (1765–90). In some ways, the founding figure was the 

Josephinism was enlightened, anti-Baroque, philo-Jansenist,66 anti-ultramontane, and against 
“superstition”; it promoted a simplified liturgy, practical preaching and moral education, better 
education for clergy and laity, and strong state control of the church. Josephinism was intensely 
Erastian, and Joseph II was an enlightened absolutist par excellence.67

There were theological elements in the Josephinist reform program, many of them 
inspired by the enthusiastic diffusion of Muratori’s writings. Joseph II ordered Muratori’s Della 
regolata devozione dei cristiani, a handbook of Christocentric Catholic piety, to be translated 
and printed in many editions.68 The Emperor also inaugurated humanitarian measures such as 
abolishing torture and codifying the tolerance of Jews and Protestants. Education was stressed, 
and lay people were encouraged to learn about the Bible and the liturgy. However, Josephinist 
policy also aggressively attacked popular piety, and many religious orders, including over half of 
the monasteries in the Hapsburg lands, were shut down by Imperial agents.69

While some secularizing and anti-clerical forces helped energize the Josephinist quest to 
control the church, many, including the Emperor and his mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, 
desired a genuine Catholic reform. Many fervent Catholics, especially those of a “Jansenist

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66 “Philo-Jansenist” is a loose term designating those who had affinities with some or many elements of Jansenist thought, while not being themselves Jansenists.


piety,” felt they had no other choice than to pledge “support [to] the secular government for ecclesiastical reform...due to the Church’s own failure to address the most pressing issues.”

The papacy, of course, was pleased neither with the attack on the monasteries and traditional piety nor with the Josephinist encroachment on papal rights. In an attempt to rectify the situation, Pius VI actually travelled to Vienna in 1782 to meet with the Emperor. The pope was greeted with cheering crowds and a polite Joseph II, but could not effect a change in policy. This same year, Joseph Valentin van Eybel wrote the aggressively anti-ultramontane Was ist der Papst? This work was accused of spreading the already condemned principles of Febronius, and Pius VI’s brief Super soliditate (1786) severely censured van Eybel’s book.

It was the chain of events set off by the French Revolution and Napoleon, however, that defeated both Febronius’ dream of a German National Church and the Josephinist quest for an enlightened and rational Catholicism controlled by the state. The church of the nineteenth century grew steadily more ultramontane, and it saw a revival in pilgrimages, Marian devotion, and other traditional forms of piety. At Vatican I, the papacy delivered a sweeping coup de grâce to key elements not only of Febronian and Richerist ecclesiology, but to the old and venerable system of Gallicanism.

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70 Ibid., 45. For an important study of the doctrinally motivated reformers in the Josephinist milieu, from their beginnings in the “Muratori circle” to the height of philo-Jansenist activity in Austria, see Peter Hersche, Der Spätspätenismus in Österreich (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977).

71 Elisabeth Kovacs, Der Papst in Teutschland: Die Reise Pius VI. im Jahre 1782 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1983).


74 For the rejection of Gallicanism in the definition of papal infallibility itself, see section 1.2, above. See also Pastor aeternus 3 (Denzinger 3064).
2. Jansenism: Radical Augustinian Reform

In various times and places and to different people, often with polemical purposes, “Jansenism” has meant a variety of things. Originally the appellation was clear: it meant the strict predestinarian soteriology of Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638, bishop of Ypres from 1636), as expounded in his posthumously published book *Augustinus* (1640). Aside from issues of grace and predestination, Jansenism came to denote a Catholic position that maintained various combinations of reformist ideas, pastoral tendencies, and theological or even political orientations and aversions.

Jansenism is often evoked without concern for the complex history of the movement or its actual theological positions. Gemma Simmonds relates that Jansenism is generally blamed for all that is considered rigid and obscurantist in Catholicism. Like the word “Puritan,” “Jansenist” has become detached from its historical moorings to serve as a catch-all phrase for rigidity, sanctimoniousness, and oppressive religious austerity, used…to describe the ‘foul legend’ of a certain type of French or Irish Catholicism, brutally pessimistic in its concentration on sin and allegedly responsible for everything from endemic sexual repression to mental illness.

Jansenism plays such a major part in the story of eighteenth-century Catholic reform that one cannot understand reform in this period without understanding Jansenism. The subject of several chapters of this dissertation, the Synod of Pistoia, was one of the most important expressions of late Jansenist reform. The Pistoians, Jansenists and philo-Jansenists of the late eighteenth century, were formed by a complex and dramatic history. They made frequent reference to this past. They drew strength from their ideological heritage, but it also limited them and boxed them

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into a sectarian mindset. In order to properly define Jansenism and contextualize the Pistoian movement, three historical phases of Jansenism will be examined. Finally, this section briefly sketches how Jansenism can be understood historically as a reform movement that attempted ressourcement.

2.1 – Early Jansenism: From the Augustinus (1640) to Unigenitus (1713)

Jansenists were intensely concerned with asserting what they deemed to be the true teaching of St. Augustine and of scripture on the depravity of fallen humanity and on the utter inability to follow God’s law without grace. They proclaimed an extreme form of the doctrine of predestination. Adam’s sin plunged humanity into complete moral and spiritual darkness. Fallen human nature hungered after evil, and humans who repented of their sin did so only because of God’s totally unmerited foreordained grace. For the elect, salvific grace was completely irresistible and radically changed the sinner’s desires from the love of wickedness to the love of God.77

The initial, highly theological phase of Jansenism centered on Jansen himself and on his close friend and colleague Jean du Verger de Hauranne (1581–1643), known as the Abbé Saint-Cyran. To a great extent because of the pastoral efforts of Saint-Cyran and of Jacqueline-Marie-Angélique Arnauld (1591–1661), Abbess of the Cistercian convent of Port-Royal (near Paris), Jansenism spread to a small but fervent group of male and female disciples based at or near Port-Royal. Three of the most important converts of this first phase were Jacqueline’s brother, Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), the scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–62), and the great tragedian Jean Racine (1639–99). Arnauld was known as le Grand Arnauld and became the

premier theorist of the Jansenist movement.\textsuperscript{78} Pascal was the movement’s brilliant polemicist, directing his searing pen at the Jesuits and their alleged moral laxism.\textsuperscript{79}

While Pascal’s excoriation of Jesuitical leniency in the confessional became famous through the wildly popular \textit{Lettres provinciales} (1657), for early Jansenists the root error behind these problems was Molinism, which they saw as a return to Pelagianism.\textsuperscript{80} The papacy, however, was weary of disputes of this nature after the condemnation of the extreme Augustinianism of the Louvain theologian Baius in 1567 and the lengthy, inconclusive proceedings of the \textit{Congregatio de auxiliis} (1602–5).\textsuperscript{81} Papal frustration coupled with Louis XIV’s hatred of Jansenism allowed enemies of the movement in France and among the Jesuits to successfully appeal to the papacy for condemnations. Most notably, in the constitution \textit{Cum occasione} (1653), Pope Innocent X condemned five propositions allegedly taken from Jansen’s \textit{Augustinus}.\textsuperscript{82} This condemnation set off a dramatic chain of events, including the famous

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{80} The Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600) sought to preserve the mystery of free will in salvation by positing “middle knowledge,” which teaches that God predestines on the basis of the foreknowledge of whether humans will accept salvific grace, although Molina always insisted acceptance of the gift of salvation was by grace, distinguishing his theory from Pelagianism. His opponents, predictably, accused him of semi-Pelagianism. See Alfred Fredosso’s introduction to his translated volume: Luis de Molina, \textit{On Divine Foreknowledge (Part IV of the Concordia)}, trans. Alfred Fredoso (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 1–81.
\item \textsuperscript{81} The work of Michel de Bay (1513–89) was condemned by Pius V in the bull \textit{Ex omnibus afflictionibus} (Denzinger 1900–80). For a sketch of the basic positions in the \textit{de auxiliis} proceedings – Suárezian, Báñezian, and Molinist – see Marschler, “Providence, Predestination, and Grace.”
\item \textsuperscript{82} Denzinger 2001–7.
\end{itemize}
distinction between right (*droit*) and fact (*fait*), the Formulary Controversy, the Clementine Peace, and the rallying of Jansenists around Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1719). Ultimately, Quesnel’s work was sweepingly condemned by Pope Clement XI in the Constitution *Unigenitus* (1713). The Pistoians and other late Jansenists felt an intense connection with past generations of “friends of the truth,” who they believed had suffered bravely under unjust popes, kings, and bishops. At the end of the eighteenth century, pride, anger, and indignation about these events and individuals was very much alive. The Synod of Pistoia made multiple references to this history.

By the end of this first phase of Jansenism, its key commitments were firmly in place. Jansenism joined to the foundation of a rigorous Augustinian soteriology strict views on penance

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83 In the aftermath of *Cum occasione*, many Jansenists clung to Arnauld’s contention that the pope had not in fact condemned Jansen’s theology. The pope had the right (*droit*) to condemn false doctrine, but in fact (*fait*) the false doctrines condemned were not actually in Jansen’s work (or the condemned formulations had a different meaning or sense in the *Augustinus*). Arnauld was expelled from the Sorbonne, many French bishops were indignant, and Pope Alexander VII (1655–67) condemned this distinction in the Constitution *Ad sanctam beati Petri sedem* (1656).

84 Louis XIV persecuted the Jansenists because he (correctly) perceived in them a spirit of resistance to absolutism. The Sun King requested the drafting of a “Formulary” of submission from Alexander VII, which required all in ecclesiastical posts to swear that the five propositions were in fact in the *Augustinus* and must be condemned in the sense understood by the author. This formulary is found in the Constitution *Regiminis apostolici* (1665). See Denzinger, 2020.

85 The “Clementine Peace” was a time of relative ease and tranquility for the Jansenists, since it was the policy of Pope Clement IX (r. 1667–69) to allow Jansenists or philo-Jansenists to sign doctrinal statements with the understanding that these made a distinction between “right” (*quaestio iuris*) and “fact” (*quaestio facti*). For the sake of doctrinal peace, Clement IX thus allowed Jansenists to maintain that Jansen had not in fact taught the heresies and errors he was accused of advocating, so long as they accepted the censuring of the propositions as the papal condemnations stated them. This arrangement lasted around thirty years. Antoine Arnauld applauded it, and the nuns of Port-Royal accepted it, but the “extremists of the two opposing parties” resented the settlement. See Louis Cognet, “The Jansenist Conflict to 1713,” in *The Church in an Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment*, 48–53, at 49.


87 See chapter four, section 1.1.
and absolution and a corresponding moral rigorism. The Jesuits became bitter enemies because they were often Molinists and they had gained a reputation for casuistry (allegedly laxism) in the confessional. Not initially seen as an enemy, the papacy became the scourge of the Jansenists by repeatedly condemning their movement. A bitter anti-ultramontanism developed in Jansenist circles, although virtually all of them affirmed that the pope was by divine right the head of the church. Jansenism shared with Gallicanism affinities other than just a desire to limit papal authority. Both of these originally Francophone movements were interested in looking past medieval scholasticism, back to the “pure doctrine” of scripture and the church fathers. For this reason, however tentatively, proto-ecumenical tendencies could develop from Jansenism with more ease than from some other theological systems.88

2.2 – Middle Jansenism (1713–65): Internationalization and the Crisis of Unigenitus

One very practical impulse driving Jansenism’s eighteenth-century development was that the papacy had ruled, in a number of official magisterial documents, not only against Jansenist views of grace, but also against a number of elements in their reformist agenda. Clement XI’s Constitution Unigenitus was an enormously divisive condemnation of 101 propositions taken from Pasquier Quesnel’s commentary on the New Testament: Le Nouveau Testament en français avec des réflexions morales sur chaque verset.89 Many Jansenists simply could not accept Unigenitus; they saw it not only as condemning the doctrine of Augustine (who they believed had correctly interpreted the Bible) but also as blocking the diffusion of scripture and the needed

88 The reception of Jansenism by Anglicans and Protestants in England in the seventeenth century, some of it positive, is detailed by Thomas Palmer, Janseni

89 The work, often referred to as Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament, was printed in many editions.
reform of the liturgy. This resistance to Unigenitus centered on four French “Appellant” bishops, who appealed in 1717 from the bull to a future ecumenical council. After the four bishops read their appeal before a March 5, 1717 meeting of the theology faculty of the Sorbonne, they were joined in protest by 97 of 110 doctors of theology present. By March 9, ten more French bishops as well as numerous priests had joined the Appellants. Such a move had as its basis the theory of Gallicanism that only the universal church could teach infallibly. Although the pope had great spiritual authority, he could be in error, and his teachings were infallible only if the entire church consented. The Catholic faithful, particularly priests and bishops (who were co-judges of the faith with the Bishop of Rome), had a duty to resist and even correct the pope if he strayed from scripture or the universal teaching of the church.

The episcopalism and Gallicanism made explicit by the actions of the four Appellant bishops was also fused with Richerism. Richerism became very useful for those protesting Unigenitus, especially after the number of episcopal foes to the bull had dwindled. To the Gallican insistence on the infallibility of the whole church (and a denial of any distinct infallibility of the See of Rome or the pope), Quesnel added the Richerist concepts of the de iure divino rights of parish priests and the importance of the clergy consulting and listening to the laity, even about doctrine. Support for the Appellants from the “lower clergy” (non-bishops) was

90 For the text of the bull, see Denzinger 2400–2502.


significant. In November 1720, about 1500 French priests signed a “reappeal” document against *Unigenitus.*

The work of transforming diffuse Jansenist sympathizers of the early phase of the movement into the tightly-connected and efficient entity of international Jansenism has been credited to the genius of Quesnel. This transition was marked by the tragedy of the literal destruction of Port-Royal by Louis XIV in 1711. A new rallying point coalesced in the Netherlands, where prominent French Jansenists had been fleeing for some time (including Arnauld and Quesnel). For doctrinal and disciplinary reasons, a group of Jansenists in the Dutch Archdiocese of Utrecht had defied the pope in 1724 and insisted on their traditional right of electing their own Archbishop. Rather than accept a Vicar Apostolic chosen by the pope, the Utrecht Jansenists had their episcopal choice, Cornelius van Steenoven, consecrated Archbishop of Utrecht by Dominique Varlet, a French missionary bishop. Ironically, this juridical instantiation of Jansenism was only possible because Protestant Holland was more tolerant of Catholic dissenters than was France. For the rest of the eighteenth century, the Church of Utrecht functioned as an intellectual, spiritual, and ecclesiastical center of Jansenism. Dutch Jansenists and exiles, mainly Francophone, published and dispersed a vast amount of literature in an effort, “consciously pan-European in outlook,” to reform the Catholic Church from the inside. The Provincial Council of Utrecht (1763), which sought a middle way between Protestantism and

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93 This number was in fact much lower than in 1717, when the four bishops first rallied support among the French clergy. See Cognet, “Jansenism in Eighteenth-Century France,” 400.


95 The nuns were evicted in 1709. In 1711, the buildings were destroyed and the bodies in the graveyard re-interred. On these events, see Strayer, *Suffering Saints*, 149–55.

ultramontane Catholicism, inspired international Jansenism, from the Pistoians in Tuscany to the Constitutional clergy in revolutionary France. 

Jansenism of the eighteenth century became a highly organized, powerful, and zealous international community. Scholarship in our own day has termed this international Jansenist network the “Republic of Grace”; it constituted a sort of doctrinal and ecclesiastical commonwealth or community of letters with strong outposts in France, Holland, and Italy, and it included sympathizers as far afield as recusant England. While it kept alive the doctrinal wars which had raged since the sixteenth century on matters of nature, grace, and predestination, middle Jansenism’s spirit of reform came to focus more clearly on ecclesiology, liturgy, and devotion. Jansenism now had a broad scope, an intellectual and theological network, and its own martyrs and confessors, especially the holy women of Port-Royal, whose “cause would endure in the hearts and minds of Jansenists everywhere.”

The persecution of Jansenists in the aftermath of Unigenitus led to a burgeoning of apocalyptic fervor and reports of the miraculous among them. The alleged miracles at the tomb of the deacon François de Pâris (1690–1727), a young Appellant who led an ascetic and saintly life, led to the phenomenon of the ecstatic convulsionnaires. The Jansenist belief that the highest authorities in the church had not only obscured the truth, but even persecuted it and

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99 Strayer, Suffering Saints, 153.

100 The convulsionnaires had ecstatic mystical experiences that involved physical shaking. See Strayer, Suffering Saints, 236–65.
denied it, increased the popularity of an apocalyptic mode of scriptural interpretation called “figurism.” This system of scriptural interpretation saw the persecution of Jansenism and the true gospel foreshadowed in the Bible, especially in the book of Revelation.\footnote{101} The Jansenists needed ways to explain why, at the official level at least, things had gone so badly for them and the truth of the gospel had been so obscured. However, while the official doctrinal battle over grace, free will, and the writings of Jansen appeared lost for the time being, the Jansenists were far from defeated in all their aims.

Many of these aims, such as opposing the Jesuits and ultramontanism, and advocating for vernacular Bible reading, liturgical reform, Christocentric devotions, and conciliar ecclesiologies were alive and well in Jansenist and other reform circles. It is when these issues are considered, and not the initial concerns about grace and sacramental practice, that the term “Jansenism” becomes so difficult to define. Jansenism in the eighteenth century became a constantly shifting umbrella term, and often an inexact smear for a theological or ideological opponent. Adding further complication, Jansenists did not self-identify as Jansenists.\footnote{102} Many denied, honestly in some cases and evasively in others, that they held to the five condemned propositions in the \textit{Augustinus}. Jansenism in the eighteenth century is most accurately described as fierce opposition to \textit{Unigenitus} and the Jesuits, a predilection for primitivism, and a desire to reform the church in many areas.

\footnote{101} Figurism was initially a mode of typological biblical interpretation, but it eventually gave birth to an apocalyptic, end-times fascination and to a suspicion that Satan was ravaging the church. See Cognet, “Jansenism in Eighteenth-Century France,” 424–26. See also chapter four, section 1.1.

\footnote{102} In addition to “friends of the truth,” they also sometimes called themselves the “Disciples of St Augustine.” See Simmonds, “Jansenism: An Early Ressourcement Movement?” 24.
In the last third of the eighteenth century, Jansenism became increasingly important at the international level, aggressively seeking church reform and becoming embroiled in a wide array of ecclesio-political conflicts. Scholars usually name this third phase “late” or “political” Jansenism. Late Jansenism promoted a “corpus of ideas” that were “very significant in the interior life of the Roman Church of the eighteenth century.” S. J. Miller defines it thus, and notes the similarities of the pastoral program both with the Catholic Enlightenment and with Vatican II’s aggiornamento:

“[Political Jansenism] had its morally rigorous aspects but its real distinguishing features might be listed as follows: co-operation with Christian princes in purifying the Church (a fatal trend once princes ceased being Christians at the end of the century) and reorganizing it according to what actually were or were believed to be practices of the Primitive Church; an attempt to restore to the bishops the rights and duties which had been eroded by centralization of ecclesiastical power in the Roman Curia since the Council of Trent; a tendency to consider the monastic orders corrupt, inefficient, too wealthy, and too privileged and as bad and inefficient educators. All of this was coupled with a desire to see the secular clergy better educated, better paid, and wholly capable of leading Christians along the path of salvation without the prayers and good works of the regulars. Jansenism could also assume characteristics which are lumped together in our day as aggiornamento: use of vernaculars in the liturgy, emphasis on the rights and duties of priests as co-sharers in episcopal power (Richerism), and an effort to educate the laity in a practical, non-mystical Christianity.

Late Jansenism impacted the entire Catholic Church in this period, but it found particularly strong expression in the Church of Utrecht, in Italy (culminating in the Synod of Pistoia), and among some of the Constitutionalist clergy in revolutionary France. Figures like Scipione de’Ricci in Italy, Gabriel du Pac de Bellegarde (1717–89) in Utrecht, and Abbé Henri

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105 Ibid.
Grégoire, bishop of the Constitutionalist Church of Revolutionary France, exemplified late Jansenism \textit{par excellence}. A late Jansenist presence in the Austrian Empire and German states overlapped extensively with Josephinism and episcopality,\textsuperscript{106} and so much so with Gallicanism that Dale van Kley sees late Jansenism as a form of “radical Gallicanism.”\textsuperscript{107} This internalization of Jansenism and, following van Kley, other forms of radical Gallicanism, was aided by the successful diffusion of the popular underground Jansenist newspaper \textit{Nouvelles ecclésiastiques}.\textsuperscript{108}

One way in which eighteenth-century Jansenists openly continued the wars of the past was in their relentless attack on the Society of Jesus. While a number of factors led to the suppression of the Jesuits by Clement XIV in the brief \textit{Dominus ac Redemptor} (1773), Dale van Kley has shown that Jansenist efforts played a significant role.\textsuperscript{109} The existence of a formidable \textit{parti janséniste} in many parlements, including Paris’, contributed both to the downfall of the Jesuits and to the birth of what scholars call “political Jansenism.” This appellation is a misnomer if it is taken to mean that Jansenists were no longer concerned with theology. However, it is a helpful phrase insofar as it marks the Jansenist marriage to Enlightenment absolutism in the Hapsburg lands (including Tuscany) and to parliamentarian forms of government and, ultimately, revolutionary politics in France.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{106} Peter Herche, \textit{Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich.} \\
\textsuperscript{107} See section 1.2, above. \\
\textsuperscript{108} On an early phase of this important journal, see Hudson, “The \textit{Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques}, Jansenism, and Conciliarism, 1717–1735,” 389–406. \\
Charles Bolton summarizes the agenda of late Jansenism thus:

The controversies on grace and predestination are relegated to the background by an appeal for reform on such points as the worship of Saints, the reading of Scripture by the laity, the liturgy shared by the people, the power of the popes, the rights of bishops, the authority of the civil power, the question of modern devotions, Indulgences, legends of Saints, pecuniary traffic in holy things, etc.\textsuperscript{111}

While not using van Kley’s felicitous phrase “radical Gallicanism,” Bolton’s view of radical Catholic reform in the late eighteenth century mirrors the same idea by perceiving all these reform movements as variations of one another. While remaining constant in certain essentials, Bolton cast Jansenism as the multifarious and constantly mutating reformist force in the church of this era.

Because Jansenism is no one thing it is not always called by the same name. Persecuted and humiliated in France, it was encouraged in the Austrian Empire of Joseph II and becomes Febronianism and Josephinism. It Italy, however, the movement clings very much to its origins and glories in the attachment to the \textit{Augustinus} and to the martyrs of Port Royal. It is perhaps here more than elsewhere that the movement achieves full consciousness of its aims and ideals; for the Italians of the latter half of the eighteenth century inherit the achievement of a hundred years of struggle in France; they are moreover in close touch with both the French and the German Jansenists; with the French chiefly through the Jansenist refugees at Utrecht, and with the Germans through the Austrian political ascendancy in North Italy. It is a long cry from Bishop Janssens of Ypres to Bishop Ricci of Pistoia both in space and time, and though there is a spiritual unity between the two, the \textit{Augustinus} throws but little light on the Synod of Pistoia.\textsuperscript{112}

Bolton is imprecise to say that Jansenism “becomes” Febronianism and Josephinism in the Austrian Empire, although those movements had strong connections with Jansenism. However, the Synod of Pistoia does indeed represent the pinnacle of late Jansenism and was its strongest institutional expression. Pistoia represents one of several aggressive attempts of the late Jansenist

\textsuperscript{110} For the role of Jansenism in the French Revolution and the Constitutional Church of France, see Dale van Kley, \textit{The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560–1791} (New Haven, Yale, 1996); Edmond Préclin, \textit{Les jansénistes du XVIIIe siècle et la Constitution civile du clergé}.

\textsuperscript{111} Bolton, \textit{Church Reform}, 29.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., ix.
movement to use sympathetic bishops, priests, theologians, and canonists, alongside powerful governments, whether enlightened despots or the revolutionary state in France, to forcefully purge the church of abuses and errors. Their bold agenda was to be achieved through synods (such as those in Pistoia and Utrecht) and even national councils (which the revolutionary Gallican Church modeled in 1797 and 1801) convened to reform the Catholic Church from the inside, piece by piece.\footnote{For a good overview of Pistoia, Utrecht, and the French National Councils, see Dale van Kley, “Catholic Conciliar Reform.” For the Acts of the two National Councils of the Gallican Church, see Canons et décrets du Concile national de France, tenu à Paris en l’an de l’ère chrétienne 1797 (Paris: L'Imprimerie-Libraire Chrétienne, 1798); Actes du second concile national de France, tenu l’an 1801 de J.-C. (an 9 de la République française), dans l’église métropolitaine de Paris, 3 vols. (Paris: L'Imprimerie-Libraire Chrétienne, 1801).}

2.4 – \textit{Jansenism as Ressoucement: Scripture, Liturgy, and Ecclesiology}

F. Ellen Weaver began her study of Jansenist reforms in liturgy and Bible reading by quoting the adage, “The evil that men do lives after them. The good is often interred with their bones.”\footnote{F. Ellen Weaver, “Scripture and Liturgy for the Laity: The Jansenist Case for Translation,” \textit{Worship} 59.6 (1985): 510–21, at 510.} This saying certainly applies to the Catholic memory of Jansenism. Following the lead of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century opponents of Jansenism, later critics of the movement tended to scorn it in a manner that is rarely sufficiently nuanced. While many twentieth-century Catholic theologians, and even, to some extent, the Catholic magisterium, have rehabilitated some elements of the theology of the Protestant Reformers, Jansenists have generally benefited from no such irenic reevaluation. Their admirers, who are few, are sure to foreground the “tragic distortions” in Jansenist theology and practice.\footnote{Simmonds, “Jansenism: An Early \textit{Ressourcement} Movement,” 24.} Others have unfairly labeled Jansenism as
lacking any concern for societal reform (or even pastoral reform). On the contrary, the Jansenist reformist vision extended beyond theology and overlaps greatly with many Catholic Enlightenment themes.

Early Jansenism [was] one of the foremost contributors to the development of modern consciousness in advocating the rights of the individual conscience. In espousing the rights of the lower clergy, the emancipation of slaves, and the restoration of civil status to Jews and Protestants, later Jansenism stands at the forefront of social, political, and philosophical radicalism.

This section highlights three elements of the Jansenist theological and pastoral reform agenda, which were all in place by the end of the first historical phase sketched above.

The first reforming element, and the foundation for the others, was the Jansenist proclivity for patristic and biblical ressourcement. This element is apparent at the origins of the movement in the work of Jansen, Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, and Pascal. In contrast to what they depicted as vain scholastic speculation, the Jansenists advocated positive theology and the direct use of the ancient sources of the faith for teaching. Their concern for positive theology made Jansenism a “close parallel to the [twentieth-century] ressourcement movement.” Like the nouvelle théologie, the “Jansenist recourse to the past was a radical response to the questions posed by a society in transit and a church in disarray after long periods of conflict and stagnation.” Unfortunately, the extreme form of Augustinianism they championed further inflamed already tense ideological struggles.

116 For example, Émile Appolis contrasted the sincere love of humanity in Muratori and the Third Party with the Jansenists’ view of humanity as a massa damnata. Jansenists “did not have the least idea of Christianity transforming society.” See Tiers parti, 123.


Second, Jansenists’ return to scripture and the early church, as well as their reception of a Gallican methodology and Catholic Enlightenment historical scholarship, led them to promote a deeper access of the laity to the scriptures and the liturgical mysteries. Jansenist ideals for liturgical reform were bold and pastorally astute, and they have been recognized as remarkably paralleling the reforms of Vatican II. Jansenists typically advocated for vernacular missals, for the laity to respond to the priest during mass, for at least some parts of the mass to be said in the vernacular, for vernacular hymns, and for the priest to pronounce the Eucharistic canon aloud. Some Jansenists, for example the Pistoians, actually encouraged the reception of communion during each mass for those in a state of grace. The first full translation of the missal from Latin into French, by Joseph de Voisin in 1660, was seen by opponents as a bold assertion by Jansenists. Pope Alexander VII condemned it in 1661, but it remained available since it was inserted into *L’année chrétienne* (published between 1677–86), a commentary on liturgical feasts by Nicolas Letourneux (1640–86), who was a great preacher and pastor with philo-Jansenist views.

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120 Ibid.
121 Weaver, “Scripture and Liturgy for the Laity,” 511.
122 “The outstanding scriptural scholarship of Port-Royal and its efforts to promote a vernacular missal were aimed at the fuller lay participation in liturgy promoted by the Second Vatican Council” (Simmonds, “Jansenism: An Early Ressourcement Movement?” 24). Pierre Jounel even suggests that Vatican II did little more than pick up where Jansenists left off! See “Les missels diocésains français du 18e siècle,” *La Maison-Dieu* 141 (1980), 91–6, at 91.
124 See chapter four, section 3.3.
126 Weaver, “Scripture and Liturgy for the Laity,” 511.
A third reforming element of Jansenism was an emphasis on the centrality of Bible reading for devotional life. Starting with the efforts of Antoine Arnauld, the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular was a primary concern of Jansenists. The history of vernacular scriptures in Catholic Europe after the Reformation is complicated. France, in particular, was an “ambiguous” situation. While there were French Bibles for Catholic use going back to 1550, some translations, especially *Le Nouveau Testament de Mons*, were controversial, either because of their Jansenist origins or because of their preference for the original languages of scripture over that of the Latin Vulgate. The Mons Bible arrived in Paris in 1667 (via Amsterdam) and provoked a storm of controversy. Arnauld eagerly entered the fray as the champion of the Jansenist position. Many attacked the Jansenist insistence on the right of all laity, even women, to have access to the Bible in the vernacular. Some conservatives thought that women were too spiritually and intellectually unstable to read the Bible, others believed only theologically educated laity should have access, and some looked askance on all vernacular translations. Jansenists, however, consistently asserted not only the right of all the laity to have direct access to the scriptures, but the duty of all Christians to read scripture if they were able.

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127 Ibid., 512.

128 Ibid., 513.


131 See Arnauld, *Défense des versions*, 153 (translation in Weaver, “Scripture and Liturgy for the Laity,” 519): “Horrible thought! Contrary to all of antiquity! Strange deprivation of the Word of God. It is a great lack of judgment to conclude from a passage of St Peter that it is an abuse to allow Holy Scripture to be read by women and the unlettered….” (2 Peter 3:15–16, which speaks of the difficulty of interpreting some Pauline passages, was used to justify limiting scriptural access).
Unigenitus, which was a condemnation of a Jansenist scriptural commentary, added fuel to an already tense situation. While Clement XI’s condemnation of the following eight propositions of Quesnel by no means ruled out lay Bible reading or vernacular translations, Unigenitus 79–86 certainly posed an obstacle for those seeking scriptural renewal in the Catholic Church (the parenthetical Bible verses refer to the passages on which Quesnel was commenting):

(79.) It is useful and necessary at all times, in all places, and for every kind of person, to study and to know the spirit, the piety, and the mysteries of Sacred Scripture [1 Cor. 14:5]. (80.) The reading of Sacred Scripture is for all [Acts 8:28]. (81.) The sacred obscurity of the Word of God is no reason for the laity to dispense themselves from reading it [Acts 8:31]. (82.) The Lord’s Day ought to be sanctified by Christians with readings of pious works and above all of the Holy Scriptures. It is harmful for a Christian to wish to withdraw from this reading [Acts 15:21]. (83.) It is an illusion to persuade oneself that knowledge of the mysteries of religion should not be communicated to women by the reading of Sacred Scriptures. Not from the simplicity of women, but from the proud knowledge of men has arisen the abuse of the Scriptures and have heresies been born [John 4:26]. (84.) To snatch away from the hands of Christians the New Testament, or to hold it closed against them by taking away from them the means of understanding it, is to close for them the mouth of Christ [Matt. 5:2]. (85.) To forbid Christians to read Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, is to forbid the use of light to the sons of light, and to cause them to suffer a kind of excommunication [Luke 11:33]. (86.) To snatch from the simple people this consolation of joining their voice to the voice of the whole Church is a custom contrary to the apostolic practice and to the intention of God [1 Cor 14:16].

Although open to multiple interpretations, condemnations such as these infuriated the Jansenists. The issues of vernacular scripture reading and liturgical reform will be discussed in more detail in chapters three and four, in the context of the Synod of Pistoia, which directly drew from these earlier Jansenist sources, including Quesnel and Arnauld.

Unfortunately, “outside the specialist world of Jansenist studies, little has been done, except in the field of liturgical studies, to relate the movement to the development of the modern church.”

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132 Denzinger 2479–86.

133 Simmonds, “Jansenism: An Early Ressourcement Movement?” 33.
reform, I will relate Pistoian contributions in ecclesiological, liturgical, and devotional reform (including Bible reading), as well as developments regarding religious liberty, to Vatican II and the contemporary church.

3. Lodovico Muratori and the Third Party: Reform Between Jansenism and the Zelanti

Jansenism and the ecclesial movements described above were some of the most visible instantiations of eighteenth-century Catholic reform. However, there was an important group of Catholics who shared many of the ideals of the Jansenists regarding Bible reading, liturgical and devotional reform, and patristic ressourcement. Yet, these Catholics eschewed Jansenist sectarianism, stopped short of their ecclesiological radicalism, and avoided pushing doctrinal disagreements to the point of formal dissent from papal teaching. These non-Jansenist reformers were marked by a humanist spirit and their ideals overlapped strongly with those of the Catholic Enlightenment, so much so that many of the luminaries in their ranks are also typically numbered among the best of the Catholic Enlighteners. The French historian Émile Appolis identified these Catholics as a “Third Party,” situated between Jansenists and the traditionalist, ultramontane zelanti.134 This center party was not organized in any formal way, but rather is a heuristic for identifying a “very diverse” group of Catholic prelates and theologians who, “beyond national borders, were intimately united by common aspirations as well as common aversions, by a very clear set of intellectual attitudes and sentiments.”135

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134 Appolis coined the phrase in Tiers parti. Many scholars have followed Appolis’ compelling case in identifying a Catholic “Third Party.” See, for example, Chinnici, The English Catholic Enlightenment, 3–4; Miller, Portugal and Rome, 2–3.

135 Appolis, Tiers parti, vii.
Traditionally mistaken for quasi-Jansenists of some kind, the Third Party was a loosely affiliated network of people who strove for the reform of the church, sought peace and toleration in intra-Catholic theological wars, and usually displayed a relatively tolerant attitude towards Protestantism and Enlightenment thought. Many of them retained Augustinian views of grace after the condemnations of Jansenism, while also accepting those condemnations as valid exercises of papal authority. While their existence and influence can be felt from the closing decades of the seventeenth century all the way to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Third Party reached its apogee in the middle of the eighteenth century, during the pontificate of one of their number, Pope Benedict XIV (1740–58), the so-called “enlightened pope.”

For a variety of reasons, their influence declined soon after that irenic pontificate ended.

After explaining their ideological position “between Jansenists and the zelanti,” this section briefly highlights some important elements of Third Party thought by examining the theological and pastoral reform agenda of Ludovico Muratori (1672–1750), who encapsulated the spirit of the Third Party *par excellence*. Muratori served as an important source for later reform and was a clear forerunner of Vatican II, particularly in his Christocentrism and his advocacy of liturgical and devotional reform.

Numerous eighteenth-century Catholics neither supported nor persecuted the Jansenists, sought doctrinal peace within the church, had a reforming and proto-ecumenical spirit, effectively distinguished between doctrine and discipline, and displayed an openness to historical

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136 See Appolis’ chapter, “L’Apogée du ‘tiers parti’ sous Benoît XIV,” in *Tiers parti*, 271–368. Another important overview is Mario Rosa’s chapter “Tra Muratori, il giansenismo e i ‘lumi’: Profile di Benedetto XIV,” in *Riformatori e rebelli*, 49–85.

137 Appolis’ final chapter thoroughly chronicles this decline: “L’Éclatement du ‘tiers parti’,” in ibid., 369–511. A major factor was the growing rift between the Dominican and Augustinian orders.

138 Miller, *Portugal and Rome*, 2–3. Miller concurs with Appolis that Muratori exemplifies both the Third Party and the Catholic Enlightenment *par excellence*. 
inquiry and Enlightenment thought. Appolis profiled this significant network which did not neatly fit into the camp of the *zelanti* (which tended to be ultramontane, pro-Jesuit, and traditionalist), but were not Jansenists either. Appolis undertook his study because he felt descriptions of figures like the committed Augustinian\(^\text{139}\) Jean-Georges de Souillac (1685–1750, Bishop of Lodève, 1733–50) as a “crypto-Jansenist” were inexact.\(^\text{140}\) Other historians of the period have spoken of these more moderate figures as “philo-Jansenists” or “pre-Jansenists.”\(^\text{141}\) But some scholars, like A. C. Jemolo, have shown that there were a number of “alleged Jansenists” (in Appolis’ words) of the first half of the eighteenth century who were in fact “devoted to the papacy” and even “truly ultramontane.”\(^\text{142}\) Appolis credited Jemolo with casting light on the “essentially theological character of this movement.”\(^\text{143}\)

Moderation was an important feature of Third Party thought. In spite of the triumphalist and erroneous claims of some Jesuits and *zelanti*, Third Party Catholics rejected the notion that the papacy had enshrined Molinism as official doctrine.\(^\text{144}\) For the Third Party, “the opinions of the schools” (Thomism, Augustinianism, Molinism, etc.) were permissible theological views, but the opinion of one school should not be used to bully or excommunicate rivals from different schools. Fortunato of Brescia (1701–54) went as far as to argue that defined Catholic dogma cannot depend in any manner upon the opinions of the schools.\(^\text{145}\) This irenic position was an

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\(^\text{139}\) Unless otherwise noted, the designation “Augustinian” refers to the theological school, not the religious order.

\(^\text{140}\) Appolis, *Tiers parti*, vi. See also Rosa, *Riformatori e ribelli*, 17–18. An important analysis of the historiography on these questions, including a critique of Appolis, is in Francesco Margiotta Broglio, “Estremisti e moderati nelle lotte dottrinali e politiche del Seicento e del Settecento,” *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 16 (1962): 275–310.

\(^\text{141}\) Ibid, viii.


\(^\text{143}\) Appolis, *Tiers parti*, ix.

\(^\text{144}\) Ibid., 53–56, 293–94.

\(^\text{145}\) Ibid., 206. This was also the view that Giovanni Lami sought to propagate. On Lami, see pages 138–39, below.
attempt to establish a space of free discussion and to de-escalate controversy. Third Party thinkers made important distinctions between revealed truth and the explication of that truth, in an attempt to allow for more theological creativity and freedom. The Third Party position, exemplified by Benedict XIV and Muratori, was that disputed theological opinions that are not revealed by God should not be taught as definitive doctrine.

Under a pseudonym, Muratori published *De ingeniorum moderacione in religionis negotio* (On the Moderation of Cleverness in Religious Matters), which provided a blueprint for Third Party irenicism. *De ingeniorum moderacione* devoted substantial space to argue against needless polemicism and false or biased accusations against theological opponents; it asserted the need for scientific and philosophical inquiry, and the virtue of tolerance between conflicting views regarding matters not defined by the church. This work was published in 1714, in the wake of *Unigenitus* (1713), which had set off some of the bitterest intra-Catholic polemics in history. Ultimately, the book was “a dissertation in favor of the critical exercise of reason on the part of intellectuals,” within a framework that respected Christian revelation and Catholic tradition. It was a sterling manifesto of Third Party thought and the Catholic Enlightenment. It

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146 For example, Fortunato of Brescia learned to think about the Eucharistic elements in light of modern philosophy, rather than only in Aristotelian categories. Ibid., 208.

147 Muratori opposed a “blood oath” to defend the (as yet undefined) Immaculate Conception for this reason and others. Benedict XIV was very strong on this count regarding disputes over grace and free will. See, for example, Rosa, *Riformatori e ribelli*, 80.

148 Lamindo Pritanio (Muratori) *De ingeniorum moderacione in religionis negotio* (Paris: Carolum Robustel, 1714) in *Opere del proposito Lodovico Antonio Muratori*, vol. 10 (Arezzo: Michele Bellotti, 1767–73) (henceforth: *De ingeniorum moderacione*).

149 *De ingeniorum moderacione* is divided into three “books.” For these themes, see, inter alia, 1.1–2, 19–24; 2.1–6, 14.

fit perfectly with the ecclesial vision of the future pope Benedict XIV, who believed that rights, conscience, freedom in the schools and a plurality of theological approaches were the will of God. De ingeniorum moderatione, and Muratori’s entire corpus, reflected the Third Party desire to avoid sectarianism and the odium theologicum which was so damaging to the church.

Third Party Catholics preferred positive theology, and tended, alongside Gallicans and Jansenists, to prioritize scripture and the church fathers in theological discourse. While there was a recognizable Augustinian strain in the Third Party, and this network became one way to remain attached to Augustine while not being a Jansenist, they were explicitly concerned with keeping the peace in a Catholic Church wracked by controversies over grace and ecclesiology. For example, most Italian Third Party Catholics were ultramontane and some believed in papal infallibility, while the French Third Party tended to be Gallican and thus conciliarist. Neither group, however, wished to see the disputed points as exclusive tests of orthodoxy, any more than they wished to see different theologies of grace in this way (within certain bounds).

Like the Catholic Enlightenment, with which they overlapped substantially, Third Party figures were formed by diverse cultural, political, and theological traditions. There were

151 Appolis, Tiers parti, 162.

152 Positive theology was a preoccupation for the Gallican tradition and for many Augustinians and Jansenists. It was sixteenth-century Louvain theologians (in the days of Baius) who produced a critical edition of Augustine’s works and inaugurated positive theology as a new discipline. See Appolis, Tiers parti, 1.

153 Ibid., 93.

154 Appolis calls the Italian Third Party “essentially ultramontane” during the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1740, the Dominican Giuseppe Agostino Orsi defended the sort of “irreformability” defined at Vatican I (Tiers parti, 125–6). Claude Fleury exemplified the French Third Party in maintaining Gallicanism but with a high regard for the Holy See and no “schismatic spirit” (ibid., 24–25).
important Third Party thinkers in German-speaking lands, France, and Spain. This loose network spanned the entire Roman Catholic world of eighteenth century Europe, from Portugal to Hungary, and shared clear concerns.

Italy occupies a prominent place in the history of the Third Party. In addition to Muratori and Benedict XIV, other prominent Italians include the lay Tuscan church historian Giovanni Lami (1697–1770), who edited the Nouvelle Letterarie, which under Benedict XIV was the organ of Third Party thought par excellence. The career of Cardinal Enrico Noris (1631–1704), a strict Augustinian, illustrates well the Third Party desire to retain Augustinian views of grace in spite of accusations of Jansenism. Benedict XIV, in fact, strongly rebuked the Spanish Inquisition for attempting to ban Noris’ work posthumously. In 1749 he suspended their decrees censuring Noris and even called one of the Inquisitors “Nero.”

Antonio Martini (1720–1809, Good examples include the Augustinian friar Eusebius Amort (1692–1775), his student Martin Gerbert von Hornau (1720–93), and Johann-Josef von Trautson (1707–57, Archbishop of Vienna 1750–57). See Appolis, Tiers parti, 259–64.

In France, the aforementioned Souillac was a prominent Third Party prelate, as was François de Fitz-James (1709–65), bishop of Soissons and grandson of James II Stuart. Bishop Fitz-James was a diligent and irenic reformer, and a proto-ecumenical advocate of religious toleration, a radical position which has seen him incorrectly categorized as a Jansenist (Appolis, Tiers parti, 226–38). See his lengthy letter of 1755 to Pope Benedict XIV cited in Appolis, Tiers parti, 234–38.

The enlightened Benedictine monk Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676–1764) represented the Third Party in Spain par excellence (Tiers parti, 142–43, 247–52). Feijóo influenced a circle of scholars and churchmen, including figures like Enrique Florez (an Augustinian friar) and Martin Sarmiento (Feijóo’s fellow Benedictine). The Third Party survived into the nineteenth century in Spain in small circles, like those surrounding two bishops, Félix Amat (1750–1824) and his nephew Félix Torres Amat (1772–1849). Despite opposition from the Inquisition and accusations of Jansenism, Torres Amat translated the entire Bible into Spanish (ibid., 555–70).


Appolis, Tiers parti, 299–300.
Archbishop of Florence from 1781) and Cardinal Andrea Gioanetti of Bologna (1722–1800) kept the Third Party spirit alive during a time of aggressive Jansenist reform and bitter zelanti retrenchment.¹⁶¹

The reception of Muratori in Austria illustrates the international impact of Italian Third Party thought. Cardinal Christoph Anton Migazzi, (1714–1803, Archbishop of Vienna 1757–1803) was strongly influenced by Muratori and worked to regulate devotion to Mary and the saints in a Christocentric direction. He had many of the Modenese priest’s works translated and he recommended them not just to clergy but to all the faithful. Migazzi was theologically an Augustinian, but he opposed Joseph II’s formal rejection of *Unigenitus* in 1781.¹⁶² Muratori corresponded extensively with German-speakers and was particularly well-received in Austria.¹⁶³ Reform-minded circles developed that were strongly influenced by him, and while Muratori himself should not be seen as a herald of Josephinism, he enjoyed great currency in networks that backed those reforms.¹⁶⁴ This influence extended to the royal family itself. The Empress Maria Theresa supported Migazzi’s publication of Muratori’s classic pastoral text, *Della regolata devozione dei cristiani* (1747) in 1759, and she had her children lectured from it.¹⁶⁵ Among these children were the future Joseph II, as well as the patron of the late Jansenists in Pistoia and throughout Tuscany, Peter Leopold.

¹⁶¹ For Archbishop Martini as a Third Party reformer, and his negative view of Scipione de’Ricci’s extremism, see Appolis, *Tiers parti*, 383–90. For Gioanetti, see 397–402. See also chapter five, section 1.2.

¹⁶² Ibid., 498–99.

¹⁶³ See Fabio Marri and Maria Lieber, with the collaboration of Daniela Gianaroli, *La corrispondenza di Lodovico Antonio Muratori col mondo germanofono: Carteggi inediti* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010). This volume features 34 German-speaking correspondents.

¹⁶⁴ See Zlabinger, *Lodovico Antonio Muratori und Österreich*; Peter Hersche, *Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich*. Hersche argues (p. 380) that Muratori was more important for Austrian Catholicism than even the venerable French school of spirituality (de Sales, Bossuet, Fénelon).

¹⁶⁵ Hersche, *Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich*, 137.
Muratori was born outside Modena to a family of modest means. He attended the Jesuit College in Modena and received the doctorate in civil and canon law. After a fruitful time spent as a librarian-scholar in Milan (1695–1700), Muratori returned to Modena where he lived the rest of his days, serving as the librarian of the d’Este Duke and as the pastor of a parish.

Muratori is well-known for his extensive contributions to eighteenth-century historical scholarship, particularly in church history and the history of Italy. Although not a biblical scholar, his name is forever linked to the “Muratorian Fragment,” the oldest known list of the canonical scriptures, which he discovered in the Ambrosian library in Milan. However, his oeuvre extended beyond history and liturgical studies into economics, political thought, moral philosophy, and theology. Muratori’s impressive range of intellectual and spiritual ventures have been extensively chronicled by historians. Chadwick hailed Muratori as the most famous historian of his day, “the finest type of Catholic reformer in the eighteenth century,” a “symbol of Catholic reforming ideals,” one who “marked an epoch.” Muratori is justly remembered as

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168 For bibliographies of Muratori’s work, as well as some secondary sources, see Vismara, “Lodovico Antonio Muratori,” 265–68. The website of the Centro di studi muratoriani has a definitive bibliography of primary sources, accessible at https://www.centrostudimuratoriani.it/muratori/indici-dei-titoli/.

169 For example, see the 48 essays in Miscellanea di studi muratoriani: Atti e memorie del Convegno di studi storici in onore di L. A. Muratori tenuto in Modena, 14–16 aprile 1950 (Modena: Aedes muratoriana, 1951).

170 Chadwick, The Popes, 398, 396–7, 400.
a central intellectual figure for eighteenth-century historiography and the Catholic Enlightenment, but he is not well known to theologians.¹⁷¹

Muratori was a conscientious and zealous pastor, and through his theological and historical scholarship and his experience of the spiritual needs of his flock, he came to advocate for biblical renewal, liturgical rejuvenation, and regulated devotion to Mary and the saints. Undergirding these reform desiderata was a Christocentric theological perspective. The affinity between certain elements of Muratori’s agenda and the reforms of Vatican II is striking.¹⁷² This section can only briefly examine some of Muratori’s calls for liturgical and devotional reform which had a particularly strong impact on the eighteenth-century church.

Muratori drew upon a general Third Party attitude toward liturgical reform, stressing the Christocentric focus of corporate worship and the Mass as the cornerstone of the devotional life of the believer. Third Party Catholics tended to frown upon what they considered Baroque excess in worship: trumpets, public flagellation, excessive showmanship in the pulpit, etc. Some were advocates for vernacular scripture for the laity, for the introduction of the vernacular into parts of the Mass, or for the loud and clear pronunciation of the prayers of the Mass.¹⁷³ Others supported printing aids for literate lay people to follow worship more closely. An important Italian proponent of these efforts, while not formally advocating for the introduction of the vernacular


into the Mass itself, was the Theatine Giuseppe Maria Tomasi (1649–1713). The Vatican press release for John Paul II’s canonization of Cardinal Tomasi in 1986 explicitly praised his anticipation of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II:

In truth, not a few of the norms, established by the authority of the Roman Pontiffs and by the documents of the Second Vatican Council and today praiseworthily in use in the Church, were already proposed and ardently desired by Father Tomasi…. [These were] all intended to promote a more intimate and personal participation of the People of God at the celebration of the sacred Liturgy.

Muratori built upon the tradition of Tomasi. The former presented a vision for liturgical and devotional reform strongly and succinctly in Della regolata devozione dei cristiani (1747), which anticipated Vatican II in its call for biblical renewal and lay participation in a liturgy marked by “noble simplicity.” While Muratori’s prescriptions were in some ways reactions to Baroque excess, they were not the result of succumbing to Enlightenment “rational” religion. Rather, Muratori approached the problem in a way similar to many twentieth-century liturgical reformers: seeking renewal through a ressourcement of scripture and tradition. The ultimate goal of this renewal was to encourage piety that drew “one’s spiritual nourishment from active and conscious contemplation of the faith of the Church as it is celebrated and expressed in the liturgical rites and prayers… as distinct from the practice of an unrelated, however worthy, devotional exercise.”

Muratori was trying to draw pastors and laity back to the idea that the

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175 This press release, published without an author, is available at http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_19861012_tomasi_en.html. The release highlights Tomasi’s work on the Liturgy of the Hours, the Missal and Lectionary, the Pontifical and Roman Ritual, and the use of the vernacular.

Mass was the “devotion of devotions,” the central act of the Christian life.\textsuperscript{177} Parati synthesizes Muratori approach as three-pronged: “that of a historian who through investigations renders an account of the evolution of rites; that of a theologian that knows how to distinguish dogma from discipline; that of a pastor of souls, sensitive to the culture of the faithful and to instances of poverty.”\textsuperscript{178}

Muratori’s pastoral theology and historical erudition met in his impressive body of liturgical scholarship. While many elements of his reform agenda were criticized in his day, and implemented only sporadically, his liturgical scholarship was an enduring contribution to the life of the Catholic Church. Some scholars have pointed to Muratori as the first, or among the first, in a chain of liturgical scholarship and reform that culminated in twentieth-century \textit{ressourcement} and Vatican II.\textsuperscript{179} Treating Muratori’s pastoral theology, Luca Brandolini argues that “the contemporary liturgical movement cannot be fully explained without taking into account the preparation of the preceding centuries, especially the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and above all the true and legitimate aspirations of the Enlightenment era.”\textsuperscript{180} Muratori has received some official recognition from the church for his contribution to liturgical reform. In 2001, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship released a “Directory” containing a brief history of liturgical reform. Muratori was paired with Benedict XIV and praised.\textsuperscript{181} Muratori has also been

\begin{thebibliography}{18}
\bibitem{177} Parati, \textit{Pioneri del movimento liturgico}, 17. Parati notes that this phrase was current in the eighteenth century.
\bibitem{178} Ibid.
\bibitem{180} Brandolini, “La pastorale,” 333.
\end{thebibliography}
noticed by postconciliar scholars that are critical of the implementation of Vatican II reforms. Commenting upon the phrase “noble simplicity” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 34), Alcuin Reid argues that “it is to Muratori and to this period with its potent cocktail of Enlightenment, Jansenist, and Gallican ideologies and to their liturgical progeny that the expression ‘noble simplicity’ can be traced.”

Muratori was a central figure, perhaps the central figure, in eighteenth-century liturgical scholarship. Almost continuously from his time in the Ambrosian library (1695–1700) until the publication in 1748 of his landmark study *Liturgia romana vetus*, Muratori studied the history and development of the liturgy for historical as well as theological and pastoral reasons. *Liturgia romana vetus* was a critical study of sacramentaries and remains an important source of liturgical scholarship even today.

The eighteenth-century debate over the reduction of the number of feast days of obligation, which raged during the pontificate of Benedict XIV, saw the convergence of a number of concerns. Third Party scholars and theologians sometimes opposed the proliferation of feast days of precept because they were seen to distract attention from the Sunday Mass or the classic liturgical seasons, which were on firmer biblical and historical foundations. Some of the opposed feasts were for recent saints. Relatively new Marian feasts were many and outnumbered feasts for Christ or those commemorating biblical events. Muratori shared all of these judgments.

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alongside an additional, economic concern: many of the poor had to give up a day of income during the week since labor was banned on these holydays of precept. Muratori saw that instead of working, many men in Modena, including fathers of poor families, would go from Mass to taverns and spend their money on alcohol. Calls for the reduction of feast days of obligation during the pontificate of Benedict XIV were numerous, and Muratori was a leader in this campaign. He was bitterly opposed by Cardinal Angelo Maria Quirini (1680–1755). Ultimately Benedict XIV decided for caution, and in 1748 ordered both sides to be silent.184

Muratori perceived the main pastoral issue of his day to be a widespread lack of lay comprehension of, and engagement in, the Mass, which led to fixation on private devotions, legends, and superstition.185 Lehner summarized Muratori’s analysis of the contemporary situation thus:

That so many of his countrymen were ignorant about the true content of their faith, could not see the joy of being Catholic and develop a personal relationship with Jesus as their friend in prayer, troubled him deeply. What made him angry, however, was when these people wasted their time with superstitious diversions instead of fulfilling the essential duties of a Christian life. Yet, he also realized how hard it was to battle such ignorance, especially if it was buttressed by intransigent clergymen.186

In order to address these issues, Muratori took a step that, for Italy, was quite radical. He included in Della regolata only the second translation of the Mass into Italian for public use.187

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185 For Muratori’s warnings against errors in devotion, and for his prescriptions for true Christian devotion, see Della regolata devozione dei cristiani, intr. Pietro Stella (Milan: Edizioni Paolina, 1990 [1747]), 98–106; 171–224. Muratori in no way sought to diminish or deny the value and efficacy of devotion to Mary and the saints. He saw his insistence on the Christo- and theocentric foundation of all Catholic devotion as the true tradition of the church, and he always argued he was merely repeating the teaching of Trent.

186 Ulrich Lehner, The Catholic Enlightenment, 130.

187 Della regolata, 143–163. An earlier translation by the Theatine Giuseppe Maria Ambrogi had been printed in Florence in 1670, but Ambrogi insisted this work was for scholarly use only. See Enrico Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano, 443n25.
Muratori made clear his translation was out of direct pastoral concern for the laity, especially those who could not understand Latin:

Because it is a great difficulty for many to conceive and maintain devotion in their hearts [during Mass], and since their ignorance of the Latin language prevents them from understanding the beauty of those holy prayers which for just reasons the Church continues to recite in that language, for the glory of God and the benefit of the ignorant, I wish here to explain (esporre) the Mass itself and its sacred and wonderful prayers for those who do not know the language of it nor understand what the priest, in the name of all present, asks of God in the celebration of the Mass.\footnote{Muratori, Della regolata, 142.}

Since Muratori knew that his work would face scrutiny for venturing into the controversial and even neuralgic territory surrounding liturgy and popular piety, he sent the entire manuscript to his Benedictine friend, Cardinal Fortunato Tamburini (1683–1761). Tamburini was, like Muratori, a native of Modena, and he admired Muratori’s historical work.\footnote{Tamburini’s reply to Muratori’s manuscript, dated 3 November 1745, contains 38 notes and suggestions for changes. It is in Della regolata, 263–73.}

The Cardinal had a humanistic streak and was himself a scholar, but he was considerably less open to reform than was Muratori. While not openly disapproving of Muratori’s bold move, Tamburini was circumspect. “What welcome you will meet for bringing the Mass into Italian, I do not know. What is certain is that if a Theatine had not translated the work of Le Brun from French\footnote{The Oratorian Pierre Le Brun (1661–1729) published extensively on the Mass, including a French translation. See Explication littérale, historique et dogmatique des prières et des cérémonies de la messe, 4 vols. (Paris: 1716–26). See Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano, 418–19. Le Brun “without a doubt” influenced Muratori (436). Le Brun’s work was translated into Italian by the Theatine Anton-Maria Donado. See Spiegazione letterale, storica e dogmatica delle prece e delle cerimonie della messa del m.r.p. Pietro Le Brun (Verona, 1735). Muratori referenced a later edition of this work, published in 1740 (Della regolata, 142).} into our language, it would be the first time that the Mass would be seen printed in the Italian language.”\footnote{Tamburini in Della regolata, 267.} Tamburini noted that the lack of a concrete law forbidding such a translation and the opinion of Benedict XIV were both in Muratori’s favor, but that the
“venerable custom of seeing it [the Mass] only in Latin” was against him. Tamburini warned Muratori that “certain zelanti,” sure to be offended by other things in the book, “might make a great clamor against this novelty” as a cover for impugning the whole work. Tamburini thought it likely that the zelanti would even retroactively attack the first Italian translator (Maria-Anton Donado). Since Muratori’s book was not just for scholars, but intended “for everybody,” he should take precautions, such as mentioning the precedence of Donado’s translation, to give less ammunition to those who harbor “hatred of novelty.”

Muratori also desired that, after being read or chanted in Latin, the scripture readings could be repeated in the vernacular during Mass. In eighteenth-century Italy the laity did not, as a rule, hear the scripture readings in the vernacular. The wisdom of having at least the scripture readings in the vernacular had seemed obvious to Muratori since he was “astonished and gladdened” while travelling in the Tyrol to hear the gospel read in German after they had been chanted in Latin. By recounting this well-known episode in detail in Della regolata, Muratori rather forcefully presented his view on the importance of lay access to vernacular scripture. The Tyrolese priest read the gospel to the people in a loud voice (alta voce) and in German, Muratori tells us, “because that was the native language of his people.” Then, they all recited the Confiteor, and the priest gave the absolution. Muratori went on to describe that this custom was also common in Dalmatia and Moravia. This prompted him to ask: why not in Italy?

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192 Ibid., 268. Tamburini was correct that Della regolata would arouse opposition. Figures as powerful as Cardinal Quirini protested against it (in Quirini’s case, directly to Rome). Chadwick, The Popes, 400. Della regolata was never censured.

193 Tamburini in Della regolata, 268.

194 The quoted words are Chadwick’s (The Popes, 76). See Della regolata, 149–50.

195 Muratori, Della regolata, 149

196 Chadwick adds that in parts of France and Germany it was also the custom (The Popes, 76).
After recounting his illuminating visit to Austria, Muratori made a prescient comment.

The Western Church has just motives to celebrate the sacred mysteries in the Latin language, as it was in the first centuries; but given that the people no longer understand that language as they once did, it seems that it would be a consolation and also of profit to the illiterate (ignoranti) faithful, who are the majority of the people, to receive by another way the understanding of these holy words, of the heavenly teachings, that the Gospel contains.\textsuperscript{197}

Muratori argued that at the very least parish priests must supply their parishioners with explanations of the gospel readings on feast days, as the sacred canons (presumably a reference to the Council of Trent) imposed.\textsuperscript{198} Often measured when wading into controversial territory, Muratori revealed his growing frustration at the Italian Church’s lack of provision for direct access to the scriptural text by the laity. Probably referring to an injunction of Benedict XIV that instructed homilists to quote the Bible only in Latin during sermons, Muratori wrote, with more than a hint of bitterness, “only the learned, who are very few, are able to profit from it [the scripture], and the rest of the people are condemned to never understand the words of eternal life.”\textsuperscript{199} Muratori transitioned back to his explanation and translation of the Mass with “but we go on” (ma seguitiamo), conveying a sense of both frustration and resignation.\textsuperscript{200}

The criticism of Cardinal Tamburini was more pointed on this proposal than on Muratori’s translation of the Mass into Italian.\textsuperscript{201} A translation of the Missal had no immediate visible effect on the actual liturgical ceremony, while introducing vernacular readings into the liturgy itself could lead to the desire for, or even the demand for, further changes. Ultimately,

\textsuperscript{197} Della regolata, 149.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 17:149–50. The Pistoians also appealed to Trent on this point. See chapter four, section 3.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 150. On the command of Benedict XIV, see Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano, 439–44. See also Crichton, Lights in the Darkness, 20.

\textsuperscript{200} Crichton interprets Muratori as employing “some sarcasm” (ibid., 20).

\textsuperscript{201} See Tamburini in Della regolata, 268.
Tamburini feared that introducing vernacular Bible readings for the reason Muratori gave – that the laity could profit from hearing these sacred words in their own language and thus understanding them – could lead to the demand that the entire Mass be celebrated in the vernacular. If indeed “such great consolation and profit” would be drawn from hearing the Gospel in the vernacular, the laity would “murmur” and be angry with their pastors should they not introduce further innovations. If vernacular Bible readings are so good and useful, “the people will say…how much more so would it be advantageous for our souls to hear the entire Mass recited in our language?”

For Tamburini, these implications were simply unacceptable. He concluded that the custom in the Tyrol might be fine for that region, but there is no reason such a novelty should spread to Italy. Nevertheless, Tamburini only asked Muratori to delete some of the more pointed material, or at least to change his criticism to something lighter. The Cardinal suggested: “I confess that such uses [vernacular readings] please me, and I would desire that they be introduced into our nations [Italy]. But in these matters it is not fitting to innovate without the authority of the Church.”

Tamburini’s attitude, while too learned and theologically sound to discount the theoretical possibility of such innovation (or, rather, retrievals) echoed a general zelanti attitude described by Crichton: “the Church in Italy felt itself under attack from foreign elements [Jansenism and Protestantism] and its leaders decided that no change in anything must be the policy.”

Inconveniently for many reform-minded Catholics, an emphasis on Bible reading was often associated with Protestantism and Jansenism in the eighteenth century. In addition to

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202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
204 Crichton, Lights in the Darkness, 23.
Muratori, reformers like Archbishop Martini also sought to expand scriptural access. Led by the pastoral and theological vision of Muratori, Third Party Italians achieved two very positive results in this area: universal authorization for vernacular translations of scripture and the first approved Catholic translation of the Bible into Italian (in the Tuscan dialect).

The post-Tridentine status quo was that vernacular translations were authorized, or not, by the local bishop. In some countries, like England and some German-speaking lands, vernacular Bibles were common and not controversial. In counter-Reformation heartlands like Spain and Italy, however, suspicion of vernacular Bible reading, along with an episcopal reluctance to approve translation projects, was much more common. This situation more or less endured until, in 1757, Benedict XIV universally authorized vernacular translations of scripture.

In 1778, Antonio Martini completed an Italian translation of the entire Bible that gained wide appeal. While Pope Pius VI was of a moderate zelanti persuasion and deeply suspicious of Jansenism, he praised the work of Martini:

You believe the Christian people are much to be encouraged to read the Bible. It is an excellent opinion. The Holy Scriptures are like springs of water that bring life to the soul, and their use ought to drive away errors widespread in this corrupt age, and show the way of truth and righteousness.

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205 On early modern Catholic vernacular Bible reading, see Chadwick, The Popes, 75–78.


207 Pius VI’s letter of 17 March 1778 was often printed in Italian Bibles. See, for example, a later edition of the Martini translation: La Sacra Bibbia secondo la Volgata tradotta in lingua italiana da monsignore Antonio Martini (Florence: David Passigli, 1842). On page 12 is Pius VI’s letter is in the Latin original and Italian translation. The English translation above is from Chadwick, The Popes, 77.
One reason that this translation project received wide approbation was that Third Party Catholics like Martini tended to stop short of some of the more polemical formulations of the Jansenists and did not alienate the papacy.

Muratori’s program for liturgical renewal comes through clearly in *Della regolata*. His demonstration of the historical contingency of many practices implicitly showed that contemporary liturgical practice could be reformed. There is a constant sense throughout *Della regolata* that the status quo is unsatisfactory, if not a pastoral emergency. Muratori shared many of the same concerns and proposed many of the same solutions as the council fathers at Vatican II. He saw that understanding scripture and participating in the Mass were both integral for Catholic reform and for personal conversion. The lifeblood of the Christian was not in *divozioncelle* ("petty devotions")\(^{208}\) but rather in the Word of God read and understood and in the sacraments celebrated devoutly. Like other Third Party reformers, Muratori came to his insights through a theological approach based on *ressourcement* and through his historical awareness of what was contingent and what was foundational in the Catholic faith.

Appolis interpreted the Third Party, which he believed survived into the nineteenth century (albeit weakened and fragmented), not only to be neither Jansenist nor *zelanti*, but also to be far from the bitter ultramontane populism of *l’Univers* and “at the antipodes” (*aux antipodes*) of Modernism.\(^ {209}\) He recognized this spirit to have endured into the twentieth century and to have animated the Catholic reforms of his own day, on the eve of the council:

> The very strong sense of the powers of the bishop and returning him to the place of divine right in the constitution of the Church; the scriptural and patristic renewal; the greater and greater participation of the faithful in the liturgy and the promotion of the laity; the return to pure liturgical sources and to the austere simplicity of primitive worship; the exaltation of the parish community; the progress of ecumenism, animated by

\(^{208}\) For this popular term see, for example, Muratori, *Della regolata*, 39, 229.

\(^{209}\) Appolis, *Tiers parti*, 574.
a spirit of understanding regarding separated Christians: these enlightened Catholics of the Third Party, whose history we have come to retrace, would rejoice at so many [of these] points in the life of contemporary Catholicism.210

**Conclusion: Ressourcement and Aggiornamento in the Eighteenth Century**

This chapter has argued that the roots of the Council need to pushed back to the eighteenth century, when certain Catholic figures and movements attempted reform through *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*. The Catholic Enlightenment engaged in *aggiornamento* through instances of creative and faithful Catholic engagement with new streams of philosophical, theological, scientific, and political ideas. The reform movements discussed above which were later “suppressed” – Gallicanism, Richerism, Febronianism, Josephinism, and Jansenism – asked a number of important questions of the church of their day. Jansenism, especially, had a tremendous impact on the theological, pastoral, and political life of the church through their attempts at *ressourcement*. The Third Party, and the career of Lodovico Muratori in particular, evidenced the existence of a moderate stream of Catholic reform that paralleled twentieth-century *ressourcement* in a number of important ways.

While none of these overlapping movements discussed in this chapter bore all of the fruit their proponents hoped for, they touched upon critical elements of the church’s life and witness. Some of those reforms that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century church suppressed reappeared forcefully in the twentieth century, and they had to be addressed again at Vatican II. We turn to Tuscany, where a group of late Jansenists attempted perhaps the boldest series of eighteenth-century Catholic reforms, many of which remarkably foreshadowed the Council.

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210 Ibid., 576.
CHAPTER III: RADICAL REFORM IN TUSCANY: SCIPIONE DE’RICCI AND LATE JANSENISM

The Synod of Pistoia\(^1\) saw the convergence of a number of eighteenth-century reformist currents. It was the culmination and clearest expression of the international movement of “late” or “political” Jansenism that had grown so strong in Italy.\(^2\) The theological and devotional concerns of these Jansenists and their sympathizers were buttressed in Tuscany by the Erastianism of the energetic and powerful Grand Duke, Peter Leopold.\(^3\) Far from being of only regional importance, the Synod of Pistoia, and the papal

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3 Peter Leopold reigned as Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1765 until 1790 and as Holy Roman Emperor from 1790 until 1792. “It is generally acknowledged that of all the figures in the century of light in Italy,” Leopold “was the most outstanding” (Samuel J. Miller, *Portugal and Rome c. 1748–1830: An Aspect of the Catholic
response it received in the bull *Auctorem fidei* were very significant events in the life of the Catholic Church.\(^4\) These intra-Catholic struggles over the nature and direction of reform cast their shadow even up to the Second Vatican Council.

This chapter examines the origins and sources of Pistoian reform, which centered on the career of Scipione de’ Ricci.\(^5\) De’Ricci’s bold vision was shaped by his education and his coming of age during a time when many reform-minded Italian Catholics were growing progressively frustrated, and anti-papal and anti-Jesuit polemics were widespread and increasingly bitter. De’Ricci’s reform agenda asserted an anti-ultramontane ecclesiology, a Christocentric reform of liturgy and devotion, and Jansenist doctrine. This chapter shows how the Bishop of Pistoia relied on Muratorian Third Party ideas, on late or “political” Jansenism, and on an Erastianism which inspired him to place great hope in a state-sponsored reform of the church. The next chapter examines the Acts of Pistoia, particularly the Synod’s ecclesiology, Jansenism, liturgical theology, devotional prescriptions, and inchoate ideas concerning religious liberty. Simultaneously, the condemnations of the bull *Auctorem fidei*

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\(^4\) Gabriel du Pac de Bellegarde (1717–89) of the Jansenist church of Utrecht, called the Abbé de Bellegarde, was a close confidante of de’Ricci and wrote in his translation of the Acts of Pistoia that the Synod was accepted and praised in Holland, and by “the most learned theologians in France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.” See *Actes et décrets du concile diocésain de Pistoie*, 2 vols. (Pistoia: 1788) 1:101 note a. The relationship between de Bellegarde and de’Ricci, and the affinities between Pistoian thought and the Utrecht circle were explored by Niccolò Rodolico in the chapter “Scipione dei Ricci e Gabriele di Bellegarde (Influssi francesi sul Giansenismo italiano),” in *Gli amici e i tempi di Scipione dei Ricci*, 49–114.

will be considered, where relevant. Chapter five will explore the aftermath of the Synod, seeking an explanation for why Riccian reform failed. These reflections will culminate in a theological evaluation of Pistoianism. While I will argue that there were many elements of true reform in the Acts of the Synod and in the agenda of de’Ricci, I will demonstrate that Pistoianism, when considered as a holistic program for Catholic reform, fails to adhere to at least three of Yves Congar’s four principles of true reform. While containing much of great value, the work of de’Ricci and his Synod cannot, for Catholic theology, be considered true reform.

1. The Education and Theological Foundations of an Eighteenth-Century Italian Jansenist

The character of Scipione de’Ricci (1741–1810) and the confluence of ideological, political, and theological currents he imbibed in the Italy of the latter half of the eighteenth century help to explain his intense reformist fervor. De’Ricci is known to history first and foremost as a radical Jansenist. By applying the term “radical” to “reform” or “Jansenism,” I mean not only the standard definition of “far-reaching or thorough,” but also the literal sense “of appealing to the root of spiritual power in Christ’s gift of it to the whole believing community.”

A deeply zealous and conscientious pastor, de’Ricci sought to immerse his flock in pure biblical and patristic doctrine, to inculcate in them a Christocentric devotion shorn of superstition, and to instruct them with participatory liturgy and vernacular texts. However, de’Ricci was also a committed Jansenist, who was deeply invested in the intense doctrinal

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6 “To ultramontane historians Ricci was a Jansenist in the full heretical sense” (S. J. Miller, Portugal and Rome, 19n42).


8 This language (“pure”; “shorn of superstition”) seeks to reflect de’Ricci’s understanding of his reforms, rather than his opponents’ perspective, which will be examined later.
disputes of the previous three centuries concerning nature, grace, and predestination. He was almost obsessed with hatred of the Jesuits and the Sacred Heart devotion that symbolized their spirituality and influence; he was also preoccupied with combatting what he saw as the unchristian hubris of the papacy and the Curia, which he often referred to as “the Court of Rome” (or, less courteously, “Babylon”). To achieve these reformist goals, de’Ricci stressed a Gallican theological method, which minimized papal teaching and stressed scripture, the church fathers (especially Augustine), and the consent of the whole church in defining doctrine. He sought to educate priests and laity with “good books,” a phrase that regularly appears in his correspondence and often, but not always, meant Jansenist books. Finally, the bishop was convinced that his reform agenda could be achieved only with the support of the state. Therefore, he lifted up the banner of his prince and asserted Grand Duke Leopold’s nearly unlimited ecclesiastical rights, often in opposition to the power of the papacy, which in de’Ricci’s mind was the greatest ecclesiastical obstacle to achieving the church reforms he desired.

De’Ricci came of age during a time of increasing polarization in the church, and when Third Party began to fade away. Born in 1740 to the old and respected Florentine family of St. Caterina de’Ricci (1522–90), young Scipione actually considered entering the Jesuit

9 On “the Court of Rome,” see, for example, de’Ricci to Leopold, 11 June 1786 in Lettere 2:666–74, at 674. For “Babylon,” see de’Ricci, Memorie 2:207. The term “Babylon” signifying Rome (as the seat of the papacy or the contemporary Catholic Church) was common in French Jansenist figurism. See Strayer, Suffering Saints, 250. On figurism, see chapter two, section 2.2; chapter four, 1.1. See also de’Ricci’s preface to the Raccolta series of tracts: Raccolta di opuscoli interessanti la religione (Pistoia: Bracali, 1783), 1:v–vi. From Bellegarde, de’Ricci had received at least one work of the French figurist, the Abbé d’Étemare, who did much to popularize the typological understanding of references like “Babylon.” See Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 76; Lettere 2:671. De’Ricci uses the term Babilonia in a 25 November 1782 letter to Giovanni Andrea Serrao (1731–99), philo-Jansenist and enlightened bishop of Potenza in the Kingdom of Naples (Carte Ricci 45, 309). On Serrao, see chapter five, 2.1.

10 In this last point de’Ricci went further than did traditional Gallicanism. Influenced by Edmond Richer, de’Ricci wished to elevate the authority of the “second order” (priests) and considered them “judges of the faith.” See chapter two, 1.3; chapter four, 1.3.

11 On the “buoni libri” see de’Ricci’s letter quoted in Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 57–58. See also pp. 10, 68, 87, 96 for correspondence where he references buoni libri. “The Jansenists both in France and Italy always speak of ‘good books’ and ‘good doctrine’” (Bolton, Church Reform, 7–8, 28–9, 89, here: 7).
Order, and for a time he attended the Roman College to train for the priesthood. As a young student in Rome, de’Ricci was influenced by the Oratorians, an order with notable members who were sympathetic to Jansenism and hostile to Jesuits. From the age of sixteen, he was greatly influenced by attending the meetings of a circle of reform-minded churchmen at the house of Msgr. Giovanni Bottari (1689–1775). This circle, called the Archetto (Bow), was mostly Tuscan; it was also anti-Jesuit, anti-ultramontane, theologically Augustinian, and at least philo-Jansenist. De’Ricci was particularly influenced by Msgr. Pier Francesco Foggini, who was a close friend of the de’Ricci family and had met Scipione when he was a young boy. De’Ricci adopted opinions similar to Foggini’s on devotions, such as a disbelief in the legend of the 10,000 Ursuline martyrs and the veil of Veronica. De’Ricci also inherited the strict Augustinianism of Foggini and other mentors.

Jansenism first gained momentum in Italy as anti-Jesuitism, which goes a long way towards explaining its appeal to monarchs during this period. De’Ricci’s distinctive brand of reform, including his Erastianism, came directly from a confluence of ideologies which were strong in the middle and late eighteenth century: Jansenism, Gallicanism, Josephinism, and more.

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12 See Rodolico’s account of de’Ricci’s origins and life before the Synod in Gli amici e i tempi, 1–48; Matteucci, Scipione de’ Ricci, 13–45; see also de’Ricci’s memoirs: Memorie 1:1–53; Bolton, Church Reform, 1–54. Lorenzo de’Ricci (1703–75), the Superior General of the Jesuits at the time of the suppression, was closely related enough to be called uncle by young Scipione (ibid., 4 and Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 13). Pius VI’s particular distress at the dissent of an Italian bishop educated in Rome is put with indignant frankness in the preface to the condemnations of Auctorem fidei: “Fuit sane non in ultimis terris, verum in media luce Italiae, sub oculis Urbis et prope Apostolorum limina…” (Stella, La bolla Auctorem Fidei, 613).

13 It was an Oratorian named Fontana who convinced de’Ricci not to join the Jesuit Order. See Memorie, 1:12; Bolton, Church Reform, 3. The Oratorians underline the connection between Italian late or “political” Jansenism and French Jansenist thought. An Italian Oratorian, Vincenzo Palmieri of Genoa, was a key confidante of de’Ricci at the Synod of Pistoia. On Palmieri’s relationship to de’Ricci and his reformist agenda, see ibid., 4, 28–9, 37, 59, 67; Appolis, Tiers parti, 414, and below, 2.3. Many important French-speaking Jansenists were Oratorians, including Pasquier Quesnel and Jacques-Joseph Duguet (1634–1719). See Louis Cognet, “The Jansenist Conflict to 1713,” 51–53. Quesnel was deeply influenced by Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629), founder of the French Oratory.

14 On the education of de’Ricci and the Archetto, see Matteucci, Scipione de’ Ricci, 13–45; Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 8–13. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 1–3. The circle also included Cardinal Nero Corsini, “an active enemy of the Jesuits” (Church Reform, 1) and a friend of Cardinal Joseph Augustine Orsi, who wrote multiple criticisms of Jesuit teaching.

15 Jemolo has studied in detail the origins of anti-Jesuitism in Italy. See Il giansenismo in Italia, 97–184.
Richerism, and Muratorian Third Party thought. The confidence of reformers of de’Ricci’s kind swelled after the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, the continued defiance of the papacy by the Utrecht Jansenists, the flexing of the ancient strength of the German prince-bishops at the Congress of Ems in 1786, and the success of Josephinist Reform Catholicism in Austria and the Empire.16

While it is important to note the international nature of the Jansenist network of which de’Ricci was a part, the Italian Jansenist influences upon him were strong. These influences included some prominent Tuscans. Indeed, de’Ricci relates that Bishop Giuseppe Ippoliti (1718–80), whom he succeeded as Bishop of Pistoia-Prato, preferred the books of Port-Royal “above all others” and thought that the most popular Jansenist periodical, the Nouvelles ecclésiastiques dealt with the most critical issues of the day.17 Upon returning to Tuscany after ordination to work in the Florentine Nunciature, de’Ricci deepened his staunchly anti-ultramontane views under the influence of men like Giulio Rucellai (who was the Tuscan Segretario del Regio Diritto from 1734–78) and Reginaldo Tanzini, who probably edited the Gazetta ecclesiastica, a radical Erastian review published in Florence in 1776.18 Echoing a common anti-ultramontane trope, de’Ricci recorded that at this time he was being disabused of “many prejudices that had been rooted in me by my past education and the theology of the Decretals.”19 Indeed, a central plank of this Jansenist Erastianism was a notion that a great

16 S. J. Miller identifies these events and ideas as parts of “Enlightenment Catholicism” as well as “political Jansenism.” See “The Limits of Political Jansenism in Tuscany,” 766.


18 Bolton, Church Reform, 5–7. Tanzini and de’Ricci were in close contact. In Carte Ricci 53–54, there are 23 letters of de’Ricci to Tanzini during the tumultuous years 1790–91.

19 De’Ricci in Memorie, 1:14. “…e mi tolse molti pregiudizi che per la passata educazione e per la teologia delle Decretali si erano in me radicati.” De’Ricci was referring specifically to the influence of Canon Philip Martini in Florence.
many papal prerogatives were based upon false views of history, the deviousness of past popes, and forged documents. Such a view converged neatly with the Catholic Enlightenment’s emphasis on the study of history, on source criticism, and on the need to curtail superstitions and abuses. All of these influences on de’Ricci’s reform agenda came to fruition and took institutional shape after his elevation to the episcopate.

2. The Riccian Reform Agenda: 1780–86

De’Ricci’s bold program was a combination of several key strands which, from our contemporary perspective, may look separable. In his late-eighteenth century context, however, they were tightly connected. These four strands of his thought are all apparent in the documents of the Synod of Pistoia. First, like most Jansenists and philo-Jansenists of his age, de’Ricci was deeply anti-ultramontane. This anti-ultramontanism was an intense motivating principle animating his construction of a decentralized ecclesiology that was influenced by Gallicanism, conciliarism, Richerism, and Febronianism. The second strand, overlapping extensively with the first, was de’Ricci’s staunch and aggressive Erastianism. He boldly asserted the authority and responsibility of sovereigns in the ecclesiastical sphere and thus sought to marshal the power of the Tuscan State to reform the church and to limit and circumscribe papal power, which he believed had usurped powers rightfully belonging to states and sovereigns. Third, de’Ricci was guided by Jansenist doctrines concerning grace and predestination. From these teachings he drew numerous practical consequences for morality and church life. Finally, de’Ricci was animated by a Muratorian spirit that sought to prioritize the Christocentric in the devotional and liturgical life of his flock. In this vein, he

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De’Ricci sought to found an ecclesiastical “Academy” which would be staffed by priests and serve the continuing education of the clergy, so that they could better understand history in order to reform abuses. The Synod of Pistoia called for the creation of such an academy in the decree on clerical life (Decreto della vita ed onesta’ dei cherici §8 in Atti, 214). On de’Ricci’s belief that the study of antiquity frees from “firmly rooted prejudices,” see Memorie 1:206.
also encouraged vernacular Bible reading and a limited use of the vernacular in the liturgy. However, his view of Christian devotional life was so colored by his Jansenism that he relentlessly attacked “Jesuitical” devotions (like the Sacred Heart), very aggressively modified local devotional life, and recommended Jansenist guides to reading scripture that the papacy had repeatedly condemned.

2.1 – De’Ricci’s Anti-Ultramontane Ecclesiology

De’Ricci was made bishop of Pistoia–Prato in 1780. In close communication with Leopold and with his explicit backing, de’Ricci immediately set to work attacking the monastic orders and scholastic education in his diocese. He proposed, in their place, a renewed secular clergy funded directly by the state and tightly controlled by episcopal and governmental oversight. The clergy was to be educated with enlightened, Gallican, and Jansenist texts. Thus, they could be immunized against “Sadduceeism and Pharisaism,” which, through “Molinist and Hildebrandist doctrines” were “spreading like gangrene in the bosom of the Church.” Such a program of study pleased Leopold because it denigrated the legacy of the Jesuits (understood in the reference to Molinism) and the claims of the papacy,

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21 The same year saw the death of Empress Maria Theresa and thus the beginning of the sole rule of Emperor Joseph II.

22 Early in his episcopacy, de’Ricci wrote that unless the Dominicans returned to “ancient” monastic ways, he would consider them “irreformable.” He claimed people were attracted to the regulars for “absolving without any discernment” and that they give the impression of having “passports” to heaven in “rosaries or scapulars or belts or toties quoties.” See de’Ricci to Francesco Mormorai (auditore of the Segretario del Regio Diritto), 19 November 1782 in Carte Ricci 45:303–4. De’Ricci also detected the legacy of the Jesuits, writing that many in Prato have “a Jesuitical spirit” and think they can “profit from the celebrated passport to a Jesuitical paradise” (profitare del celebre passaporto al paradiso gesuitico). By this language de’Ricci was arguing that the Jesuits gave the impression they could guarantee heaven through certain devotions. See de’Ricci to Clement Comparini, 11 May 1781, in Carte Ricci 45:68.

23 See de’Ricci to Leopold (11 June 1786) in Lettere 2:666–674, at 667. “Fa d’uopo valersi delle opera ancora di moderni scrittori, suscitati da Dio per combattere il Sadduceismo e il Fariseismo, che per le dottrine molinistiche e ildebrandesche vanno come la cancrena serpeggianti in seno della Chiesa” (69). See also Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 69–70. Rodolico saw this letter as a very clear illustration of the Riccian agenda and of the depths to which French authors had influenced him. In this letter, de’Ricci referenced Mabillon, Louis Ellies Dupin (1657–1719), and Cardinal Tomasi, making clear that it was not only Jansenist authors who could serve as theological disinfectants. On the polemical uses of referring to opponents as Sadducees and Pharisees, see chapter four, 1.1.
especially those of a temporal nature, understood in the reference to Hildebrand, that is, Pope Gregory VII, a hero of ultramontanes for bringing Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV “to Canossa” in 1077. Anti-ultramontanism and antagonism toward “Jesuitism” manifested the foundations of de’Ricci’s Jansenist reform agenda. To de’Ricci, the Jesuit order and the papacy bore a large part of the blame for the doctrinal, ecclesiological, liturgical, and political problems in the church. These two closely linked forces were also seen as the greatest ecclesiastical foes to the good rule of princes.

The importance he accorded the status of the sovereign in ecclesial matters, an importance also supported by the decrees of the Synod of Pistoia, makes it necessary to consider de’Ricci’s ecclesiology together with his political thought. This section will highlight de’Ricci’s ecclesiology as manifested in his actions as Bishop of Pistoia-Prato up to 1786, while the next section will highlight de’Ricci’s collaboration with the Grand Duke on the Punti ecclesiastici, which contained their synodal plan for church reform.

His plan for church reform also led de’Ricci to attempt to enshrine Gallicanism as the official ecclesiology of his diocese and, by implication, of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. In

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24 Emperor Henry IV’s humiliating penance to seek the lifting of his excommunication in the snows of Canossa symbolized the triumph of the papacy over temporal princes. De’Ricci asserted the right of the local bishop to reform the breviary and was accused of deleting or downplaying the proper status of Pope Gregory VII and Thomas Becket, both of whom could be seen as ultramontane and anti-Erastian heroes. Such actions of de’Ricci were also an assertion that the local bishop need not rely on the curial Congregation of Rites. De’Ricci had a pastoral letter against the Feast of Gregory VII translated from the French and published: “Lettera pastorale di Monsignore Vescovo di Montpellier che condanna un foglio stampato contenente un preteso Uffizio per la festa di Gregorio VII,” in Raccolta 4:299–312. On the controversial nature of the extension of the feast of Gregory VII to the universal church by Benedict XIII in 1728–29, which was especially resented in France, see Lehner, The Catholic Enlightenment, 158–59. De’Ricci also omitted from the calendar almost all the Jesuit saints, including Ignatius of Loyola, whom he replaced with a Gallican saint, St. Germanus of Auxerre. Carte Ricci 105 is a booklet of de’Ricci’s reflections on the calendar of saints. In addition to how he organized the calendar, his entries on Marian feast also reveal much of his theological and devotional orientation, which sought to steer a course between maximalism and minimalism. See his entries for December 8 (the “Conception of the Holy Virgin”), July 26 (Feast of SS Anne and Joachim), and September 8 (Nativity of Mary). See also Bolton, Church Reform, 35.

25 See 11 July 1782 letter of de’Ricci to Francesco Seratti (the segretario del Consiglio di Stato). De’Ricci blamed Molina and Jesuits for introducing new doctrine little by little, covertly teaching Pelagianism, renewing “Hildebrandish pretensions” (le pretensioni ildebrandistiche), and encouraging “petty devotions, contrary to true and solid piety” (divozioncelle, contrarie alla vera e soda pietà). See Carte Ricci 45:243–46.
the same letter to the Grand Duke of 11 June 1786 quoted above, de’Ricci set up Bossuet’s *Defense of the Declaration of the Gallican Clergy* of 1682 as a standard:

> I also am of the firm opinion that Your Majesty could not render a better service to the Church and the State than by ordering that nobody should differ from those principles contained in this *Declaration* and that all pastors of souls in receiving the institution of their benefice must pledge to hold the doctrine of it.

De’Ricci defended the necessity of such a sweeping measure by explaining, in his correspondence with the Grand Duke, that many of the problems afflicting both church and state came from a muddling of the powers proper to each.\(^2^7\)

The theological foundation of de’Ricci’s opposition to some central ultramontane claims regarding church-state relations was the belief that Jesus Christ’s Kingdom, that is, the church, is not of this world, that it is “a purely spiritual power for the salvation of souls.”\(^2^8\) Of course, behind this fundamental ecclesiological commitment is the implication that while the pope’s kingdom is not of this world (or rather, should not be), the temporal sovereign’s most certainly is. This principle, taken to an extreme in the jurisdictional and ecclesiological acts of Leopold’s reign and of the Synod of Pistoia, allowed the Grand Duke to exercise a level of control over the Tuscan Church that was antithetical to the principles of ultramontane and anti-Erastian Catholics, particularly to the pope, the religious orders, and their supporters.\(^2^9\)

De’Ricci then informed the Grand Duke of a second ecclesiological principle, which was later promulgated by the Synod of Pistoia and censured as heretical by *Auctorem fidei*.

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\(^2^6\) De’Ricci is referring an Italian translation of Bossuet’s work. See *Lettere* 2:669.

\(^2^7\) De’Ricci believed that if the papacy tended only to the spiritual matters entrusted to it, it would become a glorious ornament of a reformed Catholic Church: “destroy the teachings (*massime*) that are not of Jesus Christ and there will be a glorious Pope and a Sovereign most respectable” (De’Ricci to Cardinal Andrea Corsini (16 August 1781) in *Carte Ricci* 45, 141). The Acts of Pistoia frequently reiterated this view of church-state relations. See, *inter alia*, *Atti* 81–82 (§16.1 of the “Decree on Faith and the Church”), 241 ("Promemoria on the Convocation of a National Council," §8), 249 (“Decree on Synodal Constitutions and on Their Authority,” §3).

\(^2^8\) “[U]na potestà puremente spirituale per la salute delle anime” (De’Ricci to Leopold, 11 June 1786, in *Lettere* 2:674). This thesis is repeated verbatim at the Synod of Pistoia. See *Atti*, 223 §7.

\(^2^9\) De’Ricci was consistent in his view of this principle, even arguing that he had no power to dissolve monasteries, since it involved property, which is temporal, not spiritual (De’Ricci to Cavaliere Cesare Marchetti (19 April 1783) in *Carte Ricci* 46:199–202).
That principle was that God gave power first to the entire church, and the authority of pastors was derived from this power given to the entire church.\textsuperscript{30} This prioritization of the entire church as the locus of supreme ecclesial authority was intended to diminish the idea that the papacy dispensed ecclesiastical authority as it saw fit. From these two principles – the purely spiritual power of the pope and the derivation of pastors’ authority from that given to the whole church, de’Ricci argues, will come “sound doctrine, the restoration of the discipline of the Church, and the security of the Throne against the attacks of the Court of Rome.”\textsuperscript{31}

The appeal of de’Ricci’s reform program to a figure like Peter Leopold is obvious. The Grand Duke had a young and energetic reforming bishop to push a program which denigrated the memory of the Jesuits, who were perceived to infringe upon the rights of sovereigns through their numerous exemptions, their (alleged) pernicious doctrines, and their support of papal power.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time, this program checked the sweeping claims of the papacy in areas Leopold and de’Ricci believed should be reserved to the sovereign’s authority. Concretely, such a plan could impede papal and curial jurisdictional interference in Tuscany. Once de’Ricci had enacted his plan for clerical education and reorganization, Leopold could also expect better educated, more disciplined, and therefore more easily controlled clerical subjects of his rule. While de’Ricci and Leopold clearly had spiritual concern for the faithful of Tuscany, they also had temporal goals: more faithful Christians

\textsuperscript{30} This thesis, considered Richerist, was condemned as heretical in \textit{Auctorem fidei} 2 (cf. Denzinger 2602). See the full citation and discussion in chapter four, section 1.

\textsuperscript{31} De’Ricci to Leopold, 11 June 1786, in \textit{Lettere} 2:674 (“Da queste due massime deriverà la più sana dottrina, il ristabilimento della disciplina della Chiesa, la sicurezza del Trono contro gli attacchi della Corte di Roma”).

\textsuperscript{32} The papal brief of Clement XIV, \textit{Dominus ac Redemptor} suppressing the Jesuit Order (21 July 1773) acknowledged the repeated grievances many Catholic sovereigns had brought against the Society. “[T]here was no lack of very grave accusations against members that caused no little disturbance to the peace and tranquility of the Christian commonwealth. Hence many complaints were made against the Society. Some princes backed these complaints with their authority and reports.” For the original Latin and an English translation of the brief by John Murphy, S.J., see \textit{Promising Hope}, 281–312, at 302.
were believed to be better subjects or ministers.\textsuperscript{33} The Pistoians, then, were trying to create a great society, they were not just narrowly concerned with bitter doctrinal disputes, as Jansenists have sometimes been alleged to be.\textsuperscript{34} De’Ricci’s reform plan also allowed Leopold to manifest his enlightened credentials by boasting a Grand Duchy shorn of embarrassing superstitions about false miracles, dubious relics, and exaggerated claims about indulgences.\textsuperscript{35} Of course, de’Ricci had long lists of recommended reading (“good books”) to disabuse the literate of such credulity so that a more enlightened and biblical view might trickle down to the illiterate from his re-educated clergy.

The sources of de’Ricci’s program were published from 1783 to 1790, at his own expense, in a seventeen-volume series containing over 70 tracts, called the \textit{Raccolta di opuscoli interessanti la Religione}.\textsuperscript{36} The \textit{Raccolta} “reflects very well the agitation for reforms that became more insistent towards the outbreak of the French Revolution.”\textsuperscript{37} The reform program jointly spearheaded by de’Ricci and Leopold in Tuscany in the 1780s had direct and obvious links with the reforms of Joseph II, which is evidenced by the publication of Italian defenses of Febronius and Johann Valentin van Eybel in de’Ricci’s \textit{Raccolta} series.\textsuperscript{38} Just in time for Pope Pius VI’s visit to the Emperor Joseph II in Vienna in 1782, van Eybel had written the conciliarist and episcopalist work \textit{Was ist der Papst?}, a work which was a flagrant

\textsuperscript{33} In fact, the Pistoians believed that one could not be a faithful subject or minister without being a good Christian. See the “Promemoria on the Convocation of a National Council” §7, in \textit{Atti}, 241.

\textsuperscript{34} See chapter two, section 2.3.

\textsuperscript{35} These issues are discussed below in section 2.4, below.

\textsuperscript{36} The contents of all the tracts are listed in Matteucci, \textit{Scipione de’Ricci}, 303–7. For an overview, see Rodolico, \textit{Gli amici e i tempi}, 49–114. The influence of the Abbé de Bellegarde prompted the \textit{Raccolta}, since the Utrecht divine sent many books and pamphlets to de’Ricci and often encouraged him to translate into Italian the writings of the “Friends of Truth.” Most of the \textit{Raccolta} volumes are currently available on archive.org.

\textsuperscript{37} Bolton, \textit{Church Reform}, 29.

\textsuperscript{38} Van Eybel is defended in volume 14 of the \textit{Raccolta}. See “Esame del breve del Santo Padre Pio VI che condanna il libro: \textit{Cosa è il Papa},” in \textit{Raccolta di opuscoli interessanti la religione} (Pistoia: Bracali, 1787), 14:293–423.
provocation of the papacy. But it would be a mistake to see Riccian reform as a mere instantiation of Josephinism in Tuscany.

While Febronius, van Eybel, and the reformist thought coming from Hapsburg lands were important sources, de’Ricci was pumping an enormous amount of French and Dutch Jansenist works into Tuscany through the Raccolta tracts. The list of these “Friends of the Truth” (amici della verità), as Jansenist reformers often called one another, was essentially a roll-call of international Jansenism. De’Ricci buttressed his Jansenist propaganda campaign by appeals to the legacies of Gallicanism and conciliarism, medieval traditions that were still very much alive and well and were supported by many powerful statesmen and ecclesiastics around the Catholic world. De’Ricci’s collection of radical pamphlets went beyond moderate forms of Gallicanism and conciliarism, however, by promoting the presbyterianism of Richer and Marsilius of Padua’s view on the independence of the temporal power. As we will see, de’Ricci’s ecclesiological agenda was a rather stark combination of state absolutism coupled with a certain amount of democratization, including a revival of the synodal system, in the church.

39 Van Eybel’s Corpus iuris pastoralis was also in use in the diocese of Pistoia-Prato. See Bolton, Church Reform, 29, 38. Another important link with Josephinism was the translation of an Instruction of the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, Jerome Colloredo, dated 29 June 1782 and sent out for circulation by de’Ricci on 11 April 1783 with an accompanying pastoral letter. See below, section 2.4.

40 See, for example, the popular Florentine Jansenist periodical Annali ecclesiastici 1 (2 January 1784): 38–39, in which de’Ricci is listed among the “Friends of Truth.”

41 De’Ricci was particularly influenced by, and reliant upon, French authors. See Maurice Vaussard, “La bibliothèque janséniste française de Scipione dei Ricci,” Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France 53 (1967): 291–98.

42 Bolton, Church Reform, 31. In Bolton’s view these ecclesiological assertions are “extreme” and move well beyond the Gallicanism of Bossuet. There are various defenses of Richerist doctrine in the Raccolta, for example in the first volume and in vols. 14–16. Richerism will be discussed further in chapter four, section 1.3.
2.2 – Erastianism and Synodal Ecclesiology: The Grand Duke’s “Fifty-Seven Points”

In January of 1786, Peter Leopold sent a circular letter to the Tuscan episcopate containing fifty-seven *Punti ecclesiastici* (“Ecclesiastical Points”). The program of reform it contained was very close to de’Ricci’s agenda and to the decrees of the Synod of Pistoia. Two of these proposals are especially noteworthy. The first point calls for diocesan synods to be held at least every two years, beginning in the summer of 1786, for the purpose of reforming abuses that are brought to the bishops’ attention by their clergy. Thus, de’Ricci could argue that he called the Pistoian Synod nine months later simply in obedience to his lawful prince. The fifth point was an “act of hostility to the Papacy.” Leopold decreed that the “original rights” (*diritti originari*) of his bishops had been “abusively usurped from them by the Court of Rome,” and he gave the Tuscan bishops the right to examine canonical dispensations reserved to Rome and to reclaim those which had been removed unlawfully. This was not the Grand Duke’s first act of boldness against the papacy. In 1782 he forbade payment to Rome of several traditional ecclesiastical dues, redirecting the funds to the relief of the poor instead. He also abolished the Inquisition, increased clerical taxation, and

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43 For the “Fifty-Seven Points” and the responses of all the Tuscan bishops, see *Punti ecclesiastici compilati e trasmessi da sua Altezza reale a tutti gli arcivescovi e vescovi della Toscana e loro rispettive risposte*, 2 vols. (Florence: Gaetano Campiagi, 1787). Henceforth: *Punti ecclesiastici*. De’Ricci’s response is 1:133–54. Also of interest is the response of Antonio Martini, Archbishop of Florence (1:31–49), who had a Third Party perspective that welcomed some reforms but also wished to avoid alienating the papacy and affiliating too closely with Jansenism. The *Punti ecclesiastici* were reprinted and adopted in whole by the Synod of Pistoia. See *Atti*, 49–69. There is a copy in *Carte Ricci* 28, in the hand of Carlo Mengoni, de’Ricci’s secretary.

44 See *Punti ecclesiastici* 1: 4–5, §1.

45 Bolton, *Church Reform*, 42.

46 *Punti ecclesiastici* 1:6, §5. “E credendo uno degl’importanti oggetti il rivendicare all’autorità dei Vescovi i Diritti originari loro, statigli usurpati dalla Corte di Roma abusivamente, potranno prendere in esame, quali della Dispense riservate dalla Corte di Roma possano riguardarsi come una usurpazione alla legittima Giurisdizione dei Vescovi, e da essa rivendicarsi, e tra queste specialmente le appresso.” The notion of the “original rights” of bishops was a thorny one and a fixture in the great ideological struggle between papalism and various forms of conciliarism or episcopalism for many centuries. The phrase was even used by proponents of episcopal collegiality at the Second Vatican Council, during debates over *De Episcopis* and *De Ecclesia* (which became *Christus Dominus* and *Lumen gentium*, respectively). See chapter six, 2.4. De’Ricci apparently believed that the proposition that the pope could “limit the original faculties that Jesus Christ gave to the bishops” was “heretical.” See de’Ricci to Pettini, Archdeacon of Colle, 27 July 1790 in *Carte Ricci* 53, 554.
enforced the *exequatur* (which meant papal documents could not be published in Tuscany until he approved them). The papal nuncio’s court was abolished, and appeals to Rome were no longer allowed. The religious orders were to have no Roman superiors, they were to be regulated by the bishops, and orders deemed useless or immoral were suppressed or combined with others.\(^{47}\) This anti-ultramontane Erastianism was thus close in spirit to Josephinism, which was shaping Austria and the Hapsburg lands and intimately familiar to Leopold, the younger brother of the Emperor. Josephinist reform also favored the rights of the monarch to suppress or combine monasteries and religious orders and to turn their properties to purportedly more useful purposes (usually education or hospitals). It also asserted the state’s control, rather than that of ecclesiastical courts, over marriage; it claimed for the prince the power to curtail or even abolish the Inquisition, to dismiss papal nuncios, and to demand the *exequatur* before papal documents could be published.\(^{48}\)

It is easy to understand de’Ricci’s brashness at the Synod in light of his sovereign’s attacks on papal and curial authority and the strong assertion of Erastian doctrine in the *Punti ecclesiastici*. While the *Punti* have sometimes been understood to be primarily the work of de’Ricci, his correspondence with Leopold shows that although the points were submitted to de’Ricci in advance and some of his commentary adopted (especially regarding seminary and catechetical texts), the *Punti* themselves originated in the Grand Duke’s governing circles and directly reflected Leopold’s wishes for church reform.\(^{49}\) This fact shows that the will to

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\(^{47}\) For summaries of these actions, see Bolton, *Church Reform* 42, 51–52. For an index including some of the numerous decrees, letters, and ducal *motu proprios* effecting such changes throughout the 1780s, see *Atti Appendices*, 133–35.

\(^{48}\) On the link between the *exequatur*, the thought of Van Espen, and Josephinism, see Oskar Köhler, “Foundations and Forms of the Established Church in the Bourbon States of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *The Church in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment*, 333–35.

\(^{49}\) See de’Ricci’s correspondence with the Grand Duke in *Lettere*. The first draft of the text is in 1:251–59. For de’Ricci’s suggestions and responses, see his letters of 8 October 1785 (1:491–92), 7 January 1786 (2:534–49), and 27 July 1786 (2:747–49). I follow here the conclusion of S. J. Miller (“The Limits of Political Jansenism,” 762).
reform was also coming from Leopold himself and was not only due to de’Ricci’s undoubtedly significant influence. While de’Ricci has always been recognized as not merely a puppet of his monarch, it is important to note than even in ecclesiastical matters, Leopold did not simply repeat the views of his headstrong Jansenist bishop. Here were two principled, powerful, and ambitious men with extensively overlapping, but not completely identical, goals.\textsuperscript{50}

In France, Catholics could appeal to the Gallican tradition to support a reformist agenda, and many German-speakers could still appeal to the great prince-bishoprics. However, Italian Catholics opposed to ultramontane views of papal power did not have an indigenous tradition of such strength to appeal to and were left to adopt whatever concrete form of regalism or statism was currently available. This adoption took different forms in different parts of Italy. Hence, de’Ricci readily embraced a worldly imperial power to advance the interests of the Catholic Church, which he believed was a Kingdom not of this world. However, there is no evidence that de’Ricci adopted his strong form of Erastianism cynically or with any reluctance. His writings, correspondence, and actions all suggest he deeply believed that a strongly supervisory role for the sovereign was God-ordained and for the good of the church.\textsuperscript{51} He thought that this role had been progressively curtailed by the incursions and pretensions of the papacy, a papacy which had also been the scourge of the Jansenists, who had courageously maintained the truth about grace and the Gospel against the neo-Pelagian Jesuits. The suppression of the Society of Jesus, which was the result of the long-standing and deep-seated ire of Jansenists and their sympathizers, as well as the hostility

\textsuperscript{50} Leopold’s interest in drafting a Constitution for the Grand Duchy differed from the more autocratic tendencies of his brother Joseph II and de’Ricci. Regarding an ecclesiological policy of Erastianism and synodal ecclesiology, however, de’Ricci and Leopold’s respective positions are virtually identical. See the introductory essays of the editors of \textit{Lettere di Scipione de’Ricci a Pietro Leopoldo} for studies of de’Ricci’s relationship with Peter Leopold and their political philosophies and ecclesiologies: Marcello Verga, “Il vescovo e il principe: Introduzione alle lettere di Scipione de’Ricci a Pietro Leopoldo (1780–1791),” 1:1–48; Bruna Bocchini Camaiani, “Origine e poteri dell’autorità sovrana in Scipione de’Ricci,” 1:49–102.

\textsuperscript{51} See section 2.1, above.
of sovereigns and states to Jesuit or papal influence (real or imagined), gave more tangible reasons than ever for anti-ultramontane reformers to put their hope in Erastianism.52

For many good political, theological, and historical reasons, Erastianism did not endure as a popular position for modern Catholic reformers. Yet, to understand de’Ricci’s reform agenda, we must understand that for him and many other late Jansenists, the soteriological, liturgical, moral, ecclesiological, and political issues at stake were almost inseparable. Let us turn to a critical element of de’Ricci’s identity that shaped his theology and his view of church history: an array of ideas swirling around the internecine seventeenth- and eighteenth-century disputes over grace, predestination, and the spiritual life.

2.3 – The “Friends of Truth” and Grace: International Jansenism and Its Impact on de’Ricci’s Reforms

We have seen that, from his youth, de’Ricci was deeply influenced by Jansenists and philo-Jansenists. Some of these influences and interlocutors were Italian and included Oratorians and a significant contingent of Tuscans. But de’Ricci’s Jansenism also admitted him to a highly organized, powerful, and zealous international network, which contemporary scholarship has called “the Republic of Grace.”53 De’Ricci attributed grave importance for the life of the church to the issues at the heart of Jansenism. He had none of the moderation and irenicism of the Third Party when these matters were at stake, doctrinally or disciplinarily.

Jansenist authors figured prominently in the aforementioned series of tracts that de’Ricci published as the Raccolta. These were mostly translations from French.54 In addition

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52 Bolton, Church Reform, 6.

53 On this international Jansenist network of correspondence and publication, with especially active centers in Holland, France, and Italy, see chapter two, section 2.2.

54 See section 2.1, above.
to his desire “to flood the diocese with good books,” de’Ricci used the catechism of the Jansenist appellant Pierre Étienne Gourlin (1695–1767). This catechism was part of a wider campaign against the catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine, which many Jansenists and their sympathizers saw as too ultramontane. De’Ricci alleged it to be textually corrupt. The bishop revealed his choice of Gourlin’s catechism in a pastoral letter in May 1782. The power of the international network of the “Republic of Grace” is underlined by the fact that this letter was translated into German and sent by Emperor Joseph II to all of his bishops. De’Ricci’s confidante from the Utrecht circle, the Abbé de Bellegarde, also translated this pastoral into French. Charged with fervor, the letter was full of ideas associated with Jansenism, some of which will be examined below in the discussion of de’Ricci’s reforms concerning liturgy and Bible reading. Important for our purposes here, however, is de’Ricci’s recommendation of famous Jansenists like Colbert, the bishop of Montpellier, Pierre Nicole (an especially important theological and political source for de’Ricci), and the great Gallicans Fleury and Bossuet.

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55 De’Ricci in Memorie, 1:395: “…d’inundar la diocesi di buoni libri.”

56 On the importance of Gourlin for late Jansenist theology, see Cognet, “Jansenism in Eighteenth-Century France,” 418–19. De’Ricci actually preferred the catechisms of two other Jansenists: Charles-Joachim Colbert de Croissy (1667–1738), bishop of Montpellier and author of the famous Catechisme de Montpellier, and François Philippe Mésenguy (1677–1763). Both were on the Index, and de’Ricci wrote that he did not want to needlessly offend Rome or cause scandal to “the simple” by using them. The Italian translation of Gourlin’s work, Istruzione ed educazione cristiana, had been published in Naples and approved by the Holy Office in Venice. The use of this particular edition was a shrewd tactical move by de’Ricci, for Venice and the Vatican had an agreement that judgments of the Venetian Holy Office should be respected. See Bolton, Church Reform, 17. Gourlin is also recommended in the Acts of Pistoia, alongside Quesnel, Montazet, and Mésenguy. See Atti, 208 §29.

57 The catechism of Antoine Montazet, Archbishop of Lyon (1713–1788), was recommended in a pastoral letter sent by de’Ricci and his three Tuscan episcopal allies. These bishops claimed that “the so-called catechism of Bellarmine” included “clandestine intrusions (intruso clandestinamente)...that were contrary to the mind of the author and the pious intentions of Clement VIII.” The undated letter is available in Atti Appendices, 88–91. Here quoted: 91. De’Ricci blamed the machinations of the Jesuits (Memorie 1:29).

58 De’Ricci’s pastoral of 1 May 1782, Istruzione pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo sulla necessità e sul modo di studiare la Religione is available in Atti Appendices, 73–84.

59 Ibid., 83. The same authors are recommended at the end of the pastoral co-written by de’Ricci and three like-minded Tuscan bishops in Atti Appendices, 91.
Just as de’Ricci thought that confusion about the roles of the pope, bishops, and sovereigns led to all manner of woes, so he also believed confusion and error on matters of grace and salvation to be an equally damaging scourge on the church. “So many, without knowing it, have become Pelagians in practice, by believing that our justification is of ourselves,” he wrote, and this judgement affected his handling of clerical education, his recommendations for reading, his liturgical reforms, and the devotional life he sought to inculcate in the faithful.

The attachment of the religious in his diocese to scholasticism, their confessional practices, and their treatment of the questions of nature and grace fueled de’Ricci’s contempt for their orders. These matters were treated “so badly [by the friars] that Molina himself would not have been happy.” He sought to re-educate these religious with the work of the staunchly anti-ultramontane Louvain Jansenist, Jan Opstraet (1651–1720). Other Jansenist works recommended by de’Ricci include those of Nicolas le Gros, Pietro Tamburini, Antoine Arnauld, Jean-Baptiste-Raymond de Fourquevaux (1693–1767), Pasquier Quesnel, and Jansen himself. Along with the scriptures, he also recommended studying St. Augustine, Fulgentius, and Prosper of Aquitaine. Of course, Augustine was the theologian *par excellence* for Jansenists; he was seen as practically infallible, and his disciples Fulgentius and Prosper,

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60 Ibid., 77.

61 As early as January 1781, de’Ricci was having controversies with provincials over licenses to hear confession. See his letter to the Franciscan provincial Azzurrini Filippo in *Carte Ricci* 45:342.

62 De’Ricci in *Memorie* 1:199.

63 De’Ricci gave an important list of authors to the Grand Duke in the 11 June 1786 letter in *Lettere* 2:666–74. See also his 2 December 1782 letter to Count Carlo Astorri in *Carte Ricci* 45:315–18. Bolton’s summary of de’Ricci’s use of these authors is in *Church Reform*, 22–27.

64 Point seven of the *Punti ecclesiastici* even stated that those who do not follow Augustine’s theology should be excluded from office! See *Punti ecclesiastici*, 1:7–8.
both of whom derived their views from Augustine’s theology, were also favorites because of their strict teaching on grace and their polemics against Pelagianism.65

De’Ricci’s view of the history of the Jansenist controversies is clear not only in these recommendations but in his praise of Port-Royal, of the “Clementine Peace,”66 and of the original four “Appellant” bishops (who appealed the papal condemnation of Quesnel in Unigenitus to a future ecumenical council).67 De’Ricci’s opinion on these matters shows an attachment not only to Jansenist doctrine but also to a particular interpretation of church history. The first proposition of the Synod of Pistoia condemned as heretical in Auctorem fidei reflected this view of history, echoing the Jansenist “figurist” idea that a “general obscuration of the truth” had afflicted the church “in these latter days.”68 Some elements of Pistoian reform reflected the Enlightenment-influenced climate of the eighteenth century which emphasized the useful and “rational,” such as an emphasis on comprehensible and participatory liturgy, vernacular scriptures, better clerical and lay education, the abolition of the Inquisition, and the curtailment of abuses and “superstitions” in indulgences and devotions. Yet, as successors of the “confessors” of Port-Royal, of the convulsionnaires of Saint-Médard, and of the spiritual ardor of Pascal, de’Ricci and his followers intensely believed in divine blessing, saving, judgment, and damnation. While they sought to be historically aware, turning a critical eye to popular stories about certain saints and miracles,

65 De’Ricci also recommended many other figures that are better classified as philo-Jansenists (or not Jansenists at all), including the strict Augustinian Cardinal Enrico Noris (1631–1704), van Espen, Louis Ellies du Pin (1657–1719), Febronius, and Muratori. See Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 41, 68, 69, 75, 92, 102, 179; Bolton, Church Reform, 25–26.

66 On the Clementine Peace, see chapter two, 2.1.

67 On the Appellants, see chapter two, 2.2. The Raccolta volumes contained defenses of Quesnel (volumes one, two, and twelve), critical examinations of Unigenitus (volume seven, two tracts in volume two), and a defense of the Appellant bishops themselves (volume six).

68 The formula condemned in Auctorem fidei 1 is taken from the opening of the Decree on Grace, Predestination, and the Foundations of Morals. See Atti, 84. See also §5 and §7 of the Decree on Faith and the Church (Atti 77–78). On figurism, see chapter two, 2.2; chapter four, 1.3.
there was not a hint of skepticism in them concerning the central tenets of the Christian faith. While the Pistoians might have been influenced by some Enlightenment ideas that could be congenial to anti-clericalism, such as an emphasis on utility and a detestation of many forms of monasticism, Pistoianism was in no sense secular. Strictly speaking, it was not anti-clerical either. While perhaps more “modern” or “enlightened” than that of many of its Catholic opponents, the spirit of Pistoia was deeply devout and did not at all view doctrine as merely a tool for ethical formation or national cohesion. De’Ricci certainly had much more in common with Savonarola than with Voltaire.

While the sometimes highly technical disputes over nature, grace, and predestination that marked the Jansenist controversies may seem too complex and abstract for all but theological specialists, these debates did concretely impact the life of the faithful in de’Ricci’s diocese and elsewhere. Although by no means minimizing the role of the sacraments, those who clung to Jansenist doctrine saw a strong, personal conversion of the heart that was then evidenced by a life of intense moral rigor as central to true Christianity. Thus, these debates impacted the practice of confession. In line with other Jansenists, the Pistoans emphasized the necessity of the penitent’s demonstration of contrition (full repentance for one’s sins due to love of God) in the confessional before the granting of

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69 The appellation “enlightened” or “illuminated” (illuminato) is used in the Acts of Pistoia to describe both theologians, for example, those who concur with the Pistoian view on excommunications (see Atti, 154, §20 “On Excommunication” of the Decree on Penance) and the sovereign. Leopold is consistently described in phrases like “our most zealous and enlightened (illuminato) sovereign” (“Promemoria on the Reform of Regulars,” §10.2, 238). De’Ricci used the word to describe those who opposed superstition and held to solid doctrine (from his perspective). “Vescovi illuminati” are those bishops who agree with de’Ricci regarding devotions and ecclesiology. See his letter to Marchese Federigo Manfredini, 24 February 1783 (Carte Ricci 46:164). In his letter of 4 June 1790 to Pompeo da Mulazzo (“Signorini Auditore”) he spoke of receiving counsel from “worthy and enlightened brothers” (degni e illuminati fratelli) regarding the upheavals in his diocese over devotional changes and other problems.

70 On de’Ricci’s admiration and even veneration of Savonarola, see chapter five, section 2.2. Writing to his friend the Capitano Berlinghieri (10 May 1790), de’Ricci urged him not to be seduced by the sect of the “Illuminati,” but rather seek to address the ills of the age through the study of Augustine and the fathers. See Carte Ricci 53:382.

71 This is expressed, par excellence, by Blaise Pascal in the Pensées (1669).
absolution. Sacramental absolution should not follow simple attrition, which is repentance due to fear of divine punishment. For Jansenists, the presence of contrition was best proved by performance of penance before absolution, not after. Arnauld’s De la communion fréquente (1643), the most famous Jansenist book on this subject, and others like it were among de’Ricci’s “good books.”

Jansenism shaped the Pistoian view of purgatory and indulgences. The thought of de’Ricci on these matters was identical to that of his friend and advisor, Vincenzo Palmieri (1753–1820), a prominent Jansenist theologian from Genoa who was active at the Synod of Pistoia. Palmieri’s work on indulgences, Trattato storico-dogmatico-critico delle indulgenze, was published as part of de’Ricci’s Raccolta series of tracts in 1786. This work was also the basis for the Synod of Pistoia’s comments on indulgences. In it, Palmieri attributed errors and abuses in the doctrine and practice of indulgences to the ignorance brought on by scholasticism (cattivi studi de’ scolastici) and to the greed (avarizia) of many monks and friars. By referencing greed as a factor, Palmieri was recalling well-known abuses like the sale of indulgences, which caused so much harm in the sixteenth century. While the fact that greed had, at least in some circumstances, led to abuses in the practice of indulgences was universally acknowledged (and the Council of Trent had legislated against

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72 See Atti 141–52 for the Pistoian Decree on Penance (pp. 146–47 for the necessity of true contrition).

73 Lettere 2:672.

74 For de’Ricci’s correspondence with Palmieri, see Carte Ricci 53:104.

75 Palmieri’s Trattato was published in volume 11 of the Raccolta (1786). It took up the entire volume, running for over 350 pages. See also the section “On Indulgences” of the Synod of Pistoia’s “Decree on Penance,” which is based on Palmieri’s work (Servi, 152–54). The decree cited Palmieri among the “more enlightened” (illuminato) theologians that the church must look to since there are so many false teachers and so much confused doctrine on penance (154).

76 See the entry on Palmieri in the Dizionario biografica, which highlights the positive reception of Palmieri’s work by de’Ricci and by his Tuscan episcopal ally, the Bishop of Colle (Niccolò Sciacelli), as well as the printing of the work in Paris in 1800. This printing is evidence that the French received Italian Jansenism, rather than only the other way around. Francesco Buscemi, Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, vol. 80 (2014), s.v. “Palmieri, Vincenzo.” http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-palmieri_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ (accessed 26 April 2017).
these abuses⁷⁷, the Jansenist critique went deeper. It claimed that the “scholastic” doctrines about indulgences were actually themselves flawed; doctrine, not just discipline or practice, was at stake. The Jansenists explicitly rejected important elements of the papally sanctioned teaching of their day. However, they insisted that they were not rejecting Catholic doctrine by rejecting this teaching on indulgences. For them, true Catholic doctrine was limited to doctrines which were biblical or apostolic, and any binding interpretations or elaborations of such doctrine had to be received by the whole church or taught explicitly in ecumenical councils.⁷⁸

According to the common Jansenist view, an indulgence was a remission of an ecclesiastically imposed penance, but it was not a remission of the penalty for sin required by God’s justice. An indulgence could remit only a penalty imposed by the church, not the temporal penalty owed to God for forgiven sin. Jansenists claimed that the idea of the “treasury of merit” of Christ and the saints, which was used to justify the official teaching on indulgences, was a scholastic invention, not only unknown in scripture and the early church but actually at odds with biblical and patristic teaching. Indulgences, in the Jansenist view, cannot be transferred to the dead. The pope has no more authority in this matter than any other bishop, and lists of indulgences and privileged altars should be rejected.⁷⁹

These positions are very close to those of the early Martin Luther, and the authors of Auctorem fidei were sure to note this similarity, citing the relevant passages of Pope Leo X’s bull Exsurge Domine (1520), which censured Luther’s attack on indulgences.⁸⁰ A schema on

⁷⁷ See the Decree on Indulgences (Session 25, 4 December 1563) in Denzinger 1835.

⁷⁸ The Pistoian view of infallibility, rooted in Gallicanism, is clearly presented in the Synod’s Decree on Faith and the Church (Session Three), in Atti, 75–83.

⁷⁹ This is also the teaching of the Synod of Pistoia in the Decree on Penance, §12–16 (Atti, 152–55). Palmieri is the main source, although the Pistoians drew on a long tradition of Jansenist thinking on indulgences. In the Trattato, Palmieri argued that the Passion of Christ is applied through the sacraments, and that it is doubtful that the church has means other than this to apply them. Trattato in Raccolta 11:78.

⁸⁰ For the condemnation of this and related views on indulgences, see Auctorem fidei 40–43.
indulgences drafted at Vatican II in fact repeated this link, citing the condemnations of
Pistoia and of Luther in the same footnotes. The schema was not promulgated during the
Council, but these footnotes were included in Pope Paul VI’s reform of indulgences
published in 1967, which retained the idea of the treasury of merit.81

Again, we see the influence of anti-ultramontanism on de’Ricci’s reformism. In this
case, suspicion was cast on the papal interpretation of the “power of the keys” (cf. Matt.
16:18–20), which was an important part of justifying the official teaching on indulgences.
De’Ricci’s Jansenism inspired him to seek a return to what he supposed was the more pure,
primitive faith of the early church, before ultramontanism, Pelagianism, and the ignorance
and greed of mendicant friars caused errors to creep into Catholic doctrine and practice. For
de’Ricci, indulgences were part of a larger Pelagian problem: they led simple laity to trust
unduly in guarantees provided by friars and the papacy that were beyond the power of either
to promise, and misunderstandings of indulgences obscured the necessity of true conversion
and the sacraments, which were the only means of salvation.82 Indeed, Palmieri connected
errors concerning the transference of indulgences to wider misunderstandings in
soteriology.83

Finally, rigorous Jansenist views on grace, predestination, and salvation led de’Ricci
and his circle to treat the scholastic doctrine of limbo with scorn. This “Pelagian fable”
(favola Pelagiana)84 epitomized many of the things that Jansenists saw as contemporary
faults in the church: the invention of doctrines not present in scripture or the Church Fathers,

81 See chapter six, section 1, on Paul VI’s apostolic constitution Indulgentiarium doctrina and Auctorem fidei
40–42.
82 See de’Ricci’s pastoral letter of 11 April 1783 introducing an Italian translation of the “Instruction” of
83 Palmieri argued that God is not obligated to accept the intercession of one person for another. While Christ’s
death had infinite value to save the entire world, even this infinite merit is not applied to all, but only to an
“elect few” (pochi eletti). See the Trattato in Raccolta 11:120–21 (§97).
84 The phrase is taken from Pistoia’s Decree on Baptism, §3 (Atti, 110).
the overly speculative theology of the scholastics, and the desire to mitigate hard truths about sin, salvation, and damnation. The widespread belief in children’s limbo (limbus puerorum) was no doubt a comfort to many parents in an age when Catholic theology was skeptical about the possibility of the salvation of unbaptized infants. But above the comfort of grieving parents, the Jansenists prioritized what they saw as the brutal truth about the sinfulness of humankind and the absolute necessity of baptism. While one who endorsed their theology might have admired their consistency and their rejection of a “Pelagian” watering-down of hard truths concerning the wages of sin, including original sin, those who rejected it no doubt saw this position as another example of the exaggerated rigor and needless cruelty of Jansenist doctrine.

De’Ricci and Leopold cooperated in the practical pastoral application of these positions, and their approach was summarized in the fifty-third article of the Punti ecclesiastici, which exhorted priests to

> have zeal to enlighten (illuminare) the people on true devotion, divert them from useless or superstitious devotions, instruct them on the value of indulgences, on the dispositions for obtaining them, on the way to intercede for the dead not only with masses but with all the other works of piety, on the application of masses, on the Communion of Saints, and on other similar articles that the people are either totally ignorant of or that have been handed down to them with the addition of endless errors.

The skepticism was rooted in the notion that experiencing the Beatific Vision was impossible without baptism, although many Catholic theologians denied infants suffered the pain of hell since they had committed no actual sin. Recently, the International Theological Commission (ITC) published a lengthy study of this question, “The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptized.” The study references the Pistoian denial of limbo and the papal censure of the Synod on this point in Auctorem fidei 26 as an important early modern development in the debate. “Papal interventions during this period, then, protected the freedom of the Catholic schools to wrestle with this question. They did not endorse the theory of Limbo as a doctrine of faith. Limbo, however, was the common Catholic teaching until the mid-20th century.” The ITC study was approved by Pope Benedict XVI on 19 January 2007 and is available on the Vatican website at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/citi_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070419_un-baptised-infants_en.html.

Leszek Kolakowski explored these issues in God Owes Us Nothing. See especially the section “Infants in Hell?” 82–85.

Punti ecclesiastici 1:25, §53.
Thus, disputes over nature, grace, and predestination in late eighteenth-century Italy were not just technical debates between theologians, but were important practical matters which really impacted the religious lives of normal people. Had the reforms of de’Ricci succeeded, preaching, devotional life, and pastoral practice in his diocese would have been changed dramatically. If the Bishop of Pistoia had managed to implement his and Peter Leopold’s plans more widely, Tuscany might have served as a model for the Jansenistic reform of the entire Catholic Church. A great deal of that reform concerned liturgy and devotions and constituted that most visible element of the Pistoian agenda.

2.4 – De’Ricci’s Christocentric Reform Program for Devotions and Liturgy

While Riccian reform was heavily colored by Jansenism, it also received key elements of the thought of Third Party Catholics like Muratori, who never openly aligned with the Jansenist cause. Albert Gerhards sees Muratori’s “remarkable” (beachtlich) legacy in many European lands extending to the Pistoians in particularly strong ways in liturgy, devotions, and moral theology. The most explicit influence Muratori had on the radical reformers in Tuscany was through the popularity of Della regolata in both the Grand Duke’s circles and de’Ricci’s. Peter Leopold recommended this important book from his childhood as exemplary “moral theology” in the fifty-fourth ecclesiastical point. De’Ricci promoted Muratori’s work and subsidized the printing of a new edition of Della regolata in Siena for all of the Tuscan clergy. By adopting the Punti ecclesiastici, the Synod repeated the

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88 Gerhards, “Von der Synode,” 43–45, at 43. While Gerhards remarks that the “positive Muratorian approaches to liturgical reform failed at Pistoia,” he believes that the circumstances of the day and the character of the actors involved were to blame, not the ideas themselves (45).

89 Atti, 68 (cf. Punti ecclesiastici §54).

90 See Atti 2:68. This new edition of Della regolata (Siena: Pazzini, 1789) was dedicated to Peter Leopold. See Atti 2:214.
The pastoral letter of Archbishop Colloredo, printed in the Appendices to the Acts of the Synod, recommends a pseudonymous work defending Muratori and *Della regolata*, particularly on the regulation of devotion to Mary.  

While these are the only two explicit references to Muratori in the actual synodal publications, Muratori was an important influence on Pistoianism and on many of the radical reformers of eighteenth-century Italy. His historical-critical, economic, theological, and pastoral arguments for the reduction of feast days were enthusiastically received and repeated by de’Ricci and his circle, who distrusted “new” saints and wanted Sundays and the traditional seasons of the liturgical year to regain precedence. Palmieri’s *Trattato* on indulgences was indebted to Muratori’s historical work. *Della regolata* was also a source for Pietro Tamburini’s arguments that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers had implications for liturgical participation. Muratori’s views on liturgy were well known, and the Pistoians eagerly continued the Muratorian tradition, by, for example, pushing for the people’s communion to occur within the Mass, with Hosts consecrated during that Mass. Muratori’s influence is also detectable in the Synod’s attempts to reform regulars.

But more than inspiring any particular idea, Muratori’s thought functioned as a “mediating platform” (*piattaforma mediatrice*) by which a particular reformist orientation

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91 See *Atti*, 68. The same ecclesiastical point recommends Quesnel’s *Réflexions morales*.

92 The work was *Lamindi Pritanii redivivi epistola* (Venice: J. B. Pasquali, 1755). The author was Ambrogio Manchi, an Augustinian friar. It was recommended by Colloredo in *Atti Appendices*, 40n1.

93 Muratori and Jean-Baptist Thiers (1636–1703) were the most important influences on this issue. See Stella, “Le bozze dei documenti sinodali: Autori e fonti letterarie,” in *Atti* 2:65–67. See also 334, 338.


95 *Atti* 2:252.


97 Ibid., 2:346. An influential work of Muratori’s on the reform of regulars and their education was published posthumously under a pseudonym. See *Epistola paraenetica ad superiores religiosorum eorumque professores* (Augsburg: Rieger, 1765).
was passed down to the second half of the eighteenth century in Italy.\footnote{Stella, “Sinodo e riforme in Toscana nella seconda metà del’700,” in Atti 2:66. This mediation also happened internationally, because of the popularity of Della regolata and the use to which Bourbon and Hapsburg governments and prelates in those states put Muratorian ideas.} Sometimes, this reformist vision was simply an attitude and a style, as Pietro Stella detected in the ways Palmieri and de’Ricci inherited from Muratori a concern not to needlessly offend Protestants.\footnote{Stella cites Muratori’s concerns about Marian devotion. See “Sinodo e riforme,” in Atti 2:3–28, at 6.} Palmieri referred to Protestants as “brethren led astray” (fratelli traviati), and de’Ricci in fact used the now-famous appellation “separated brethren” (fratelli separati).\footnote{Ibid., 6n6. For Palmieri, see the Trattato in Raccolta 11:136. Palmieri argued that Protestants were not wrong to oppose the scholastic teaching on indulgences, since they rightly saw it “opposed to antiquity”; they were wrong to “separate” from the Catholic Church (136–37). For de’Ricci see Lettera pastorale di monsignor vescovo di Pistoia e Prato in occasione di un libello intitolato Annotazioni pacifiche (18 May 1788), 2nd ed., (Florence: Paganì, 1788), 117. De’Ricci relied on Muratori’s liturgical scholarship to establish certain points in this letter (110).} This is in keeping with the idea running throughout Muratori’s work that Protestants are right to be scandalized by some Catholic practices, and that the true faith is not always correctly presented to them.\footnote{See chapter two, section 3.1.}

As in the case of Muratori, this attitude verged into certain concrete proto-ecumenical ideas. It is notable that the two phrases used above by Palmieri and de’Ricci to describe Protestants connote passivity, rather than active heresy or schism. De’Ricci went much further than Muratori, even claiming (privately) that the frati (friars) had wreaked havoc in Holland, Germany, and Austria, and had even done more damage than “the heretics”\footnote{De’Ricci to Serrão, 25 November 1782, Carte Ricci 45:309.} Like Febronius, de’Ricci believed that the reform of the papacy was the pressing issue in Protestant-Catholic relations. He believed books explaining the true role of the pope would give “a new stimulus to the project of reunion of the so-unfortunate brethren separated from us.”\footnote{One such book was Louis Dutens, De l’église du pape, de quelques points de controverse et des moyens de réunion entre toutes les églises chrétiennes (Geneva: Barthelemi Chyrol, 1781). See de’Ricci’s 26 December 1782 letter to the Marchese Federigo Manfredini in Carte Ricci 45:356–63.}
De’Ricci’s idea to reform confraternities by combining them all into one “Company of Charity” (Compagnia della carità) in each parish “followed in the footsteps” of Muratori. Muratori’s recommendation of gospel readings in the vernacular during Mass was also well known and widely embraced by late eighteenth-century Italian reformers. While such a position “dug up Lutheran ghosts” (riesumare fantasmi luterani), Jansenists like the Pistoians could point to orthodox Catholic reformers like Muratori who shared their position on the limited incorporation of the vernacular into worship, particularly for scripture readings.

Clearly, the vision of Muratori and the Pistoians differed in important respects. The foundational difference, linked to the fact that Muratori was not a Jansenist, was that the Modenese pastor wanted the Holy See, the bishops, and political powers to cooperate in reforming the church. De’Ricci, Tamburini, and Palmieri had abandoned any hope in Rome and were willing not only to ignore the pope and the Curia, but even to antagonize them and to use the civil power against them when necessary. But the fact that de’Ricci and the Pistoians could incorporate so much of the approach of a non-Jansenist – indeed, a man who, at least later in life, had a view of humanity that was so positive he was accused of Molinism – means that the Riccian reformist movement was sometimes capable of broadness of vision. While Muratori might have had all the right enemies (certain Jesuits, friars, and zelanti), he was no true Jansenist. Yet, he was still acceptable enough to de’Ricci and his closest advisors to form a major plank of their reform program.

104 Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves, “Scipione de’Ricci dalla formazione giovanile all’esperienza sinodale: Rileggendo le sue Memorie,” in Atti del Convegno (1986), 65–149, at 104. This idea was part of the regulations in the Grand Duke’s motu proprio of 22 July 1783 (Atti Appendices 84–88). De’Ricci’s pastoral on the founding of the company, to which is appended the company’s constitution, is in Carte Ricci 106:125–46. See also Fantappiè, Riforme ecclesiastiche, 198.


For de’Ricci, the foundation of the spiritual life was an understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ and an accompanying growth in the life of grace and good works. Like Muratori, de’Ricci believed this understanding and growth must be accomplished principally through meaningful participation in the mysteries of salvation celebrated at Mass and through an understanding of the teaching of scripture as interpreted by the church fathers. Thus, for de’Ricci, it was imperative that the Mass be comprehensible even to the uneducated or illiterate and that the scriptures be accessible in the vernacular. In addition to prioritizing the reading of scripture for the literate, clergy and lay, or the hearing of scripture in the case of the illiterate (who were many in eighteenth-century Tuscany), de’Ricci wanted spiritual reading to focus on the main doctrines of Christianity as he saw them: the person and work of Jesus, the moral life, and a knowledge of truths about justification, faith, and grace (in a Jansenist or Augustinian sense). To this end, as we have seen, he recommended church fathers like Augustine and Fulgentius and scriptural commentaries such as Quesnel’s.

De’Ricci’s Christocentrism undergirded four positive elements of his theological thought and pastoral career that I will argue, in chapter five, contained many elements of true reform. First, de’Ricci presented the gospel and the person and work of Jesus with clarity and zeal. Second, this clarity and zeal led to a desire to reform what he saw as liturgical and devotional abuses (many of the abuses he identified would be widely recognized as abuses today). Third, he correctly emphasized the necessity of access to the scriptures for the life of the believer, and consequently put a healthy emphasis on Bible reading in an age when there was still substantial suspicion of vernacular Bible reading in many parts of the Catholic world. Fourth, he was morally serious and sought to be a good and ardent pastor of his people.

108 A number of de’Ricci’s homilies are available in Carte Ricci 106. When untainted by polemic and sectarian bitterness, a warm and pastorally zealous Christocentric message comes through in both de’Ricci’s letters and preaching.
All four of these positive elements of Riccian thought are evident in his pastoral letter of 11 April 1783, sent to his priests along with a translated “Instruction” of Jerome Colloredo, Prince Archbishop of Salzburg (dated 29 June 1782). In this pastoral, de’Ricci praised the writings of the Archbishop and added his own commentary. It was imperative, de’Ricci wrote, for every Catholic to be taught that “Jesus Christ is our true, unique, and necessary Mediator and Savior; our intercessor for us before God the Father.” Regarding the intercession of Mary and the saints, an element of Catholic doctrine and practice of which de’Ricci denied neither the reality nor the efficacy, he echoed Muratorian themes of moderation and a proper contextualization of these devotions, which must impel the believer towards the worship of God and not serve as a distraction or as an end in themselves. “[T]he Saints and even the Virgin are honored as servants and friends of that God, to whom alone we give worship (rendiamo il culto) as the First Being and Supreme Lord.”

The Instruction of Archbishop Colloredo used stronger language than de’Ricci or Muratori, however, and even argued “certain expressions approved by the Church” like Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven, Mediatrix, and even “Our Lady” could “arouse among

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110 One can see why he was accused of a certain minimalism and risked offending those with traditional piety when he wrote things like “as to the cult (culto) of the Saints the Catholic Faith teaches us no more than that it is a good and useful thing to venerate them, and to implore before God their intercession. The errors on this point are many, and God is willing that greed and hypocrisy, the one never far from the other in clerics (Ecclesiastici), might never take possession of your hearts, thus turning the service of piety of the Faithful into a sordid profit by proposing new practices of devotion to the Saints.” Ibid.

112 Ibid. De’Ricci was clearly concerned with any veneration of saints that he felt eclipsed honor properly due to Christ. For example, he printed a translation of a French pamphlet from 1670 that attacked an inscription on the façade of a Franciscan convent in Rheims, which read “To the God-Man and Francis both crucified” (*Deo Hoomini et B. Franciscus utrique crucifixo*). See the tract “Dissertazione sulla iscrizione della facciata del convento dei Francescani di Reims,” in *Raccolta* 11:65–170. The work doubts the reality of the stigmata and argues the inscription is idolatry. Bolton, *Church Reform*, 34, sees the pamphlet not as attacking St. Francis per se, but rather the friars, whom Jansenists often saw as overly credulous and poor teachers of the people.
the ignorant people (*idioti*) wrong and unworthy notions of God.” The significant influence of more moderate Muratorian thought, and not just Jansenism, in Josephinist and Pistoian circles is seen in the Archbishop’s recommendation of an anonymous work defending Muratori, published after his death, which criticized Alphonsus Liguori’s maximalist work *The Glories of Mary*. Muratori, of course, did not deny the usefulness of Marian devotion (he believed in her Immaculate Conception) but was concerned with correcting abuses and misunderstandings.

While de’Ricci did not denigrate Marian devotions and traditions like novenas and confraternities per se, he wanted it made abundantly clear that these devotions could not replace progress in the moral life. Like Muratori, de’Ricci realized that the contemporary realities in eighteenth-century Italy called for clarification of the church’s true doctrine on practices like image veneration. “Too often it is necessary,” he wrote, “especially in the present times, to make known to the people that images have no particular power (*virtù*).”

De’Ricci’s devotional concerns about images were intimately linked with misunderstandings of indulgences, propagated by “certain false Doctors” which led to many laity thinking that “kissing an image or running around a church or reciting a few prayers is enough to satisfy outrages against Divine Justice.” De’Ricci’s ideas were represented in *Punti ecclesiastici* §28, which called for bishops to inspect and remove any doubtful relics and to uncover statues that were covered under the “evil pretense (*malamente preteso*) of increasing...

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113 Colloredo’s Instruction in *Atti Appendix*, 38, note 1.

114 See 181n92, above.

115 See chapter two, section 3.1.

116 “[I]t is neither Rosaries, nor Novenas, nor gathering in Confraternities that make us holy but the practice of Christian virtue; that alone can give us the grace of Jesus Christ.” De’Ricci’s Instruction in *Atti Appendix*, 14.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.
veneration.” Major relics should be placed under the altar, and the altar should carry no pictures, but only a cross. These prescriptions reflect the desire to focus worshippers on the Eucharistic sacrifice enacted on the altar and to prioritize the Christocentric, while not rejecting, but contextualizing, the veneration of Mary or the saints. The article also states that relics should be in the possession of the bishop, not the civil authorities, an injunction which probably had in mind the peculiar situation in Pistoia involving the Madonna dell’Umiltà, a thorny issue to which we will return.

The antidote to problems occasioned by devotional and liturgical abuses, according to de’Ricci, was threefold: “good books” of theology, access to scripture, and a reformed liturgy. As previously discussed, de’Ricci flooded his diocese with translations of theological writings, often by Jansenists, which would correct such errors. But one could not expect, even with these books translated into Tuscan Italian, that a great percentage of his flock would be capable of (or, perhaps, interested in) such reading. The reading or hearing of scripture and participation in reformed liturgical celebrations were much more likely than de’Ricci’s “good books” to directly reach the common people.

Therefore, de’Ricci’s second antidote to errors was an emphasis on Bible reading. In his memoirs, de’Ricci blamed one natural problem and one supernatural problem for the contemporary situation, in which the scriptures were undervalued in the life of the average believer. The natural problem was that bad preachers saw “the study of religion [as] insolent curiosity (insolente curiosità)” and “drew the faithful away from the reading of the Holy Scriptures or from any book that could enlighten them (illuminargli)[.]” De’Ricci

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119 *Punti ecclesiastici* §28, pp. 17–18.

120 Ibid. De’Ricci had addressed what he saw as devotional abuses surrounding this image soon after becoming bishop. See his pastoral letter of 12 May 1782 in *Carte Ricci* 106: 53–54. See Bolton’s discussion in *Church Reform*, 44. For the controversy between de’Ricci and his detractors over the Madonna dell’Umiltà, see chapter five, section 1.3.

121 De’Ricci in *Memorie*, 1:164. De’Ricci goes on to reference condemnations of Jansenism (“imaginary heresies”), prohibited books and Bible translations, and false devotions as completing this gloomy picture.
attributed this bad preaching to ignorance, which, as we have seen, de’Ricci thought he could
correct through new education initiatives in an Enlightenment spirit. The supernatural
problem was caused by Pelagianism. These bad preachers and theologians had succumbed to
“fallen nature” and had “tried to substitute it [false doctrines on grace] for the teaching of
Jesus Christ.”122 We see, again, how the various strands of Jansenist theology and an analysis
of contemporary problems in the church were connected in the Riccian reform agenda.

The liturgy, for de’Ricci, had to be both comprehended by the people and centered on
Eucharistic participation. De’Ricci emphasized that the faithful should receive hosts
consecrated at the Mass they attended, because such reception would effectively assert the
rights of the laity to participate in worship and would underline the importance of their
liturgical cooperation.123 He also claimed the right to revise the breviary in use in his own
diocese, citing Archbishop Montazet of Lyon. This reform desideratum was motivated by
de’Ricci’s anti-ultramontanism and by his appreciation of the historical-critical work of the
Maurists, which was giving reformers the tools to identify and remove unhistorical legends
from the lives of the saints.124 The fourth of the Punti ecclesiastici, which de’Ricci
emphatically approved of, asserted that public prayers must be changed if they “contain
matters contrary to the doctrine of the church,” that “false and erroneous legends” should be
purged from missals and breviaries, and that the entirety of scripture should be read at Mass
each year. It even recommended that the bishops consider administering the sacraments in the
vernacular.125 The twenty-seventh article of the Punti actually contained prescriptions for

122 De’Ricci’s pastoral of 1 May 1782 cited in Atti Appendices, 77.

123 These were common Jansenist ideas that de’Ricci made sure to print in the Raccolta. In volume 12 he printed
a work of the Servite Carlo Traversari supporting lay liturgical participation (Raccolta 12:3–94). See also
Bolton, Church Reform, 33–34.

124 See Bolton, Church Reform, 35.

125 Punti ecclesiastici 1:6, §4. This idea was based on the Rituel d’Aleth of Bishop Nicholas Pavillon, issued in
1667 (and recommended by Leopold at the end of the Punti). See Bolton, Church Reform, 41.
liturgical reforms not dissimilar to Pius X’s, including banning celebration of saint’s days on Sundays and solemn feasts, prioritizing choral chant, and celebrating only one mass at a time in a given church.\textsuperscript{126}

The \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} outlined many liturgical reforms desired by de’Ricci and others. The \textit{Punti} called for the recitation of vernacular prayers, such as the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition before the Mass. During Mass, priests were to speak “at a moderate speed and in a loud and clear voice.”\textsuperscript{127} Those in the congregation who knew Latin should respond, rather than leaving the responses to the altar servers alone (the practice of the congregation as a whole responding to the priest became popular in the twentieth century as the “dialogue Mass”).\textsuperscript{128} After the reading of the gospel in Latin, the priest should face the people and read it again in the vernacular, as Muratori argued and as was in fact common in some parts of the Catholic world in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{129}

Preaching should be on the gospel itself and should be applicable to the life of the people.\textsuperscript{130} After Mass, the priest should say vernacular prayers and end with the \textit{Te Deum}. Sunday afternoons should feature adults’ and children’s catechism classes, and Sundays should not feature devotions to saints unless they were commemorated in the liturgy.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} 1:17, §27. Bolton comments (\textit{Church Reform}, 44) that “much of this is in accordance with Pius X’s reforms; but a lead from the Papacy is different from a lead given by a temporal monarch.” Muratori had argued for the centrality of the Sunday Mass. See chapter two, 3.1.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} 1:25, §43.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. Many eighteenth-century Catholics, including many opponents of Jansenism, considered such lay participation suspect. \textit{Unigenitus} 86 rejected the following proposition of Quesnel: “To snatch from the simple people this consolation of joining their voice to the voice of the whole Church is a custom contrary to the apostolic practice and to the intention of God.” See Denzinger 2486. This condemnation figured prominently in the deliberations of the committees who drafted \textit{Auctorem fidei}. See chapter five, 2.1.

\textsuperscript{129} See chapter two, 3.1.

\textsuperscript{130} Jansenist and Third Party reformers had often made polemical allegations about frivolous sermons on dubious miracles, purely speculative matters, or scholastic subtleties. See chapter two, 3.1.

\textsuperscript{131} See \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} 1:23–25, §41–51.
The centrality of scripture in the life of the believer and other theological reasons led de’Ricci to advocate a more participatory, simpler, and more biblical liturgy and devotional life, but he also appealed to political and cultural reasons for these reforms. Endorsing these latter reasons for reform constituted an effort to influence Leopold and to convince him of the utility of de’Ricci’s agenda. However, there is no reason to suspect that de’Ricci saw any conflict between the intensely evangelical rhetoric he used in pastoral contexts and the rhetoric he used to appeal primarily to Josephinist, enlightened goals in passages such as this:

The reading of the Bible and the familiar use of good and devout hymns composed in the vernacular, even during religious services (funzioni Ecclesiastiche), are a most useful means of civilizing the people and making them no less good Christians than faithful subjects. The Bible translated into our own language we do not lack; but it would be desirable that some experts among you might labor now to produce a collection of sacred songs (Sacri Cantici) for the use of our flock.... The people do not become civilized by being reduced to effeminacy, but by being instructed in their own duties. The country people, which is the class of persons most necessary to Society, are often in this age those most abandoned to a supine ignorance (supina ignoranza). The damage that arises from this to the Church and the State you yourselves, Venerable Brethren, can easily know: so whoever among you finds himself amidst a coarse and uncultured people can make every effort to render service in the interest of making them full of culture and knowledge.

Of course, it was obvious to Jansenists like de’Ricci which ecclesiastical forces were to blame for the sorry state of much of the Catholic laity: the papacy, the Jesuits, and some of the mendicant orders bore a great deal of the responsibility. Thus, such an appeal to civilizing subjects, improving education, and other standard goals of enlightened despots included within it the strands of an anti-ultramontane ecclesiology, a Jansenist view of history and the contemporary problems of the church, and a mixture of Jansenist and Third Party

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132 De’Ricci is here slandering extravagant Baroque worship and petites dévotions as effeminate, a common trope in his writings.

133 De’Ricci’s Introduction to Colloredo’s Instruction in Atti Appendix, 13–14.

134 This blame, usually explicit in the case of the papacy and the mendicant friars but slightly coded in the case of Jesuits (read “Jesuit” or at least “Jesuit-influenced” in references to “Molinists”), runs through much of de’Ricci’s correspondence and pastoral letters, and at the Synod of Pistoia. For examples of each in the Acts of the Synod, see Atti 192–93 (on the papacy), Atti 235–39 (“Promemoria on Reform of Regulars”), and Atti 29–33 (segments of the oration of Fr. Bartoli which used thinly coded anti-Jesuit language).
concern for devotional and liturgical reform. All these strands were wound tightly together into the single cord of Pistoian reform.

Paradoxically, the bonds among all the strands of de’Ricci’s reformism were perhaps both its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. On one hand, the coherence of Pistoian reform lent it a certain raw and uncompromising force that reflected de’Ricci’s own singular focus and zeal. For a time, the Pistoian project was backed by many influential friends in Tuscany and abroad. De’Ricci’s zeal and the force of his reformist program appealed to a variety of people, for various reasons. However, de’Ricci’s reform efforts also made powerful enemies among those who hated Jansenism, opposed Erastianism, were attached to traditional devotions, and rallied, for many reasons, around the papacy. Ultimately, in a politically and ecclesiastically turbulent world, these enemies were able to cause the downfall of de’Ricci’s reform effort, as I will show in chapter five.
CHAPTER IV: THE SYNOD OF PISTOIA
RADICAL FORERUNNER OF VATICAN II

After thorough preparation, Scipione de’Ricci convened a diocesan synod September 18–28, 1786, in Pistoia.¹ Diocesan priests and a small contingent of other invited guests, totaling about 250, attended and voted in seven sessions held in the Church of St. Leopold.² The Synod promulgated decrees on almost every element of Christian and ecclesial life, far exceeding the practical needs of a single Italian diocese. De’Ricci was frank about his grandiose and polemical objectives. He designed the Synod to be “a compendium of doctrine and discipline, gathered together, and founded on the Gospel and on tradition, precisely matched to combat in detail that diabolical and anti-Christian invention.” This “invention” was “the ancient machine of the Papal Monarchy.”³ The Synod’s resolutions concerned issues as wide-ranging as ecclesiology, grace and predestination, the place of the mendicants, proper relations between church and state, the veneration of Mary and the saints, the celebration of the liturgy, processions, feast days, devotional life, stipulations regarding marriage, and indulgences. Ultimately, de’Ricci intended this comprehensive set of decrees to serve as a model for a “National Council” of the entire Tuscan church.⁴ True to de’Ricci’s

¹ The most important archival source for the study of the Synod is in ASF, Carte Ricci 28, “Carte relative al Sinodo di Pistoia del 1786.” Drafts of all the Decrees appear in the hand of Carlo Mengoni (de’Ricci’s secretary) with emendations from other hands. The folder is also indispensable for the study of those few attendees who dissented (in whatever fashion) from the proceedings. The folder even includes notes from doctors excusing parish priests not in attendance.

² The church in which the synod fathers met had been recently renamed St. Leopold in honor of the Grand Duke. It has reverted to its original name of St. Benedict. For the history and images of this church and other important local history related to the Synod and de’Ricci, see Alessandro Aiardi, ed. Scipione de’ Ricci e la realtà pistoiese della fine del Settecento: Immagini e documenti (Pistoia: Edizioni del Comune di Pistoia, 1986).

³ De’Ricci in Memorie, 1:490.

⁴ See Atti, session six, “Promemoria per la convocazione di un concilio nazionale,” 240–43. See esp. §7–12, 241–42. This extraordinary document frankly details the staunch Erastianism of de’Ricci and Leopold. Article seven argues that the right and task of calling national councils falls upon the Sovereign as the “vescovo esteriore,” a title which at least connotes caesaropapism. Article eight argues that contemporary sovereigns have the same ecclesiastical authority in their states as the Emperor had in the Roman Empire. Articles 9–10 praise
idealism, his experiment in Pistoia was meant to herald the beginning of a sweeping reform of the entire Catholic Church, achieved through the vehicles of diocesan and national synods.\(^5\)

To that end, the Synod confirmed and ratified the Grand Duke’s fifty-seven *Punti ecclesiastici*, including the ecclesiological, liturgical, and devotional reforms which de’Ricci and other Jansenist (or philo-Jansenist) intellectuals and statesmen had influenced.\(^6\) In addition to de’Ricci and Tamburini, the most important theological minds at the Synod were prominent Italian Jansenists like Vincenzo Palmieri of Genoa\(^7\) and Fabbio de’Vecchi of Siena.\(^8\) The central role of Pietro Tamburini, who served as “Promotor,” established another strong link with Josephinism. Tamburini was professor at the University of Pavia, then under the control of Joseph II, and an intellectual theorist for Jansenist and Erastian reform.\(^9\)

In this chapter, I will consider the theology of the Pistoians as presented in the synodal *Atti e decreti*, alongside the condemnations of the Synod in *Auctorem fidei*. I will pursue a topical approach, evaluating Pistoian ecclesiology, the Synod’s (inchoate) vision of religious liberty, its liturgical theology, and its devotional reforms. This approach is preferred to a sequential examination of the *Atti* for several reasons. First, the *Atti* contain numerous

the example of the Kings of France in directing ecclesiastical matters and exalt the Gallican Liberties. Article 11 does the same for the rights claimed by the King of Spain.

\(^5\) See de’Ricci’s letter of 23 March 1787, “Lettera di Monsignor Vescovo ai Vicari Foranei,” in *Atti* v–vii. De’Ricci praises Peter Leopold as a just and religious prince and believes that the National Council will come soon and will affect other countries (v–vi).

\(^6\) The ratification of the *Punti ecclesiastici* is in *Atti*, session two, 46–70.

\(^7\) Palmieri was intimately involved in the composition of the Synod’s documents. On Palmieri, see chapter three, 2.3.

\(^8\) For letters of de’Ricci to de’Vecchi, see *Carte Ricci* 53: 518, 549, 931; 54: 157, 316.

documents, and to construct a vision of Pistoian thought on, for example, ecclesiology, requires a synthesis of several decrees and other documents, rather than considering, for example, just the Decree on Faith and the Church, important as that decree is. Simultaneous consideration of *Auctorem fidei* can help us understand Pistoian thought because the Constitution\(^\text{10}\) highlights many of the most controversial, foundational, and innovative ideas in the *Atti*. Sometimes, the Constitution itself provides a certain synthesis or summary of Pistoian ideas. However, it is for this reason especially that *Auctorem fidei* must be read critically; it does not always state Pistoian positions clearly or fairly. However, the papal constitution does effectively highlight some of the most important elements of Pistoian thought even if it attempts to present them unfavorably.

The condemnations of *Auctorem fidei* can help us understand why Pistoia was both seen by some opponents as provocative and actually intended by some of the fathers of the Synod as such. The fact that *Auctorem fidei* links Pistoia to propositions condemned before the Synod took place partly helps us to understand why ultramontane readers saw the Synod as so inflammatory. Also, *Auctorem fidei* has so colored the reception of Pistoia that considering the Constitution as part of the story of the Synod is indispensable. In chapter six we will consider the “ghost” of Pistoia at Vatican II, and it is almost exclusively through *Auctorem fidei* that the council fathers encountered and addressed the memory of Pistoia. The Constitution itself is an important monument of the main eighteenth-century theological opponent of late Jansenism, that is, an ultramontane, anti-Erastian, and devotionally traditional Catholicism steeped in at least one strain of the counter-Reformation. Finally, this topical approach that includes a simultaneous consideration of *Auctorem fidei* is preferred to a chronological one also for convenience; it avoids unnecessary repetition, since the synodal

\(^{10}\) By the “Constitution” I refer to *Auctorem fidei*, which was promulgated as an “apostolic constitution.” In the literature it is normally referred to with the generic term “Bull” (*la Bolla*).
decrees often repeat important themes, and *Auctorem fidei* quotes liberally from the Acts of Pistoia.

I will examine the circumstances surrounding the composition and promulgation of *Auctorem fidei* in the next chapter. It is important to note, however, that *Auctorem fidei* does not always quote word-for-word from the Acts of Pistoia. Rather, the Constitution explicitly concerned itself with pinpointing and condemning erroneous doctrines that the papally-appointed committee thought the Synod was teaching (or even implying) or offensive and imprudent disciplinary reforms that the Synod intended to implement. According to the preface of *Auctorem fidei*, the condemned propositions were developed from a collection of propositions composed by the papal committee. Some of these propositions were word-for-word quotations from the Acts of Pistoia, but many were summaries from those Acts (pluralitasinde collectas propositiones, alias quidem per sese, alias attenta sententiarum connexione).\(^{11}\) Out of this collection were chosen “certain main heads of depraved doctrines” (selecta ex tota synodo praecipua quaedam pravarum doctrinarum capita).\(^{12}\) Whenever I quote a condemnation from *Auctorem fidei*, I will note where in the synodal *Atti* the condemned proposition is found, and whether the citation is a literal quotation, an accurate synthesis of Pistoian thought, or of questionable origin.

I will divide my examination of the Synod and its decrees according to four topics. First, I will examine Pistoian ecclesiology, which was foundational to the whole project. I will pay special attention to the pseudo-democratic Richerist elements against which the papacy reacted with particular vehemence, as well as the importance the Pistoians attached to the rights of the episcopacy.\(^{13}\) In this section I will need to consider certain matters that are

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\(^{11}\) Denzinger does not include the preface. The entirety of *Auctorem fidei* is in Stella, ed., *La bolla Auctorem Fidei*, 611–46. For the preface, see 611–16. Here: 613.

\(^{12}\) See the preface to *Auctorem fidei* in Stella, *Il giansenismo in Italia*, 613.
not “ecclesiological” in the contemporary use of the term. However, they are closely connected to ecclesiology and foundational to the Synod’s project: the Pistoian narrative of church history (which was strongly Jansenistic), the belief that there was a “general obscuration” of truth in the contemporary church, and the necessary interconnection of their entire reform program with these theses. Second, I will consider Pistoia’s rejection of the coercive power of the church and the assertion of at least a limited understanding of religious liberty. Third, Pistoian liturgical reform will be explored, along with the striking similarities between the agenda of Pistoia and the reforms at and after Vatican II. Finally, I will examine the Synod’s reforms of devotional life, including the centrality of Bible reading, as well as the treatment of devotion to Mary and the saints and the veneration of relics. Since many of these liturgical and devotional reforms were concretely resisted by a significant and vociferous portion of the faithful of Pistoia and Prato, this section will bridge into the next chapter, where I will explore why Pistoian reform failed. In chapter five I will also evaluate whether the Pistoian project constituted true or false reform in the church, and in what ways.

While the relationship between Vatican II and Pistoia will be explored in further detail in chapter six, I will point out many important parallels between the Council and the Synod in this chapter, including striking affinities in liturgical and devotional theology and practice.

1. Ecclesial Democracy? The Synod and Authority in the Church

The most notable Pistoian decrees were ecclesiological. Auctorem fidei recognizes this ecclesiological radicalism; all seven Pistoian propositions condemned as outright heresy,

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13 Chapter six presents the relationship between the Pistoian view of the rights of the episcopacy and Vatican II reform.

14 These ideas are tightly connected to the Pistoian vision of church-state relations, discussed in detail in chapter three, 2.1 and 2.2.

15 For eighteenth-century Gallicans, Jansenists, and Italian Augustinians, “it was the ecclesiology that made the difference.” See Dale van Kley, “Catholic Conciliar Reform,” 114. Josep-Ignasi Saranyana explores the central role of Tamburini in the ecclesiology of the Synod and proposes political ramifications of Pistoia’s ecclesiology,
the highest grade of censure in the Constitution, concern the nature of the church. In this section, I will examine Pistoian ecclesiology, both in its own right and in light of Auctorem fidei. I will begin, however, by contextualizing Pistoian ecclesiology in light of the Synod’s claim that the church labored under a “general obscurcation” of Christian truth. I will also recount their strongly Jansenistic view of church history and their view that all of their reforms were necessarily connected.

1.1 – The “General Obscurcation”: Narrating Church History through Jansenism

As outlined in the previous chapter, the thought of de’Ricci and his circle was strongly rooted in late Jansenism. Many of the decrees of Pistoia, accordingly, were unmistakably Jansenistic. In its first article Auctorem fidei attacks Jansenism as the root of Pistoia’s cluster of errors. Here the Constitution rejected as heretical the claim, rooted in mystical Jansenist “figurism,” that a “general obscurcation” of Christian truth (generalem obscurationem super veritates) regarding faith and morals had fallen upon the church in “these later times.” Auctorem fidei understandably placed this condemnation first because it was a cornerstone of the entire Pistoian project. The Constitution cited a Pistoian Decree, but it could also have cited de’Ricci’s Letter of Convocation or the opening oration of Guglielmo Bartoli, the designated preacher of the Synod. Bartoli was a former Dominican


16 Pietro Stella has shown that ecclesiological differences were the fundamental divide between the theology of the Synod and that of Auctorem fidei. See La Bolla Auctorem fidei, xxxiii–cxli.

17 On this highly symbolic and prophetic reading of scripture which developed among eighteenth-century Jansenists, see chapter two, 2.2.

18 See Denzinger 2601 (Auctorem fidei 1): “The proposition that asserts ‘that in these later times there has been spread a general obscuring of the more important truths pertaining to religion, which are the basis of the faith and of the moral teachings of Jesus Christ’, [is] heretical.” (Proposito, quae assertit, “postremis hisce saeculis sparsam esse generalem obscurationem super veritates gravioris momenti, spectantes ad religiorem, et quae sunt basis fidei et moralis doctrinae levi Christi”: haeretica.). See Pietro Stella, “L’oscuramento delle verità nella Chiesa dal sinodo di Pistoia alla bolla ‘Auctorem fidei’ (1786–1794),” Salesianum 43 (1981): 731–56.
whom de’Ricci secularized without permission from Rome. His fiery speech served as a fitting prelude to the Synod and its themes.

One can identify in Bartoli’s oration the centrality of a Jansenist narrative of church history for Pistoianism. Bartoli began by asserting a primitivism which exalted the “original glory” (primiero splendore) of the early church, in which sovereigns protected the faithful and disinterested priests served them. In those days, the church was aware that it was a kingdom not of this world. The last two centuries, however, have seen novelty and artifice.

A note to the text confirms Bartoli was referring to Molinism; the trouble started during the de Auxiliis controversy. Jesuits and Molinists are the “unhappy leftovers of Pelagius.” Bartoli praised Clement IX (pope from 1667–69), a native of Pistoia who was the author of a period of peace in the church in which (Jansenist) consciences were not disturbed for the final third of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, according to Bartoli, the “New Pharisees” (Jesuits and others) exchanged the teaching of the church fathers for casuistry. Instead of

19 Auctorem fidei §1 reads Pistoia fairly on this point, excerpting, essentially word-for-word, from the beginning of the Decree on Grace, Predestination, and the Foundation of Morals (Session Three), §1: “Uno dei massimi oggetti dei Sinodi è di mantenere la purità e l’unità della Fede e della Morale. In questi ultimi secoli si è sparso un generale oscuramento sulla verità più importanti della Religione, e che sono la base della fede e della Morale di Gesù Cristo” (emphasis mine). The antidote for such error is to return to pure sources, flee novelty, and seek uniformity of doctrine in the diocese. See Atti, 84. De’Ricci’s Letter of Convocation uses similar language. See “Lettera pastorale di Monsignore Scipione de’Ricci Vescovo di Pistoia e Prato, per la convocazione del sinodo diocesano di Pistoia,” 31 July 1786, in Atti, 5. Pius VI was right to fear this line of thinking because a rejection of recent papal teaching on doctrinal issues related to Jansenism went along with it. Indeed, a strong motivation for believing in a generale oscuramento was to make sense of, or even justify, such rejections of recent papal teaching.


21 For Bartoli’s oration, see Atti, 28–40. For helpful notes on Bartoli’s myriad sources and allusions in the speech, see the index entry for Bartoli in Stella, Atti e decreti, vol 2: Introduzione storica e documenti inediti.


23 Ibid., 28. On the de Auxiliis controversy, see chapter two, 2.1.


25 On the so-called “Clementine Peace,” see chapter two, 2.1. This praise incurred the wrath of Pius VI in Auctorem fidei 13 (see Denzinger 2613).
conscientious pastors, a “mob” or “rabble” of enemies of grace arose (nemici delle Grazie). These false teachers caused extravagance and illusion, a neglect of scripture, and even Jewish “childishness and superstition” rather than the true worship of God in spirit and truth. These were grievous wounds of Mother Church.

The Council of Trent and the synods of St. Charles Borromeo were the models for rectifying this crisis. Bartoli implied that Leopold was comparable to Constantine and Theodosius, functioning as the vescovo esteriore (“bishop of externals”) of his people. According to Bartoli, the crisis in the church metastasized beyond problems regarding grace and the relationship between church and state. The Molinists infected moral teaching. The ministry of the Word was broken and corrupted and exchanged for silly disputes of the schools (scholasticism). Bartoli expected no help from the papacy and warned of a blind fanaticism against reform. After explaining the dire straits in which the church, wracked by Pelagian error, found herself in the last two centuries, Bartoli praised wholesome synods, such as Borromeo’s in 1582.

The most important elements of Pistoian ecclesiology were apparent in this opening oration. The apostolic custom of holding synods was, according to Bartoli, the best way of resolving problems in the church. Borromeo showed that synods are led by the Holy Spirit for

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28 The implementation of the *Punti ecclesiastici* of the Grand Duke would help return the church to her former glory. Ibid., 30–31.

29 The Acts of the Synod echo Bartoli’s interpretation. See especially the Decree on Grace, on Predestination, and on the Foundation of Morals (session three) in *Atti*, 84–95.

30 Ibid., 33.

31 Ibid., 35–40.

32 See “Orazione al Sinodo,” §3, Session 1, in *Atti*, 30. Bartoli also contrasted effectual synods with ineffectual ones, such as one previously held in Pistoia in 1721, which accepted *Unigenitus*. See Stella, *Atti e decreti* 2:203. On the importance of Borromeo for those seeking the reform of the church (Jansenist or otherwise), see Maria Teresa Fattori, “The Council of Trent in the Eighteenth Century,” 417–59, at 431–36.
“ending controversies, removing errors, saving the faith, and stabilizing morals.”\textsuperscript{33} The normal membership of such an assembly is a bishop surrounded by his diocesan priests: the Richerist vision for church reform.

To modern eyes, the ideas in Jansenist reform and the Synod of Pistoia make a strange combination. They seem enlightened when arguing for a diffusion of authority in the church, and they clearly anticipate twentieth-century Catholic emphases in encouraging vernacular liturgy and the lay reading of scripture; yet, they also stressed a rigorous understanding of predestination, and severity in the confessional. The Pistoians made other claims which shock contemporary Catholic ears, such as accepting the damnation of unbaptized infants.\textsuperscript{34} While modern people are unlikely to see such ideas as necessarily connected, late Jansenists did.

Bartoli’s sermon provides an especially interesting window into this late Jansenist thought world because it is succinct, passionate, and confident. For the fiery ex-friar, everything with which the Synod is concerned is linked. First, there is primitivism and Erastianism. The early church was a time of glory, but the later church forgot important principles. The church and her pastors, who should have only been concerned with shepherding souls to salvation, started making claims and taking on roles that encroached on the rights of the state. An especially bloated example of this usurpation is the papacy, typified by Pope Gregory VII, the “destroyer of the Christian Republic.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus, opposing ultramontanism becomes connected to this ideological chain.

Then, errors on grace and predestination entered the picture. These errors were particularly grave, because they struck at the heart of the gospel, which is a recognition of the


\textsuperscript{34} The Decree on Baptism §3 (session four) speaks of the “Pelagian fable” of limbo. \textit{Atti}, 110.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 38. On the polarizing memory of Gregory VII and controversy over recognizing his feast day, see chapter three, 2.1.
utter helplessness of humanity and one’s total dependence on the grace of Jesus Christ. This identification of Augustinian or Jansenist doctrines on grace and salvation with the gospel is why Bartoli compared the persecution of that doctrine to “crucifying the truth” or even putting Jesus Christ himself under anathema, hyperbolic as these claims might seem.36 Bartoli’s sermon succinctly presented a common Jansenist narrative of the period 1580–1780. The crisis and pain Jansenists felt regarding their persecution and the rejection of their doctrines by Rome and many bishops was absolutely central to this narrative. From this perspective, the papacy tragically participated in, and sometimes led, this persecution.

Impoverished doctrine from the “New Pharisees” (Molinists and Jesuits) led to moral decline because it led to a false theological anthropology. This false view of the human person in turn caused clerical corruption and errors in discipline in the confessional. Scholasticism and the Jesuits bear much of the blame, as we see in the railing against casuistry. This poor theological and moral situation led to forgetting the teaching of the church fathers, of solid liturgical practice, and of Bible reading. Without these aids, the people had slipped into ignorance, laziness, superstition, and even semi-idolatry. These factors in turn caused all the erroneous devotional practices surrounding Mary and the saints. Lazy and venal friars benefitted unscrupulously from this situation.

The result of accepting such a late Jansenist view of church history is to coherently link all of the following, which to us, especially considering the nature of much twentieth-century reform, seem easy to separate: primitivistic idealization, Erastianism, anti-ultramontanism, extreme Augustinianism (regarding grace and predestination), rigor in the confessional, anti-Jesuitism, anti-scholasticism, anti-monasticism, a desire to return to the

36 Ibid., 36. Jacques Gudvert’s “violently anti-Roman polemic,” Jésus-Christ sous l’anathème et l’excommunication (1727), was placed on the Index and publically burned in 1734. De’Ricci reprinted this book in Italian translation in 1786. For a helpful study, see Marina Caffiero, “‘La verità crocifissa’: Dal sinodo di Pistoia al millenarismo giansenistico nell’eta rivoluzionaria,” in Il sinodo di Pistoia del 1786, 313–25 (the quote above is at 313–14).
church fathers, (vernacular) liturgical reform, and anti-Baroque devotional reform, including reforms of indulgences, processions, relics, etc. Typified and summarized in Baroli’s fiery speech was the coherent view of church history presented by the Synod of Pistoia. This view of church history in turn required a coherent system of reform.

It is not surprising, then, that the foes of the Synod of Pistoia had difficulty separating the wheat from the chaff. While many eighteenth-century Catholics, especially ultramontanes, had a certain paranoia about anything that might be even remotely tainted with Jansenism (witness the sometimes absurd accusations against Muratori38), Auctorem fidei often does correctly read the Acts of Pistoia, and, understandably, harshly reproves already condemned propositions on nature, grace, and predestination drawn from figures like Baius and Quesnel. These statements were sometimes rather brazenly copied almost word for word by the Pistoians.39 We have already explored how in other areas, such as indulgences and in understandings of purgatory and limbo, de’Ricci’s Jansenism had stamped pastoral practice and theology in his diocese. Thus, Auctorem fidei was reacting against current teaching in a Catholic diocese, that Pius VI judged to be erroneous and already condemned by the church, and this fact helps explains the vehemence of the language of the Constitution.

1.2 – Pistoia and Authority in the Church

In her study of the reforms and legislation of Pope Benedict XIV, Maria Teresa Fattori pinpoints five ecclesiological subjects which were controversial in the eighteenth century. These were “the hierarchical structure of the church, the denial of the primacy of the

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37 See, for example, the Decrees on Penance and on Orders (session five) in Atti, 146–52, 163–180.

38 For these rather far-fetched accusations of Jansenism (and even Freemasonry!) directed at Muratori, see Visamara, “Lodovico Antonio Muratori,” 261; Chadwick, The Popes, 398.

39 The censures in Auctorem fidei 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 23 cite these obviously Baianist and Jansenistic notions in the Pistoian Atti.
pope’s jurisdiction, the rights of the episcopate, the rights of parish priests, and the conception of the church as the mystical body” of Christ. The Acts of Pistoia addressed all of these unresolved problems and in a manner the papacy deemed unacceptable.

We have seen that de’Ricci and his circle were animated by a deep anti-ultramontanism and that they held a diffuse conception of authority in the church, a conception that privileged the rights of bishops and ecumenical councils, as in conciliarist and episcopalist theories. They claimed further de iure divino rights for parish priests, although without the same degree of juridical specificity that they attached to bishops’ rights. Added to this diffusion of authority into different levels was an assertion of the importance of the reception of teaching, both by the episcopacy and even by the entire church, including lay people. This conception was inspired by the Synod’s attachment to the early church and the fathers and thus has some affinities with twentieth-century ressourcement and parallels a renewed emphasis in the postconciliar church.

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41 While the Pistoians often highlighted the long tradition of constitutionalist conciliarism in the church, their concrete inspiration for such claims usually came from more recent sources embroiled in the Jansenist controversies, in particular the reception (or rejection) of Unigenitus. For example, in tract five of the Raccolta, a catechism of one of the Appellant bishops (Soanen of Senez) is reproduced. To the question: “Does the infallible tribunal of the Church dwell in the Pope?” the catechism answers, “No, the privilege of infallibility is not attached to the person of the Pope, nor to his dignity, nor to his See. That was decided in the General Councils of Basil and Constance. It is true that the Pope is the Head of the Church, but he is only the ministerial Head of it: he is the first member of the Church, but he is not the entire body.” For Soanens’ “Catechismo sulla Chiesa,” see Raccolta 5:205–327, at 219. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 37–38. Tracts five (an anonymous author) and twelve (Antoine Arnauld) also asserted that councils and popes are not infallible in questions of fact, which was a point of dissension after Jansenists asserted that the teachings anathematized by Innocent X in Cum occasione could not in fact be found in Jansen’s book Augustinus.

42 De’Ricci taught that the ideal organ for teaching was parish priests gathered around a diocesan bishop in perfect concord. He believed that bishops were superior in authority to priests, but he emphasized that consensus is important between bishops and priests and that priests have an active, deliberative role in doctrinal teaching. See de’Ricci’s pastoral letter of convocation, 31 July 1786, in Atti, 3–4.

Pistoia even go as far as to say that because church teaching in these “unhappy times” is often plagued by “the most grave innovations,” lay people have the right and duty to question the hierarchy regarding whether teaching conforms to scripture and tradition. However, the Pistoians sometimes succumbed to a primitivism which rejected later developments and innovations deemed erroneous or undesirable with a vehemence that was of course undetectable in the documents of Vatican II. While the parallels between Pistoian ecclesiology and elements of the ecclesiological reforms at Vatican II will become obvious in this chapter, they will be explored in more detail in chapter six.

1.3 – Richerism and the Parochi

Pistoian ecclesiology was a combination of medieval conciliarist and Gallican insights paired with eighteenth-century Febronian, Josephinist, and Richerist strands. Richerism, named for the Sorbonne theologian Edmond Richer (1559–1631), was a particularly important strand of Pistoian ecclesiology. Richerism was increasingly popular in the eighteenth-century, especially among Jansenists. Richer was known for a theory of church governance derived from his Libellus de ecclesiastica et politica potestate (1611) that has been called “ecclesial democracy.” De’Ricci had made his preference for Richerism clear in the first volume of the Raccolta, which he provocatively addressed not only to bishops but also “to pastors of the Second Order,” that is, parish priests (parochi). His modes of

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45 See the Decree on Faith and the Church §12 (session three) in Atti 79–80. This view of the rights and duties of the laity developed out of eighteenth-century Jansenist figurism. In the wake of Unigenitus, some Jansenists argued the laity had the right to raise a “cry of conscience” against a hierarchy which had largely succumbed to doctrinal and moral “obscuration.” See Dale van Kley, “Catholic Conciliar Reform,” 106.

46 On the importance of Richerism to Jansenists, especially in the wake of Unigenitus, see chapter two, 2.2.
expression clearly evoked Richerism. De’Ricci’s pastoral letters were addressed to “Consacerdoti e Cooperatores” rather than just Cooperatores, the latter being the common practice. Richerism, as adopted by the Pistoians, was not really democratic. Rather, it had democratic, deliberative elements under a canopy of episcopal superintendence. The bishop, in Pistoian ecclesiology, is clearly above the “Second Order,” but priests had a real theological and juridical role as “judges of the faith.” Pistoian ecclesiology, punctuated especially by its radical Richerist features, was promulgated in several key passages of the synodal Atti and was concretely illustrated by the practice and ceremonial of the Synod, and even the gospel readings chosen for its masses.

De’Ricci’s thought, supported by his sovereign and influenced by the work of experts from outside the diocese like Tamburini, Palmieri, and de’Vecchi, clearly set the synodal agenda. Still, the Synod of Pistoia was notable for its democratic and deliberative elements (although these had clear limits). All those priests with the right to participate in the Synod were invited (there were about 250 voting attendees), and on 18 September 1786 a convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit was celebrated, de’Ricci presiding. The priests present,

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47 See the address “Ai Venerabili Vescovi e Pastori dell Second’ Ordine,” in Raccolta 1:iii.

48 For example, the pastoral letter convening the Synod is addressed to the bishop’s “Venerable brothers, co-priests (consacerdotes) and co-workers (cooperatores)” (Atti, 1–8). De’Ricci uses this phrase many times in the Atti. On this practice, and the significance of Richerist phraseology, see Bolton, Church Reform, 29. In the Latin church, the practice of bishops referring to their fellow bishops (not presbyters) as consacerdotes goes back at least to Cyprian. Since the Pistoians often claimed their practices were direct retrievals of the early church (when doctrine was supposedly purer), it is surprising they did not mimic this patristic practice. Their usage of consacerdotes suggests they were more interested in advancing Richerism than antiquarianism or ressourcement. For Cyprian, see Sententiae episcoporum numero LXXXVII de haereticis baptizandis (Concilium Carthaginense sub Cypriano anno 256 habitum) 26.47.220. Many fourth- and fifth-century church fathers used consacerdotes in this way, including Lucifer of Cagliari, Ambrose, Augustine, and the fathers of the Council of Aquilea.

49 For example, Bartoli clearly teaches the supremacy of the bishop, but the equality of the parish priests underneath him. See Atti, 37. On priests as judges of the faith (giudici della fede), see Bartoli in Atti, 34.

50 De’Ricci wanted the Synod to recover the sacred rights of the Second Order and said that it is because the parochi are of divine institution that he invites all his parish priests to the Synod. See the pastoral letter of convocation in Atti, 2–4. On the significance of the gospel readings, see page 207, below.
however, wore stoles as signs of concelebration. Then, official decrees convoking the Synod and recognizing attendance and special roles were read. At the beginning of the Mass that opened the Synod, the priests processed to the altar “without distinction of post or seniority.” The place of the bishop in the synodical assembly was a clearly separate and executive role. If there was a “democratization” of authority at Pistoia, it was under the clear presidency of the bishop, who had great theological and ecclesiastical authority.

The readings of the opening Mass reflected this collegial atmosphere. The Gospel (Matt 13:15–22) proclaimed the Lord’s presence “where two or three are gathered” after Acts 20:17–36 (Vulgate: “Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopos regere Ecclesiam Dei”) was read, which could be used to support the assertion that the rights of bishops were de iure divino. More evocative from an ecclesiological standpoint was the Gospel reading that began the second and fifth sessions: the sending of the seventy-two disciples by Jesus (Luke 10:1–23).

This passage had been used by Richerists and Jansenists since at least the early eighteenth-century to argue for a biblical witness to the de iure divino rights of parish priests and their status as “judges of the faith.” This idea was firmly resisted by the papacy, only the bishops

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51 On attendance, make-up of deliberative congregations, the opening mass, etc. see Atti, Session One, 9–27. The priests are called parochi (171 attendees), cappellani curati (14), canonici (14), and sacerdoti, which are split into secolari (12) and regolari (13), totaling 234 (see Atti, 27).

52 The Atti says the priests concelebrated with de’Ricci “as on Holy Thursday” and all received communion. See Atti, 14 (session one). Bolton notes this was “not in the full sense of the Eastern rite, but in the limited sense of Maundy Thursday when there is only one Mass in each church.” See Church Reform, 61.

53 “…senza differenza di posti o anzianità.” Atti, 12.

54 Atti, 14.

55 “In illo tempore: designavit Dominus et alios septuaginta duos et misit illos binos ante faciem suam in omnem civitatem et locum quo erat ipse venturus” (Luke 10:1, Vulgate). (“At that time, the Lord appointed also seventy-two others: and he sent them two by two before him into every city and place where he himself was going to come.” My translation.). See Atti, 41, 135.

56 On the connection of this assertion to opposition to Unigenitus, see chapter two, 2.2.
(in communion with the Holy See) were judges of the faith, properly speaking. This position had been reaffirmed as recently as Benedict XIV in *De synodo dioecesana*.57

Indeed, every effort was made at Pistoia to elevate the status of the parish priest, even, to accord them at least some level of judgement of the faith alongside their bishop, which was meant to be concretely manifested in synodal deliberation.58 The importance of the local synod and the role of the parish priest was emphatically proclaimed by Bartoli, the Synod preacher. We have already touched on many important elements of this speech. In addition to the importance of a Jansenist view of history, Richerist elements, and synodal deliberation, Bartoli also rejected Roman interference: “acceptance” was not accorded to “the decrees, the definitions, or judgments, even of the greater Sees, if they had not come to be approved and recognized by the Diocesan Synod.”59 Bartoli ended his oration with a stirring passage directed at the parish priests:

> You do now what was done then; you follow the ways of your elders (*maggiori*); you inherit the same rights; and whatever things, pertaining to the faith and to the salvation of souls that have not been decided by the voice of the universal Church either united or dispersed, are all subjected to your judgement. There is no power in the Church that can take from you that which God has given you. Judges of the faith, I speak to you: your judgement becomes holy, because you are under the eyes of God, who has made you dispensers of his mysteries, because you sit in testimony of his oracles and [are] interpreters of his will.60

These words of Bartoli clearly proclaim Richerist doctrine, and they echo in fact de’Ricci’s Letter for the Convocation of the Synod (31 July 1786).61 This Richerism was condemned in

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58 For this effort, see especially de’Ricci letter of convocation in * Atti*, 5, and Bartoli’s speech in * Atti*, 33–35.

59 Bartoli, “Orazione al Sinodo,” §8 in * Atti*, 34

60 Ibid., 34–35.

61 Like much in his writings, when untainted by polemic, de’Ricci’s words to his priests are warm and theologically astute: “How can anyone hesitate to believe that the institution of these venerable assemblies goes back even to the Apostles and is commended by the universal practice of all ages, and that they renew the ancient practice of judgment that was always pronounced by Priests together with the Bishop in the important affairs of the Church? Therefore, what a consolation it is for us to follow what was done in the happy times (*nei bei tempi*) of Christianity when the Bishop was always surrounded by his co-laborers, who unfailingly labored with him, and with due subordination governed the Diocese in common! As for myself, Venerable brothers, my
Auctorem fidei 9–12 under the heading “The Right Incorrectly Attributed to Priests of Inferior Rank in Decrees of Faith and Discipline.” Auctorem fidei 9 condemns what it sees to be the insinuation of de’Ricci’s letter:

[that] the reformation of abuses in regard to ecclesiastical discipline ought equally to depend upon and be established by the bishop and the parish priests in diocesan synods and that without the freedom of decision, obedience would not be due to the suggestions and orders of the bishops” [is] “false, rash, harmful to episcopal authority, and subversive of hierarchic government, favoring the heresy of Aerius, which was renewed by Calvin.

Article 10 condemned the idea that parish priests are “judges of the faith” and that they receive this right through ordination. This is a fair interpretation of Pistoian doctrine.

Article 11 condemns in harsh terms the idea that diocesan synods have the right to accept or to reject the decisions “of even greater Sees.” This is a clear reference to the requirement that even papal teaching be received and ratified, both in the Pistoian reiterations of Gallican theory and in the Richerist doctrine of Bartoli quoted above. It is noteworthy that even after Bartoli spoke of the importance of “the voice of the Universal church” he referenced an ecumenical council or universal concurrence in doctrine, but not the role of the pope.

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62 The section headings in Denzinger appeared in Auctorem fidei itself.

63 Denzinger 2609. Aerius of Sebaste, an obscure fourth-century Armenian, allegedly taught “the perfect equality of the power of the bishops and the presbyters” (ibid). The reference to Calvin comes in a condemnation of Calvinist ecclesiology in Benedict XIV’s De synodo dioecesana XIII, I (cited in ibid). De’Ricci clearly did not believe in, nor did the Synod teach, a “perfect equality” between priest and bishop. This censure gives fascinating insight into the ultramontane perspective. While the drafters of Auctorem fidei knew Pistoian ecclesiology was not Calvinist, it was enough to sound close to Calvin to merit censure (“favoring” a presbyterian heresy “renewed by Calvin”). One can see why it made sense to the drafters to accuse the pope’s enemies here of being sounding Protestant in any way, since the papacy at the time was so fiercely anti-Protestant. Needless to say, this was the exact opposite of an ecumenical posture.

64 Denzinger 2610. The Pistoian and Richerist doctrine is called “false, rash, subversive of hierarchic order, detracting from the strength of dogmatic definitions or judgments of the Church, (or) at least erroneous.”

65 Denzinger 2611. This teaching is “false, rash, detracting, by its generality, from the obedience owed to the apostolic constitutions, as well as to the decisions emanating from legitimate superior hierarchic authority, fostering schism and heresy.”
1.4 – The Papacy and Power

The sermon of Bartoli set the ecclesiological tone for the Synod which, from the ultramontane perspective, was seriously infected with Richerism. The ecclesiological thesis underpinning this view of authority in the church comes from de’Ricci’s Letter of Convocation. The following statement was cited by Auctorem fidei and condemned as heretical if understood in the following manner:

“Power was given by God to the Church, that it might be communicated to the pastors, who are her ministers for the salvation of souls,” if this is understood in the sense (*sic intellecta*) that from the community of the faithful the pastors derive the power of ecclesiastical ministry and of governing.

Years later, in his point-by-point response to Auctorem fidei, de’Ricci protested that neither he nor the Synod understood the proposition thus. De’Ricci cited the Tridentine Decree on Penance to argue that the Pistoians maintained, as the pope did, that pastors receive their authority from God. Nevertheless, Auctorem fidei did correctly identify the crux of the matter, ecclesiologically: the Pistoians taught not only a Gallican insistence on the consent of the whole church in defining doctrine, but also Richerist additions to that ancient doctrine. These included the rights of parish priests to be judges of the faith and a contextualization of both episcopal and papal rights that made these figures explicitly accountable to the whole church community, which could deliberate before accepting teaching. The Pistoians even

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66 The cited part of this condemned proposition was taken word-for-word from de’Ricci’s Letter of Convocation, but it is actually part of a statement asserting the proper boundaries between the jurisdiction of the church and that of the state, rather than a programmatic statement on the internal constitution of the church per se. See *Atti*, 5.

67 *Auctorem fidei* 2; Denzinger 2602: “Propositio, quae statuit, ‘potestatem a Deo datam Ecclesiae, ut communicaretur pastoribus, qui sunt eius ministri pro salute animarum’; *sic intellecta*, ut a communitate fidelium in pastores derivetur ecclesiastici ministerii ac regiminis potestas: haeretica.” A note in Denzinger correctly identifies §2–3 with Richerism.


69 See the “Decree on Faith and the Church,” Session 3, §16.4, (*Atti*, 82) which repeats the fourth Gallican article on the necessity that papal teaching receive the consent of the church to be irreformable. The same decree, §8, asserts that infallibility was given to the whole church, not any one individual.
taught that lay people have some role to play in this deliberation and acceptance.\textsuperscript{70} These views of the Pistoians could only clash with the absolutism of many expressions of ultramontanist doctrine.\textsuperscript{71} Indeed, they were designed precisely to do so.\textsuperscript{72}

Regarding the papacy, the Synod avoided some of the more extreme language de’Ricci had used in correspondence and even in published material.\textsuperscript{73} However, the Pistoian conception of the papacy as the “ministerial head” (\textit{capo ministeriale}) was unacceptable to Pius VI and his supporters because it could mean that the pope received authority from the church rather than directly from Christ, and it had been used in the past in the context of denying papal jurisdictional claims.\textsuperscript{74} This papal title was used in the Pistoian Decree on Faith and the Church (§8)\textsuperscript{75} and was condemned in \textit{Auctorem fidei} 3 thus:

The proposition that states “that the Roman pontiff is the ministerial head,” if it is so explained (\textit{sic explicata}) that the Roman pontiff does not receive from Christ in the person of blessed Peter, but from the Church, the power of ministry, which as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[70] See section 1.2, above.
\item[71] In addition to \textit{Auctorem fidei}, the Brief of Pius VI, \textit{Super soliditate} (28 November 1786), which condemned the book \textit{Was ist der Papst?} (Vienna, 1782) by the Viennese canonist J. V. Eybel, is representative of ultramontane thought in the late eighteenth-century. Past teaching documents like \textit{Unam Sanctum} (Bull of Boniface VIII, 1302) were also considered representative of ultramontanism. For \textit{Super soliditate}, see the Italian translation on the Vatican website, https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-vi/it/documents/breve-super-soliditate-petrae-28-novembre-1786.html, as well as the excerpt in Denzinger 2599 (immediately preceding \textit{Auctorem fidei} and subtitled “Against Febronianism”).
\item[72] See chapter three, section 1.
\item[73] For correspondence, see his needlessly inflammatory statement about the “papal monarchy” being a “diabolical and antichristian invention” in \textit{Memorie}, 1:490. De’Ricci called the “pretended infallibility” of the pope and the “Roman congregations” a “chimera.” He acknowledges those with “incompetent” ideas about “the Roman Court” may not want to hear this. See his preface to the \textit{Raccolta} series: \textit{Raccolta} 1:vi–vi.
\item[74] Notably, this title was used by the schismatic Church of Utrecht at their famous synod of 1763. See “IIIe rapport: De la primauté du pape, par François Meganck,” in \textit{Actes et décrets du II. concile provincial d’Utrecht, tenu le 13 septembre M.DCC.LXIII. dans la chapelle de l’église paroissiale de saint Gertrude, à Utrecht} (Utrecht: Au dépens de la compagnie, 1764), 142–43; 171–73.
\item[75] See \textit{Atti}, 78, §8. The church is “represented by the body of pastors, vicars of Jesus Christ, united to the Ministerial Head, and to the center of communion, the Roman Pontiff, first among them, receives the right to judge, and to guide the Faithful in controversies arising on doctrine and on morals.” (“…rappresentata dal Corpo dei Pastori Vicari di Gesù Cristo, uniti al Capo Ministeriale, ed al centro commune il Romano Pontefice primo fra essi, ricevette il diritto di giudicare, e di determinare i Fedeli nelle controversie insorte sulla dottrina o sulla morale”). This phrase was also used by the French Appellant Bishop Soanens. His catechism is quoted above in de’Ricci’s Italian translation for the \textit{Raccolta}. See section 1.2, above.
\end{footnotes}
successor of Peter, true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church, he possesses in the universal Church, (is) heretical.\textsuperscript{76}

The phrase “ministerial head” was used by Richer.\textsuperscript{77} Its employment here should be understood in a late Jansenist context, not as a denial that the office of the papacy was \textit{de iure divino} (de’Ricci certainly held that it was, as did the general tradition of conciliarism before him\textsuperscript{78}), but rather as part of a critique of the papacy’s allegedly unjust accumulation of temporal and spiritual powers.\textsuperscript{79} The insinuation of the term was that much of the theological and ecclesiastical power of the contemporary papacy was \textit{de iure ecclesiastico} and could thus be reformed without disrupting (true) doctrine. To the Pistoians, the primacy instituted by Christ was a center of unity, the primacy of an elder bishop who had “the principal part” of pastoral solicitude for the whole church, but not the plenitude of power, which belonged only to the ecumenical council representing the universal church.\textsuperscript{80}

De’Ricci also spoke of the pope as \textit{primo tra i Vicari di Gesù Cristo} (“first among the vicars of Jesus Christ”).\textsuperscript{81} This phrase was popular among French Jansenists. While

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Auctorem fidei} 3 (Denzinger 2603): “\textit{Insuper, quae statuit, ‘Romanum Pontificem esse caput ministeriale’: sic explicata, ut Romanus Pontifex non a Christo in persona beati Petri, sed ab Ecclesia potestatem ministerii accipiat, quae velit Petri successor, verus Christi vicarius ac totius Ecclesiae caput pollet in universa Ecclesia: haeretica.”


\textsuperscript{78} See de’Ricci’s response to \textit{Auctorem fidei} 3 in \textit{Memorie}, 2:156. “I have always confessed with all the catholic Church that Jesus Christ established a primacy in his Church, that this was given by Jesus Christ to St. Peter, and in him to his successors. The error that is condemned has never been held; neither by me nor by the Synod[.]” For the fifteenth-century conciliarist affirmation of the papal office as \textit{de iure divino}, see Francis Oakley, \textit{The Conciliarist Tradition}, 78.

\textsuperscript{79} See de’Ricci’s preface to the \textit{Raccolta} series, cited on the previous page.

\textsuperscript{80} The pope’s possession of the “principal part” comes from the fourth Gallican article, ratified in the Pistoian “Decree on Faith and the Church,” Session 3, §16.4, in \textit{Atti}, 82.

\textsuperscript{81} See the “Letter for Convocation” in \textit{Atti}, 1. Bolton (\textit{Church Reform}, 56) associates the phrase with French Jansenism. See the entry “Primo tra I Vicari di G.C.”, §100, in Guasco, \textit{Dizionario ricciano ed antiricciano}, 226–231. Guasco notes the phrase had been used recently by Quesnel (227) and the “conciliabolo” of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht (228). He suggests the title confuses the issue of who is the true successor of Peter
technically orthodox insofar as all priests are vicars of Christ, at least in their sacramental function, it was a clear rhetorical attempt to minimize or contextualize papal authority through implying that all who act in persona Christi are vicars of Christ, and not just the pope. While de’Ricci’s use of the phrase was published with the Acts of Pistoia, it was not in fact condemned in Auctorem fidei. Thus, the phrase “first among the vicars of Jesus Christ” could be frowned upon by defenders of the papacy for its intended implication, but it could not be rejected outright, unless its meaning was explicated further. Still, given the strong ultramontane orientation of Auctorem fidei and the serious concern Pius VI and the drafters of the Constitution had regarding Pistoian ecclesiology, it is surprising that the phrase was not condemned, accompanied by a sic intellecta (“thus understood to mean…”).

The canonical and theological authority of the bishop vis-à-vis the pope and the Roman Curia was a very important issue for the Pistoians, and their propositions on these matters were condemned in Auctorem fidei 6–8. As these condemnations were the subject of important debates at Vatican II, they are discussed in detail in chapter six.

Auctorem fidei detected several other ecclesiological problems in the Acts of Pistoia. Article 15 condemns de’Ricci’s use of the ecclesial image of the Mystical Body of Christ, if it implies a rigorist reading, in which only the faithful who are “perfect adorers in spirit and

and asks sarcastically whether the faithful must sift through decrees, briefs, and bulls from the Vicars of Jesus Christ in Pistoia (de’Ricci), Pienza (Bishop Pannilini), and Colle (Bishop Sciarelli): “ogni Vescovo è dunque Papa nella sua Diocesi” (“every bishop is therefore pope in his diocese”) (228).

82 According to Trent, “The Lord Jesus Christ left priests to represent him (sacerdotes sui ipsius vicarios reliquit).” See Session 14, chapter five, “Doctrine on the Sacrament of Penance” in Denzinger 1679.

83 In itself, the claim that all the ordained were vicars of Christ in certain sacerdotal functions was of course not controversial. Defending himself against Auctorem fidei 2, de’Ricci calls all ordained ministers “vicari di Gesù Cristo” who receive authority from God by way of ordination. See Memorie, 2:155–56.

84 This is apparent in the Punti ecclesiastici, a multitude of Raccolta tracts and many decrees and appended documents in the synodal acts. See for example, the Promemorias for the Convocation of a National Council (Atti, 240–43), the reforms of feasts (Atti, 228–33), the reform of Regulars (235–39), the nullification of the bull Ambitiosae (Atti Appendices, 1), and the letters of the Segretaria del Regio Dirritto and de’Ricci on reserved cases (Atti Appendices, 50).
truth” (*qui sunt perfecti adoratores in spiritu et veritate*) truly belong to the Mystical Body, rather than all the baptized.\(^8^5\)

Article 85 condemns as schismatic and heretical a reading of Pistoia on national councils that sees them as bearers of infallibility, “as if freedom from error in questions of faith and morals belonged to National Councils.”\(^8^6\) It must be said that while de’Ricci and the Pistoians placed great weight on “National Councils” (indeed, they hoped the church would be dramatically reformed through them), and certainly accorded them jurisdictional and theological authority far beyond what Pius VI could countenance, neither de’Ricci nor the Pistoians ever argued a national council could be infallible in faith or morals. The Synod of Pistoia itself firmly held to the Gallican notion that infallibility resided only in the universal church, and that this infallibility was properly manifested in ecumenical councils.\(^8^7\) This position on infallibility was true to de’Ricci’s Jansenism. Thus, the condemnation seems to miss the mark. Clearly, there were other elements of the Pistoia view of diocesan synods and national councils (such as their independence of papal or curial oversight) that were censurable. In light of the disputes over the Synod of Bishops and the authority of national

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\(^8^5\) Denzinger 2615. De’Ricci used the phrase in his *Istruzione pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo sulla necessita e sul modo di studiare la Religione* (§28 in the Appendices), 73–84, here: 75–76. He defends himself against *Auctorem fidei* 15 in *Memorie* 2:159–60. De’Ricci made an orthodox distinction between belonging to the outward body of the church and the inward soul. On Vatican I’s avoidance of this image for the church due to its association with Jansenism, see the Introduction, 15n52.

\(^8^6\) See the “Promemoria for the Convocation of a National Council,” in *Atti*, 240–43. This call for a National Council (*sic intellecta*) is censured as schismatic and heretical in *Auctorem fidei* 85 (Denzinger 2693): “The proposition stating that any knowledge whatsoever of ecclesiastical history is sufficient to allow anyone to assert that the convocation of a national council is one of the canonical ways by which controversies in regard to religion may be ended in the Church of the respective nations, if understood to mean that controversies in regard to faith or morals that have arisen in a Church can be ended by an irrefutable decision made in a national council, as if freedom from error in questions of faith and morals belonged to a national council [is] schismatic and heretical.”

\(^8^7\) See Decree on Faith and the Church (§§) in *Atti*, 78. Infallibility is discussed along Gallican lines: “infallibility in judging and proposing to the Faithful articles (*articoli*) to be believed…was not conceded to anyone in particular, but only to the body of Pastors representing the Church.” This belief confounds the “innovators” (*Novatori*) because it is founded on the “especially clear testimony of Scripture” and even the very nature and constitution of the Church. Another typically Gallican belief, the rejection of the development of doctrine (or at least a caricature of it), is asserted in §9 (pp. 78–79). “It would be a very great error to imagine” that when the church “newly proposes” (*nuovamente propone*) something to be believed, this could possibly be due to “fluctuating opinions interpos[ing]” a “new article of Faith.” See also Bolton, *Church Reform*, 112–13.
episcopal bodies both during and after Vatican II, we can see that the Synod of Pistoia again touches upon issues that remain important and disputed in the twentieth- and twenty-first century Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{88}

Finally, the Synod rather provocatively adopted the Gallican Articles of 1682\textsuperscript{89} and incorporated them into the *Atti*. This inclusion could only be interpreted by the papacy as an insult.\textsuperscript{90} It was deemed “insidious” and was denounced spiritedly in *Auctorem fidei*.\textsuperscript{91}

The highest grade of censure in *Auctorem fidei* was reserved for the ecclesiological teaching of the Synod of Pistoia since Pius VI and the drafters of the Constitution correctly understood that these propositions contained the Gallican, late Jansenist, and Richerist foundations for their program for church reform. There was nothing hidden about this agenda since the Synod made explicit use of markedly Richerist ideas and ratified and adopted the Gallican Articles. The ecclesiology of de’Ricci, Tamburini, and Grand Duke Leopold was radically different from that of the ultramontanists and would have fundamentally changed the Catholic Church; indeed, such was their intention. In these matters, *Auctorem fidei*

\textsuperscript{88} While bishop’s conferences and the Synod of Bishops did not exist in 1786, de’Ricci and the Synod were very much concerned with issues now treated under the rubric of episcopal collegiality, to which we will turn in chapter six.

\textsuperscript{89} On the Gallican Articles see chapter two, 1.2.

\textsuperscript{90} The papally-appointed committee of prelates investigating the Synod all reacted negatively to this inclusion but reactions ranged from advising the pope to spiritedly condemn the inclusion to counseling that he simply ignore it for reasons of political expediency. See the responses to *Dubbio* 7 in *ASV, Pistoia* 2. For example, Cardinal Borromeo said even though the Articles are “abominable,” it is “not opportune” to draw attention to them. During discussion, another prelate said that mentioning the Articles could start rumors, or “exite some French fanatic to make common cause with the Synod of Pistoia” (eccitare qualche fanatico Scrittore francese a far causa commune col Sinodo di Pistoia). This no doubt highlights the precarious political position the papacy was in. See also the responses to *Dubbio* 14 in *Pistoia* 1 (the Oration of Bartoli). There was even some diversity in the Pistoian understanding of the Articles. De’Ricci and his circle clearly believed they could be used by any sovereign, while the Oratorian Francesco Tolomei (one of the handful of synod fathers who expressed “difficulties”) argued that the Gallican Church did indeed have her priviledges, but that they exceeded those of the Pistoian Church! See Tolomei’s letter in the inter-sessions (“congregazioni intermedia”) in *Carte Ricci* 28.

\textsuperscript{91} See the Decree on Faith and the Church in *Atti*, 81–82, condemned in the conclusion of *Auctorem fidei* (Denzinger, 2699–2700): “…pastoral solicitude demands much more strongly of Us that We reject and condemn as rash and scandalous the recent adoption of these acts tainted with so many faults, made by the synod, and, especially after the publication of the decrees of Our predecessor as exceedingly injurious to this Apostolic See, and We, accordingly, reject and condemn it by this present constitution of Ours, and We wish it to be held as rejected and condemned” (2700).
generally did correctly read the Acts of Pistoia and the objectives of de’Ricci, notwithstanding that there was room to argue that what followed the *sic intellecta* was not always the intention of the drafters.

Especially in light of the theological developments at Vatican II, two ecclesiological affirmations of Pistoia that were not censured by *Auctorem fidei* have importance. The first was a proposition affirming the priesthood of all believers (“in a certain sense” – that is, without denying the ordained priesthood). This idea becomes especially important in the Pistoian reform of the liturgy. A second statement, from the same paragraph in which the pope’s role is described as “ministerial head,” asserts that infallibility is not the prerogative of one but was given to the whole body of pastors. Still, critical elements of Pistoian ecclesiology were rejected, with all the harshness of *anathema*, albeit couched with *sic intellecta* and *quatenus innuit*.

2. “The Heart is Not Reformed by Prison and Fire”: Pistoia and Religious Liberty

The marked Erastianism both of Leopold’s *Punti ecclesiastici* and of de’Ricci’s views has already been examined. Much of their plan for the ecclesiastical reform of Pistoia-Prato and, eventually, all of Tuscany was repeated in the Acts of Pistoia. This plan included state, rather than clerical, control over marriage and over numerous issues regarding the reform of

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92 Decree on the Sacraments in General, §11 in *Atti*, 108. Of course, this concept, coming from scripture (1 Peter 2:5, 9) could only be censured if a false understanding was appended to it. Vatican II developed the idea of the laity sharing through baptism in the threefold ministry of Christ (prophet, priest, and king). In this way, the laity share in priesthood, albeit one clearly demarcated from ordained priesthood. See *Lumen gentium* 10 and 31.

93 Decree on Faith and the Church, §8, in *Atti*, 78. Vatican I rejected the Gallican insistence on the consent of the church for infallible teaching. However, Vatican II promoted a more multivalent and balanced view of infallibility, teaching, alongside papal and conciliar infallibility, the infallibility of the episcopal college (*Lumen gentium* 25) and of the entire people of God (*Lumen gentium* 12).

94 Decree on Matrimony (session five) §7, 11, and 12 in *Atti*, 181–90. See especially §7, which asserts that since Jesus Christ’s Kingdom is spiritual, most things regarding marriage fall under the authority of the sovereign. See also the promemoria “Concerning Betrothals and Marriage Impediments,” (session six), in *Atti* 222–24. This promemoria is part of a collection of six requests to Peter Leopold (see *Atti* 221) to use civil power for ecclesiastical reform in Pistoia and in Tuscany. *Auctorem fidei* 58–60 condemned many of these plans.
the religious orders. These decrees followed basic patterns already set out by “enlightened despots” like Joseph II. This anti-monastic agenda included an accusation against many religious communities of a certain obscurantism, laziness, and lack of utility. While there were certainly communities in need of reform, this meddling of sovereigns in a cherished and ancient part of ecclesiastical life was resented by the papacy and by many others, as we will see. Some of these proposed reforms appear very reasonable, such as an increased episcopal oversight of communities of religious. However, many appear vindictive, and designed to marginalize religious communities, including the stipulation that only one monastery was permitted in each city, and must be outside the city walls. Especially offensive to the religious orders and to the papacy was the stipulation that there should be only one religious order, modelled after the structures of the Benedictines and the piety of Port Royal.

We should recall that the first Gallican Article was a rejection of the temporal power of the pope, and thus in adopting the Articles, the Pistoians were not just making a statement exalting ecumenical councils, but also denigrating the temporal power of the papacy. Papal temporal power was an increasingly neuralgic issue in the eighteenth century (and remained contentious until decades after the fall of the Papal States in 1870). Pistoian denigration of

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95 Promemoria “On the Reform of Regulars,” (session six) in Atti 235–39. Article 8 asked Leopold to enforce these decrees. See Auctorem fidei 80–84 (Denzinger, 2680–92). Article 84 is very lengthy, containing eight sub-articles, including a condemnation of an especially inflammatory Pistoian decree that perpetual vows should not be allowed for any nuns under the age of 40 or 45. The resulting Pistoian “system” was condemned as “subversive to the discipline now flourishing and already approved and accepted in ancient times, dangerous, opposed, and injurious to the Apostolic Constitutions and to the sanctions of many councils, even general ones, and especially of the Council of Trent, and favorable to the vicious calumnies of heretics against monastic vows and the regular institutes devoted to the more stable profession of the evangelical counsels” (Denzinger 2692).

96 This desire is reflected in the promemoria “On the Reform of Regulars” (session six), §10.7 in Atti, 239.

97 Ibid, §10.3 in Atti, 238.

98 Ibid, §10.1. See Denzinger 2684 (Auctorem fidei 84), sub-article 1.

99 The first Gallican article is in the Decree on Faith and the Church §16.1 in Atti, 81–82.
the temporal power of the pope was also manifested in a view of church history which saw the “False Decretals” and the “idea of indirect power of the pope” as “most calamitous (funestissimi) monuments which [were] imposed shamefully on the most sacred ministers of the Church of God, and which overthrew the most inviolable rights of sovereignty.”

Most notable, however, was the Synod’s rejection of the church’s coercive power, which anticipates Vatican II’s Declaration on Religious Liberty, Dignitatis humanae (1965). De’Ricci and the Pistoians based their position, a startling contrast to the official Catholic teaching, on their reading of the gospel. They believed Jesus “did not want to found a kingdom or a temporal monarchy and restricted all the powers he gave to the Church to things spiritual.” Christ restricted “all the faculties he gave to [the Church] to spiritual things.” Pastors who seek coercive power commit “irregular usurpations” and “sow scandal and division in society.” The Synod “rejects solemnly” the “passions of past ages” and vows not to confuse its own spiritual role with that of “the temporal rights of the state.” The church must therefore reject “the use of force and violence to obtain external subjection to its decrees.” These “abusive means” are outside its competence, and, besides, they are “unreasonable and disproportionate.” “The mind is not persuaded with the lash, and the heart is not reformed with prison and fire.”


101 See the speech of Canon Fabbrizio Cellesi in the introduction to session six in Atti, 192–93.

102 Decree on Faith and the Church §13 (session three) in Atti, 80.

103 Ibid., §14, in Atti 80–81. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 72–73.
The Pistoians drew these ideas from French reformers, many of whom were Jansenists or philo-Jansenists. In 1753, the French Oratorian and Jansenist Vivien Laborde argued the church had only spiritual power and no power of constraint. His book, *Principes sur l’essence, la distribution et les limites des deux puissances, spirituelle et temporelle*, was condemned by Benedict XIV as “fraudulent, false, impious, and heretical” in the Brief *Ad Assiduas* (1755) addressed to the bishops of Poland (where a translation had appeared). The Synod’s critics drew this connection and cited *Ad Assiduas* in *Auctorem fidei 5*, condemning the inchoate Pistoian idea of religious liberty.

Like many of their reforms, this Pistoian idea was rooted in a certain desire for *ressourcement* (or primitivism) and was pushed forward through Erastian means. Leopold suppressed the Inquisition in Tuscany by a decree of 5 July 1782, an action de’Ricci heartily commended. The Grand Duke argued that the Inquisition was an unfortunate change from the general tolerance of the first twelve centuries of the church and only arose because of the tumultuous events of those days (presumably a reference to the Albigensian crisis in France). It was the right of the bishop to judge in all cases of faith, not the Inquisition’s, which therefore had no reason to exist.

Of course, the Pistoians did not assert a complete freedom of thought and action. They recognized that in some circumstances the state might need to limit the activities of religious

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104 Ibid., §14, in *Atti* 81.

105 On Laborde, see Émile Appolis, *Le tiers parti catholique au XXVIIIe: Entre Jansénistes et Zelanti* (Paris: A et J Picard, 1960), 261. *Ad Assiduas* is quoted in *Quod aliquantum*, the 1791 Brief of Pius VI condemning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Laborde was guilty of “un sistema empio e pernicioso, già molto prima dalla Sede Apostolica riprovato ed espressamente condannato come eretico, è appunto quello che, con fallaci ciance e con stile specioso mascherato da religione, e con autorità di Scritture e di Padri affatto stravolti, l’impudente scrittore presenta al fine d’ingannare più facilmente i semplici e gl’incauti. Quindi Benedetto proibì tale opuscolo, lo condannò come ’fraudolento, falso, empio, ed eretico.’”

106 “Edict of Suppression in Tuscany of the Tribunal of the Inquisition,” 5 July 1782, in *Atti Appendices*, 52–53. The property of the Inquisition was given to support poor clerics.

dissenters. De’Ricci also dealt harshly with the religious orders, and used episcopal and state authority to suppress them. While de’Ricci asserting such authority over the property of the religious and their internal organization is not per se a violation of civil religious liberty, it shows there were firm limits to the Pistoian ideals of toleration. Also, while the Grand Duke’s directive exhorted the bishops to act moderately and with love (pastorale moderazione e carità) and to correct those in error privately (since public trials and condemnations can cause more harm than good), Leopold did affirm the right of the secular power to limit the spread of religious and moral error.108

Despite the acceptance of this possibility, there was a radical core to Pistoian thought on the matter of tolerance and coercion. This radical character comes to expression in the principle that “the heart is not reformed by prison and by fire.”109 While clearly seeing a strong role for the temporal sovereign in the protection of religious truth and morality, the Pistoians implied a startling level of freedom from coercion in religious matters and emphasized debate and correction over coercion and violence.110 The claim that force was a prerogative only of the state, the clear idea that the reform of the church and protection of her teaching cannot happen through force, and the assertion that Jesus and the early church never sanctioned coercion are three premises which can easily lead to the conclusion that a right to religious liberty should be proclaimed by the church. Indeed, this is how the Pistoian position was interpreted by both friend (some of the English Cisalpines) and foe (the drafters of Auctorem fidei).111

109 See above, page 218.
110 It should be pointed out, however, that liberal policies under Joseph II and Peter Leopold did not preclude banning books. See Jean-Pierre Lavandier, Le livre au temps de Joseph II et de Leopold II: Code des lois de censure du livre pour les pays Austro-Bohèmiens (1780–1792) (Bern, France: Peter Lang, 1995); Adam Wandruska, Leopold II.
111 In 1792 the Catholic Committee (soon to be renamed the Cisalpine Club) drafted a statement on religious liberty and the church limiting itself to “the means of persuasion” that was clearly indebted to the Acts of
While the traditional doctrine affirmed that the act of faith must be free (no one could be lawfully coerced into baptism), once one was a baptized Christian, as were the great majority living in Italy in the eighteenth century, one was, at least notionally, bound by ecclesiastical law. While, in theory, it was the role of the “secular arm” rather than the church to execute condemned heretics (which was increasingly rare in the eighteenth century), the church itself proclaimed its right to coercive power, for the good of souls and society and the protection of the faithful from the spread of error. Thus, the Pistoian flirtation with religious freedom seemed to their detractors not only like a dangerous level of indifference but also an attack on the established doctrine and practice of Catholicism.

Auctorem fidei recognized this radicalism and condemned it in two articles. Article 4 reads:

The proposition affirming, “that it would be a misuse of the authority of the Church, when she transfers that authority beyond the limits of doctrine and of morals and extends it to exterior matters and demands by force that which depends on persuasion and the heart”; and then also, “that it pertains to her much less to demand by force exterior obedience to her decrees”; insofar as by those undefined words, “extends to exterior matters”, the proposition censures as an abuse of the authority of the Church the use of her power received from God, which the apostles themselves used in establishing and sanctioning exterior discipline, (is) heretical.113

Article 5 reads:

In that part in which the proposition insinuates that the Church does not have authority to demand obedience to her decrees otherwise than by means that depend on persuasion; insofar as it intends that the Church “has not conferred on her by God the power, not only of directing by counsel and persuasion, but also of ordering by laws

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112 Common justification for such thinking was provided by Aquinas. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 2, art. 1–2, on the voluntary character of faith. In II-II, q. 16, art. 1, Aquinas argues that it is licit to make laws prohibiting acts of vice that corrupt faith. On situations in which human laws can legislate on religious matters, see *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 96, arts. 2–4.

113 Auctorem fidei 4 in Denzinger, 2604. “Propositio affirmans, ‘abusum fore auctoritatis Ecclesiae, transferendo illum ultra limites doctrinae ac morum, et eam extendendo ad res exteriore, et per vim exiundo id, quod pendet a persuasione et corde’, tum etiam, ‘muito minus ad eam pertinent, exigere per vim exteriorem subiectionem suis decrets’, quatenus indeterminatis illis verbis ‘extendendo ad res exteriore’ notet velit abusum auctoritatis Ecclesiae usum eius potestatis acceptae a Deo, qua usi sunt et ipsi Apostoli in disciplina exteriore constituenta et sancienda: - haeretica.”
and of constraining and forcing the inconstant and stubborn by exterior judgment and salutary punishments”, leads toward a system condemned elsewhere as heretical.\footnote{The quotation is from the brief of Benedict XIV \textit{Ad assiduas} addressed to the hierarchy of Poland (March 4, 1755). See \textit{Auctorem fidei} 5 in Denzinger, 2005. “\textit{Qua parte insinuavit, Ecclesiam non habere auctoritatem subiectionis suis decretis exigendae alter quam per media, quae pendent a persuasione, quatenus intendat, Ecclesiam ’non habere collatam sibi a Deo potestatem, non solum dirigendi per consilia et suasiones, sed eiam iubendi per leges, ac devios contumacesque exterioire iudicio ac salubribus poenis coercendi atque cogendi’: inducens in systema alias damnatum ut haereticum.”} \footnote{De’Ricci’s defense of the Synod on this point is evasive. He clearly supports only the Church’s right to excommunicate and impose other spiritual penalties. See \textit{Memorie} 2:156–57.} While the clarity with which modern teaching like \textit{Dignitatis humanae} speaks of religious liberty is not explicit in the Pistoian propositions, the exaltation of “persuasion” and “the heart” over coercion and force clearly anticipates a development of doctrine in these matters, and even seems to call for one. The Pistoians do not here use the language of “rights” or even, explicitly, of “freedom”; rather, they call for the church to return to its roots and they evoke gospel values like gentleness and non-violence. Steeped in Erastianism, the Pistoians had no notion that the state should be neutral in religious matters. They would have emphatically rejected that a separation of church and state like the one in the American Republic was necessary in a Catholic country, but \textit{Dignitatis humanae} does not teach that such a form of government is ideal either. It does teach that the human persons and groups have a right (\textit{ius}) to religious freedom within due limits,\footnote{\textit{Dignitatus humanae} 2.} and that governments must not impede this right.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, §3–4.} This right to religious liberty can be impeded only if public order is at stake.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, §2.} Thus, while the Pistoians were of course not saying precisely the same thing as the fathers of Vatican II, they differ more in degree of clarity than in basic principles.
3. “Uniting the Voice of the People with That of the Whole Church”: The Synod’s Radical Liturgical Reforms

Liturgical reform was central to the agenda of late Jansenism. De’Ricci and the Pistoians offered a liturgical ideal that was strikingly different from the status quo. While the debate and discussion of the Synod of Pistoia and *Auctorem fidei* at Vatican II mostly centered on ecclesiology, it is the liturgical similarities between the reforms proposed at Pistoia and those elaborated during and after Vatican II that are most remarkable. These similarities have been recognized by theologians and historians and also in postconciliar traditionalist polemics. Almost all the attention that the Synod of Pistoia receives in intra-Catholic polemics today concerns liturgy, devotion, and ritual, even though the most radical propositions of the Synod were in fact ecclesiological. This polemical attention is a testament to the fact that the most obvious parallels between Pistoian reform and Vatican II reform are liturgical.¹¹⁸

While the Pistoian liturgical decrees were not condemned as heresy, the vehemence of the condemnations in *Auctorem fidei* caused great anxiety to future Catholic liturgical reformers, like Antonio Rosmini (1797–1855). The example of Rosmini, a major nineteenth-century Catholic reformer, shows the enduring significance of the brief but poignant experiment with liturgical reform by the Pistoians.¹¹⁹ This experiment was the result of a century of Jansenist reform efforts which attempted to make the liturgy simpler and more accessible, pedagogical, biblical, and Christocentric. The text of the condemnations of these proposed liturgical reforms in *Auctorem fidei* contain in abbreviated form the reasons why the late eighteenth-century papacy rejected these reforms, and it sheds light on ultramontanism and Catholic conservatism of the time.

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¹¹⁸ On polemical and scholarly interest in these parallels, see the Introduction.

¹¹⁹ On Rosmini and *Auctorem fidei*, see the Introduction.
3.1 – *Active Participation: Rooted in Anthropology, Baptism, and Ecclesiology*

We have already explored important elements of de’Ricci’s thought on liturgical reform, some of which he had begun to implement in his diocese and much of which was supported by the Grand Duke’s *Punti ecclesiastici* and by Jansenist and philo-Jansenist reformers internationally. The decrees of the Pistoians on the liturgy not only codified much of de’Ricci’s thought but also served as the culmination of at least a century of Jansenist proposals for liturgical reform. An Enlightenment emphasis on utility and comprehensibility, as well as echoes of evangelical Muratorian pastoral thought are also detectable.

The overarching goals of the Pistoian liturgical reform were to encourage lay participation and to increase the comprehensibility of the worship experience in order to put lay people in closer touch with sacramental mysteries and educate them in biblical truths. Ultimately, like the Second Vatican Council, the Synod of Pistoia saw its primary work as that of the Catholic Church: the salvation of souls. This is why we see such a tight connection, in both the Council and the Synod, between theological anthropology (who we are), soteriology (how we are saved), ecclesiology (the church, our home and the vessel of this salvation), and the liturgy (the celebration and enactment of this salvation). The Synod sought to achieve its liturgical goals through a number of reforms. While there were elements of the Pistoian project that were radical for the eighteenth century and incurred the censure of

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120 On the legacy of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jansenist and philo-Jansenist liturgical reform, see chapter two, 2.4.

121 De’Ricci outlined the salvation of souls as the goal of the Synod as well as the primary vocation of priests in his letter of convocation (31 July 1786). See *Atti*, 2. Vatican II expresses the mission of the Catholic Church (and consequently its own mission) as the salvation of souls in *Lumen gentium* 1; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1; *Dei verbum* 1; *Ad gentes*, 1–9. The link between ecclesiology and soteriology is the foundation for the optimism of *Gaudium et spes*. The church is a community of people that have “welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds” (§1).
the papacy, such as the suggestion that vernacular liturgy was preferable, many other elements of Pistoian liturgical thought could only be considered, then and now, as solidly orthodox and Catholic.

Just as the Synod highlighted the foundational importance of theological anthropology in their discussion of sin and grace, human nature was a primary consideration for Pistoian liturgical thought. In the Decree on Prayer, the Pistoians proclaimed that everyone has a right (diritto) to participate in public prayer. In a powerful passage, this right is compared to the right of all people to be loved and is thus linked to what we could today call human dignity. “No one can be excluded from [public prayer] because no one can be excluded from love (carità), which is the soul of every prayer.” All Christians, especially, have a duty to participate in the public prayer of the Church. This duty includes the obligation to enter into the spirit of worship and into an understanding of the church’s prayers (intelligenza delle orazioni) and ceremonies, “especially of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.” These foundational insights provide a roadmap for the Pistoian liturgical reforms. Because the essence of Christian prayer is love, every human person has not only a duty to participate in public prayer, but a right to do so, because we are all ordered to the love of God and neighbor. This right and duty necessitate entrance into the spirit of the church’s prayer and a comprehension of her ceremonies, especially the Mass.

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122 Decree on the Eucharist §6 in Atti, 131.

123 The central importance of correct teaching on sin and grace is highlighted in Bartoli’s oration (Atti, 28–40) and expounded upon in session three in the heavily Augustinian and Jansenist decree “On Grace, Predestination, and the Foundations of Morals,” in Atti, 84–100.

124 Decree on Prayer (session six) in Atti, 195–211.

125 Ibid., §19, in Atti 203. This inclusivity extends even to “enemies” and “heretics and unbelievers.” “Non vi è alcuno che possa esserne escluso, come non vi è alcuno che possa essere escluso dalla carità, che è l’anima di ogni Preghiera. I nemici vi sono compresi, come pure gli eretici e gl’infedeli.”

126 Ibid., §22, in Atti, 205.
Founded upon this theological anthropology, Pistoian liturgical thought is tightly connected with ecclesiology. The Decree on the Sacraments in General (session four) begins with the insight that religion has always been a human need. True religion uses “sensible signs” to lift people up to contemplation of “invisible things” and to the Creator. Religion has an inescapable sociological dimension, gathering believers into a society marked by “external signs” of transcendent realities. This general insight tightly connects ecclesiology, liturgy, and soteriology. The purpose of religion is to gather up sinful humanity into a graced fellowship, the church, that works to undo the effects of the fall, which loomed so large in the theology of the Pistoians, rooted as it was in a reading of Augustine. The Decree on the Sacraments sees a linear, chronological process: primitive religion led to the law of Moses and God’s relationship to Israel, and finally to the sacraments and the New Covenant instituted by Christ, which are the pinnacle of religion. Now, Christians know that the object of faith is Christ the Mediator. While Christ established a “visible [ordained] priesthood” in the church, the Synod teaches that “all Christians are in a certain sense priests, because all can and should offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God, and even though not all consecrate the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the visible Sacrifice of the Altar, all assist in the offering of the immaculate Lamb.” This tenet, that all Christians are called to offer and participate in sacrifice, is a central one because “religion consists in sacrifice.”

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127 Decree on the Sacraments in General in Atti, 105–9, at 105 (§1).
128 Ibid.
130 Ibid, 108 §11. “Quantunque il santo Sinodo riconosca, che tutti i Christiani sono in un certo senso sacerdoti, perché tutti possono e debbono offrire spirituali sacrifici di lode e di rendimento di grazie a Dio, e perché quantunque non tutti consacri il Corpo e Sangue di Gesù Cristo nel visibile Sacrificio dell’Altare, tutti però quelli che vi assistono offeriscono l’Agnello immacolato; crede ciò nonostante, che non tutti i Fedeli costituiscono il visibile sacerdozio di Gesù Cristo nella di lui Chiesa.”
131 Decree on the Eucharist §6, ibid., 130.
serves as a foundation for the Synod’s reforms seeking to increase lay participation in, and comprehension of, the liturgy.

Vatican II’s famous call for the “fully conscious…active participation” of the laity in the liturgy was explicitly rooted in this biblical doctrine. The participation that arises from a universal priesthood, according to Pistoia and Sacrosanctum Concilium, is a “right and duty” because of a sacramental event, baptism, which orders Christians soteriologically and ecclesiologically.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people” (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4–5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.132

In the liturgical reform of the Council, “this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.”133 The Pistoians are forerunners of these teachings of Vatican II and even appear to provide something of a roadmap for the later conciliar reform. The similarities between Pistoia’s and Vatican II’s specific prescriptions for attaining these goals become obvious when we explore the concrete liturgical prescriptions of the Synod in more detail.

3.2 – A General Reform of Public Prayer: The Centrality of the Parish Mass

The Synod promoted a general reform of prayer life in the Decree on Prayer (session six).134 Of primary importance was the need for priests to collaborate with the bishop in the


133 Ibid. “Quae totius populi plena et actuosa participatio, in instauranda et favenda sacra Liturgia, summopere est attendenda: est enim primus, isque necessarius fons, e quo spiritum vere Christianum fideles hauriant[.]”
reform of the missal and the breviary in order to purge both of falsehoods and legends, since God, being truth himself, “does not wish to be honored with lies.” The Breviary should be amended so that the entire Bible is read through in one year. Vatican II did not make this precise decree, but it called for “a more representative portion of the holy scriptures” to be read at Mass and in the Divine Office. Pistoia called for the faithful to be provided with prayer books and missals with text in both Latin and the vernacular, a forerunner of the status quo on the eve of Vatican II. Various measures, most of them taking previous Riccian reforms as their inspiration, are aimed at “always engaging the Faithful more in the true spirit of prayer.”

The reforms of the Decree on Prayer show a very clear pastoral concern for strengthening the life of the parish. Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and feast days is praised, and the frequentation of the local parish is preferred over recourse to oratories or private masses. The Synod attempted to strengthen parish life also through administrative reforms (such as redrawing parish boundaries), through encouraging care for the poor, and through emphasizing and reforming liturgical life. This concern for the centrality of

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134 See “Decree on Prayer,” in Atti, 195–211. §18–33 constitute the sub-heading Della Preghiera Pubblica (Atti 203–11).

135 Ibid, §23. “Ognun’sà, che Iddio il quale è la verità, non vuole essere onoraro con menzogne[.]” This necessity is well known, the Synod claims, by holy men and was known by some of the popes.


137 Sacrosanctum Concilium 51, 92. This injunction fell to postconciliar liturgical committees to implement.


139 Ibid, §25, Atti, 206. For these precise reforms see §25–27.

140 It is important to note that while Pistoia insisted on strict continuity with Trent, it was in fact seeking to solve certain problems that Trent had not solved or could not solve. Fantappié, Riforme ecclesiastiche, 40.

141 The care for the poor was to be a main concern of the “Compagnia della Carità,” which de’Ricci hoped would replace the Confraternities and other lay ecclesial associations he found redundant, frivolous, or immoral. See Ibid, §30 in Atti, 210. See also Atti Appendices, 111–26, §40–46, for the constitution of the Company, and other supporting documents.

142 For all these reforms, see Decree on Prayer, §28–33 in Atti, 209–11.
parish life is an important Pistoian ecclesiological principle (rooted in Jansenism and Richerism), and one with direct liturgical consequences. While *Auctorem fidei* was righteously indignant at the Pistoian contempt for the regulars, it did not single out this positive emphasis on parish life for censure of any kind.

The Synod declared that there should be only one altar in every church. Its basis for this preference was an appeal to antiquity. It “pleased the Synod to reestablish” this former custom; they were “persuaded, because of the order of Divine Offices, and the ancient custom of the Church, that it is fitting that there be only one altar in each church.” *Auctorem fidei* rejects this appeal to the primitive simplicity of the early church. The Constitution (§31) condemns it as “rash” and “injurious” to ancient and approved piety. Beyond the stated reliance on a certain primitivism, the Pistoian motivation was “a desire to restore a more obvious unity of priest and people in the one offering” and to diminish the number of private masses, which were seen as imperfect forms of worship by the Pistoians and also as giving rise to a number of abuses.

Although Vatican II’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium* did not explicitly call for only one altar in churches, the instruction *Inter oecumenici*, published by the Sacred Congregation for Rites in 1964 for the implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, stated that “there are to be fewer minor altars and, where the design of the building permits, the best place for them is in

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143 See the lengthy attack on the Pistoian treatment of regulars in *Auctorem fidei*, 80–84 (Denzinger 2680–92).


145 Denzinger 2631 (*Auctorem fidei* 31): “The proposition of the synod enunciating that it is fitting, in accordance with the order of divine services and ancient custom, that there be only one altar in each church and, therefore, that it is pleased to restore that custom [Decree on the Eucharist, §5] (is) rash, injurious to the very ancient pious custom flourishing and approved for these many centuries in the Church, especially in the Latin Church.”

146 See Bolton’s judgement in *Church Reform*, 83. We will explore the Pistoian view of so-called “private masses” below, section 3.3.
chapels somewhat set apart from the body of the church.”

Pistoia and Vatican II reform concur on an emphasis on the centrality of the parish mass for the life of the Christian. However, Vatican II reform was more moderate and multivalent. While it called for change, the documents themselves did not call for the total elimination of side altars, an old tradition that many Catholics found and still find edifying. True to de’Ricci’s radicalism, Pistoia advocated a sudden and dramatic change. While the Pistoians held up an important ideal, the centrality of the parish mass, they also denigrated long-approved customs.

3.3 – Use of the Vernacular and Lay Reception of Communion

While the most extensive Pistoian statement on the liturgy is found in the Decree on Prayer (session six), some of the most pregnant passages are in the Decree on the Eucharist (session four), which outlined sacramental theology in general as well as certain specific liturgical practices. The Pistoians highlighted the celebration of the Eucharist as the pinnacle of Christian worship. Priests were thus exhorted to say the canon of the Mass diligently, and to pronounce all the words “distinctly and devoutly”; they were neither to rush through the canon nor to be inordinately slow. Organ music was not to be played from the Offertory until the Postcommunion prayer. This injunction is anti-Baroque and indicative of a wish

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148 Of course, it should be noted that in different nations and dioceses, documents like Inter oecumenici were interpreted and implemented different ways, even in the sense of a total elimination of side altars as sites for mass.

149 Decree on the Eucharist §5 in Atti, 128.

150 Ibid.
to simplify worship. However, this stipulation also coincided with a more important element of Pistoian thought: the desire that lay people comprehend the prayers of the Mass and even hear them (contra the status quo of an inaudible canon). While it is not explicitly stated, these injunctions are based on a common practice among Jansenists that originated in France, namely, the praying of the canon of the Mass out loud, rather than the official *sotto voce* custom. The purpose of such a change in practice was to help the people more fully participate in the prayer of the church and the Eucharistic offering. Some French dioceses encouraged the laity to say “Amen” after the words of institution so that the people knew that they too had a role in the most sacred moment of Catholic worship. These efforts were part of a wider Jansenist position, echoed also by Muratori and many Third Party Catholics, that the liturgy is meant for participation that includes focus on the words of the Mass, rather than on private devotions or other distractions from communal worship. The eighteenth-century scholarship investigating the history of the liturgy, exemplified by the work of Muratori, could be easily employed by Jansenists, who desired to retrieve the practices of the early church.

The Decree on the Eucharist agrees that “if religion consists in Sacrifice, and if there is only one Sacrifice in the new covenant, it is well to confess that the faithful have a part in it

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151 The Index of the Synodal Acts has an entry: “Canon of the Mass and method of pronouncing it,” 128. See *Atti Appendices*, 138. See also Bolton, *Church Reform*, 82.


153 The Troyes missal was a center of controversy for these reasons. See Préclin, *Les jansénistes du XVIIIe siècle*, 186–92, 196. According to Guasco, the Troyes missal was a source of de’Ricci’s errors. See §70 “Lingua volgare” in *Dizionario ricciano ed antiricciano*, 157–59, at 158, where Guasco cites the work *Note al mandamento di Mgr. Languet: Arciv. di sens contro il messale di Troyes* (Rome: 1787). Guasco also (correctly) linked the Synod’s preference for the vernacular to Antoine Arnauld (157 note e).

154 See chapter two, 3.1.
The Synod fathers expanded upon their understanding of lay participation at Mass and the priesthood of all believers:

When we say that the faithful have a part in the sacrifice, we mean that they offer and immolate the victim together with the Priest, and they offer the same with him…[I]n deed it is according to the doctrine of the Fathers, the practice of antiquity, and the very order and tenor of the entire Liturgy [that] the Liturgy is an action common to the Priest and to the People.\textsuperscript{156}

Because the liturgy is a sacrifice of praise common to priest and people, and because the people are therefore exhorted to enter into the spirit of the liturgy and to understand the rites and prayers, the Pistoians proceeded to a more controversial series of reflections on how to accomplish this goal, including implementing a vernacular liturgy.

Persuaded of these principles, the holy Synod desires to remove those reasons by which [these solid liturgical principles] have been in part forgotten: by recalling the Liturgy to a greater simplicity of rites, by expressing it in the vulgar tongue, and by uttering it in an elevated voice.\textsuperscript{157}

This radical statement angered the papacy because, at face value, it clearly calls for the implementation of a vernacular liturgy (a reform that had been more or less consistently rejected after the Council of Trent).\textsuperscript{158} The passage insinuates that aspects of the church’s rites themselves (their complexity, language, and oral pronunciation) had led to a forgetfulness of solid liturgical principles. Forgetfulness is a passive fault, and insinuating...

\textsuperscript{155} Decree on the Eucharist §6, 130.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid §6, Atti, 130–31. “Quando poi noi diciamo, che i fedeli hanno parte nel sacrificio, intendiamo che essi offrono, immolano la vittima insieme col Sacerdote, ed offirono le medesimi con quello. E siccome tutta la Liturgia non contiene che queste parti del Sacrificio, e la regola degli atti, coi quali debbonsi accompagnare le parti medesime; quindi è che secondo la dottrina dei Padri, la pratica dell’antichità, e l’ordine medesimo e il tenore di tutte le Liturgie, la Liturgia è un’azione comune al Sacerdote ed al Popolo.”

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 131. “Persuaso di questi principi desidererebbe il santo Sinodo, che si togliessero quei motivi, per i quali essi sono stati in parte posti in oblio, col richiamare la Liturgia ad una maggiore semplicità di riti, coll’esporla in lingua volgare, e con proferirla con voce elevata.”

\textsuperscript{158} However, some Catholics, and not just Jansenists, had incorporated the vernacular into certain parts of the Mass, including vernacular hymns, scripture readings in the vernacular after being chanted or read in Latin, and vernacular prayers before and after the Mass proper. Muratori, again, was a central promoter of such reforms. See chapter two, 3.1.
such is less offensive than suggesting active occlusion or suppression of solid principles. Yet it offended nonetheless.

However, the Pistoians knew their sweeping reform program was simply not possible in the immediate future. They frankly admitted this fact, suggesting certain alternative measures, “since the circumstances of things do not permit the fulfillment of these desires.” While a vernacular liturgy was at present unattainable, the Synod asked priests to better instruct the faithful at Mass, explaining every part. Pastors were also urged to provide vernacular missals, encouraging literate parishioners “to accompany the Priest in this way.” These measures were, the Pistoians claimed, a renewal of the law of the Council of Trent.  

The Synod also decreed that “an essential part of the Sacrifice [of the Mass]” is “participation in the victim” (that is, reception of the Eucharist).  

Since lay people were seen to truly participate in the Mass, their reception of communion was essential. However, this reception could be either physical reception or spiritual communion, which is a true partaking but of a less perfect kind. The Synod argued that the faithful should actually receive communion provided they are in a state of grace, and that they should receive Hosts consecrated at the Mass they attended, which symbolized the unity of the community and the participation of the whole church in the sacrifice.  

Masses in which there are laity present who do not receive are not condemned, since they can receive spiritually. However, pastors

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159 Decree on the Eucharist §6, 131. “Ma poiché le circostanze delle cose non gli permettono il soddisfare questi suoi desideri, s’arresta a rinnovare la legge del Concilio di Trento, nella quale si prescrive, che i Pastori in ogni istruzione che fanno nelle feste nel tempo della Messa, spieghino qualche parte della Liturgia, e gli esorta ad introdurre nel Popolo dei libri, ove sia l’ordinario della Messa in lingua volgare, e ad insinuare a quelli che fanno leggere, l’accompagnare con questo mezzo il Sacerdote.” The Synod was referring to Trent’s instruction that pastors explain the liturgy to the people “lest the flock of Christ hunger” (ne oves Christi esurient). See the Decree on the Eucharist (1562), Session 22, Chapter 8, in Denzinger 1749.

160 Decree on the Eucharist §6, 131. “Siccome poi una parte essenziale al sacrificio è la partecipazione alla vittima, il santo Sinodo desidererebbe, che i fedeli qualunque volta vi assistono, comunicassero.”

161 This was also a reform Muratori advocated, hoping to end the practice of the laity being given communion after the conclusion of Mass, which was a common eighteenth-century custom but not theologically or liturgically well grounded. See chapter two, 3.1.
who withhold the sacrament without reason are in sin; receiving the Eucharist was in fact a “right” of the faithful. One can logically deduce, then, that only unconfessed mortal sin should prevent the laity from receiving communion. While Jansenists were known for discouraging frequent communion, the Pistoians in fact encouraged it, again anticipating the liturgical reform of the twentieth century associated with Pius X. While de’Ricci had published classic Jansenist texts arguing for extreme rigor and caution in the frequency of reception of communion, a holistic look at his writings and the Acts of Pistoia inclines towards the view that the Pistoian position was not unduly rigoristic in the stereotypically Jansenist sense. Provided one understood and professed solid doctrine and regularly confessed mortal sins, the Synod seems to encourage regular lay reception of communion.

While the Synod did not explicitly condemn or denigrate private masses, it conspicuously omitted mention of them. The decrees only mentioned masses in which the faithful actually received communion or made a spiritual communion. Because of this telling omission of a common and approved practice of the day, Auctorem fidei (§28) took care to condemn in very strong terms an understanding of the Pistoian liturgical program which seemed to deny the efficacy or suitability of private masses:

The proposition of the synod in which, after having decided that “a partaking of the victim is an essential part in the sacrifice”, it adds, “nevertheless, it does not condemn as illicit those Masses in which those present do not communicate sacramentally, for

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162 Decree on the Eucharist §6–7, in Atti 131–32. See esp. §6: “Non condanna però come illecite quelle Messe, nelle quali gli asstanti non si comunicano sacramentalmente, atteso che essi partecipino in modo sebbene meno perfetto a questa vittima, ricevendola collo spirito. Vuole però che qualora alcuno sia disposto a comunicarsi, eccettuati i casi di grave necessità, comunichi nella Messa con particole consecrate in essa, e per conseguenza ingiunge a Sacerdoti, che qualunque volta prevedano che alcuno disposto a comunicare assista alla Messa, consacrino un conveniente numero di particole, e secondo il Decreto del Messale Romano comunichino dopo aver essi comunicato; ed avvisa i medesimi che si sarebbero rei di peccato, qualora volendo un fedele comunicare nella Messa, non secondassero questo suo diritto, e lo privassero (sic) del frutto particolare, che proviende dalla comunione Liturgica.” See also Bolton, Church Reform, 83–84.

163 Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia (1786) and Popular Religion,” 87.

164 Including Arnauld’s classic work on the subject. See chapter two, 2.1.

165 Relevant texts on this question are: the Decree on Grace, on Predestination, and on the Foundation of Morals (session three) in Atti, 84–95, Decree on the Eucharist (session four, 123–32) Decree on Penance (session five, 141–51), and the Decree on Public Prayer (session six, 203–11).
the reason that they do partake of the victim, although less perfectly, by receiving it spiritually”, [Decree on the Eucharist (from sess. 4), § 6] inasmuch as it insinuates that there is something lacking to the essence of the sacrifice in that sacrifice which is performed either with no one present or with those present who partake of the victim neither sacramentally nor spiritually and as if those Masses should be condemned as illicit in which, with the priest alone communicating, no one is present who communicates either sacramentally or spiritually, (is) false, erroneous, suspect of heresy, and having the flavor of it.\textsuperscript{166}

It is unfair to accuse the Pistoians of insinuating a deficiency in the “essence” of Masses performed by a priest alone or with people present who do not receive communion. The Synod never says such a thing, and the Pistoians very clearly taught a Catholic understanding of the \textit{ex opere operato} principle.\textsuperscript{167} They did, however, clearly oppose masses in which the faithful present did not go to communion (unless they were in need of confession).

The papacy reacted to the conspicuous silence of the Synod on private masses. In view of the decree calling for only one altar in each church and the constant emphasis on the importance of lay participation in the Mass, the authors of \textit{Auctorem fidei} were correct to detect a Pistoian desire to change the status quo in this area, making Mass (at least normally) oriented around parish life, communally based, and involving lay participation. While these Pistoian emphases might have had the “flavor” of heresy in ultramontane minds, the Pistoians could not be justly accused of error or falsehood, since they never actually decreed anything contradicting Catholic doctrine in these areas. It should be remembered, however, that \textit{Auctorem fidei} found the proposition objectionable only “inasmuch as it insinuates” (\textit{quatenus insinuat}) censurable ideas.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Auctorem fidei} 28 (Denzinger 2628): “\textit{Proposito Synodi, qua, postquam statuit, ‘victimae participationem esse partem sacrificio essentiale’, subiungit ‘non tamen se damnare ut illicitas Missas illas, in quibus adstantes sacramentaliter non communicant; ideo quia isti participant, licet minus perfecte, de ipsa victima, spiritu illam recipiendo’; quatenus insinuat, ad sacrificii essentiam deesse aliquod in eo sacrificio, quod peragatur sive nullo adstante, sive adstantibus, qui nec sacramentaliter nec spiritualiter de victima participant; et quasi dammandae essent ut illicitae Missae illae, in quibus, solo sacerdote communicante, nemo adsit, qui sive sacramentaliter sive spiritualiter communicet: falsa, erronea, de haeresi suspecta eamque sapiens.”

\textsuperscript{167} Decree on the Sacraments in General (session four), §12, in \textit{Atti}, 108. The Pistoian understanding of the Catholic doctrine that Christ uses sinful ministers in order to save his people through visible signs is a foundational ecclesiological and liturgical doctrine shared by the Synod and Vatican II. See \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} 7; \textit{Lumen gentium} 8.
Vatican II certainly did not condemn private masses, but the view of liturgy in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* does prioritize many of the same principles as did the Pistoians. For example, article 55 “strongly commend[s]” as the “more perfect form of participation in the Mass” that form according to which “the faithful, after the priest’s communion, receive the Lord’s body from the same sacrifice.” Albert Gerhards notes the striking affinity between this article and the Pistoian propositions quoted above in *Auctorem fidei* 28. The affinity between the Synod and Vatican II on these points is indeed noteworthy, and these two assemblies are similar, too, in the fact that neither Pistoia nor *Sacrosanctum Concilium* actually condemns private masses.

Vatican II’s Constitution on the Liturgy, however, does contain other passages which can be (and have been) interpreted to marginalize private masses, although postconciliar practice by no means eliminated such masses. Articles 26 and 27, under the heading “Norms Drawn from the Hierarchic and Communal Nature of the Liturgy”:

26. Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church…. Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church….

27. It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private. This applies with especial force to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and social nature.

The most striking parallels between the Synod of Pistoia and Vatican II concern the use of the vernacular in worship and the notion of the laity as active participants in the liturgy. While there is no evidence that de’Ricci ever said Mass in Italian, it was alleged by

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168 *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 55: “Valde commendatur illa perfectior Missae participatio qua fideles post Communionem sacerdotis ex eodem Sacrificio Corpus Dominicum sumunt.” The same article lists situations in which communion under both kinds for the laity could be advisable. These situations were vastly expanded after the Council and reception under both kinds became the norm in many parts of the Catholic Church.


his enemies that he supported experimentation with the incorporation of the vernacular into
the Mass on several occasions, which was illicit. These included the singing of the Passion in
Italian during Holy Week in 1786 and again in 1787. It was also alleged that a priest of the
diocese said Mass in Latin while another priest simultaneously read the Missal to the people
in Italian. 171 Such allegations are likely accurate, since the Synod not only recommended
vernacular worship, but strongly implied its superiority. Unsurprisingly, these moves incurred
the condemnation of the papacy.

To many Catholics, these changes looked not only Jansenist but even Protestant. Two
scathing Roman critiques of de’Ricci and the Synod connected these proposed reforms to
Jansenists like Antoine Arnauld, and from them back to the Protestant Reformers, who
advocated some (but by no means all) of the same liturgical principles. 172 The passages in
which the Synod wished to bring the liturgy back to “an action common to priest and
people” 173 at least implied not only that the current liturgical status quo was undesirable, but
also that the church had forgotten or obscured certain important liturgical principles.

Auctorem fidei 33 interpreted the Pistoians in this way:

The proposition of the synod by which it shows itself eager to remove the cause
through which, in part, there has been induced a forgetfulness of the principles
relating to the order of the liturgy, “by recalling it (the liturgy) to a greater simplicity
of rites, by expressing it in the vernacular language, by uttering it in a loud voice”, as
if the present order of the liturgy, received and approved by the Church, had emanated
in some part from the forgetfulness of the principles by which it should be regulated

171 These allegations are in Guasco, Dizionario ricciano ed antiricciano. See the scathing entry “Passio,” in
which Guasco attacks de’Ricci for supposing he can improve on “eighteen centuries” of tradition in the Latin
church, and Guasco writes that while the Passion sung in Latin incites the faithful to tears, the vernacular causes
laughter (!) (§88, pp. 203–204). See also §70, “Lingua vulgare,” 158–59. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 53.

172 Guasco alleges a Protestant (and Jansenist) connection in Dizionario ricciano ed antiricciano, 157. Another
Roman author primarily blames the French Jansenists. “Bravissimo,” he wrote sarcastically, to those who gave
“al Santo Concilio di Pistoia la bella idea di volgarizzare la Santa Messa!” See Giuseppe Antonio Rasier, Analisi
del concilio diocesano di Pistoja celebrato nel mese di settembre dell’anno 1786, 2 vols. (Assisa: Ottavio
Sgariglia, 1790), 1:116–17, at 117. Bolton remarks, “[I]f the Synod’s recommendations were looked upon with
suspicion it was because their ideas were thought by many to be infiltrations of Protestantism” (Church Reform,
82–83, at 83).

173 Decree on the Eucharist, §6 in Atti, 131.
Technically, the Constitution censured the Pistoian liturgical reforms as imprudent and sometimes erroneous disciplinary reforms, but not as doctrinally erroneous. Thus, they were not considered heretical, a term which censures grave and pertinacious doctrinal error. Indeed, much Pistoian liturgical thought was unassailably orthodox and Catholic. In addition, Catholic thinking had come to distinguish between doctrine and discipline. Much of what Pistoia discussed regarding liturgy that the papacy found objectionable fell in the domain of discipline. It is important to note the accusations that Auctorem fidei actually levelled against the Pistoians. First, it accused them of being “insulting to the church.” In addition to rejecting the notion of a “forgetfulness,” this censure saw the Synod’s calls for liturgical reforms that were associated with Protestantism and Jansenism as an insult to the church since the church by and large had already refused to initiate reforms of this kind. Second, demanding such reforms was “favorable to the charges” of “heretics” (presumably Protestants but also Quesnel and other Jansenists), who had accused Catholic liturgy of serious, even crippling, deficiencies and errors. Auctorem fidei’s attitude seems to be thus: if a disciplinary reform was proposed or implemented by Protestants or Jansenists but refused in the past by popes or councils (like calls for vernacular liturgy), such a reform proposal not only is imprudent but also implies that the critiques that motivated such heretics’ reforms

174 Denzinger 2633 (Auctorem fidei 33). “Propositio Synodi, qua cupere se ostendit, ut causae tollerentur, per quas ex parte inducta est oblivio principiorum ad liturgiae ordinem spectantium, revocando illam ad maiorem rituum simplicitatem, eam vulgari lingua exponendo et elata voce proferendo’: quasi vigens ordo liturgiae ab Ecclesia receptus et probatus ex parte manasset ex oblivione principiorum, quibus illa regi debet: temeraria, piarum aurium offensiva, in Ecclesiam contumeliarum, favens haereticorum in eam convictis.” De’Ricci’s defense against this allegation was somewhat evasive. He simply argued that the Synod was seeking to follow Trent in helping “the faithful enter into the spirit of Church when they assist at the divine sacrifice.” De’Ricci said the Synod “deplored” the causes of “ignorance”; they did not wish to impugn “the present liturgy.” He said nothing about the use of the vernacular, pronouncing the words of the canon, or the allegation of “forgetfulness.” See de’Ricci in Memorie 2:173.

were accurate. This attitude is intimately linked to a polemical context characterized by a zero-sum game pitting Catholics against Protestants; in this context any implication that Protestants might have had something right in their critiques of the Catholic Church is a dangerous negative for that church’s embattled reputation.

As we have pointed out, the Pistoians did not seek to institute a vernacular Mass in their own time, although they implied that such a reform was desirable. In a key passage in the Decree on Prayer (§24), in which the Pistoians argued for the introduction of vernacular Missals and other aids to lay participation, they echoed a very strong statement of Quesnel. It would be “contrary to apostolic practice, and against the designs of God not to procure easier ways for the simple people to unite their voices with all of the Church.”

Yet, the decree was very careful to circumscribe the introduction of the vernacular to the written word, with the possible exception of singing psalms in Italian.

Under the heading: “The Manner of Uniting the Voice of the People with the Voice of the Church in Public Prayers,” Auctorem fidei condemned the Pistoian proposition which both criticized current liturgical practice and implied that reforms introducing the vernacular could rectify that unsatisfactory situation:

The proposition that asserts that “it is contrary to apostolic practice and the counsels of God not to prepare easier ways of uniting the voice of the people with that of the whole Church” [Decree on Prayer, §24], if understood (to mean) that the use of the common language should be introduced into the liturgical prayers, (is) false, rash,

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176 Decree on Public Prayer §24, in Atti, 206. “Giacche poi noi sappiamo, che sarebbe un operare contro la pratica apostolica, e contro i disegni di Dio il non procurare al semplice popolo i mezzi più facile per unire la sua voce a quella di tutta la Chiesa.” Pietro Stella links the Pistoian reliance on Quesnel’s support of the vernacular to their decision to redact the synodal decrees in Italian rather than in Latin. See “Il Sinodo di Pistoia nel quadro del riformismo Leopoldino,” in Il giansenismo in Italia, xxxiii–li, at xl.

177 Ibid. The decree went on to invite the bishop to choose respected priests (“venerabili Padri”) to “compile a Ritual and Manual for the use of the City and Diocese of Pistoia,” with “all necessary instructions and explanations.” The sufficiently literate laity would be able to read in Latin and the vernacular the prayers and rites of the Church for administering sacraments, the offices of major feasts, the Ordinary of the Mass, and whatever else might be of use for edifying and instructing the faithful. Finally, the Synod desired that this manual contain the psalms in Italian verse, so that the laity could have “that same consolation” that St. Jerome had in his labors.

178 “De modo iungendae vocis populi cum voce Ecclesiae in precibus publicis.”
disruptive of the order prescribed for the celebration of the mysteries, and easily productive of numerous evils.  

The quoted Pistoian proposition had been lifted almost word for word from Quesnel and had been condemned in Unigenitus 86. De’Ricci defended the Synod on this point by appealing to 1 Corinthians 14. He also stated that the Synod was not seeking to institute a vernacular Mass, but only to provide translations. While his statement is true, the critics of Pistoia were also correct to point out that the Synod clearly implied that a vernacular mass was the ideal, just not realistically attainable at the present.

However, the Pistoian proposition was provocative and even aggressive because it censured current liturgical practice by implying it was “contrary to apostolic practice and the counsels of God.” These were serious attacks on the contemporary practice. Indeed, the Pistoian position was not just that current liturgical practice was not the ideal, or could be improved; it at least implied that the status quo was in fact contrary to right Christian thinking and in defiance of divinely sanctioned norms. It is understandable that the papacy would strongly rebuke such insinuations. However, Auctorem fidei goes further than that; it censures

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179 Denzinger 2666 (Auctorem fidei 66): “Propositio asserens, ‘fore contra apostolicam praxim et Dei consilia, nisi populo facientes viae pararentur vocem suam iungendi cum voce totius Ecclesiae’: intellecta de usu vulgaris linguae in liturgicas preces inducendae: falsa, temeraria, ordinis pro mysteriorum celebratione praescripti perturbativa, plurium malorum facie productrix.” The English translation in Denzinger has “destructive of the order prescribed,” but “disruptive” seems to render perturbativa more accurately.

180 Denzinger 2486.

181 De’Ricci argued the Synod meant nothing more than what St. Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 14: 9, 16–17, 19. This answer was provocative since Unigenitus 86 was censuring Quesnel’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:16. De’Ricci also pointed out that the Synod did not seek to introduce the vernacular into the liturgy, but rather to provide the faithful with vernacular translations. 1 Corinthians 14: 9, 16–17, 19 (NRSV) reads: “So with yourselves; if in a tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air; Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

182 The committee of cardinals and other prelates appointed by Pius VI to investigate the Synod was deeply troubled by what they saw as the clear implications of the Pistoian reforms regarding lay participation in the Mass and public prayer. See chapter five, 2.1. See also the accusations of Guasco and Rasier quoted in sections 3.2 and 3.3.
in harsh terms the view that introducing the vernacular into liturgical celebration is required if the church is to be faithful to its apostolic and divine foundation. Such a view was not only “false, rash, [and] “disruptive” of prescribed liturgical order, but also “easily productive of numerous evils.” Opposition to substantial introduction of the vernacular into the liturgy is the position that generally prevailed after the Council of Trent and that was the common conservative Catholic view of vernacular liturgy throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.\(^\text{183}\) The same position was presented at Vatican II by those who opposed the increased use of the vernacular in the liturgy.\(^\text{184}\)

Albert Gerhards notes the similarity between the positions condemned in *Auctorem fidei* 33 and 66 and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 34 and 36, respectively.\(^\text{185}\) Article 34 reflects the Pistoian call for “a greater simplicity of rites”:\(^\text{186}\)

> The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.

The approval of the use of the vernacular at Mass was the most tangible Vatican II reform, and some sociologists assert it had the greatest impact on the life of the church.\(^\text{187}\) While this reform was often interpreted liberally and was sweepingly implemented, *Sacrosanctum*

\(^{183}\) Trent decreed only that it did not seem expedient that the Mass be celebrated in the vernacular everywhere or indiscriminately: “non tamen expedire visum est Patribus, ut vulgari passim lingua celebraretur.” See Trent, session 22, chapter 8, “Doctrine and Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass” (Denzinger 1749). Canon 9 anathematized the claim that a *sotte voce* Latin Eucharistic canon must be condemned, or that Mass must be celebrated only in the vernacular (Denzinger 1759). The only way this Tridentine decree explicitly recommends correcting whatever disconnect might exist between the people and the liturgy is frequent explanations during the Mass of the words read in its rites. During the examination of the Synod, Cardinal Borromeo cited this canon but did not include the word *passim* – a revealing edit which encapsulates an interpretation of Trent which goes beyond the actual text. See ASV, *Pistoia* 15, document one (Borromeo’s report).


\(^{186}\) Decree on the Eucharist §6 in *Atti*, 131.

\(^{187}\) See chapter one, 1.6. The phrase “noble simplicity” actually appears in the Pistoian *Atti*, but in reference to their idealization of the early church’s discipline regarding penance (“l’antica nobile semplicità cristiana”). See the Decree on Penance §13 in *Atti*, 150.
Concilium 36 itself called for a cautious and limited introduction of the vernacular into worship, an attitude close to the experiments of de’Ricci and other eighteenth-century Jansenists, and clearly paralleling Pistoian reform.¹⁸⁸

Also striking is the concurrence of Sacrosanctum Concilium 14, 19, and 48 with the Pistoian decrees on the liturgy and with eighteenth-century Jansenist liturgical thought in general. Article 48, in particular, provides a succinct manifesto of the Vatican II perspective on liturgy, which emphasizes the “active participation” of the faithful, who share by baptism in Christ’s priesthood, gathered around an ordained priest in a community ordered towards the salvation of its members and, indeed, the whole world.

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.¹⁸⁹

The concept of “active participation” in Sacrosanctum Concilium, a critical component of Vatican II’s liturgical reform, is another way of stating the Pistoian goal of providing “easier ways of uniting the voice of the people with that of the whole Church.”¹⁹⁰ Of course, the Vatican II reforms were the culminating result of decades of liturgical reform, much of

¹⁸⁸ The full text of Sacrosanctum Concilium 36 (sub-headings 1–4) illustrates the caution with which the council fathers introduced this reform, but also the juridical apparatus which made it possible for a liberal implementation. See also §54. Sacrosanctum Concilium 36.1 decrees that “the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.” However, 36.2 decrees: “Since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters. (36.3). . . . it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority…to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved…by the Apostolic See. (36.4) Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above.”

¹⁸⁹ Sacrosanctum Concilium 48.

¹⁹⁰ See the Pistoian Decree on Prayer, §24, cited above.
which, especially in the pontificates of Pius X and Pius XII, was sanctioned by the highest authorities in the church,\textsuperscript{191} while the Synod of Pistoia clearly had no such sanction and in fact defied the papacy. In addition, \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} does not assert explicitly, as did Pistoia, that there had been any sort of “forgetfulness” (\textit{Auctorem fidei} 33) of solid liturgical principles, although one could deduce many Vatican II fathers thought there had been. Many at the Council were unsatisfied with the liturgical status quo and were seeking to change it, a goal they certainly accomplished.\textsuperscript{192} It is then no surprise that the liturgical reforms proposed by the Pistoians, some of which were tentatively implemented for a brief time by de’Ricci, bear a striking similarity to many liturgical reforms at and after the Council. While Vatican II did not share many Pistoian preoccupations in other areas, there are striking liturgical parallels made possible by similar foundational principles. These parallels include a shared concern with encouraging lay participation, simplifying the liturgy, pronouncing the Eucharistic canon out loud, increasing the use of the vernacular, encouraging the reception of communion at Mass, and focusing the attention of worship on the altar.\textsuperscript{193}

4. Pistoia’s Radical Push for More Christocentric Devotion

Following the reforming path marked out by the \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} and de’Ricci’s devotional reforms as bishop, the Synod sought to inculcate in the laity a strong Christocentrism. They prioritized teaching an understanding of core Christian doctrine, centered on scripture and the Mass, over traditional devotions to Mary and the saints. The

\textsuperscript{191} This latter fact was explicitly noted in the conciliar texts themselves and in interventions and \textit{relationes}, such as Cardinal Ferdinando Antonelli’s in \textit{Acta} I/1 304–8.

\textsuperscript{192} One example of many, and that authoritative (as a \textit{relatio}), was Cardinal Antonelli’s claim that there existed “the most grave pastoral reasons” (\textit{ratio pastoralis gravissima}) to reform the liturgy, for the laity had since the Middles Ages become “mute spectators” when they ought to be “actors” in worship (\textit{muti potius spectatores facti sunt quam actores}). See his \textit{relatio} of 22 October 1962 on the schema \textit{De Sacra Liturgia} (which became \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium}) in \textit{Acta} I/1, 304–8 (draft schema at 264–303). See also O’Malley, \textit{What Happened}, 130–33 for a summary of Antonelli’s \textit{relatio}.

\textsuperscript{193} Of course, much of this was presaged by earlier twentieth-century reforms.
Pistoians saw many of these devotions as over-emphasized and often not properly understood in a Christocentric framework or distracting from such a framework. Also detectable in the Synod’s agenda was a typical Enlightenment emphasis on ridding the people of “superstitions.” Concern about superstition and misunderstandings of church doctrine, however, was also a strong emphasis of the Tridentine reform, which the Pistoians saw themselves as implementing. True to the Jansenist spirit, the Riccian antidote to these problems, as formerly discussed, was encouraging the reading of scripture and other “good books” in the vernacular. I will first discuss the Pistoian decrees aiming to reform various elements of devotional life, and then the injunctions concerning Bible reading.

Pistoian devotional reform overlapped extensively with their liturgical thought. Just as Pistoian ecclesiology and soteriology provided deep roots for the Synod’s liturgical thought, so did its plan for Christocentric devotional reform grow from the same sources. Indeed, all of these reform elements were influenced by a desire to ground all theology and Christian life in Christocentrism and to return, at least in the mind of the Pistoians, to the simplicity and doctrinal purity of the early church and to the theology of the scriptures and the fathers; Pistoian reform was an attempt, however flawed, at ressourcement.

4.1 – Christocentric Foundation of Prayer Life

The primary Pistoian concern was to center all devotional life on the person of Jesus. In the Decree on Prayer, the unique mediatorship of Christ is emphasized strongly:

“Therefore, we declare that for us it is an absolute necessity to pray in the name of Jesus Christ; any other manner of prayer, that is not made through Jesus Christ, not only does not obtain pardon for sin, but is itself a sin.”\(^{194}\) It is in light of this declaration that we can understand the disparate elements of Pistoian devotional reforms. Auctorem fidei did not

\(^{194}\) Decree on Prayer §8 in Atti, 198.
censure this proposition. It is not inconceivable that such a statement, if isolated, could have been censured, accompanied by a *sic intellecta*: if understood to denigrate the cult of Mary or the saints or to imply that such devotions, when approved, are not truly Christian forms of piety. However, the drafters of *Auctorem fidei* must have understood the Pistoian intent behind such a seemingly absolutist statement, that is, not to invalidate other forms of mediation (the church militant, Mary, the saints), but to highlight emphatically that they are made with and under the unique mediatorship of Jesus Christ.195 This fundamental Catholic doctrine might not have always been understood correctly by all the faithful, but such teaching was not at issue between the Pistoians and their detractors. What was at issue was whether or in what way devotional life should be reformed to better reflect the Christocentric foundation of all prayer.

Prayer, the Synod taught, illustrates the “necessary dependence” of the creature on the creator God. Prayer, which is blessing, adoring, invoking, thanking, and loving God, would be necessary even in the “state of innocence.”196 Now, after the ravages of sin, it is all the more necessary. Christians now have the example of Jesus and his own prayer life (the agony in the garden is highlighted), including the prayer he himself taught us. Through prayer, God can bless and strengthen us and heal our weakness and sinfulness.197 The “principal object” of true prayer is “the fulfillment of the divine designs on the elect, united to the destruction of sin, and to the perseverance in charity.”198 Having established these principles, the decree then discussed of what true and false prayers consisted, focusing on whether the heart of the

195 The Decree does offer these clarifications in ibid, §12–13 in *Atti*, 199–200.
196 Ibid, §1–2, 195.
supplicant is truly converted, in a manner that suggested Jansenist rigor and had strong predestinarian themes.  

“But the most essential condition of all, is that prayer is done in the name of Jesus Christ.” This is because sin has so devastated humanity. In order to approach “the Throne of the divine Majesty,” we must come not with our own merits, but through Christ. There is no other way for humans to draw close to God, except through “his Only-begotten Son, who is our propitiation, our High Priest, our Mediator.” This fundamental Christological insight had intense soteriological ramifications, for sinful humans were in dire need of a Savior; it was only through the blood of Jesus, the one Mediator, that anyone could be saved. Once the decree discussed this foundation, it passed immediately to the declaration proclaiming the absolute necessity of prayer through Christ. However, this “absolute necessity” was defined in terms which fit with the possibility of subordinate mediators underneath the unique mediatorship of Christ. Prayer in the name of Jesus was defined: “properly speaking, it is nothing other than leaning solely on his love and on his merits, recognizing in him the spirit that groans and prays in us, asking everything according to his will.” Articles 12 and 13

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200 Ibid., §8, 198.

201 On the necessity of a Redeemer and the blood of Christ, see de’Ricci’s pastoral of 1 May 1782, Istruzione Pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo sulla necessità e sul modo di studiare la Religione, available in Atti Appendices, 73–84, at 75. “…la necessità d’un Redentore, la insufficienza di ogni altro remedio fuori di quello del Sangue suo per guarire le due grandi piaghe, che formano la infermità nostra, cioè la ignoranza, e la concupiscenza.”

202 Decree on Prayer, §8, 198. “Ma la più essenziale di tutte le condizioni della preghiera si è, che ella sia fatta nel nome di Gesù Cristo. Dopo la separazione che il peccato ha posto tra Dio e l’uomo, noi non possiamo più da per noi medesimi avere accesso al Trono della divina Maestà, non abbiamo più in noi, e per noi istessi alcun motivo che possa impegnare Dio ad ascoltarci, anzi non meritiamo se non di essere da lui rigettati; poiché tutto ciò che gli offriamo come da noi medesimi è indegno di lui, perché infetto dalla cupidigia. Non ci resta più adunque altro mezzo per accostarci a Dio, che il suo Unigenito Figlio, il quale si è fatto nostra propiziazione, nostro Pontefico, nostro Mediatore. Siccome Dio non ci ama se non in questo unico oggetto delle sue compiacenze, così non ci ascolta che per esso. Dichiariamo adunque esser per noi un’assoluta necessità il pregare in nome di Gesù Cristo, di manera che qualunque preghiera, che non è fatta per Gesù Cristo, non solamente non ottiene il perdono de’ peccati, ma essa medesima diviene un peccato.”

203 Ibid, §9, Atti, 198. “Ora il pregare in nome di Gesù Cristo, a parlare propriamente non è altro che appoggiarsi unicamente sulla di lui carità e sopra i di lui meriti, riconoscere da esso lo spirito che geme e prega
specifically state that the mediatorship of Christ does not preclude the invocation of Mary and the saints; indeed, it is this priestly and heavenly role of Christ that makes such mediation possible and efficacious. The Catholic understanding of the Trinity is also expressed to avoid a narrow Christomonism, as is the biblical role of Christ as the heavenly High Priest who intercedes with the Father to make believers’ prayers effectual. Thus, the Synod situates its strongly Christocentric language in the context of the essentially theocentric and Trinitarian opening of the Decree on Prayer.

4.2 – Reform of Private Devotions

After having laid down these strong theological and pastoral principles, the Pistoians turned to concrete devotional reform. Surprisingly, they did not begin by singling out abuses in devotions to Mary and the saints that obscured Christocentrism. They instead renewed an old attack against a Christocentric devotion that Jansenists often attacked as teaching or implying erroneous doctrine, the Sacred Heart of Jesus devotion. De’Ricci had resumed this old Jansenist crusade almost immediately after being named bishop. By 1781 he had clashed with the papacy because of his hostility to this devotion. This occasion was marked by de’Ricci’s writing of an inflammatory pastoral letter, which was also the beginning of his

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clash with many religious orders in his diocese. De’Ricci’s letter irritated Rome. Pius VI wrote de’Ricci, incredulous and exasperated that the bishop had dug up an issue the Holy See had already ruled on. It is probable that some women religious in his diocese had appealed to Rome on this matter because they resented de’Ricci’s devotional theology and his strong jurisdictionalist and episcopalist claims, which had little respect for the privileges and exemptions religious orders claimed. At de’Ricci’s episcopal consecration in Rome, a former Jesuit had asked him to approve a new Office and Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart on behalf of a petition from a nun in Prato. De’Ricci refused, and when the Jesuit obtained permission from the Congregation for Rites, de’Ricci ignored the order. Such an episode illustrates the convergence among de’Ricci’s episcopality, his anti-ultramontanism, and his desire for a more enlightened and Jansenist devotional life.

On this contentious issue, the Synod of Pistoia continued down the path already marked out in the *Punti ecclesiastici* and modelled on the first six years of de’Ricci’s episcopate. The Decree on Prayer argues it is an anathematized error to adore the humanity, flesh, or any part of Jesus Christ separately from his divinity, and it reiterates the 1781 pastoral letter. The devotion to the Heart of Jesus is rejected alongside other “similar devotions as new and erroneous, or at least as dangerous, and we wish that it be entirely abolished in our Churches.” Pastors are exhorted to instruct the faithful to adore and pray to Jesus “without division.”

We have seen that de’Ricci’s anti-Jesuitism was a major factor in his and other late Jansenists’ repudiation of the Sacred Heart devotion. Another, related reason for his forceful

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207 “Istruzione pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo di Pistoia e Prato sulla nuova devozione al Cuor di Gesù” (3 June 1781) is in *Atti Appendices* §32, 92–95. See also Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia,” 91–93.


opposition to this devotion, which seems so inoffensive today, was a concern that a fixation on physical things – in this case, the physical heart of Jesus – obscured proper understandings of Christological doctrine and, in particular, of the divinity of Christ. In this case, the Synod argued that the physical heart of Christ was at risk of being superstitiously separated from the divinity by the worshipper, and thus the pastoral letter of de’Ricci censuring the Sacred Heart devotion, which so irritated the papacy, was approved and reiterated. The Pistoian predilection for primitivism, and accompanying suspicion of any devotions seen as novel, saw new devotions as especially prone to superstition and error. This approach was apparent in the Decree on Prayer and in de’Ricci’s reforms in his diocese.\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Auctorem fidei} 62 and 63 censured the Pistoians’ critiques of devotions as captious, rash, false, pernicious, and offensive, as long as the devotions in question were approved by the Holy See.\textsuperscript{211}

The Synod continued de’Ricci’s sustained attack against the Sacred Heart devotion, but the concerns of the Pistoians were much broader. The rest of their decree on prayer summarized the scope of the Synod’s attempted devotional reform, which was concerned with a wide array of issues, including false or misleading devotions to Christ, the Trinity, Mary, and the saints. Since devotions that teach error or are prone to misunderstanding harm the spiritual life of Christians, especially the uneducated, by giving them false notions about divine things, it is the job of priests and their bishop to purge their churches of these stumbling blocks.

Let all images be entirely removed from the Churches that either present false dogmas, as those of the carnal Heart of Jesus, or give the occasion of error to the uneducated, as those of the incomprehensible Trinity, or finally those which instead of edifying, are a motive of scandal, like lascivious or ridiculous paintings, or [ones which] give off an air of vanity and pomp. Equally, let those images be removed in

\textsuperscript{210} This was not just a Jansenist preoccupation. Epitomizing the Third Party cast of mind, Benedict XIV was very cautious regarding new devotions throughout his pontificate (1740–58). See Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 350–51.

\textsuperscript{211} Denzinger 2662–63. It is reaffirmed in article 63 that worshipping the physical heart of Jesus is appropriate so long as it is understood that the humanity of Jesus is inseparably united to the person of the Divine Word.
which it would seem that the people put special faith, or recognize some special power (\textit{virtù}) contrary to the decrees and intentions of the Church.\footnote{Decree on Prayer §27 in \textit{Atti}, 202. \textquoteleft\textquoteleft Si rimuovano affatto dalle Chiese tutte le Imagini, che o presentano falsi domini, come sarebbero quelle del Cuor carneo di Gesù, o danno all'idiota occasione di errore, come quelle della Trinità incomprensibile, o finalmente che in vece di esser di edificazione, sono un motivo di scandalo, quali sono le piture lascive, ridicole, e spirante un'aria di vanità e di pompa. Si tolgano parimente quelle Imagini, nelle quali pare che il popolo riponga una fiducia singolare, o riconosca qualche speciale virtù contro i Decreti, e l'intenzione della Chiesa.'\textquoteright\textquoteright See the commentary of Lamberts, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft The Synod of Pistoia,' 94; Bolton, \textit{Church Reform}, 101.}

Some parts of this quotation could be read merely as corrections to certain Baroque excesses or reiteration of the Tridentine desire to remove images and reform devotions that could lead the simple to doctrinal error.\footnote{See the Council of Trent, Session 25, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft Decree on the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of the Saints and on Sacred Images' (3 December 1563), in Denzinger 1821–25. De'Ricci appealed to this decree against the censures of \textit{Auctorem fidei} 69–72. Any understanding of their reforms, he wrote, that contradicted this Tridentine decree would be contrary to the Synod's intention. They wished only 'to order the cult of the saints and of sacred images in the way and form that the Council of Trent desired, and that other provincial and diocesan synods have equally followed.' See \textit{Memorie} 2:186–87.} Indeed, in 1745 Pope Benedict XIV had decreed certain precautions in depictions of the Trinity.\footnote{He reacted against images of the Trinity as one person with three faces, or three identical persons, or pictured inside the womb of the Virgin Mary. See Lamberts, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft The Synod of Pistoia,' 94. The brief of Benedict XIV, \textit{Sollicitudini nostrae} (see §25–36), is cited in \textit{Auctorem fidei} 69, which censures Pistoia's decree as not sufficiently distinguishing between approved and unapproved images of the Trinity. See Denzinger 2669.} Nevertheless, the Pistoians still found it necessary to stir up controversy regarding the Sacred Heart, labelling this papally approved devotion as \textquoteleft\textquoteleft presenting false dogmas'\textquoteright without qualification. This belligerence presaged the clash between Riccian devotional reform and the wishes of many of the faithful, who had specific grievances but also had a general sense (as did Rome) that de'Ricci was an iconoclast.\footnote{On this clash, see chapter five, 1.3.}

The Synod saw the cult of Mary and the saints as good and useful, if it was understood in the context of the heavenly mediation of Christ, which allows the communion of saints to intercede effectively for those on earth. The Synod echoed themes common in the work of Muratori and other Third Party figures: the invocation of Mary and the saints, rightly

\footnote{Denzinger 2669–72. De'Ricci's response to the censure of \textit{Auctorem fidei} 61–63 is in \textit{Memorie} 2:183–84.}
understood, is a good and pious exercise, but only the mediation of Christ is necessary “simply and absolutely.” The infinite distance between creature and Creator must be recognized; giving to creatures the adoration due only to the Creator does not win their assistance but is grave sin. The veneration of saints should have as its end “their imitation” rather than a “sterile and vain admiration.” In line with standard Catholic treatments of the subject, the Synod was pointing back to the distinction between latria (adoration or worship) and doulia (veneration) already incorporated into the anti-iconoclastic decrees of Nicea II (787). While devotion to the saints, and to Mary in particular, is considered praiseworthy, the Synod took an uncompromising position on some elements of the status quo of their cults.

Regarding devotion to Mary and the saints, the Synod declared that in their cults “we wish that every shadow of superstition might be removed, such as those which fix a certain efficacy in a determined number of prayers and salutations.” The parish priests were to be vigilant in regulating the devotions of their people, who “are too often inclined to superstition and materiality.” In the same decree, the Pistoias referred positively to a pastoral of de´Ricci, printed in the Atti, which castigated the recent “indiscreet profusion of indulgences” and the “superstitious determination of the number three” which falsely gives simple people the impression “that by certain minute practices of piety [they receive] a passport to the Heavenly Kingdom[.]”

217 For the above, see Decree on Prayer §13 in Atti, 200.

218 The Decree on the Eucharist §8 states that the Saints deserve “honor” but not latria. See Atti, 132.


221 Ibid.

222 See “Lettera di Monsig. Vescovo ai Vicari Foranei,” in Atti Appendices, 96. De´Ricci argued the recent decree from Rome granting these indulgences was forged (probably in order to criticize it more openly). He blocked its diffusion in his diocese, saying he would instead teach his people “true Catholic doctrine on
While the Pistoian concern with teaching the people that devotions pleased God not because they involved a certain number of prayers or other actions was not per se controversial, they were unnecessarily far-reaching and caustic in their criticisms. Rather than pointing out and censuring specific extreme cases, the Pistoia indictment too broadly attacked a supposed prevailing attitude toward worship among the laity. In the context of a discussion of devotion to the Passion, the decree criticized “the spirit of compunction and of fervor” which is “tied to a determined number of stations, or of arbitrary meditations (riflessioni) [which are] often false, more often fickle (capricciose), and always full of stumbling blocks.” The next chapter will show how these decrees were perceived not as a helpful correction of some mistaken attitudes, but as a wholesale attack on approved piety.

Such attacks put the papacy in a difficult position because while many Catholics recognized at least some situations in which devotions and especially local customs needed to be reformed or contextualized properly, the Pistoian critique could be read to censure unduly and immoderately, because not only did it attack approved devotions (include popular ones like the Sacred Heart), but it also could at least be read as denigrating a common form of devotional life, one rooted in fixed formulas, set numbers of prayers, and an expectation of specific rewards or fruits of such devotions. *Auctorem fidei* responded with a tone of exasperation, asserting that it is not superstitious to consider pious exercises efficacious not indulgences.” He also showed an Enlightenment disdain for the “less enlightened piety” of those who sought such indulgences. De’Ricci’s disdain for the idea of a “passport to heaven” goes back to his younger days, at least as he narrates them. De’Ricci claims that when he was a young man, he thought joining the Jesuits would give him a passport to heaven, on the basis of a private revelation to St. Francis Borgia. See Louis-Joseph-Antoine de Potter, ed., *Vie et mémoires de Scipion de Ricci, évêque de Pistoie et de Prato, réformateur du catholicisme en Toscane, sous le règne de Léopold*, 4 vols., (Paris: J. Tastu, 1829) 1:16–17. Such ideas help explain his intense hatred of the Jesuits and of certain traditional forms of Catholic piety. Muratori also sharply criticized this conception of indulgences and special devotions. See chapter two, 3.1.

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223 Decree on Prayer §11 in *Atti*, 199.
because of the outer form itself but due to the meaning attached to the exercises by the church.\textsuperscript{224}

4.3 – Reform of Public Devotions

We have already discussed some specific reforms of liturgical life. The Pistoians also sought to apply their principles to reform Eucharistic piety, processions, and other elements of devotion during and outside the Mass. Many of these reforms recall the twentieth-century Liturgical Movement, the decrees of Vatican II, and postconciliar Catholic practice (some of it directly sanctioned by the Council and some of it not). The striking similarities between these twentieth-century forms and the Pistoian agenda have been pointed out by scholars. “When looking at the totality of all these texts one is astonished about the many bright, striking proposals which can be seen as precursors of the liturgical renewal in the 20th century.”\textsuperscript{225} In the judgment of Lamberts, the Pistoians were indeed reacting to a situation in which reform was desperately needed:

The liturgical year was almost completely overshadowed by the increasing number of the saints’ feasts. The gathering together of the assembly on the Lord’s Day in order to celebrate the paschal mystery was hardly experienced. Next to the popular devotions which were indeed directed to the Lord, such as the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Via Crucis, the veneration of the stable of Bethlehem, the passion-plays, the devotion to the Sacrament, most of the attention was drawn to the veneration of the saints which led to a number of devotions, novenas, octaves, veneration of the relics, pilgrimages, processions, acquisition of indulgences, etc. All these were experienced in a very individualistic manner as a way to obtain the means of grace

\textsuperscript{224} Denzinger 2664 (Auctorem fidei 64). “The doctrine that notes as universally superstitious ‘any efficacy that is placed in a fixed number of prayers and of pious salutations’, as if one should consider as superstitious the efficacy that is derived, not from the number viewed in itself, but from the prescript of the Church appointing a certain number of prayers or of external acts for obtaining indulgences, for fulfilling penances, and, in general, for the performance of sacred and religious worship in the correct order and due form, (is) false, rash, scandalous, dangerous, injurious to the piety of the faithful, derogatory to the authority of the Church, and erroneous.” The Decree on Prayer §11 does not specifically criticize attributing “efficacy” to fixed numbers of prayers or devotional exercises but §14 does, which Auctorem fidei cites. It also cites de’Ricci’s pastoral of 3 June 1784, cited above, page 247.

\textsuperscript{225} See Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia (1786) and Popular Religion,” 102.
which were given by the Church in the name of God and his saints to ensure one’s own salvation.226

This unsatisfactory situation also drove the agenda of Muratori and more moderate reformers.

In the Decree on the Eucharist, the Synod sought to further emphasize Christocentrism during times of Eucharistic adoration and benediction by substituting a vernacular Litany of Jesus for the Litany of the Saints. This Litany, printed in the Appendix to the synodal acts, contains Italian texts of Psalm 69 (old Vulgate numbering) and the Pange lingua, along with vernacular prayers for the remission of sins, for the pope, bishop, sovereign, and peace; for the souls in purgatory, for divine assistance, and for all the faithful living and dead.227 If the Pistoians cannot be said to have introduced the vernacular into the Mass per se (except in sporadic instances alleged by their enemies), they certainly did introduce it into worship more generally.

The Decree also contained what might be described as anti-Baroque musical instructions, arguing that the church fathers introduced music to help the faithful enter more fully into the spirit of religion. Thus, all ecclesial music must be “simple, grave, modest, pious, and adapted to the sense of the words.” Anything else is prohibited.228 The Synod then referred to the provisions of the Instruction of the Archbishop of Salzburg (Jerome Colloredo) for removing abuses in the interior disposition of churches. We have already seen that the Pistoians wished that there be only one altar in every church. They also decreed simplicity: reliquaries and flowers should not be placed on the altar, and if a church in fact possesses “authentic relics,” they should be placed under the altar, “according to the custom of antiquity.”229

226 Ibid. In the Pistoian decrees, Lamberts identifies a “Gallican spirit” and an “enlightened and Jansenist mentality” (93).

227 Decree on the Eucharist §3 in Atti, 126. For the Italian text of the litany, see Atti Appendices §7, 6–10.

Again, the motivation was a certain primitivism, as well as an enlightened and
Jansenist skepticism about elements of popular religion. In another move that struck at
popular religion, the Synod censured the “false opinion” that giving alms to a priest to say
Mass for a particular intention caused a “special fruit” and allowed people to apply this
spiritual fruit to whomever they chose (for example, someone in purgatory). The Synod
commanded the *parochi* to teach the people that while the sacrifice of the Mass has infinite
value, “the application of the fruits of it depends on God.” Besides, God looks only on the
“piety of the donor” rather than on the financial value of the gift. Only the “spirit of charity”
is efficacious. In the Decree on Prayer, the Pistoians took aim at superstitions such as a
belief that certain souls in purgatory can be “abandoned” (forgotten) by living people and
thus cut off from help. This “most pernicious” error occludes the good news of the church’s
treaching, which is that all who die in grace are “among the living members of Jesus
Christ by the charity that unites them together.” None of these can be excluded from the help
of the church because prayer is by and for the entire Body. Thus, any practice that gives the
faithful such superstitious and erroneous notions was to be prohibited. This example
further illustrates that leveling against all Jansenists or philo-Jansenists the charge of a one-
sided pessimism and gloominess fails to take adequate account of their full theological
outlook.

A desire for further safeguards against the obscuring of good doctrine prompted
additional regulations concerning relics and sacred images. These regulations directly led to
De’Ricci’s struggle with many of the people of Pistoia and Prato regarding their favorite

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229 Ibid, 130.

230 Ibid §8, 133.

relic, “Our Lady’s Girdle,” and their favorite image, the Madonna dell’Umiltà. The Decree on Prayer asks pastors to teach the “true spirit of worship” regarding relics and images of saints. This teaching stressed the body as the vessel of God’s glory, and the veneration of the bodies of saints as part of a faith in the resurrection of the body. Any miracles worked by such bodies or relics should cause the faithful to believe more strongly in the intercession “of those blessed souls” but not to attribute to the bodies or relics any power (virtù) in themselves. “All our hope must be founded on the power and goodness of the one that honors his faithful servants as he pleases.” The “same spirit” applies to the honor and veneration of sacred images. They should not be regarded as having any “divinity or power” (divinità o virtù) in themselves. To do so would be to imitate pagan faith in idols. The honor given images must refer ultimately to the glory of Jesus Christ, in himself and in his saints. Again indulging in a reading of early church history, the Pistoians argued that the “tradition of the Fathers” was to consider the “usefulness of Images…primarily as a book for the ignorant, in which things are expressed to them that they cannot learn through reading.”

The Decree on Prayer also took measures that directly touched devotion to Mary. The common custom of giving particular titles to certain images – and Marian images are singled out – is called a “dangerous custom…for the most part vain and puerile.” Only names “which are analogous to the Mysteries which have been expressly mentioned in the divine Scripture” should be used in devotions and worship. If this injunction is not followed, the people tend to put superstitious trust in particular images or titles, and the meaning of saintly and Marian

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232 We will explore de’Ricci’s failure to reform these devotions in chapter five, 1.3.

233 Decree on Prayer §15 in Atti, 201.

234 Ibid §16, 201–2. However, the decree also states that images do serve all by reminding us “in a more lively way of what Jesus Christ has done for us, the marvels that God has worked in his Saints, the examples that he has given us in them, so that we might give thanks for them, and be stirred up to imitate them.”
devotion starts getting twisted. Preference should be given to images which depict edifying events recorded in scripture.\textsuperscript{235}

Processions were strictly limited to key feasts in the liturgical calendar. All others were abolished, especially those carrying relics or images of saints, and those featuring “certain images of the Blessed Virgin or the other Saints, that usually end in banquets, and indecent and tumultuous assemblies, remain absolutely abolished.”\textsuperscript{236} Regarding Eucharistic piety, the Synod decreed that there should be a public procession of the Eucharist only during the octave of Corpus Christi. The Host would be exposed only once a month, and only in the Cathedral. On Sundays, adoration should occur without the sacrament being moved from the tabernacle, and the priest should give a blessing after adoration with the pyx closed.\textsuperscript{237} Feast days are useful for recalling the minds of the faithful to holy things, but what is truly desirable is that “the life of a true Christian” be “a continuous feast” full of songs of praise, prayer, and meditation on the things of God.\textsuperscript{238} Excessive feast days were considered prejudicial to the poor (since on these days they could not do “servile work” which they needed for subsistence). This was a point of concern for many eighteenth-century reformers, like Muratori.\textsuperscript{239}

Behind many of these Pistoian criticisms was a desire to adequately distinguish between doctrine and dogma, on one hand, and discipline and practice, on the other. We have

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid §17, 202–3.

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid §25, 207. “Tutti le altre Processioni, especialmente quelle destinate a portare in giro qualche Imagine o Reliquia, e più ancora quelle che dirette a visitare alcuna Imagine della Beata Vergine o di altro Santo, sogliono terminare in conviti, ed adunanze indecenti e tumultuose, restano assolutamente abolite.”

\textsuperscript{237} Decree on the Eucharist §3 in \textit{Atti}, 126.

\textsuperscript{238} Decree on Prayer §26 in \textit{Atti}, 208. This puritanical attitude recalls the kind of thinking that led some Protestants to dismiss important church holidays. It was surely totally out of touch with the habits and desires of normal Tuscans. The widely negative reaction to Riccian devotional and liturgical reform is strong evidence of this fact (see chapter five).

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid, §27, 208–9. On the reduction of feast days, see Ulrich Lehner, \textit{The Catholic Enlightenment}, 155–58.
already seen the Pistoian reliance on Gallicanism and some Third Party reformers. Also bearing the strong influence of Jansenism, the Pistoian project was keenly interested in separating what was integral to the faith from the much less valuable (usually harmful) later accretions. While there was a burgeoning historical consciousness in the Pistoian project, it was too often derailed by a primitivism that was both excessively polemical and naively romantic. This perspective could take the form of a pillorying of the “barbarous” (Middle) Ages and of scholasticism in particular. Such sweeping condemnations were unsophisticated ways to handle the real methodological and theological difficulties which faced a church seeking to understand its past with the new historical-critical tools of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries.

4.4 – On the Necessity of Bible Reading

The Pistoian agenda for devotional reform was not simply destructive. Although it targeted abuses, sometimes rather indiscriminately, there was a positive core. That positive core was a re-focusing on Christ and the Mass, the cultivation of a rich personal and communal prayer life, and the private reading of scripture and “good books.” While the Pistoians tried to sweep away certain devotions and traditions that were dear to some of the laity, they also attempted to replace these things in a positive way. We have already discussed

240 The best example of this double tendency is Bartoli’s “Oration to the Synod.” See Atti, 28–40.

241 Anti-scholasticism is apparent in the “Decree on Ecclesiastical Conferences,” which blames the schools for introducing “novelty,” “discordant systems,” and finally leading to probabilism and laxism. See Atti, 215 (§1). Auctorem fidei 76 (Denzinger 2676) rebuked this attack on scholasticism, saying it was injurious to “good and holy men who, to the great good of the Catholic religion, have developed the Scholastic method.” The charge against scholasticism is even deeper, for the same Pistoian decree alleges that scholasticism changed ecclesiastical government since ministers forgot their rights and obligations, leading to a forgetfulness of the ancient forms of ministry (§1, Atti, 215). Auctorem fidei 77 (Denzinger 2677) called this “false, rash, erroneous” and claimed “the primitive notion of ecclesiastical ministry or pastoral solicitude” could never be forgotten. De’Ricci replied that the Synod was not condemning holy and learned scholastics like St. Thomas, but that his critiques of later centuries were very common, and “founded on history” and on the scholarship of “many learned men” like Mabillon, Bossuet, and Fleury. See Memorie 2:186–87. On this anti-medieval mentality, see Bolton, Church Reform, 91, 94, 105–6.
the Pistoia proclivity for “good books,” and some of these Gallican-Jansenist recommendations (likes the works of Quesnel and Mésenguy, and the Catechisms of Gourlin and Montazet) are repeated in the Decree on Prayer. 242 A very important recommendation the Synod made for the life of the clergy and laity was personal reading of the Bible, which was to be available in the vernacular. The insistence with which they formulated this recommendation was central for their reform program.

We have seen that emphasizing lay vernacular Bible reading in the eighteenth-century was sometimes negatively associated with Protestantism and Jansenism. However, moderate Third Party reformers, such as Muratori and Archbishop Martini (neither of whom were Jansenists or alienated the papacy), sought to expand scriptural access. The warm sentiments Pius VI expressed regarding Martini’s Italian translation of the Bible encouraged de’Ricci and the Pistoians. 243 Still, they wanted to frame their insistence on the centrality of Bible reading carefully, in light of past condemnations of Protestant and Jansenist ideas. Thus, in the third session, it was stated that “the reading of scripture is certainly useful in itself, but it is not necessary to all and to each man in particular in order to obtain salvation.” 244 Such

242 Decree on Prayer §29 in Atti, 209–10. On these “good books,” see chapter three, section 1.

243 For Pius VI’s praise of Martini, see chapter two, 3.1. Naively, some Jansenists and philo-Jansenists actually saw Pius VI’s enthusiasm for Martini’s vernacular translation of scripture as a first step toward the revocation of Unigenitus. See Appolis, Tiers parti, 386.

244 This is in fact part of the Synod’s representation of “Theological Articles” presented by the faculty of Louvain to Pope Innocent in 1677, and “Twelve Articles” presented by Cardinal de Noailles (Archbishop of Paris) to Benedict XIII in 1726 for examination. The Louvain articles contained propositions reflecting the influence of Jansen and Baius, and de Noailles’ that of Quesnel. The Pistoian citation on scripture reading is the eleventh article of de Noailles. See Atti, 95–100, at 100: “La lezione della Scrittura Sacra è certamente utile in se stessa, ma non è necessaria a tutti e a ciascheduno uomo in particolare per il conseguimento della salute.” This Quesnellian thesis, which was strongly advocated by late Jansenists (and many Third Party Catholics), was still fundamentally conservative in its understanding of the role of the laity vis-à-vis the teaching authority of the Church: “But it is not licit for anyone to interpret the Scripture from their own fancy (capriccio), or according to a private spirit, or to read it without observing that deference and obedience which is owed to Pastors, or without sincere submission to the Church, to whom belongs the judgement of the true sense, and of the right interpretation of the Scripture.” This encouragement of private scripture reading in the vernacular by the laity, but within a context of religious submission to the doctrinal teaching and scriptural interpretation of pastors and the church’s tradition and magisterium is essentially identical to that of Dei verbum 10, which asserts that the magisterium of the church “has been entrusted exclusively” with “authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on.” Article 25 charges bishops and pastors with encouraging, but also shepherding and safeguarding, lay reading of scripture through approved translations, explanatory notes, etc.
caveats were intended to avoid disturbing anxious souls and to allow for exceptions to a
general rule, exceptions which surely had to be made in light of widespread illiteracy,
poverty, the variance of vernacular tongues and the high cost of books in eighteenth-century
Italy (and many other Catholics lands).

However, since the Pistoians believed that the place of the Bible was absolutely
central to the life of the faithful, they went on to define to whom scriptural reading was not
necessary, in order that their injunction requiring Bible reading might not be explained away
too liberally. A footnote to the above passage read:

Since this article, through the natural laziness and negligence of the Faithful, could be
understood too generally, it pleases the holy Synod to observe that inasmuch as the
reading of Sacred Scripture cannot be said to be necessary for each and every person,
yet only real inability can excuse from this so important reading. The testimony of the
holy Fathers on this so important subject is too decisive, and the obscuration of the
primary truths of Religion that is born out of this neglect is too perceptible, and the
ignorance of the divine Scriptures is only too clear.245

Three things are especially of note here. First, the exception to the general rule of Bible
reading is defined very strictly: “only real inability,” which probably meant illiteracy or
mental or financial incapacity. Second, the text echoes the Jansenist idea of the “general
obscuration” (oscuramento) of central Christian truths in the contemporary day, an idea that
was condemned in Auctorem fidei 1. Connecting the injunction insisting on Bible reading
with Jansenist principles was unlikely to make it well received by the papacy. This Jansenist
explanantion of the lack of Bible reading had already been voiced at the beginning of the
Synod by Bartoli, the synod preacher. He had blamed it on “Neo-Pharisees” and “Casuists”:
“Thus, the divine Scriptures, the Testament of Jesus Christ left to his sons, were neglected,

245 See note 1 to article 11 of the “Twelves Articles” in Atti, 100. “Siccome questo articolo dalla naturale
indolenza e trascuratezza dei Fedeli potrebbe essere inteso troppo generalmente, così piacque al santo Sinodo
di osservare che per quanto non debba dirsi la lezione della Scrittura Sacra necessaria a tutti, e a ciascuno
in particolare, pure non iscusa da questa lezione così importante se non la vera impotenza. Sono troppo decise
le testimonianze de’ santi Padri sopra un oggetto così interessante, ed è troppo sensibile l’oscuramento che
nacque sulle primarie verità della Religione da questa trascuratezza, e dalla ignoranza delle divine Scritture”
(emphasis original).
and these sons were occupied in the reading of delusions and daydreams, from an ignorant and self-interested laziness. Third, the passage in the block quotation above blames this *oscuramento*, at least in part, on a slothful neglect of scriptural literacy. This allegation places implicit blame on popes, councils, synods, and bishops who did not approve vernacular translations or did not encourage Bible reading, and was probably seen as “favorable to the charges of heretics” against the church, just like the Pistoian call for vernacular liturgy. We have seen that Pius VI did indeed approve of vernacular translations and lay Bible reading, but such reform, to be well received by the papacy, had to be couched in the moderate and irenic terms of an Archbishop Martini rather in the provocative rhetoric of a fiery de’Ricci.

*Auctorem fidei* 67 condemned the Pistoian injunction on Bible reading thus:

The doctrine that asserts that only a true incapacity can dispense from the reading of Sacred Scripture and that adds that the obfuscation of the first truths of religion that has developed because of the negligence of this precept continues to spread (is) false, rash, disturbing to the peace of souls, and condemned on another occasion in Quesnel.

One can understand de’Ricci’s astonishment that Pius VI condemned the Pistoian propositions favoring Bible reading by the laity as “already condemned in Quesnel.” In his self-defense, de’Ricci cited the pope’s effusively congratulatory letter to Bishop Martini for

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247 Appolis outlines the moderation, irenicism, and caution of Archbishop Martini in *Tiers parti*, 383–90. Martini exemplified these qualities in his response to Leopold’s “Fifty-Seven Points.” See *Punti ecclesiastici*, 31–49.

248 Denzinger 2667: “Doctrina perhibens, a lectione sacrarum Scripturarum nonnisi veram impotentiam excusare; subiungens, ultero se prodere obscurationem, quae ex huiusce praecepti neglectu orta est super primarias veritates religionis; falsa, temeraria, quietis animarum perturbativa, alias in Quesnellio damnata.” The article adds a footnote: “Appendix to the Decree on Grace: twelve articles addressed to Benedict XIII from Cardinal Noailles, note to art. 11.” Denzinger references *Unigenitus* 79–85, condemnations which are much more sweeping than that in *Auctorem fidei*. For many who wished to emphasize the reading of vernacular scriptures, *Unigenitus* provided great difficulty. On these condemnations, see chapter two, 2.2 and 2.4.
his Italian translation of the scriptures.\(^{249}\) However, Pius VI clearly did not wish that Bible reading be imposed as a duty on all literate lay people, which the Pistoian proposition implies. Still, by evoking the condemnation of Quesnel in *Unigenitus*, Pius VI was certainly recalling a cautious, if not negative and suspicious, attitude to lay Bible reading that seems at odds with his praise of Martini’s attempts to make the Bible more accessible to lay people. De’Ricci’s surprise at *Auctorem fidei*’s censuring of the Synod on this point is understandable in light not only of Pius VI’s past praise of vernacular scripture translations, but also the conciliatory tone he took early in his pontificate regarding *Unigenitus*.\(^{250}\) While we should not underestimate the significance of the attachment of the Jansenist idea of the *oscuramento* of the truth to the Pistoian decree, the reiteration of the condemnations of Quesnel’s ideas show that the papacy was still struggling between an openness to lay, vernacular Bible reading and more cautious attitudes.

In its permission and even encouragement of lay vernacular Bible reading, Pistoia clearly anticipates Vatican II. However, it was by no means only at the Council that the Catholic magisterium encouraged lay Bible reading. Indeed, we have already explored episodes, limited in scope though they were, in which vernacular Bible reading was encouraged in the eighteenth-century church. While by no means universal, vernacular translations became available in many Catholics lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well.\(^{251}\) In the century before Vatican II, notable papal teaching documents like Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) and Pius XII’s *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) built

\(^{249}\) De’Ricci argued he was simply following the lead of Pius VI. See *Memorie* 2:186.

\(^{250}\) During a visit to Vienna, Pius VI told a Hungarian bishop on 20 April 1782 that *Unigenitus* should be discussed “historically, not dogmatically.” See Owen Chadwick, *The Popes*, 283–84.

\(^{251}\) While printed vernacular Catholic Bibles had existed since the invention of the Gutenberg Press in 1456, the publication or recommendation of such texts for the use of lay people was sometimes and in some places controversial. See chapter two, 2.4.
upon, and provided further sanction for, a growing Catholic affirmation of the centrality of vernacular, lay Bible reading.

However, it was at Vatican II, in *Dei verbum* (the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), that the college of bishops approved a magisterial statement which went beyond an encouragement of lay Bible reading. *Dei verbum* actually asserted the necessity of the Bible in the life of the believer in terms similar to those of the Pistoians, but without any claim that the church had been suffering an *oscuramento*.

The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the “excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:8). “For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with [Libenter…accedant] the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time, with approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church, are commendably spread everywhere.252

While vernacular translations of the scriptures and official encouragement of lay people to read the Bible were by no means novelties of Vatican II, the clear meaning of *Dei verbum* 25 is that the reading of scripture is not just useful, but is in fact necessary.253 The fathers clearly argue that without access to the scripture, the faithful will be left ignorant of important truths. Ignorance, as Congar shows us, is a classic wrong that church reform seeks to correct.254 The Pistoians, of course, were keenly aware of this fact, too, but argued for it in a way which criticized both the supposed laziness of the faithful and the current hierarchically approved church practice. By embedding the famous quotation of St. Jerome in

252 *Dei verbum* 25: “Pariter Sancta Synodus christifideles omnes, praeertim sodales religiosos, vehementer peculiariterque exhortatur, ut frequenti divinarum Scripturarum lectione ‘eminiem scientiam Iesu Christi’ (Phil. 3, 8) ediscant. ‘Ignoratio enim Scripturarum ignorant Christi est.’ Libenter igitur ad sacrum textum ipsum accedant, sive per sacram Liturgiam divinis eloquuis confertam, sive per piam lectionem, sive per institutiones ad id aptas aliaque subsidia, quae approbantibus et curantibus Pastoribus Ecclesiae ubique nostro tempore laudabiliter diffunduntur.”

253 I say “necessary” because the subjunctive verb *accedant* signifies what should be the case. So the Vatican II fathers asserted that the faithful should willingly accede to the scriptures.

254 See chapter one, 3.6.
the text, that “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ,” the Vatican II fathers at least implied that only some strong extenuating incapacity could excuse one from reading scripture if one is able, which was the exact claim of the Pistoians and the Jansenists.

Conclusion

The Synod of Pistoia was the high-water mark of de’Ricci’s aggressive late-Jansenist reform program, and it caused great anxiety to the papacy. The Synod’s Acts went well beyond the needs of a single Italian diocese; they were in fact a blueprint for the reform of the entire church. Although there are some obvious and important discontinuities between the Pistoian plan for church reform and the reforms enacted by Vatican II, the similarities are many and striking. These similarities go beyond surface-level appearances; the two ecclesial assemblies diagnosed similar problems facing the church, and they shared the desire to recover a richer ecclesiology, theology of the liturgy, and practice of personal devotional and prayer life of which Bible reading was a central component. Both assemblies attempted ressourcement and sought to employ a theological methodology that was simultaneously Catholic, scriptural, and rooted in the church fathers and the practice of the early church.

During the immediate aftermath of the Synod, the next goal of de’Ricci and Leopold was to hold synods based on Pistoia in each of the Tuscan dioceses, and eventually a council representing the entire Tuscan Church. This wish is made clear in the second-to-last statement approved at Pistoia: “On the Convocation of a National Council.”

De’Ricci, however, harboured the desire to go much further. True to his profound, nostalgic Jansenism, he wished for his Synod to become a model for the reform of the entire Catholic Church.

255 “Promemoria per la Convocazione di un Concilio Nazionale,” (session six) in Atti, 240–43.

256 In the letter of 23 March 1787 to “Vicari Foranei,” de’Ricci advertises the coming National Council to vindicate and confirm his Synod. He believed it would affect other nations. See Atti, v–vi. In the “Promemoria on the Convocation of a National Council,” §4, the situation of different dioceses teaching different things was compared to a bad dance. See Atti, 240. In §2 of the “Decree on the Synodal Constitution and on their
This grand and almost utopian plan of church reform was to come crashing down by the 1790s. Let us turn to the complex reception of Pistoia throughout the Christian world, and to the events which caused the sudden unravelling of de’Ricci’s plans, events which also help us judge which elements of the Pistoian project constituted true and false reform.

Authority,” the Pistoians wanted the Synod to open the way to an acceptance of their reforms by the universal church, or at least to a national council. See Atti, 249.
CHAPTER V: THE SPIRIT OF PISTOIA: THE RECEPTION AND FAILURE OF A BOLD REFORMIST VISION

This chapter examines the reception of the Synod of Pistoia and the failure of Riccian reform. It demonstrates that the failure of Pistoianism in Tuscany was swift, and that it was the direct result of the imprudence of de’Ricci’s reforms in Pistoia-Prato and of the negative perception of them in that diocese and throughout the Grand Duchy. While the synodal decrees technically affected only a small Italian diocese, much of the Catholic world was watching Pistoia, and the Synod was vigorously debated in many countries. The harsh content of the papal rejection of the Synod in the bull *Auctorem fidei* illustrates the vehemence of theological opposition to Pistoianism. The circumstances surrounding the bull’s promulgation highlight the political precariousness of the papacy, for the bull was not finally promulgated until eight years after the Synod, and when it was, it was widely banned by hostile governments. The international failure of late Jansenism, of which the Synod of Pistoia has rightly become a symbol, was by no means inevitable. I can here recount only part of the story of that failure, as it extends beyond the eighteenth-century. Indeed, this story continues into the complex political and theological reactions to the French Revolution, the seismic ecclesiastical changes that the age of Napoleon wrought, and the rise of nineteenth-century ultramontanism with the consequent decline of Gallicanism.

The final part of the chapter evaluates Riccian reform and the Synod of Pistoia from the perspective of Yves Congar’s four conditions for true reform in the church. While Pistoianism had many positive reformist elements, it does not fulfil three of Congar’s four conditions, at least without great qualification, even if it does fulfil the second condition, to the extent that the Pistoians formally remained in communion with the rest of the Catholic Church. The history of the Synod of Pistoia is the story of the rise and fall of a bold attempt
at Catholic reform. That story straddles, and even illuminates, the church’s transition from an eighteenth century marked by the Catholic Enlightenment, Jansenism, and Erastianism to a nineteenth century that saw the unpredictable return of the Jesuits and the stunning rise of the papacy to heights of spiritual and ecclesiastical power it had never before known.

1. The Failure of Pistoianism in Tuscany

De’Ricci’s reform agenda in Tuscany did not fail because of grand international events such as the theological and political reaction to the French Revolution, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, or the Terror, the importance of these events for the future of Catholic reform and the long-term reception of Pistoianism notwithstanding. Antedating the 1794 publication of Auctorem fidei and these upheavals in France, de’Ricci’s failure in Tuscany was due to local factors. 1 The Riccian project in Tuscany had really come to nought by 1791, when de’Ricci resigned his see amid civil unrest and widespread accusations of heresy, only to see the new bishop of Pistoia formally abrogate the Synod in 1792. 2

1.1 – The Riccian Plan for the Synodal Reform of the Church

Believing his agenda was fully backed by his Hapsburg protector, de’Ricci was confident in the immediate aftermath of the Synod. 3 Yet, he was realistic about the significant obstacles he and the Grand Duke would face should they attempt to expand Pistoian reform throughout all of Tuscany. Thus, de’Ricci wanted to proceed decisively but cautiously. Due to make his triennial report to Rome, de’Ricci convinced Leopold to decree that all Tuscan


2 See the letter of abrogation by de’Ricci’s successor, Francesco Falchi, Lettera pastorale di Mons. Francesco Falchi, Vescovo di Pistoia e Prato (Florence: 1792).

3 For De’Ricci’s perspective see Memorie 1:503–13. For a critical overview, see Matteucci, Scipione dei Ricci, 189–96. See also Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano, 529–30.
ecclesiastical correspondence with the Holy See be submitted first to the Grand Duke. This move fit into de’Ricci’s broad strategy to give the Pistoian agenda the best chance of success by marginalizing the pope’s power in Tuscany, which had been exercised through direct or curial contact with bishops and through the papal nuncio, and by concentrating ecclesiastical authority in the Grand Duke and those supporters of reform closest to him. He laid out his detailed plan for the synodal reform of the Tuscan Church in a lengthy letter of 28 December 1786 to the Grand Duke, which featured his *Riflessioni relative al Sinodo Nazionale da tenersi in Toscana*.

Although de’Ricci and the Grand Duke agreed on the goal of convoking a National Council of the Tuscan Church, de’Ricci knew that at present there were too many powerful enemies of the Pistoian vision for such a council to reap the results they wanted. He warned Leopold that the powerful archbishops of Florence and Siena, and the bishops of Fiesole and Montalico “are decided proponents of the Curia,” and many other Tuscan bishops were not much better. Thus, it was necessary to tread carefully and to support only the trustworthy (Jansenist-leaning) bishops of Colle, Chiusi-Pienza, and Cortona, who could follow Pistoia’s lead by convening their own diocesan synods, preparing the way for a National Council.

When we have had four or five synods sharing a deep harmony (consanguineità) of doctrine, we will have at that time a respectable number of adherents to the good cause and [this will be] a not insignificant impediment to those who would want to

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5 A “point of the greatest importance” for de’Ricci was that the papal nuncio should have nothing to do with the planned National Council. See de’Ricci to Leopold, 28 December 1786 in *Lettere* 2:880.

6 On the diverse positions of the Tuscan bishops regarding reforming synods, see Christopher Granville, “I vescovi toscani e il sinodo riformatore,” in *Atti del Convegno* (1986), 245–64.


8 Ibid., 875–76. They were, respectively, Niccolò Sciarelli (1731–1801), Gregorio Alessandri (1728–1802), and Giuseppe Pannilini (1742–1823). De’Ricci believed that the bishop of Sovana (Francesco Pio Santi) had “good dispositions” and might be an ally. Sciarelli was one of de’Ricci’s closest confidantes after the Synod. They corresponded extensively. See *Carte Ricci* 53: 102, 139, 360, 437, 467, 551, 712, 742, 782; 54: 161, 303, 484.
bring their private opinions before the national synod, to the damage of the truth and the soundest doctrine (la più sana dottrina).

Fearing that some Tuscan bishops might take up the call of the Punti ecclesiastici to hold synods in order to express hostility to the Pistoian program, de’Ricci advised Leopold to use state power to suppress any attempted synods by bishops whose “fanaticism and prejudice are notorious.” By “fanaticism and prejudice” de’Ricci meant ultramontanism, ecclesiologies that had no room for Richerism, and opposition to his Jansenist vision.

De’Ricci argued the government was in fact obligated to suppress any synods that might “erect an altar opposed to the Synod of Pistoia,” because they “would disturb public peace and tranquility.”

De’Ricci wanted this future National Council to be Richerist in structure. Richerism was integral to his theological vision and heritage, but also, crucially, it was pragmatically useful against a Tuscan episcopate he knew was mostly opposed to his reforms. To counter these unfriendly prelates, de’Ricci wanted parish priests empowered to deliberate and to vote as “judges of the faith” (giudici della fede) as de’Ricci insisted was their right in the primitive church, a right based on the gospel (Luke 10:1–9; Acts 15).

However, the priests, theologians, and canonists that a bishop selected to accompany him to the National Council had to be carefully vetted by the government so that “fanatics” could be excluded. “In every diocese there are enlightened parish priests, but these are low in number” because of bad

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9 Ibid., 876.

10 Ibid. A bishop who “wants to dominate and who regards the parish priests as servants and his vicars” is unacceptable.

11 Ibid.

12 De’Ricci would later argue for this point at the Episcopal Convocation. See Atti dell’assemblea degli arcivescovi e vescovi della Toscana tenuta in Firenze nell’anno 1787, 4 vols. (Lugano, 1789–92), 2:203. See the discussion in chapter two, 1.3.

13 Lettere 2:877.
education and self-interest that prevents the embrace of reform. To wake up these parochi to the need for reform, and to lead them to embrace the rights of the “second order” (the presbyterate), de’Ricci wanted another flood of “good books” to descend upon Tuscany, especially books alerting the parochi to the “original rights” they had yet to acknowledge.

Not only did de’Ricci intend to use priests to stack the voting and deliberation, he also wanted laity empowered to attend synods and councils, as he argued was the practice of the early church. While he did not go so far as to say that laity could vote (“as the heretics claim,” presumably Protestants), he envisioned an active lay role in synodal deliberation and not mere passivity. De’Ricci again inferred the validity of this practice from his reading of Acts 15, arguing that after St. Peter’s famous speech “the entire multitude was silent” (tacuit omnis multitudo; Acts 15:12) and that this formerly conversing multitude was clearly not just apostles and bishops, but included “the lay faithful.” Therefore, while the laity might not be judges of faith in the sense that priests and bishops were, one could not conclude that they should “remain mute or in silence.”

Most importantly, the attendance of the sovereign, who represented the laity, was crucial. The bishop argued that sovereigns had always taken part in councils, either directly or through “deputies or ambassadors,” as at the Council of Trent. De’Ricci appealed to the example of Constantine and Charlemagne, urging Leopold to be physically present at the National Council in order to “restrain the evil, encourage the good, and maintain order.”

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14 Lettere 2:877.

15 Ibid., 876. De’Ricci rather slyly suggested that the books be printed all over Tuscany, to avoid the appearance that the Richerist ideas were just coming from his circle.

16 Dale van Kley illuminates the antiquarianism of the late Jansenist appeals to primitive church order and synodality in their Richerist ecclesiology. See “Clerical Garb,” 100–2 for the historical and theological background to these claims.

17 Lettere 2:878.

18 Ibid.
the meantime, de’Ricci suggested that Leopold could control any diocesan synods, by
subjecting all their decisions to his approval. The resulting plan was a curious mix of
absolutism and democratization that cannot help but look opportunist to us, although this
combination of autocratic and democratic elements fit with the spirit of enlightened
despotism, as well as an ecclesiology that combined Richerism and Erastianism.

De’Ricci, then, wanted to proceed confidently but still gradually and cautiously. His
multifaceted plan sought to lessen papal influence, concentrate ecclesiastical authority in the
government and the person of the Grand Duke in particular, support the few philo-Jansenist
bishops in Tuscany, control literature, raise up a militant “second order,” and involve the laity
in theological and ecclesiastical decision-making. While Peter Leopold had begun to move in
all these areas, unfortunately for de’Ricci, the Grand Duke was too confident in the body of
Tuscan bishops, many of whom he had appointed. This confidence failed to take sufficient
account of the fact that the replies to the Punti ecclesiastici were on the whole negative and
that news of the Synod of Pistoia had caused such an uproar that the Grand Duke had
prudently refused to publish the Acts of the Synod, lest dissemination further inflame the
situation by causing pamphlet wars and other controversies. They were not published until
1788, after de’Ricci insisted only transparency could crush rumours and allegations about the
Synod’s content. Leopold also decided that no diocesan synods should meet until after the
National Council. But instead of a slow build up to the grand Tuscan Council along the lines
everisioned by de’Ricci, Leopold decided on a hastier route. In April 1787, only six months
after the Synod of Pistoia, the Grand Duke convened an “Episcopal Convocation” of
seventeen Tuscan bishops, at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence.

19 Ibid., 2:876–77, at 877.

20 They are all published in Punti ecclesiastici.

21 On the publication of the Acts of the Synod, see “Lettera di Monsignor Vescoco ai Vicari Foranei, (23 March
1787)” in Atti, v–vi.
The Episcopal Convocation was a decisive defeat for Pistoianism.\textsuperscript{22} It became clear over nineteen sessions, from 23 April to 5 June, that thirteen of the seventeen Tuscan bishops present substantially disapproved of the Riccian agenda.\textsuperscript{23} This anti-Pistoian majority rallied around the three Tuscan archbishops (Siena, Pisa, and Florence) and “completely disappointed the hopes of Peter Leopold and the Jansenist-reformist party.”\textsuperscript{24} Apart from de’Ricci himself, only the bishops of Colle (Niccolò Sciarelli) and Chiusi-Pienza (Giuseppe Pannilini) consistently supported the vision of the Synod.\textsuperscript{25} The reform party was greatly outnumbered despite the Grand Duke’s backing. He had made known his own proclivities (although he did not attend the proceedings), had repeatedly praised de’Ricci as the model Tuscan bishop, and by his own authority had invited veterans of the Pistoian Synod like Vincenzo Palmieri and Fabio de’Vecchi to join the pool of theologians and canonists in attendance at the Convocation.\textsuperscript{26}

The near-total defeat of the Riccian party at the Episcopal Convocation highlights the extremism and imprudence of the Pistoian position. While not all the Tuscan bishops were as learned and pastorally sensitive as Antonio Martini, the Archbishop of Florence represented the moderate reformers who recoiled at de’Ricci’s more fanatical positions, particularly his


\textsuperscript{23} See \textit{Atti dell’assemblea}. The \textit{Atti are also available in Mansi 38:1117–1220. For a detailed contemporary history of the Assembly, see Reginaldo Tanzini, \textit{Istoria dell’assemblea degli arcivescovi e vescovi della Toscana tenuta in Firenze l’anno 1787}, 3 vols. (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1788). There is a host of contemporary documentation related to the Convocation in \textit{Carte Ricci} 107.

\textsuperscript{24} Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 383.

\textsuperscript{25} Gregorio Alessandri (Cortona) drew back from his initial support of de’Ricci, leading the bishop of Pistoia to bemoan Alessandri’s “simpleness” and the “ignorance and evil of those who took possession of him [rival Tuscan bishops].” See \textit{Memorie} 1:500–1, at 501.

\textsuperscript{26} The Grand Duke’s personal appointments were made on 14 March 1787 in \textit{Rescriptum, quo denominantur commissarius regius, duo canonistae, quattuor theologi, et duo secretarii} in Mansi 38:1113–14. While he was not physically present at the proceedings, he followed them closely. See Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 383.
Jansenism and his acerbic and combative language about the papacy.\textsuperscript{27} Appolis’ categorization of many of the non-Riccian Tuscan bishops as akin to the Third Party spirit of Muratori and Benedict XIV is compelling. Many of these non-Riccian Tuscan bishops were still “convinced Augustinians”; they adhered to a “severe” morality, and they wanted worship purified from “novelty and superstitions.”\textsuperscript{28} There are myriad examples of these bishops being open to episcopalist and Erastian arguments, supporting lay reading of Martini’s Italian translation of the Bible as well as vernacular aids to worship, and harbouring suspicion of “new” devotions such as the Sacred Heart.\textsuperscript{29}

There should, then, have been plenty of common ground for de’Ricci to build upon. From outside Tuscany, Cardinal Andrea Gioannetti (Bologna) corresponded generously with de’Ricci, but he had strong words for him when he went too far.\textsuperscript{30} And while Martini disapproved of “dishonest attacks” on the Pistoians, he was increasingly alienated from de’Ricci, who took Martini’s principled moderation as weakness.\textsuperscript{31} In the judgement of both A. C. Jemolo and Appolis, great fault lay with Leopold for too aggressively promoting de’Ricci and, in the eyes of many of the Tuscan bishops, for forcing a decision between disobedience toward their sovereign and religious schism. Indeed, de’Ricci’s anti-papal policies and rhetoric could have been seen as \textit{de facto} schismatic.\textsuperscript{32} While many of these

\textsuperscript{27} See Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 383–90, for a profile of Martini and his posture at the Convocation, especially vis-à-vis de’Ricci.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 383.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 382–401 for this evidence.

\textsuperscript{30} See Passerin, “Il fallimento.” Important exchanges between de’Ricci and Gioannetti are on pp. 115–131. Claudio Lamioni has provided a summary, inventory, and excerpts of many letters from Gioannetti to de’Ricci in \textit{Lettere di vescovi e cardinali} (from Carte Ricci 72–74). See the entry for Gioannetti on page 208. For letters from de’Ricci to Gioannetti, see Carte Ricci 45, 339, 350; 46, 254; 53, 638, 807. See also Appolis’ analysis in 397–402. While Gioannetti could be sharply critical of de’Ricci, he believed de’Ricci and himself “both loved the truth, but in two different ways.” See his letter to de’Ricci (4 January 1786, cited in Passerin, “Il fallimento,” 111.

\textsuperscript{31} Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 383.

\textsuperscript{32} Jemolo, \textit{Il giansenismo}, 367; Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 383.
bishops had episcopalist tendencies, they were uncomfortable not only with de’Ricci’s Jansenism but with the quasi-caesaropapist ideas he advanced about Leopold.

The “egocentric” and “authoritarian” character of de’Ricci also severely harmed his chances to rally his fellow bishops around a shared reformist vision. S. J. Miller sees him, harshly but not unfairly, as “marred by a confirmed self-righteousness and an utter unwillingness to see any good in those who opposed him.” “The right arm of the Grand Duke [de’Ricci],” wrote Appolis, was “intimately persuaded of the excellence of his mission, and he revealed himself as an intolerant dictator for the Tuscan Church.” With some hyperbole, Eric Cochrane called him “sure of his own infallibility” and “probably the most disagreeable, the most intransigent, and certainly the most disliked man in Tuscany.”

But more determinant than the not insignificant harm de’Ricci’s personality or temperament did to his cause was the gulf between the theological agenda of the radical reformist circle and the moderate majority. That gulf became apparent when the bishops at the Convocation considered what religious and liturgical literature was acceptable. Some steps were made unanimously, such as a request for the archbishops to revise the missals and breviaries in use in Tuscany. But de’Ricci and his circle were often on the losing side of the debate. For example, while the Convocation praised St. Augustine’s theology, the majority considered it necessary to interpret it in accordance with Aquinas – a dilution, at best, and a

33 Appolis, *Tiers partii*, 383.


36 Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries*, 416–17, at 416. Cochrane also highlighted that around the time of the Episcopal Convocation, Leopold was learning to distance himself from de’Ricci. Cochrane cites letters of the Grand Duke noting that de’Ricci was “riled at the least opposition” and “a persecutor of whoever does not share his opinions.”

37 Appolis, *Tiers partii*, 393.
bastardization, at worst, for Jansenists.\textsuperscript{38} The bishops consistently rejected books that had been condemned by Rome. De’Ricci had wanted to “flood” Tuscany with many of these condemned books, and he had begun to do so from his presses in Pistoia. However, the works of those Appolis classified as Third Party – Muratori, Berti, Incontri,\textsuperscript{39} and Martini – were approved by the Tuscan bishops.\textsuperscript{40} Bossuet’s Catechism was accepted and Colbert’s rejected.\textsuperscript{41} The majority also displayed a preference for Italian works: Martini’s Bible was preferred to Le Tourneux’s \textit{L’Année chrétienne}, and Incontri’s guide to Sundays and feasts was adopted in place of Fitz-James’.\textsuperscript{42} Rather than adopting the Ritual d’Alet, the bishops charged the three archbishops with translating the Roman Ritual into Italian.\textsuperscript{43} De’Ricci’s “good books” agenda was dealt another serious blow when Tamburini’s course of moral theology (recommended by both the \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} and the Synod of Pistoia) was rejected.\textsuperscript{44} While Muratori’s \textit{Della regolata} was accepted in its place (a book everyone approved of), the anti-Pistoian implications of a rejection of Tamburini were clear.

The Pistoian agenda was also specifically attacked when the bishop of San Sepolcro cited Pope Gregory the Great in rejecting the call of the Synod and the \textit{Punti ecclesiastici} to have only one altar in each church.\textsuperscript{45} This same bishop argued that all books censured by the

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Atti dell’assemblea} in Mansi 38:1139–40.

\textsuperscript{39} Francesco Gaetano Incontri (1704–81) was Archbishop of Florence from 1741 until his death. He was of Third Party inclination.

\textsuperscript{40} Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 393.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} Another motivation was that Fitz-James’ and Le Tourneux’s works were associated with Jansenism. The committee of prelates examining the Synod saw Le Tourneux as one of the “primary leaders of the Jansenist sect” (primarii capi della setta giansenistica). See the report of the Eighth Congregation (19 May 1791) in Stella, \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, 290–91.

\textsuperscript{43} Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 394.

\textsuperscript{44} Mansi 38:1190–92. In Appolis’ view (\textit{Tiers parti}, 394), the unanimous support for Muratori illustrates the “enlightened tendencies” of the Tuscan bishops.

\textsuperscript{45} An advisor of the Bishop of Massa also cited the scholarship of Muratori in support of multiple altars in a church as an ancient practice. See Appolis, \textit{Tiers parti}, 394.
Holy See should be censured in Tuscany, citing the famous paraphrase of Augustine that Rome had spoken and the matter was ended. The fact that the majority of the bishops (all but three) concurred with this judgment was a death blow to Riccian reform, which had relied so heavily on banned literature. Particularly targeted was the Pistoian Raccolta series, full of works of censured Francophone Jansenists, and inflammatory figurist literature like the wild Jansenist screed Jésus-Christ sous l’anathème. This book, which de’Ricci had printed in Pistoia in 1786, was denounced as “impious,” “dangerous,” and “fanatical.” To add insult to injury, the majority party even reiterated the recent papal censure of the Jansenistic teaching of their fellow, and present, Tuscan bishop Pannilini (of Chiusi-Pienza), perhaps de’Ricci’s staunchest supporter.

In sum, the majority party at the Episcopal Convocation was open to moderate, irenic reform in the spirit of the Third Party. They wanted worship purified of superstition and “novelty,” they supported the diffusion of vernacular Bibles, and they had solid theological and historical foundations in the thought of figures like Bossuet and Muratori that led them (generally speaking) to hold their episcopal rights and duties in high regard. But this majority not only rejected certain Pistoian reforms such as Richerist synods and limiting churches to

46 Mansi 38:1188 (cf. Appolis, Tiers parti, 395).
47 Ibid., 1219. De’Ricci was furious at these attacks and penned in response Apologia contro la censura fatta da xiv vescovi della Toscana ad alcuni libri pubblicati in Pistoia (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1787). This lengthy work was also published in Raccolta 17:3–202.
48 Mansi 38: 1223–25. The papal committee examining the Synod was also incensed at the notion of Christ being “under anathema.” The response of Cardinal Carafa that such a statement was “blaphemous” was typical. See Carafa’s repsonse to Dubbio 15 in ASV, Pistoia 1.
49 Pannilini’s Istruzione pastorale di monsignor vescovo di Chiusi e Pienza sopra molte ed importanti verità della religione ossia sulla sana dottrina (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1786) was rebuked by Pius VI, and many of the Tuscan bishops saw the Instruction as a source of scandal. Pius VI’s letters rebuking Pannilini are in Mansi 38:1103–6 (20 October 1786) and 1107–8 (5 February 1787). For the critical comments of the majority party on Pannilini’s Instruction and on his replies to the pope, see Atti dell’assemblea 4:87–177. The support of de’Ricci and Sciarelli is at 4:178–84. This was “one of the most neuralgic debates of the Assembly” (Appolis, Tiers parti, 396).
50 For de’Ricci’s push for Richerism see Atti dell’assemblea 2:203. See also chapter two, 1.3.
one altar, they were positively indignant with de’Ricci and his circle for their inflammatory anti-papal language and their flaunting of banned and anathematized books and doctrines. It became very clear that the Riccian vision, as embodied in the Acts of the Synod of Pistoia and the Punti ecclesiastici, had been mostly rejected.

Leopold dismissed the assembly on 5 June 1787, and he threatened to move the reforms forward at the national level on his own authority.\(^{51}\) The Grand Duke appears at least initially to have been quite serious about his unilateral threat, since de’Ricci drafted for him a long reform document (the legge normale) adapted from many of the principles in the Punti ecclesiastici.\(^{52}\) The situation deteriorated considerably because of events both internal and external to Tuscany, which are discussed below. The desire for caution overcame the Grand Duke, and no action was taken before the death of his brother, Emperor Joseph II, in 1790. When Peter Leopold ascended the Imperial throne in Vienna as Leopold II (r. 1790–92), his responsibilities and concerns were changed.\(^{53}\) The National Council that de’Ricci dreamed would serve as a model for the eventual Jansenistic reform of the entire Catholic Church had been demoted by his sovereign to a hasty Episcopal Convocation, which turned out to be a total triumph for the interests of the pope, who was not even in a politically powerful enough position at the time to discipline de’Ricci or Leopold.

1.3 – The Revolt of the Faithful in Pistoia and Prato and the Limits of Riccian Reform

Perhaps even more disheartening for de’Ricci than the resistance of his brother bishops was the violent rejection of his reforms by many of the faithful in his twin diocese of

\(^{51}\) See Atti dell’assemblea 1:244–45. For an account of the final session on 5 June, see Tanzini, Istoria dell’assemblea 3:194–205.

\(^{52}\) See Lettere 2:1025–35 for the letter of de’Ricci to Leopold (23 November 1787) to which is appended a lengthy draft document titled Minuta di legge normale a S.A.R. dal vescovo di Pistoia nel di 27 novembre 1787 (pp. 1035–73).

\(^{53}\) See Wandruska, Leopold II, 220–46 on this period of transition.
Pistoia-Prato. The rage and mistrust of large groups of laity at liturgical and devotional reforms boiled over in two very serious riots, one in May 1787 and a second in June 1790. The latter effectively ended de’Ricci’s tenure as a diocesan bishop. While these riots must be understood in light of wider economic, social, and popular religious disaffection in Tuscany – expressed most famously in the riot in Florence on 9 June 1790, which caused the regency government to essentially abandon what was left of Leopoldine reform – the riots of Pistoia-Prato were unmistakably anti-Riccian.

Stirred up by de’Ricci’s actual and rumored reforms, and probably catalyzed by the religious orders with which the bishop was constantly feuding, the people of Prato rioted during the Florence assembly to preemptively protest against any further changes and to show their desire to return to the religious status quo. On 20 May 1787 crowds stormed into the Prato cathedral to protect their most beloved relic, thought to be the Blessed Virgin’s belt, from de’Ricci’s alleged plans to remove it for lack of authenticity. “Our Lady’s Girdle” (il sacro cingolo) was believed to have fallen from Mary during the Assumption, a legend

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54 For a thorough account of popular resistance to Leopold’s reforms around Tuscany (including Pistoia-Prato), including riots and protests, see Gabriele Turi, “Viva Maria”: La reazione alle riforme leopoldine (1790–1799) (Florence: Olschki, 1969). De’Ricci’s letters regarding these revolts are important, albeit heavily biased. There are dozens of letters throughout Carte Ricci 53–54 for the 1790 riots. For a monograph on the riot in Prato, see Carlo Fantappiè, Alle radice del fallimento ricciano: Il tumulto di Prato del 20-21 maggio 1787 (Prato: Cassa di risparmio e depositi, 1980). Central to the social history of Riccian and Leopoldine reform is Fantappiè, Riforme ecclesiastiche e resistenze social: La sperimentazione istituzionale nella diocesi di Prato alla fine del antico regime (Bologna: Mulino, 1986); pp. 261–401 for the riots in Prato. On the importance of particular images and veiled images for protestors and rioters, see Michael P. Carroll, Veiled Threats: The Logic of Popular Catholicism in Italy (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 18–24.

55 The best English source for the situation in Tuscany, with some attention to Pistoia and Prato, is Cochrane, Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 399–418 (416–17 for the end of de’Ricci’s episcopacy). For Cochrane’s judgment of the primary source material, material which is contradictory and almost all of it intensely biased, see page 553. For other summaries see Bolton, Church Reform, 118–20, 127–29 (although the entire final chapter is relevant); Van Kley, “Catholic Conciliar Reform,” 120–21; Wandruszka, Leopold II, 135–39. For a theological and pastoral evaluation, see Lamberts, “Synod of Pistoia.”

56 Both Pistoia and Prato, formerly separate dioceses, had their own cathedrals.
de’Ricci had little time for.\textsuperscript{57} Jansenist books were burned,\textsuperscript{58} church bells rang, and incensed crowds sang late into the night in the cathedral. Torch-lit processions went to various monastic churches to restore the statues that had been removed on de’Ricci’s orders. Unveiled statues were veiled again, as before.\textsuperscript{59} The situation was unstable for two days. The military had to be dispatched to Prato to control the city and to Pistoia to prevent a similar outbreak.\textsuperscript{60} While de’Ricci had a strong authoritarian streak, he actually appealed to the government for a gentle treatment of the rioters.\textsuperscript{61} He even offered his resignation for the sake of peace, perhaps accepting, in a realistic moment, that his reform agenda had been rejected

\textsuperscript{57} The underground and very popular Jansenist journal, Nouvelles ecclésiastiques (87: 197–200), ran an article intensely critical of the relic, which they claimed was used for blessings in the manner of Eucharistic benediction. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 119. Soon after the tumult had died down, de’Ricci expressed the belief that “Rome” would seek to “stir up other tumults” under the “pretense of displaying and worshipping (adorazioni) the Belt.” See the letter of 16 June 1787 to the Grand Duke in Lettere 2:960–68, at 960. De’Ricci claimed that while he did not believe il sacro cingolo was a true relic, he was not trying to suppress it. See his letter of 21 April 1790 to Signorini Pompeo da Mulazzo in Carte Ricci 53, 320. However, he also wrote that since it was inauthentic and unverifiable, a true relic from Rome should replace it. He suggested a piece of the True Cross. See de’Ricci to Fanoi Domenico, 30 May 1790 in Carte Ricci 53, 461–63.

\textsuperscript{58} The fact that the townspeople knew which books were Jansenistic suggests the involvement of (literate) religious that de’Ricci had persecuted or offended; see Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia,” 104–105. De’Ricci believed a conspiracy of his enemies was behind the revolt. He complained to Archbishop Martini that rumors were being spread to the faithful of his diocese that the sacraments being performed by him and his clergy were invalid, prompting some families to travel to Florence to have their children baptized. See de Potter, Vie et mémoires 2:272–77, at 273.

\textsuperscript{59} Michael Carroll argues (Veiled Threats, 18–24) that it was commonly believed that veiled images and statues were more powerful or efficacious, and that “ordinary Catholics” saw certain Marian images as “separate and distinct supernatural beings” (19). If he is correct, while they may have erred in how they tried to correct them, the abuses de’Ricci and the Pistoians were concerned with were very grave indeed. The logic of veiling images in Italian popular religion “ensures that contact, even visual contact, with an especially powerful image occurs within precisely defined limits, to minimize the danger associated with that image” (22). However, the Jesuit missioner Paolo Segneri the Younger argued in a letter to Muratori that accusations of popular polytheistic-type beliefs were not correct. While many people believed that evoking Mary under different titles could have different results and fruits, he saw no evidence anyone believed that God had two Mothers. See Jean-Marie Sansterre, “Les excés d’une dévotion mal réglée: L’utilisation des images religieuses et leur culte selon L. A. Muratori,” in A. Dierkens, S. Peperstraete, and C. Vanderpelen-Diagre, eds. Art et religion (Bruxelles, Éditions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 2010), 75–90, 81.

\textsuperscript{60} For a reconstruction of the event and an analysis of all the contemporary sources, see Fantappiè, Riforme ecclesiastiche, 337–97. For short summaries see Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia,” 104–5; Bolton, Church Reform, 118–20.

\textsuperscript{61} De’Ricci’s relationship with his clergy also reflected his conflicting inclinations. On the one hand, he refused to allow them to sign documents “servo e suddito” (servant and subject) nor to sit on the steps of his episcopal chair or put his shoes on in ceremonies. See de Potter, Vie et mémoires 2:274–75; Bolton, Church Reform, 126. On the other hand, he could be severe with dissenters, as when he had Giovanni Marchetti, the author of a pamphlet criticizing him, expelled from Tuscany in 1788. See Cochrane, Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 470.
by substantial portions of his brother bishops and the laity. The Grand Duke, however, did not accept his abdication.  

We have seen that de’Ricci’s Christocentric liturgical and devotional theology had strong affinities with the approaches of Muratori and the Third Party, but also contained more aggressive elements drawn from Jansenism and Josephinist-style enlightened despotism. De’Ricci’s potent combination of passionately held beliefs and of his sometimes belligerent personality had led to disputes from the beginning of his episcopacy in 1780. We have already examined his intransigence regarding the approved Sacred Heart devotion, an uncompromising position which offended many in his diocese, as well as the pope. Clashes over this devotion (a symbol of the hated Jesuits) sparked a series of increasingly negative relations with the religious orders in Pistoia-Prato, groups for which he did not even pretend to conceal his disdain.

De’Ricci’s efforts before the Synod to reform devotional abuses had met with intense opposition. On the eve of the Synod, such opposition was becoming more and more open. In a letter to the Grand Duke (15 July 1786), de’Ricci reported two instances of graffiti on the cathedral door accusing him of heresy, which he believed the papal nuncio was behind.

According to the influential and bitter anti-Riccian polemicist Giovanni Battistia Marchetti,

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62 De’Ricci wrote, with great sadness, that the viciousness of others had made him into “an object of hatred of many,” and that he desired to resign not out “cowardice” but out of a desire to suffer passively for the souls of his people. See the letter to Peter Leopold of 28 May 1787 in Lettere 2: 948–54, at 951. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 119–20.

63 See chapter three, section 2.

64 De’Ricci, Memorie 1:236–40.

65 Lettere 2:741–44, at 44. The graffiti, which de’Ricci said was written in “the Roman style,” read: “True Christians, pray for Bishop Ricci and for the Archpriest Morandi, because they are heretics”; and “Pray for our heterodox bishop.” De’Ricci always suspected the nuncio of starting a rumor (“chattering”) about a brief of excommunication coming for de’Ricci. This was not the first such incident. On 6 January 1783, de’Ricci recounted to the Marchese Federigo Manfredini that there was a placard found on the Prato Cathedral asking for prayers for “our heretic bishop.” On 8 January 1783 he recounted the same story to Antonio Mormorai. De’Ricci believed that the Jesuits and Dominicans and their followers, led by Zaccheria and Mamachi (zelanti polemicians) had banded together to accuse his reforms of heresy (“i Gesuiti e i Gusmani collegati insieme, con Zaccheria e Mamachi alla testa, non cessano mai di gridare all’eretico”). See Carte Ricci 46: 100–2; 102–3.
the reputation of the bishop of Pistoia preceded him to Florence. The crowd gathered outside the Palazzo Pitti for the Episcopal Convocation of 1787 refused to doff their hats for de’Ricci when he passed by in procession, as they had for every other Tuscan bishop, “as a sign of indignation.”

The Synod of Pistoia continued the path marked out in the *Punti ecclesiastici* and modelled in the first six years of de’Ricci’s episcopate. The Pistoian Decree on Prayer, particularly passages such as §27, summarized the intentions of the Synod and helps explain the revolt of the faithful in de’Ricci’s diocese. This decree censured images that present “false dogmas” (like the “carnal Heart of Jesus”), that give “the occasion of error,” or “are a motive of scandal, like lascivious or ridiculous paintings.” It also called for the removal of images in “which it would seem that the people put special faith, or recognize some special power (*virtù*) contrary to the decrees and intentions of the Church.”

Obviously, such a decree could be interpreted in varying ways; much depended upon how “scandal,” “the occasion of error,” or “lascivious” and “ridiculous” were defined. What mattered to ordinary Catholics was not de’Ricci’s or the Synod’s theoretical ideal, but how that ideal was applied. Ultimately, a large group of the faithful revolted when they saw that many concrete changes were being made to their devotional lives. The most offensive of these were de’Ricci’s actions, or rumors regarding planned actions, that affected Marian devotion.

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67 The relevant passage is quoted in full in chapter four, section 4.3 (see Atti, 202). See the commentary of Lamberts, “The Synod of Pistoia,” 94; Bolton, *Church Reform*, 101.
De’Ricci had already attempted to reform, but not to reject, the Stations of the Cross devotion, by removing non-biblical elements such as Christ’s three falls on the way to Calvary and the story of Veronica and her veil.68 Such efforts brought him into conflict with the Franciscans, who promoted the Stations.69 While de’Ricci’s efforts here were motivated by Christocentrism and the historical-critical work of reformers like Muratori, he did not share the great Modenese reformer’s caution and moderation.70 When de’Ricci attacked or sought to change cherished parts of local devotional life, even for good reasons, he was cast by his enemies as distant, haughty, and, worst of all, of dubious piety.71

This last accusation was unfair in the sense that de’Ricci clearly accorded Marian devotion an important place in church life, and he followed the Council of Trent’s desire to contextualize such devotion in a Christocentric framework.72 However, his position vis-à-vis the Madonna dell’Umiltà, a beloved Pistoian image believed to be miraculous, was strongly resented by many laity and religious. Many of them became increasingly convinced that de’Ricci was a minimizer of Marian devotion, which was not a welcome attribute in eighteenth-century Italy. The rumor that de’Ricci planned to ban devotion to the image led to the second, and decisive, riot.


70 De’Ricci did not oppose the Stations devotion, but in his mind he wanted to “balance” it “with a particular Christocentric sensitivity,” according to Lamberts (“The Synod of Pistoia,” 97).

71 De’Ricci looked tone-deaf to local devotion however, even after the first riots. In 1790 he claimed to one of his priests that it should be “easy (!) to persuade the people” that the Synod was correct regarding the unreasonableness of a procession of penitence with the relics of St. Joseph to honor the saint. See de’Ricci to Gualtieri in Carte Ricci 53:245–46. De’Ricci claimed that his crackdown on funeral processions and stipulations regarding funeral ceremonies were “the first pretext of the insurrection of Pistoia.” See de’Ricci to the Rector Frigert, 20 July 1790, in Carte Ricci 53:528–30. For examples of contemporary polemics against de’Ricci, see section 2.1, below.

72 See chapter four, section 4.3.
Through his influence on the *Punti ecclesiastici*, de’Ricci had already tried to gain control over local devotion to the Madonna dell’Umilità. Article 27 gave the bishop full rights over devotional life in his diocese, regardless of whatever exemptions regulars claimed, and independent of the authority of the pope and curial congregations. Article 28 allowed bishops to inspect all relics and images and to remove any they saw fit. It also asserted that no image should be veiled.\(^{73}\) While this was an effort to reduce superstitious beliefs which regarded religious images as magical talismans or afforded a particular image authority or power in itself rather than as a symbol of something godly, this article obviously applied directly to the people’s beloved Madonna dell’Umiltà. Also clearly aimed at the cult of this image was the section of §28 decreeing any relics or images owned by the civil authorities should be handed over to the bishop.\(^{74}\) This injunction subverted the peculiar traditions of the city of Pistoia in favor of de’Ricci, and this assertion of episcopal rights no doubt angered those financially profiting from the shrine as well. The handling of the Madonna dell’Umiltà, which yielded significant revenue and was owned by the city of Pistoia, illustrates how Riccian reform ran up against devotional, economic, and theological roadblocks.\(^{75}\)

Because of abrupt changes to cherished parts of their devotional life, significant and vociferous anti-Riccian sentiment was aroused. The common people probably had little sense of the complex theological and ecclesiastical reasons for which the Tuscan bishops rejected much of the Riccian project; to them the radical outward changes seemed Protestant and Calvinist.\(^{76}\) This sentiment grew among more conservative laity and clergy in the diocese,

\(^{73}\) *Punti ecclesiastici* 1:17–18, for §27–28.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 1:18.

\(^{75}\) See Lamberts’ discussion of the image in “The Synod of Pistoia,” 98.

\(^{76}\) Bolton, *Church Reform*, 121–22. According to Bolton much of the Riccian project looked “Calvinistic to simple people” (122). It was not just simple people who thought so. De’Ricci was also accused of pseudo-Calvinism or Protestantism by educated critics. Marchetti unfavorably compared Pistoianism to Protestantism multiple times in the *Annotazioni pacifiche*. See pp. 45–47, 50, 57, 62.
and it was emboldened by rumors that de’Ricci would soon be condemned as a heretic, sent to prison in Castel Sant’Angelo, and that the Acts of the Synod would be placed on the Index.\(^{77}\)

As much as some of de’Ricci’s enemies might have yearned for such action, the papacy was in no position to act in this manner. Pius VI knew he had to be exceptionally careful since Leopold was in a strong political and ecclesiastical position. The Grand Duke threatened to dismiss the papal nuncio and to recall his minister from the papal states.\(^{78}\) Consequently, Pius VI decided to wait and to proceed cautiously since a condemnation of de’Ricci or the Synod might make a bad situation much worse by angering the Grand Duke and pushing him to more drastic actions. However, the news of the French Revolution in 1789 and the death of Emperor Joseph II, which led to the recall of the Grand Duke to Vienna, emboldened the many anti-Riccian elements in the diocese.\(^{79}\)

In 1790, de’Ricci’s enemies told the citizens of Prato that the bishop planned to pull down the altar housing Our Lady’s Girdle, and the people of Pistoia were told that the Madonna dell’Umiltà was also in danger. These rumors led to a riot in each city on 24 April. The riots were so serious that the civil authorities advised de’Ricci to leave for his own safety.\(^{80}\) In a rousing rejection of Riccian devotional reforms, the unrest in Prato spread even to the hills surrounding the city.\(^{81}\) Advised to flee to Jansenist friends in France, de’Ricci

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\(^{77}\) De Potter, *Vie et mémoires* 2:270–71. See also Bolton, *Church Reform*, 126.

\(^{78}\) De Potter, *Vie et mémoires* 2:273–74.

\(^{79}\) On the position of Rome and Pius VI, see below, section 2.1.


\(^{81}\) Turi, *Viva Maria*, 5.
decided instead to retire to his family villa in Rignana, a small village outside Greve in Chianti, near Florence.82

At de’Ricci’s departure, conservative elements in Pistoia-Prato and elsewhere rejoiced. There was a flurry of activity to undo Riccian reform; altars and images were put back into place, certain statues were veiled as before, rites and ceremonies returned to their former status, more “good books” were burned, and the remaining religious orders were restored to their former exemptions. Some of de’Ricci’s friends, slandered as “Scipionists,” were even forced out of the diocese.83

When Leopold became Holy Roman Emperor in 1790, his son Ferdinand succeeded him as Grand Duke of Tuscany. While Ferdinand initially asked de’Ricci to return to the diocese, it became clear that only the resignation of the bishop or the use of force would restore peace. Thus, on 3 June 1791, de’Ricci resigned.84 While he remained on friendly terms with Grand Duke Ferdinand and the new Emperor, many Tuscan authorities were hostile to him, even forbidding him to send his final letter to his clergy and faithful. This letter is full of warmth and tenderness, and it urges all to obey the next bishop, to “love peace and unity,” and to “flee schism as the worst of all evils.”85

From England, a recusant priest named Joseph Berington, who was an enlightened Whig and an anti-ultramontane conciliarist, watched these events closely. He praised de’Ricci and the Tuscan bishops sympathetic to him as “enlightened & liberal men.”

Berington, a leading figure in the English Catholic Cisalpine network, expressed pithily the

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82 De Potter, Vie et mémoires, 2:402–3. On Rignana and the de’Ricci family villa there, see Alessandro Aiardi, ed. Scipione de’ Ricci e la realtà pistoiese, 185–86.


84 Memorie 2:284. For the letter of resignation (dated 20 June 1791), see Carte Ricci 106, 477–78.

85 See de’Ricci’s letter of 20 June 1791 in Memorie 2:372–74. De’Ricci sent multiple letters to individual Pistoian and Pratese priests urging them to avoid schism in July 1790. See, for example, Carte Ricci 53, 490–502.
major reason why Riccian reform failed. He bemoaned that “so noble a cause…a general
reform of religion” had been severely hampered by their “childish attachment to the opinions
of an exploded sect,” that is, to Jansenism.\footnote{Berington to Kirk, 2 January 1794. AAB, c. 1286.}

By 1791, the papacy was under enormous international pressure from revolutionary
France, Erastianism in the Hapsburg lands, and defiant German prince-bishops. However,
forces aligned with its interests had triumphed over the Synod of Pistoia, at least in Tuscany,
although the papacy did not dare publish a condemnation for three more years. We turn to the
international reception of the Synod and to that document, which became a symbol of
ultramontanism in the next two centuries.

2. International Reception and Condemnation: Rome and Revolution

Despite the failure of Riccian reform in Tuscany, the Synod of Pistoia commanded
considerable interest from both supporters and detractors in Italy and abroad. This process of
reception and rejection began before the promulgation of Auctorem fidei, as news of the
Synod quickly spread and the Atti were published in Italian (October 1788) and promptly
translated into French and Latin (1789).\footnote{The first French edition, translated by de Bellegarde, is Actes et décrets du concile diocésain de Pistoie, 2 vols. (Pistoia: Bracali, 1788). The Latin is Acta et decreta synodi dioecesanae Pistoriensis an. MDCCCLXXXVI, 2 vols. (Ticino: Balthassaris Comini, 1789).} This process of diffusion was strongly affected by
the reception (or non-reception) of Auctorem fidei, by the association of Pistoia and
Jansenism with the Revolution in France, and, later, by various currents of nineteenth-century
thought: counterrevolutionary sentiment, liberalism, ultramontanism, and the push for Italian
national unification (Risorgimento).\footnote{Carlo Fantappiè’s important essay on the historiography on de’Ricci and the Synod addresses how nineteenth-century debates on the temporal power of the pope and Risorgimento shaped perceptions of Pistoianism. See “Scipione de’Ricci: Tra mito e storia,” in Riforme ecclesiastiche, 11–42. There is not a direct relationship between de’Ricci and the Risorgimento, but some have argued that other late Jansenists in Italy (for example,
and polemics, including the Roman response in the bull Auctorem fidei. Then the reception of the Synod in two critically important Catholic nations, France and Spain, will be considered. In conclusion, the solidification of the place of the “Pistorienses” in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic imagination as symbols of heresy and schism will bring us to a theological and historical evaluation of the legacy of the Synod in light of Congar’s conditions of true reform.

2.1 – Italian Reception, Polemics, and the Promulgation of Auctorem fidei

Despite the many ambiguities, errors, and heresies that Pius VI and his advisors perceived in the Acts of Pistoia, the official condemnation was delayed almost a full eight years, until 1794. Several reasons help to explain this delay. First, Pius VI had an understandable fear of Leopold, who had shown aggressive Erastian tendencies similar to those of his brother Joseph II. The pope prudently delayed any strong action while the younger brother was Grand Duke. Secondly, the pope was heartened by events in Tuscany, the rejection of Riccian reform by the majority both of the Tuscan bishops and of the laity in Pistoia and Prato. This rejection certainly made Pistoianism less of an immediate danger than it might have initially seemed in 1786 (yet the pope still rightly considered Pistoian ideas to pose a significant threat in other parts of the Catholic world). Thirdly, and probably most

the Tamburini circle in Pavia) were indeed influential. See Maurice Vaussard, Jansénisme et gallicanisme aux origines religieuses du Risorgimento (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1959). See also Bolton, Church Reform, 136.

89 The Synod was also debated, received, and rejected in other lands. For Switzerland, see Domenico Maselli, “Echi e riflessi del sinodo di Pistoia nella Svizzera francese e italiana,” in Atti del Convegno (1986), 387–92; for German-speaking lands, see Peter Hersche, “Il sinodo di Pistoia nel mondo germanico,” in ibid., 393–96; for the Low Countries see Peter J. van Kessel, “I Paesi Bassi e il sinodo di Pistoia,” 401–10; for Belgium see Jan Roegiers, “Le synode de Pistoie en Belgique,” 411–24. There is no study dedicated to the reception of the Synod in English-speaking lands, although Catholics in Britain and early America were aware of the Synod and Auctorem fidei, and Pistoia was vigorously discussed and debated in these places by ex-Jesuits, bishops, theologians, and interested laity. To address this lacuna, I plan to publish an essay tentatively entitled “A ‘Pistoian Infection’ in Eighteenth-Century England? Tracing the Connection between English Cisalpinism and Continental Catholic Reform.”

90 The essays and original documentation in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem Fidei, are indispensable for the study of the bull, its genesis, and its reception.
importantly, the pope was in a very difficult political position in the late eighteenth century. The potential ramifications of any doctrinal condemnation had to be carefully weighed. Often, papal documents were openly banned and rejected by hostile governments.\(^91\) Indeed, when *Auctorem fidei* was promulgated (28 August 1794), many Italian governments, including Tuscany, Turin, Naples, Venice and Milan, refused to publish it (as did Spain, France, Portugal, and Austria).\(^92\) Such flagrant rejection of papal teaching shows the continued vitality of Europe’s anti-ultramontane Catholic monarchs and statesmen at the end of the eighteenth century.

Finally, in 1789 the French Revolution rocked all of Europe, and particularly the Catholic world. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790), the schism that resulted from it, and the resulting violent persecution of many French Catholics, especially clergy and religious, put Pius VI in one of the most politically difficult positions in the history of the papacy. After these calamities, Pius VI could no longer ignore the Synod of Pistoia, which he and his advisors linked to various political philosophies and theologies undergirding the Revolution.\(^93\) While the rejection of Pistoianism by many bishops in Italy was an encouragement to the pope, late Jansenist and anti-ultramontane elements all around the peninsula were reading the Acts of the Synod with great interest.\(^94\) There was enthusiastic

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\(^91\) On the Erastian attitudes of many of these governments, see Karl Otmar F. von Aretin, “Cattolicesimo riformatore, illuminismo cattolico e assolutismo illuminato” in *Atti del Convegno* (1986), 1–9.


\(^93\) See below, section 2.2.

acceptance and rejection of the Synod throughout Italy: in Liguria, the Piedmont, Lombardy, Mantua, Parma, Modena, Naples, Rome, and throughout Tuscany.

There had already been much suspicion of, and opposition to, Riccian and Leopoldine reform throughout the 1780s from various groups and figures not just in Tuscany but throughout Italy, including ex-Jesuits, ultramontanes, members of the religious orders, and anti-Erastians. The news of the Synod spread quickly around the peninsula and a number of spirited attacks or defenses followed. For supporters of the papacy, Rome’s delay in condemning the Synod was “an embarrass[ing] silence.” The English ex-Jesuit, Charles Plowden, wrote many letters from Rome in the 1780’s attacking Pistoian and Josephinist reform and deploring the weak position of the papacy. In 1786, he lamented that “the wits of Rome” were showing “their malice in pasquinades,” including ones which depicted the keys dropping from the hand of the statue of St. Peter outside the basilica. This fanciful event symbolized the pope’s inability or unwillingness to use his teaching authority, “the keys of kingdom of heaven” (Matt 16:18), against the Pistoians. This reticence to confront the Pistoian threat was shared by the Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma. The journal, a “declared antagonist” of the Florentine Annali ecclesiastici, wrote nothing about the Synod from 1789

95 In the Kingdom of Naples, Giovanni Andrea Serrào (1731–99), bishop of Potenza from 1782, was a friend of de’Ricci and Tamburini and a supporter of the Synod, Erastianism, episcopalam, and such radical notions as clerical marriage. His book De sacris scripturis liber, qui est locorum morallium primus (1763) argued for lay vernacular Bible reading. Serrào held a Synod in his diocese, but unfortunately no records survive since the government destroyed them. Serrào supported the French Revolution and the Parthenopean Republic (a French-backed revolutionary government which controlled Naples from January–June 1799), planting a tree of liberty and urging the people to be loyal to the new Republic. He was murdered in his bed by the counter-revolutionary forces of Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo. For a summary see Chadwick, The Popes, 474–5. For a full study see Domenico Forges Davanzati, Giovanni Andrea Serrao: Vescovo di Potenza e la lotta dello Stato contro la Chiesa in Napoli nella seconda metà del Settecento (Manduria: Lacaita, 1999). De’Ricci corresponded amicably with Serrào. See Carte Ricci 45: 309; 46:151, 246; 72, 84, 135, 147, 73, 571.

96 Many of the most important of these works are listed in the bibliography in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, xxiii–xxvii. For detractors and supporters, also see Bolton’s bibliography, Church Reform, 153–56.


until the publication of *Auctorem fidei* in 1794.\(^99\) This delay caused particular confusion and pain to many ex-Jesuits, who felt they had suffered greatly for Catholic orthodoxy in recent years, only to see Jansenists and regalists openly flout condemned doctrines and illicit disciplinary practices in the face of the papacy with no rebuke.\(^{100}\)

While St. Peter’s keys may have lain unused in an official capacity, anti-Pistoian sentiment around Italy was strong and active.\(^{101}\) De’Ricci received local and private demonstrations of opposition that were increasingly vicious. An anonymous letter of 5 February 1791 addressed de’Ricci as “most abominable, most heretical Calvinist, Jansenist monsignor.”\(^{102}\) The author is certain that de’Ricci will be damned along with Calvin, Luther, Jansen, and Saint-Cyran, and he wishes that the *Atti* would be burned as well.\(^{103}\) One of the most popular polemical assaults on Pistoia was the Marchese (Marquis) Francesco Eugenio Guasco’s *Dizionario ricciano ed anti-ricciano* (1793), which relentlessly pilloried the Synod, the figure of de’Ricci, and other central persons involved in the reforms.\(^{104}\) This work was reprinted many times, and it enjoyed a privileged place in anti-Pistoian polemics. For example, in the Piedmont, the *Dizionario* was reprinted in 1794 together with *Auctorem fidei*,

\(^{99}\) Stella, *La Bolla* *Auctorem fidei*, lxii.


\(^{101}\) A good reference for anti-Jansenist and anti-Riccian polemics at this time is Giuseppe Pignatelli, *Aspetti della propaganda cattolica a Roma da Pio VI a Leone XII* (Rome: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1974), 98–103.

\(^{102}\) The letter is in *Memorie* 2:368–71.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 2:369.

\(^{104}\) *Dizionario ricciano ed antiricciano compilato dal signor marchese Francesco Eugenio Guasco patrizio alessandrino, e canonico della basilica Liberiana*, 3\(^{rd}\) ed. (Assisi: Ottavio Sgariglia, 1796). The first edition of 1793 lists Sora and Flaminio Palla as the place and publisher, but it was in fact published in Foligno by Giovanni Tomassini.
with civil and ecclesiastical backing.\textsuperscript{105} The most important was the “violent attack” of Giovanni Battista Marchetti, \textit{Annotazioni pacifiche} (1788), ostensibly a reply from a parish priest of the diocese to his bishop, de’Ricci, on the occasion of the latter’s controversial pastoral letter of 5 October 1787.\textsuperscript{106} Marchetti’s work accused de’Ricci of heresy and the Synod of being a repeat of the violent pseudo-synod Ephesus II of the year 449 (“secondo assininio Efesino”).\textsuperscript{107} These two works, along with many others, were examined and used by the papal commission which ultimately condemned Pistoia.\textsuperscript{108}

These works were, of course, met by spirited rebuttals directly from de’Ricci\textsuperscript{109} and also from the “friends of the truth.” Italian sympathizers were especially active, such as the Venetian Giuseppe Maria Pujati (1733–1824), who quickly released his own \textit{Annotazioni} on Marchetti’s \textit{Annotazioni}.\textsuperscript{110} De’Ricci and the Synod also had international defenders of stature. From Louvain, a prominent canonist in the spirit of Van Espen, Josse Le Plat (1733–1810), published an open letter to Pius VI, questioning \textit{Auctorem fidei} and defending the Synod.\textsuperscript{111} The Dominican bishop of Noli, Benedetto Solari (1742–1814), sparked one of the

\textsuperscript{105} The publisher, Giuseppe Panialis, was based in Vercelli. See Stella, ““Echi e reflessi del sinodo di Pistoia in Liguria e in Piemonte,” 337–8.

\textsuperscript{106} Stella, \textit{La bolla Auctorem fidei}, I (see also lxvi–lxvii). See Giovanni Battista Marchetti, \textit{Annotazioni pacifiche di un parroco cattolico a monsignor vescovo di Pistoja e Prato sopra la sua lettera pastorale de’ 5 ottobre 1787 al clero e popolo della città e diocesi di Prato…} (Rome: Zempel, 1788). De’Ricci’s pastoral of 5 October 1787 was something of an apologia. It opens with the claim that he is “afflicted but not despairing” (afflito ma non avvilito). See \textit{Carte Ricci} 106: 208–65, which includes correspondence with Pius VI.

\textsuperscript{107} Marchetti, \textit{Annotazioni pacifiche}, 22–25. See Stella, \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, lxvii.

\textsuperscript{108} Stella, \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, lxxiii. Stella lists, in addition to Marchetti and Guasco, other anti-Pistoian authors whose works the Commission used.


most interesting debates in the wake of *Auctorem fidei* by urging the Genoan Senate to reject the Bull.\footnote{Le Plat, *Lettres d’un théologien canoniste à N. S. P. le Pape Pie VI au sujet de la bulle Auctorem fidei 28 août 1794 portant condamnation d’un grand nombre de propositions tirées du synode de Pistoie de l’an 1786* (Brussels: Hayez, 1796).} Rome was intensely concerned with bishops adhering to *Auctorem fidei*, and the public and persistent rejection of it by Solari led to a spirited polemic with Gerdil, a principal author of the bull. Their exchanges, which continued into the early nineteenth-century and filled multiple volumes, evidence two erudite defenders of the main ecclesiologies of the era vying for control of the church: Solari’s episcopalism buttressed by jurisdictionalism\footnote{See Maurice Vaussard, “Un janséniste de grande classe: Benedetto Solari,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 68.2 (1973): 429–56. See also Stella, *La Bolla Auctorem fidei*, cxx–cxxiii.} and Gerdil’s ultramontanism.\footnote{For Solari, see *Riflessioni in difesa di m.r Scipione de Ricci e del suo sinodo di Pistoja sopra la costituzione Auctorem fidei pubblicata in Roma il di 28. agosto 1794. sotto il nome del sommo pontefice Pio* (Genoa: Stampata della Libertà, 1796); *Apologia di fra Benedetto Solari dell’ordine de’ predicatori vescovo di Noli contro il fu Eminentissimo Cardinale Gerdil*, 3 vols. (Genoa: Scureria la Vecchia, 1804).}

The official Roman response came when Pius VI decided the political and ecclesiastical risks of condemning the Synod were worth taking, in order to achieve the good of a clear and decisive rejection of Pistoianism.\footnote{For Gerdil, see *Esame de’ motivi della opposizione fatta da monsignor vescovo di Noli alla pubblicazione della bulla Auctorem fidei, preceduto dall’esame delle Riflessioni preliminari dell’anonimo editore de’ medesimi: Opera del C. G. G.*, 2 vols. (Rome: Lazzarini, 1800–1). Bolton speculates that Gerdil’s response to Solari was delayed by the French invasion of the peninsula (*Church Reform*, 155).} Wisely backing off from an initial plan to establish an Italy-wide commission, Pius appointed a committee of curial theologians to examine the synodal acts.\footnote{Most of the important documentation regarding the papal investigation of the Synod is in the *Sinodo di Pistoia* collection in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV). Of particular importance for our study are the following files: 1 (concerning de’Ricci’s letter of convocation and Bartoli’s sermon); 2 (investigation of the Decree on Faith and Church); 8 (Decree on the Eucharist); 14 and 15 (on public prayer and private devotion); 18 (on the primacy of the pope); 19 (on the exterior discipline on the church); 20 (on Quesnel and other Jansenist books); 41 and 42 (official concluding votes). Stella provides an inventory of the 48 files in the ASV collection in *La Bolla Auctorem fidei*, xv–xvi.} Relying on the *Atti* as well as anti-Pistoian polemics, this first
group isolated the Jansenist elements of the Synod.\textsuperscript{117} A second commission of bishops and cardinals – a “squad of ultramontanes” including Michele di Pietro, Gerdil, Vitaliano Borromeo, and Francesco Saverio de Zelada (Secretary of State, 1789–96) – drafted a preliminary condemnation.\textsuperscript{118} A smaller commission finally completed work on the document in 1794, and Pius VI signed and promulgated it on 28 August, the feast of St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{119} The irony of a condemnation of a group of extreme Augustinians on the feast of Augustine was not lost on the “friends of the truth.” In a letter to de’Ricci, the Archbishop of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht wrote that he was “well persuaded that St. Augustine would not accept the dedication” of the bull to him.\textsuperscript{120}

We have discussed in depth some of the most important condemnations in \textit{Auctorem fidei} on ecclesiology, church-and-state relations (including religious liberty and the coercive power of the church), the liturgy, Bible reading, and devotions. Many other elements of the Pistoian reform project were deeply unpalatable to Pius VI and his ecclesial allies. The condemnations covered almost every subject addressed in the Acts of Pistoia, including Christology, grace and predestination, limbo, the place of the religious orders, the administration of the sacraments, the power of the state over marriage law, and the rights of


\textsuperscript{118} The phrase is Miller’s. See his review of \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei} in the note above. The exception among these anti-Jansenist prelates was the Dominican Giorgio Maria Albertini (1720–1803), a strict Augustinian who defended the Synod’s controversial positions on nature and grace (but not other matters). See Stella, \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, lxxxix–xcii, 7–18, 204–31, 461–77. For this second phase, see Stella, “Verso la condanna: la congregazione esaminatrice di cardinali e vescovi (1790–1792),” in ibid., lxvii–xcvi.

\textsuperscript{119} Stella, “Albani, Antonelli e Gerdil: La messa a punto della bolla di condanna (1792–1794) in ibid., xcvii–cxii.

\textsuperscript{120} See Gaulthier Michel Nieuvenhuyzen to de’Ricci, 4 November 1794, cited in van Kessel, “I Paesi Bassi e il sinodo di Pistoia,” 409. The Archbishop also wrote that he “did not at all recognize the voice of St. Peter in the Bull.” This “strange Bull” could not be followed by the sheep because they did not hear in it the voice of the Good Shepherd (Christ).
diocesan bishops. The Constitution, in general, read the Acts of Pistoia and the intentions of its authors correctly. It had an exasperated tone when it condemned ideas which popes had clearly condemned in the past (normally in criticisms of famous Jansenist works).121

An example of this exasperation, and the general mind of the investigating prelates, can be found in the committee’s deliberations on the Synod’s statements on public prayer and private devotion in two meetings held in late 1791.122 The committee agreed that the Pistoian conception of prayer, tainted as it was with Jansenism, could lead people to believe that there are certain divine precepts that are impossible for them to keep.123 Some prelates, like Cardinal Albani, took a very hard line, judging the Decree on Prayer to be “scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and heretical.”124 Others, like Cardinal Rezzonico, believed the problem was not so much what the Pistoians did say, as what they left out: their conception of the life of prayer relied too exclusively on faith to the detriment of “love” (he used both amore and caritas).125 Ultimately, however, even prelates investigating the Synod who leaned Augustinian (like Rezzonico, who quoted Berti on grace)126 were likely to reject formulations that in any way harkened back to condemned Jansenist or Protestant ideas.

Despite their clear profession of faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Pistoian reluctance to speak of transubstantiation was not sympathetically interpreted as

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121 “That Pistoia explicitly praised the Four Articles of the Gallican Clergy was to say the least undiplomatic. Urging the faithful to read works repeatedly condemned by Rome as Jansenist or philo-Jansenist certainly challenged papal authority in an excessively provocative way.” See Miller, review of Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, 111.

122 See ASV, Sinodo di Pistoia 14 (“Decreto della preghiera (24 November 1791)”) and 15 (“Preghiera e testi analoghi: sull’umanità di Cristo, il Cuore di Gesù (22 December 1791).”

123 ASV, Sinodo di Pistoia 14 (report to Pius VI).

124 Ibid., report of Cardinal Albani. Albani believed the Pistoians were in heretical contradiction of the “defined dogma” (dogma definito) of Trent session 6, canon 7. “Iudico esse scandalosam, impiam, blasphemam, et hereticam….”

125 Ibid., report of Cardinal Rezzonico.

126 Ibid.
an attempt to revive patristic modes of expression, but as an opening for Calvinist errors.\textsuperscript{127} Regarding the importance of lay participation in the liturgy, the committee saw the Synod coming too close to the idea of “an invisible Priesthood, only spiritual, and common to all Christians.”\textsuperscript{128} Even if the intention of the Pistoians in these and others areas was not heretical (they clearly believed in an ordained priesthood), they did not “preclude every path to the error of Innovators.” Thus, their work could be used by “Lutherans and Calvinists” to undermine the truth.\textsuperscript{129} This kind of theology was very dangerous, according to the committee. It was a strategy of “novatores” to seem orthodox while opening the road to error – “Calvin himself sometimes seemed orthodox.”\textsuperscript{130}

While the actual condemnations in \textit{Auctorem fidei} regarding Pistoian liturgical reform gave some latitude for interpretation,\textsuperscript{131} the report of the committee on 22 December 1791 was decidedly hostile toward Pistoian attempts to increase lay participation in, and understanding of, the liturgy.\textsuperscript{132} There were at least three reasons for this hostility. First, de’Ricci and the Pistoians were asserting their right to make certain changes to liturgical and devotional life without reference, and even in opposition, to the practice of other churches and especially the Church of Rome (and they were using the authority of the Hapsburg Grand Duke). Second, the Pistoians quite flagrantly repeated propositions from Jansenist texts, many of them formally condemned by Rome. The use of Quesnellian formulas was

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\textsuperscript{127} See \textit{Dubbi per la Congregazione Ottava}, 19 May 1791, in \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, 262–91, at 267 (cf. ASV, \textit{Sinodo di Pistoia} 46). Also, to speak too exclusively of Christ’s \textit{spirituale} presence in the Eucharist was to echo Zwingli and Calvin too closely (ASV Pistoia 8, folder 2).

\textsuperscript{128} ASV, Pistoia 8, folder 1. Interestingly, the Committee does not cite a Protestant author here, but detected an error of Baius (cf. \textit{Ex omnibus affectionibus} 45).

\textsuperscript{129} ASV, Pistoia 8 \textit{voto} report to Pius VI (signed by Cardinal Rezzonico). Comparing this perspective to the attitude that generally prevailed at Vatican II is instructive.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. “Calvino stesso sembra alcune volte Ortodosso.”

\textsuperscript{131} See chapter four, section 3.

\textsuperscript{132} ASV, Pistoia 15; 46. See also “Dubbi per la Congregazione Quindicesima,” in \textit{La Bolla Auctorem fidei}, 391–405.
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particularly offensive, since the pope and the Curia were so committed to upholding the authority of *Unigenitus*.\(^\text{133}\) One of the five *Dubbi* (“doubts” – questionable matters demanding resolution) on the Pistoian Decree on Prayer asked the committee whether the Pistoians had revived the error of Quesnel, condemned in *Unigenitus* 86, and whether the Pistoians thus attacked or accused (*impetere*) the decree of Trent which censured those who condemned the Latin Mass and the *sotto voce* canon (session 22 canon 9).\(^\text{134}\) Every examiner agreed that the Pistoians did indeed revive the error condemned in Quesnel. Such a conclusion was inescapable since the Pistoian formulation under investigation was an almost verbatim repetition of *Unigenitus* 86 (“*quasi ad litteram*” is often repeated by the committee). The Decree on Prayer (§24) read: “it is contrary to apostolic practice and the counsels of God not to prepare easier ways of uniting the voice of the people with that of the whole Church.”\(^\text{135}\) It is not at all surprising, then, that the renewal of Quesnel was seen as “most injurious to the Church” insofar as it was a direct challenge to the authority of the pope and the great number of bishops who had accepted *Unigenitus*.\(^\text{136}\)

However, there was a final reason that much of the committee considered the Synod’s basic orientation toward liturgical reform censurable: they believed the ideas themselves to be not only rebellious and imprudent but actually “erroneous” (*erronea*).\(^\text{137}\) Some prelates, like Cardinal Campanelli, thought that these Pistoian liturgical reforms should be censured insofar

\(^{133}\) *ASV* Pistoia 14 (first folder, *et passim*), 46. *La Bolla* Auctorem fidei, 402.

\(^{134}\) On *Unigenitus* 86 and the relevant Tridentine decree, see chapter four, 3.3.

\(^{135}\) *Auctorem fidei* 66 condemned this proposition. See chapter four, 3.3. Cardinal Campanelli argued (ASV, Pistoia 15, folder 2) that the Pistoia formula was “more detestable” than Quesnel’s since Quesnel said the church should not “take away” (*tolgiere*) these means of participation, while the Pistoian proposition was more sweeping since it said “not procuring” (*non procurare*) them was contrary to apostolic practice and the designs of God.

\(^{136}\) See the report of Cardinal Borromeo in ASV, Pistoia 15, folder one. The Decree on Prayer §24 was “*injuriousissima alla Chiesa, e perniciosa ai fedeli.*” Key passages were underlined by the authors in these handwritten reports, and I reproduce them as such.

\(^{137}\) Ibid.
as they could be read to attack Trent (“in qualche modo”), but in fact they “never expressly do”; any negative “consequences” have to be “deduced,” and are not explicit.138

Nevertheless, Campanelli concluded his more subtle and irenic take by still pronouncing the Synod to be “certainly contumelious” (against Trent) in their desire for a vernacular liturgy, for pronouncing it in a loud voice, and for the laity to respond to the priest!139

More of the prelates on the committee believed that the Pistoian agenda was very clear, and it was actually erroneous in itself. Cardinal Borromeo, for example, saw these liturgical issues as already settled by Unigenitus, the Faculty of Paris’ censure of some of Erasmus’ ideas, and the condemnations of the Bohemians.140 Borromeo argued that the implications of Pistoia’s Decrees on Prayer and on the Eucharist were perfectly clear: “no one can doubt” that the intention of the Synod is that “every Christian has the obligation of entering into the spirit and the understanding of the prayers and ceremonies of the church.” Since so many are illiterate, this would be impossible, Borromeo claimed, without implementing (si adempia) a vernacular liturgy. By suggesting it, the Synod was “accusing” (tacciare) the pope and much of the church of being against apostolic practice and the designs of God.141 To think that the church can “approve and generally practice a method of discipline opposed to the designs of God, to apostolic practice, and to the salvation of simple


139 Ibid. “...certamente contumeliosa allo Sagro Concilio tanto nei desideri della versione della Sagra Liturgia in lingua volgare, quanto nella pronunzia della medesima a voce elevata, e però rispondo.”

140 Cardinal Borromeo in ASV, Pistoia 15, folder 1. In referencing the “Bohemians” Borromeo presumably referred to condemnations of Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague at the Council of Constance in 1415.

141 “Ora sa ognuno, che il popolo idiota non può entrare nell’intelligenza degli uffi divini, delle orazioni del S. Sacrifizio della messa, e delle altre preghiere pubbliche della Chiesa ove tutto non si adempia in lingua volgare. Ha voluto dunque il Sinodo di Pistoia tacciare la Chiesa, quasi col celebrar le sacre funzioni in lingua non volgare, trapponga al semplice popolo un’ostacolo, per cui non possa soddisfare all’obbligazione di ogni cristiano, e ciò contro la pratica apostolica, e contro i disegni di Dio.”
people” is a “most grievous error.” 142 Thus, the Synod “tends towards schism.” 143 The fact that de’Ricci had recently instructed his priests to pray the canon of the Mass aloud makes it “most evident” (evidentissimo) that Trent “in all of its parts is opposed to the doctrine of the Synod.” 144

Every report from the committee saw the Pistoians as renewing the errors of Quesnel and of in some way impugning either the authority of Trent, the Roman Church, the pope, or general Catholic practice. 145 Cardinal Palotta concluded his judgment that in addition to censuring the Pistoians for “attacking” (impeter) Trent, the censure “suspect of heresy” could perhaps also be justified due to the Synod’s “peverse desire for innovation.” 146 Cardinals Rezzonico and Colonna concurred with Borromeo that the obvious implication of Pistoian liturgical theology and the Synod’s pastoral admonitions was that Mass would be preferable in the vernacular, a conclusion that was totally unacceptable. Rezzonico argued that it becomes clear when one reads the totality of the Synod’s views on liturgy (from the Decree on the Eucharist, on Prayer, and on Public Prayer) that they are not envisioning a Latin Mass when they discuss the central importance of lay comprehension of, and participation in, the liturgy. He believed de’Ricci’s 1789 Ordo divini offici pro Ecclesia pistoriensi confirmed this implicit but inescapable conclusion. 147

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142 “…[E]gli è un errore gravissimo, il pensare solamente che la Chiesa possa approvare, e praticare generalmente un metodo di disciplina opposto ai disegni di Dio, alla pratica apostolica, ed alla salute del semplice popolo. Tale poi dichiava il Sinodo, essere la disciplina della Chiesa nel celebrare i Divini Ufizi ed il S. Sacrificio della Messa in lingua non volgare[.]”

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid. Many of the committee members cited de’Ricci’s Ordo divini offici pro Ecclesia pistoriensi anni 1789, which on page 12 read: “In omnibus missis admodum rr. Sacerdotes intelligibili voce pronuncient ea verba canonis, quae in rubricis missalis Secreta nuncupantur:”

145 See the responses to Dubbio 5 throughout ASV Pistoia 15.

146 See the report of Cardinal Guglielmo Palotta in ASV Pistoia 15.

147 See Rezzonico’s report in ibid.
Colonna was the bitterest. The Pistoians were even worse than Quesnel because Quesnel attacked those who “took away” (togliere) the consolation of joining their voices to the church’s in public prayer, while Pistoia censured those who did not provide the easiest means to the people (non procurare i mezzi più facili). If the “infallible Oracle of the Vatican” did not hesitate to condemn Quesnel, how much more so should the Pistoians be condemned? While Quesnel left the implementation of his maxim open (according to Colonna), the Pistoians had laid bare their plans: they wanted bilingual prayer books and missals, and they translated Psalms and liturgical songs (Pange lingua, Tantum ergo) for public use. While the church desires her children to “be united to public prayers and enter into the spirit of whatever pertains to the worship of God,” it wants to obtain this “by a very different road from that prescribed by the Synod[].” There are many means available already for bringing the laity into the heart of worship: preaching, catechisms, approved spiritual books. Translating the liturgy, scriptures, and “other ritual books” is “dangerous” and a “stumbling” block, especially for “uneducated people, women, and children” who cannot understand “the true sense.” The Synod thus took “a different, and dangerous road” from that of the church, which led to the error in the Decree on Public Prayer (§22), which stated the obligation of every Christian “to take part in, and enter into the spirit and

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148 See the report of Colonna in ibid. Colonna’s characterization of the pope as an “infallible Oracle” is a strong example of the sort of view of the papacy that the Pistoians were combatting. “Or bene se l’Oracolo infallibile del Vaticano ha giudicato di condannare la proposizioni Quesnello, perché opinio soltanto esser contro la pratica Apostolica, e contro l’intenzione di Dio il togliere al semplice popolo la consolazione di unire la sua voce a quellla di tutta la Chiesa; tanto più e degn di Biasimo l’asperzione del Sinodo, la quale stringe assai di più, e giunge ad obbligare di procurare i mezzi più facili al semplice popolo di unire la sua voce a quella della Chiesa, altrimento essere una operazione contro la pratica Aplica. e contro l’intenzione di Dio.”

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid. “[La Chiesa] vuole per altro ottenere questo fine per una strada assai diversa da quella che prescrive il Sinodo con tante nuove compilazioni in latino, e volgare, le quali piuttosto produrrebbero assai più male, che bene, come potrebbe chiaramente dimostrarsi, se qui fosse luogo, e tempo, e perciò sono espressamente proibite. La S. Chiesa ha provveduto assai più sicuramente, e abbondantamente per tutte sorti di persone con l’annunziazione della divina parola, con Catechismi &, e con tanti altri Libri spirituali ben riveduti, ed approvati per quei che sanno leggere, prevenendo esser piuttosto dannose la traduzione ad verbi del Sagro Festo, de’ Salmi, Lezizioni, ed altri Libri de’ Rituali, Manuali & per la persone idiota, donne, e ragazzi, da cui ne riceverebbero facilmente inciampo e pericolo per non intindere il vero senso.”
understanding of, the Prayers of the divine Offices, of the ceremonies of Holy Church, and especially of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.\textsuperscript{151} How, Cardinal Colonna wondered, could an illiterate person, a country person, or a woman fulfill this obligation? Not by reading Latin texts and probably not by reading vernacular texts either. Thus, Colonna argued that the logic of the Synod points in one direction: to a vernacular Mass pronounced aloud. While one might argue that the Synod never “openly” (apertamente) says that the Mass must be celebrated in the vernacular, “it has given every indication that this is its desire.”\textsuperscript{152} The confirmation of this perception comes from the Decree on the Eucharist §6, which praised the ancient liturgical practice of simplicity, using the vernacular, and pronouncing the words aloud.\textsuperscript{153} Colonna asked rhetorically: “Can they speak more clearly? Can the inclination of the Synod be made more manifest?” For Cardinal Colonna and, as indicated at least by their votes, for the rest of the committee, this inclination was unacceptable. While not all used language as strong as Colonna, for him the Synod’s position was “full of dangers, and stumbling blocks, and therefore rejected, and prohibited by the Church.”\textsuperscript{154} We thus see that, while the official text of \textit{Auctorem fidei} might be open to other interpretations, the opinion of much of the committee of prelates investigating the Synod quite holistically rejected the Pistoia view of liturgy as not only imprudent but actually involving error.

While the authors of \textit{Auctorem fidei} seem almost always to correctly interpret the intentions of the Pistoian authors, there is occasional confusion. For example, the Constitution simultaneously accuses the Pistoians of advocating Jansenism (quite reasonably) but also semi-Pelagianism. The latter charge is certainly a misreading and seems to contradict

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{153} See chapter four, 3.3.

\textsuperscript{154} Colonna’s report in ASV Pistoia 15. “[Questi] proposti sono pieni di pericoli, e d’inciampi, e perciò rigettati, e proibiti dalla S. Chiesa.”
the former accusation. While there are portions of the Bull that seem excessively severe, the drafters of *Auctorem fidei* did not fundamentally misunderstand the Synod. *Auctorem fidei* was a doctrinal document written by a commission serving a pope whose temporal and spiritual authority was in crisis. The document itself, however, became an important monument to confident, strong papal teaching, and it marked a significant moment in the development of the modern papal magisterium.

Certain harsh portions of *Auctorem fidei* notwithstanding, it was fortunate that Pius VI invested Cardinal Gerdil of Savoy, sometimes considered an enlightened Catholic, with considerable authority in the preparatory committee. Gerdil was responsible for the unique and significant addition of “*sic intellecta*” (thus understood) and “*quatenus innuit*” (insofar as it intimates/signifies) to the notices on condemned propositions. In certain circumstances these additions allowed future Catholic reformers to separate their ideas, some of which sounded very close to those of the Pistoians, from heretical or erroneous ideas explicitly

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155 Compare *Auctorem fidei* 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, which find Baianist and Jansenistic notions, with §18 and 20, which detect semi-Pelagian ideas. The authors of the bull might have simply believed that heretics or *novatores* were perfectly compable of contradicting themselves in their errors.

156 In de’Ricci’s lengthy reply to *Auctorem fidei*, he regularly argued, sometimes convincingly and sometimes not, that he and the Synod did not hold a stated proposition in the sense condemned. This important letter to Pius VII is printed with an introduction in Stella, *La Bolla Auctorem fidei*, 670–99 (cf. *Memorie* 2:150–95).


159 For Cardinal Gerdil’s involvement in the drafting of *Auctorem fidei*, see Stella, *La bolla Auctorem fidei*, passim (index entry on 722); Vanysacker, “Giacinto Sigismondo Cardinal Gerdil, 91–93.
condemned in *Auctorem fidei*. In the next chapter we will explore some important episodes in the ecclesiological debate at Vatican II where this ability was crucial.

2.2 – *The French Revolution, the Civil Constitution, and the “Pistoia Network”*

Gabriel du Pac de Bellegarde of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht, de’Ricci’s close confidant, boasted that the Synod was accepted and praised in Holland and by “the most learned theologians in France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.” While space limitations prevent here an adequate discussion of the reception of the Synod of Pistoia in all relevant European and American lands, we must consider France, a country of central importance in Catholic history in the late eighteenth century. Pius VI and the drafters of *Auctorem fidei* were well aware of the importance of French theological and political thought and were responding in part to the tense situation in Europe which was rendered unstable by the French Revolution and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790). The connections between French and Italian Jansenists were many and clear. In particular, Francophone influence on de’Ricci and the Synod was immense, and the literature the Pistoians cited was enough to make this fact abundantly clear to the drafters of the Bull.

By the time of *Auctorem fidei*, the synodal acts had already been printed in two French editions. Important leaders of the “Constitutionalist” French clergy, who went into schism with Rome for accepting the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, had strong political,

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160 They were a merciful addition also for the sake of de’Ricci, who ultimately justified his submission to the Bull because of the interpretive possibilities given by *sic intellecta* and other qualifying clauses. See below, section 3.2.


162 The personal connections between leading Italian Jansenists, especially de’Ricci, and the Jansenists of Utrecht and France were close and deeply significant. A good study is Paola Vismara, “L’influence de la France, du synode de Pistoia à *Auctorem fidei*,” in Frédéric Meyer and Sylvain Milbach, eds., *Les échanges religieux entre l’Italie et la France, 1760–1850* (Chambéry: University of Savoy, 2010).

163 The first was translated by de Bellegarde (cited above, 285n86). The second edition was printed in Paris in 1789.
theological, and personal connections with the Pistoians and other Italian Jansenists\(^\text{164}\) (the Constitutionalist clergy included some Jansenists and philo-Jansenists).\(^\text{165}\) Two prominent bishops in the Constitutionalist Church, Abbé Henri Grégoire and Abbé Augustin Jean-Charles Clément, were close correspondents of de’Ricci and admirers of the Synod.\(^\text{166}\) At least by November 1789, there were connections being made in Rome between the Revolution and “the principles professed in Tuscany,” which of course did nothing to ease the tension between de’Ricci and the papacy.\(^\text{167}\) When de’Ricci finally submitted in person to Pope Pius VII in Florence in 1805,\(^\text{168}\) the pope’s confessor, Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio, rebuked de’Ricci (in contrast to Pius’ gentleness), telling him that the Synod was to blame for the “overthrow” of discipline in France and the “war waged on religion” there.\(^\text{169}\)

The papal confessor was engaging in extreme hyperbole, but there was a grain of truth in his accusation. Several months before the passing of the Civil Constitution, the Constitutionalist bishop Clément wrote to de’Ricci, thanking him for the example of the minority bishops which was preserved in the Acts of the Episcopal Convocation in Florence. These records formed “a precious collection” and a “means of defense” for the whole church.

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\(^{166}\) Maurice Vaussard (*Correspondance*) has provided us with the extant Grégoire-de’Ricci letters. See also Bolton, *Church Reform*, 130–31, 136–38, 146. Clément appears to have influenced the Synod. In *Carte Ricci* 28 there appears an Italian letter dated 20 August 1786 and signed by Clément, giving a plan for the Synod that is extremely close to what was eventually promulgated. Clément believed that his prescriptions for reform were as applicable in Tuscany as in France because “the whole Church is afflicted by the same abuses” (*tutta la Chiesa afflitta dai medesimi abusi*).

\(^{167}\) This phrase comes from a letter of Reginaldo Tanzini to de’Ricci (18 November 1789). See de Potter, *Vie et mémoires*, 2:314; Rodolico, *Gli amici e i tempi*, 128–30. Quoted also in Bolton, *Church Reform*, 130, although Bolton is incorrect on the date of the letter.

\(^{168}\) See below, section 3.2.

\(^{169}\) *Memorie*, 2:244–45. See also Bolton, *Church Reform*, 142.
against those who opposed reform and revolution. De’Ricci was esteemed so highly by some of the Constitutional clergy that he was even invited to both of their National Synods (1797 and 1801), although he was able to attend neither. In the judgement of Edmond Préclin, the Synod of Pistoia was an important influence on the Civil Constitution. Thus, while Menochio and others might have overstated the matter, the influence of what Jacques Gres-Gayer called “the Pistoia network” on certain pro-revolutionary French Catholics and the Constitutional clergy was significant.

De’Ricci was an eminent figure in the eyes of many who wanted philo-Jansenist and Erastian reform, and his opinion held a certain authority in the international debates raging on the admissibility or inadmissibility of the actions of the Constitutionalist clergy. De’Ricci was consulted on a number of pressing questions regarding oaths and jurisdiction, and his responses, all supporting the Constitutionalist position, sparked spirited rebuttals. It is no surprise, then, that de’Ricci’s peaceful retirement at his family villa was disrupted when anti-French forces retook control of Tuscany in 1799. De’Ricci was identified as a supporter of the French invaders and spent time in prison and then under surveillance in San Marco, the

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171 Tamburini and de’Vecchi were also invited. See de Potter, *Vie et mémoires*, 2:357.


174 De’Ricci’s most important comment on the French Revolution and the Constitutionalist clergy was his *Réponse de M. l’évêque de Pistoie et Prato, aux questions qui lui ont été proposées relativement à l’état actuel de l’Église de France* (Paris: Leclère, 1791). Many significant letters between de’Ricci and French correspondents that touch on the events in France are printed in *Memorie*, vol. 2, and Rodolico, *Gli amici e i tempi*, 115–212. See Bolton’s summary of these events and documents in Church Reform, 129–40 (and the bibliography on p. 156).

175 For extensive documentation on this period, see Carte Ricci 105. “Memorie ec., Sull’Arresto di Mon. de’Ricci.”
famous Dominican monastery of Savonarola in Florence, before he was finally allowed to return to his villa.\textsuperscript{176}

The religious influences on the French Revolution and the Constitutional clergy are many and complex, but the importance of international late Jansenist networks is clear, as the recent research of Dale van Kley has amply shown. The Jansenist struggle was still vital in the 1790s, and some Italian Jansenists, like Niccolò Sciarelli (the bishop of Colle), interpreted the chaos and bloodshed of the Revolution as God’s vengeance on the French nation for their disgraceful treatment of “the holy confessors of Port-Royal.”\textsuperscript{177} De’Ricci and the Synod of Pistoia were a significant influence on the exciting and tense political, theological, and ecclesiastical changes in France of the 1790s.

Accordingly, \textit{Auctorem fidei} was a wound to the credibility of the Constitutionalist clergy, who wanted to convince the French faithful that continuity with the pre-Revolution Gallican Church lay with them, not with the non-juring clergy who, in obedience to the pope, refused to swear to the Civil Constitution.\textsuperscript{178} French ultramontanism, a powerful force in the nineteenth century, received a boost in 1850 when the bishop of La Rochelle, Clément Villecourt (to be made Cardinal in 1855) translated \textit{Auctorem fidei} into French.\textsuperscript{179} That there

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{176} See \textit{Memorie} 2:1–91. See Bolton’s summary in \textit{Church Reform}, 138–40. De’Ricci studied Savonarola’s papers while in custody in San Marco. De’Ricci viewed Savonarola as a “martyr” and “venerable” and prayed for his intercession. See \textit{Memorie}, 2:13, 63–64. See also Bolton’s discussion of these trials in \textit{Church Reform}, 138–39.
\item \textsuperscript{177} See the letter of Sciarelli to de’Ricci, 28 December 1793, in de Potter, \textit{Vie et Mémoires}, 2:338–39. Sciarelli interpreted the upheavals in France in line with a highly sectarian and polemical Jansenist understanding of history. “The persecutions, the exiles, the massacres which the holy confessors of Port-Royal and those that follow them were made to suffer cry out for vengeance in the sight of God and to the throne of the Lamb against the perverted reign of the antichristian maxims of the Jesuits.” The Jansenists, according to Sciarelli, had cried out \textit{Vindica, Domine, sanguinem sanctorum tuorum qui effusum est}, and the Lord heard them and punished France!
\item \textsuperscript{178} Préclin, \textit{Les jansénistes}, 532. After vacillating, Pope Pius VI clearly condemned the Civil Constitution in the brief \textit{Quod aliquantum} (10 March 1791).
\end{itemize}
was enough interest in France for the vernacular translation of a papal document condemning a Tuscan diocesan synod (and condemning the Gallican articles!) held over sixty years before was a sign of both the enduring significance of the Pistoian experiment and the growth of ultramontane sentiment.

2.3 – Spain and Auctorem fidei

Spain, another deeply Catholic kingdom ruled by the Bourbons, is also of primary importance for the story of the reception and rejection of Pistoianism.\textsuperscript{180} Although Spain is often seen as a stronghold of traditional and ultramontane Catholicism, there were strong regalist and Jansenist elements in the Spanish Church in the late eighteenth century. For this reason, the Synod of Pistoia had a “profound impact” there.\textsuperscript{181} One reason for this impact was the sympathetic reports about the Synod, including large excerpts of the \textit{Atti}, coming from the “French-inspired” Madrid periodical, \textit{Mercurio histórico y político} in April 1787. Thanks to the royal protection the \textit{Mercurio} enjoyed, Pistoian ideas “spread throughout Spain and shaped the development of Spanish Jansenism.”\textsuperscript{182} But the Crown’s position was somewhat mixed; King Charles IV did not ultimately permit a Castilian version of the \textit{Atti}, and the Inquisition banned the work of Tamburini and debated banning the synodal Acts.\textsuperscript{183}

Nevertheless, the influence of Pistoianism was so great in Spain that the Jansenist Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811) bragged that “all of the Salamancan youth are

\begin{footnotes}

\footnotetext[181]{Schmidt, “\textit{Luces por la fe},” 441.}

\footnotetext[182]{Ibid.}

\footnotetext[183]{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
Port Royalist of the Pistoian variety.”

Appolis even argued that the impact of Pistoia on Spanish Jansenism was greater than that of the Civil Constitution. Thus, it is possible that Pius VI and the commission drafting Auctorem fidei were even more immediately concerned with Spain than with France. After all, before the promulgation of the Bull, Pius VI had already condemned the Civil Constitution.

Rumors that Spain’s government was preparing to publish a translation of the Acts of Pistoia abounded. The fear of this Castilian version of the Acts of Pistoia may have been the decisive factor that ultimately led the papacy to act. Reginaldo Tanzini, an agent of the Tuscan Grand Duke to the Holy See, wrote to de’Ricci in December 1790 that a Spanish Augustinian friar in Rome praised the Acts of Pistoia as holy, said that everyone in Spain except the religious orders accepted it, and that the government would pursue publishing a translation. While these claims no doubt exaggerated the level of pro-Pistoian enthusiasm in Spain (certainly not all Spaniards were friendly to regalist and Jansenist reform), the pope notified his nuncio in Spain that a condemnation was coming, in the hope of stopping a Spanish translation and the further spread of Pistoian ideas. It seems clear that Pius VI and his advisors decided they were willing to risk condemning ecclesiastical assemblies that

184 Cited in ibid., 442. Jovellanos, an enlightened Catholic, was “probably the best representative” of the “fusion between Spanish Jansenism and regalist reform” (441).


186 This is the view of Bolton (Church Reform, 135).

187 De’Ricci himself believed that the possibility of this translation was a major factor in the final push to promulgate a condemnation of the Synod. See Memorie 2:39.

188 Tanzini had been a close friend of de’Ricci’s from their youth and remained close to him after his resignation. See Rodolico, Gli amici e i tempi, 128–30. On Tanzini, see Giovanna dal Poggetto, Reginaldo Tanzini (1746-1825): Un giansenista fiorentino tra riforme e rivoluzione (Messina: Trisform, 1999).

189 See Tanzini to de’Ricci, 17 December 1790, cited in de Potter, Vie et Mémoires, 2:306. In a letter of 12 September 1794 (two weeks after the publication of the Bull), Tanzini claimed Auctorem fidei was directed at Spain. See ibid., 2:346–47. De Potter claimed the promulgation of the Bull “would not have happened” but for the “fear” that events in Spain were inspiring in Rome (ibid., 347).

190 De Potter, Vie et Mémoires, 2:211–12.
“encourage[d] democratic and reforming tendencies that might be of a revolutionary kind.”

In a letter to the new Grand Duke of Tuscany several weeks before the promulgation of *Auctorem fidei*, Pius VI explained to Ferdinand that the revolutions in Europe had been caused by religious errors. As many such errors had been taught at Pistoia, it had become necessary to publish a formal and detailed condemnation. The decision to formally condemn the Synod was the action of a papacy that felt besieged not only theologically by Jansenism and ecclesiastically by Josephinist Erastianism, but politically by various stirrings of revolution.

While *Auctorem fidei* did not dampen the enthusiasm many Catholics felt for the Synod in the 1790s, it created a permanent record of the solemn papal rejection of a great deal of the Pistoian reform agenda. After the conservative theological and political reaction to the French Revolution and the French invasion of Italy, the papacy was in a less tenuous place than it had been in before. Some luminaries of Jansenism, like Tamburini (1737–1827) and Eustachio Degola (1761–1826), did survive unbowed into the nineteenth century. However, the restoration of the Jesuits (1814) and the rise of strong forms of ultramontanism, reaching hitherto unthinkable levels from the papacy of Gregory XVI (1832–48) onwards, cemented the place of the Pistoians in the list of heretical and schismatic opponents of the true faith and of Christ’s Vicar on Earth. Let us turn to a theological evaluation of the

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191 Bolton, *Church Reform*, 106.

192 See the letter of Pius VI to Grand Duke Ferdinand III (8 August 1794) in *Memorie*, 2:391–98. The Grand Duke had argued such a condemnation was unnecessary since the new bishop of Pistoia had abrogated the Synod and its decrees were nowhere in force.


194 Mauro Cappellari, the Camaldolese monk who became Pope Gregory XVI, published his influential ultramontane work *The Triumph of the Holy See* in 1799. In the first few pages of the preface, Cappellari drew connections between Italian Jansenism and the French Revolution (page x) and praised *Auctorem fidei* (xiii). See also 621–23 for his attack on Pistoian Erastianism and episcopalian. See *Il trionfo della Santa Sede e della Chiesa contro gli assalti dei novatori* (Venice: Giuseppe Battaglia, 1832 [1799]).
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Synod through the lens of Yves Congar’s work. Such an evaluation must be critical and free from the polemics which have often painted the Pistoians in unduly harsh ways. During these reflections, I will complete my story of the Pistoians in their day, including the submission of de’Ricci to Pope Pius VII.

3. The Synod of Pistoia and the Riccian Agenda: True or False Reform?

De’Ricci and the Synod took up many questions that desperately needed attention. Much in the program they attempted was good and true, and the church of the twentieth century implemented many of their reforms under the banners of ressourcement and aggiornamento. This failed and condemned reformist attempt at Pistoia deserves careful consideration from both historical and theological standpoints because the questions raised at Pistoia did not go away, and on some of them (such as the church’s right to coerce and liturgical reform), the church appears to have done an about-face. Thus, having already treated the historical question about how Pistoian reform failed, we should ask the theological question about what was true, right, and good in the goals and the actions of the Pistoians. Answering this question can help us to see why so many of their concerns ultimately resurfaced before, during, and after Vatican II. We should also ask which theological and historical lessons Pistoia and its condemnation can teach us in general about reform, dissent, and renewal in the church.

There are two extremes to avoid when considering the question of whether the Synod of Pistoia constituted true or false reform. First, the total rejection of all elements of Pistoianism because there were, from the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy, some clear errors in the Acts of the Synod – its Jansenism not least – would be to dismiss a complex and multifaceted reality too sweepingly. Some in the church did just so reject Pistoianism in its own day and in later generations, dismissing it tout court. Second, although the Synod of
Pistoia was prophetic at least in a historical sense, that is, by clearly anticipating many of the reforms of Vatican II and the twentieth-century church, a blanket endorsement of the Synod should also be avoided. To evaluate the place of the Pistoians in the history of Catholic reform from a theological standpoint requires an analysis that is sympathetic to the concrete reality of the church in the late eighteenth century as well as in the contemporary day and that takes seriously the teaching authority of both Pius VI and of the fathers at Vatican II.

A theological evaluation of the Synod of Pistoia is particularly neuralgic for three reasons. First, the phenomenon of Jansenism is often misunderstood. The term is regularly stretched beyond its original historical meaning. Unlike Protestants, who since Vatican II have become, from the standpoint of the Catholic Church, brethren and official partners in dialogue, Jansenists have few theological defenders; they are often remembered dismissively and with a contempt usually lacking nuance. Second, in contrast to the situation of Muratori and the Third Party, a magisterial teaching document of relatively high authority (an apostolic constitution) condemns a great deal of the Synod of Pistoia, sometimes in grave terms. Thus, Auctorem fidei presents obvious problems for Catholic theologians who wish to recognize continuity in official church teaching, since Vatican II and the postconciliar magisterium have rehabilitated so much of the Pistoian reform agenda. Third, given the manifest affinity between many elements of Pistoian reform and Vatican II, it can seem that to comment on the validity (or invalidity) of certain Riccian ideas is also to defend or to

195 This point is discussed in the Conclusion.

196 On this dismissal and contempt, see the Introduction. Protestants, according to Unitatis redintegratio 3, cannot be considered heretical or schismatic simply for being born into Christian communities separated from the Catholic Church. However, polemical, theological, and historical literature routinely refers to Jansenists, even figures who accepted the condemnation of the Augustinus and never entered into schism (the great majority of so-called “Jansenists”), as “heretics” and “schismatics.”
attack, if not the Council texts themselves, then certainly the direction of the postconciliar church and the theological ideas of many prominent council fathers.  

Because of these significant issues, a theological evaluation of the Synod of Pistoia and the Riccian agenda must be critical yet still open. My evaluation will proceed in dialogue with the thought of Yves Congar (1904–95). It would be difficult to overstate the impact of Congar on Vatican II. His conception of reform, expounded most clearly in *True and False Reform* (1950), greatly influenced both the two popes who led the Council and the twentieth-century movements for *ressourcement*. These facts, coupled with Congar’s extensive input in the drafting of key conciliar texts lead Paul Philibert to conclude that “most of *True and False Reform*’s insights found their way into the major documents of Vatican II.”

I will argue that Pistoianism formally fails all but one of Congar’s four conditions for true reform put forward in *True and False Reform*. However, the Pistoian agenda also contained many true and evangelical elements, some of which the church desperately needed to hear in its day, and some of which are good and helpful today as well. Thus, even if they need not consider the Pistoians to be totally pure in their agenda or prophetic in the face of persecution, theologians should study them both to shed more light on how reform movements can lose their bearings and on the positive elements such unmoored reforms can still leave to the church as their legacy.

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197 To condemn Vatican II reform by showing the affinity of such reform to the Synod of Pistoia is the goal of many traditionalist evocations of the Synod or *Auctorem fidei*. These evocations take for granted that the Synod of Pistoia was theologically dangerous and deserved its condemnation. See the Introduction.

198 See chapter one, 3.2–3.6.

3.1 – *The First Condition: The Primacy of Charity and of Pastoral Concerns.*

Did Riccian reform give primary place to charity and to pastoral concerns? In his office as bishop and in the synodal Acts he approved, de’Ricci placed great importance on pastoring the laity and showed himself consumed with zeal to address pastoral problems. Pistoian liturgical and devotional reforms were serious attempts to educate the laity in religious truths, to bring them further into the central ecclesial act of the celebration of the Eucharist, and to connect them to the person of Jesus through cultivation of a life of private, Christocentric prayer. The Pistoians advocated biblical preaching, participation in the sacraments, vernacular scripture, songs, and litanies. These reforms are all thoroughly Catholic, and the church placed a great deal of emphasis on a pastoral program like this one in the twentieth century and in the documents of Vatican II.

De’Ricci certainly had great pastoral zeal. When the bishop was removed from polemics and controversy, his pastor’s heart was revealed, such as in his visits to the faithful in the mountainous regions of his diocese in the summer of 1788. Many of the men from these parts of the diocese had worked for a time remotely in the Campagna and had heard negative things about de’Ricci. His pastoral warmth and his willingness to travel through rugged country on foot earned the respect and affection of these rural people. When he arrived to dedicate a church in San Marcello, the people lit bonfires in celebration, fired guns, and rang bells. At the dedication, de’Ricci distributed translations of the ceremony so that those who did not understand Latin could participate, and the day was ended with the singing of the Litany of Jesus in the vernacular. “It is in moments such as this, when the stress of

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200 These journeys are recounted in *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques* (24 December 1788): 205–6.

201 See *Carte Ricci* 106:389 for de’Ricci’s letter accompanying the translation of the Rites for consecration of the church.
theological controversy is forgotten, and [de’Ricci] becomes the devoted pastor of his people, that we see the best side of the Bishop of Pistoia.”

The Acts of Pistoia express, sometimes with great beauty, zeal for the religious life of the people. The profound Christocentrism of the Synod’s teaching on prayer owes much to the greatly admired work of Muratori and Pascal: “we recognize his spirit that groans and prays in us; we ask for everything according to his will, and in the order of good merited by him, we unite ourselves to his prayer and sacrifice, our sole mediator.”

When this Christocentrism manifested itself as a desire to reform liturgy and devotions, especially devotions to Mary and the saints, de’Ricci ran up against significant opposition. While these reforms went too far and moved too quickly, we should recall the evidence that the Synod and de’Ricci’s teaching were not anti-Marian or iconoclastic. They were seeking to implement the Council of Trent in these areas. While they interpreted Trent very strictly, they never strayed outside of Catholic doctrine in these areas. Despite their pastoral motives, their failure was in their pastoral and disciplinary policies, not in their doctrine.

That de’Ricci made tactical mistakes in the manner in which he pushed for devotional and liturgical reform is obvious. It became abundantly clear that the late eighteenth-century church in Tuscany was hardly ready for this series of reforms. De’Ricci’s character flaws exacerbated an already difficult situation. Samuel J. Miller rightly credits de’Ricci with a “genuine reforming instinct, principally displayed in his current attention to the improvement

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202 Bolton, Church Reform, 125.

203 Rosa cites this beautiful passage (Decree on Prayer §9 in Atti, 198), in “Italian Jansenism and the Synod of Pistoia,” 48. Rosa calls these Pistoian passages on prayer “the most sublime pages, as regards religious depth, written by Italian Jansenism.” Rosa points out that Duguet and Eustache Guibaud (1711–94), author of Gémissements d’une âme pénitente, are less well-known but “perhaps more direct” influences on this decree than is Pascal.

204 See chapter four, 4.3.

of the *cura animarum* in his diocese.”

Yet we must also agree with Miller that de’Ricci’s true reforming instinct was ultimately “marred by a confirmed self-righteousness and an utter unwillingness to see any good in those who opposed him.”

These fatal flaws derailed the Synod of Pistoia, its implementation, and the career of de’Ricci, and thus Pistoianism fails Congar’s first condition. Congar’s reflections on the danger of allowing a “prophetic initiative” to “develop into a System” (particularly a system that handicaps charitable pastoral concern) seem especially apropos to the Riccian project. There was a genuine prophetic initiative in many Pistoian ideas. They were reacting to a church in desperate need of biblical renewal and the rejuvenation of lay and clerical spiritual life, of liturgical and ecclesiological reforms – in short, of *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*. But genuine though it was when applied to certain areas of Catholic life like the liturgy and Bible reading, the *ressourcement* undertaken by the Pistoians was disfigured by a Jansenist obsession with literal fidelity to Augustine and his seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jansenist interpreters) and a primitivism that was selective and could be needlessly polemical.

Many of Congar’s criticisms of Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, and the seventeenth-century Jansenists are applicable to de’Ricci and the Synod of Pistoia. The Pistoians fell victim to a sectarian spirit that was dangerous and bordered on schismatic. The following judgment of Congar can be easily adjusted to criticize de’Ricci and the Pistoians, as I do in brackets:

The case of the Jansenists is even more enlightening. Jansenism was, of course, a religious movement that drew from its Augustinianism its serious tone and generous spiritual energies with a capacity to nourish an authentic reform initiative. But it was

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207 Ibid.


209 One of the priests who dissented from the Synod argued, quite presciently, that he was uncomfortable using St. Augustine in this combative manner, since St. Augustine always wanted to submit his thought to the church. See the document “Difficoltà esibite dagli opponensi,” in *Carte Ricci* 28. The Synod had lost sight of the fact that true fidelity was not always thinking what Augustine thought, but thinking like him.

spoiled by the spirit of several of its founders or leaders because of the spirit of an alternative “system.” This spirit of the system for Jansen [or de’Ricci] himself trumped fidelity to the thinking of the concrete church—the Church of 1640 [or 1786]—by a literal fidelity to a text from the past written by St. Augustine [and, for the Pistoians, the subsequent Jansenist corpus and network]. It was this spirit of a system which led astray the spiritual thinking of Saint-Cyran [and de’Ricci] (first simply Christian in character and then increasingly harsh) into Jansenism. Doubtless there are few examples better than his that exemplify the danger of a “prophet” who directly undertakes a reform, makes his own message a program, and turns his prophetic intuition into a system.211

Just as Congar correctly recognized a genuinely prophetic element in the life of Saint-Cyran, a truly remarkable spiritual man, it seems clear that de’Ricci (as well as Tamburini, Palmieri, and others) shared many of these gifts. Indeed, de’Ricci would in no way fall afoul of Congar’s warnings against those reformers who lose touch with the devotional life of the church. In comparing Newman with Renan, Congar remarks that, while seriously grappling with the intellectual challenges of his day, Newman always took the Christian faith as a concrete reality. It was a given, it suffused and permeated Newman’s life, and he always grappled with challenges in that light. On the other hand, Renan regarded the faith as an intellectual abstraction, one that could perhaps or perhaps not stand up to challenge, and he ended in apostasy.212 According to Congar, those who approach the faith primarily academically – he uses Renan, Döllinger, and Loisy as examples – end up schismatic or heretical.213 While succumbing to the sectarian spirit that Congar warns of, de’Ricci never allowed the faith to become an intellectual abstraction. Despite his many errors and ambiguities from the point of view of official doctrine, de’Ricci remained a devoted Catholic pastor and serious Christian believer, even after the total shipwreck of his reforms and his personal exile and humiliation.

211 Ibid., 226.
212 Ibid., 227.
213 Ibid., 220.
Nevertheless, de’Ricci and the Pistoian reforms clearly run afoul of Congar’s warnings about the possibility of a sectarian spirit occluding the primacy of charity and pastoral concerns. The international Jansenist network that de’Ricci tapped into had allowed itself to be consumed with polemic and unduly concerned with victory over their ideological opponents. Congar cites St. Vincent de Paul’s (1581–1660) contention that Jansenism became for many an intellectual game, and while de’Ricci did not go this far, St. Vincent’s observation applies to him insofar as sectarian theological disputes greatly distracted him from his admirable pastoral goals.214 Rather than resurrecting debates about “right” and “fact,” the Clementine Peace, Unigenitus, and the Appellants,215 de’Ricci and his circle could have made common cause with the other moderate reformers in Tuscany and focused on a program of liturgical reform, biblical renewal, the strengthening of parish life, and pastoral rejuvenation. The aforementioned debates had severely harmed the French Church, and de’Ricci had no business raising such issues in Tuscany. Likewise, de’Ricci’s hatred of the Jesuits, born from Jansenist sectarian venom, blinded him to the pastoral value of the Sacred Heart devotion and caused him to waste his time and energy fighting an approved, Christocentric devotion. Since de’Ricci admitted that the devotion could be understood in an orthodox manner,216 he should have devoted this energy to catechizing his people with good Christology so they could understand the devotion correctly. Instead, blinded by his contempt for the Jesuit order and his overzealous desire to stamp out anything that could be accused of novelty, de’Ricci needlessly antagonized the papacy and many of the faithful of his diocese by attacking an approved devotion, sometimes in terms that seemed to border on

214 Ibid., 227.

215 See chapter two, section 2; chapter four, section 1.1.

216 De’Ricci claimed he never impugned the devotion when it was understood in the manner approved by Clement XIII, Clement XIV, and Pius VI (that is, as a symbol of Christ’s infinite love for humanity). See de’Ricci’s letter to Pius VII defending the Synod against Auctorem fidei in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem Fidei, 670–99, at 692–93. The original, in de’Ricci’s hand, is in Carte Ricci 104.
Nestorianism. Head-scratching episodes like this one make clear that de’Ricci and the Pistoians failed to keep the primacy of charity and pastoral concerns at the forefront of their reforming project, allowing the many positive elements of their reformist vision to be submerged and obscured by bitter polemics. Gemma Simmonds’ general observation on Jansenism applies directly to de’Ricci and the Pistoians: “Yet the positive dynamic within Jansenism burned itself out in an ideological quarrel that ultimately thwarted the very reform at which it was aimed.”

3.2 – The Second Condition: Remaining in Communion with the Whole Church

De’Ricci and the Pistoians fulfilled Congar’s second condition. Neither de’Ricci nor any synod fathers were excommunicated; no national church was formed in Tuscany, nor was a schismatic local church in Pistoia-Prato created on the model of the Jansenist Church of Utrecht. In fact, after deep personal anguish, de’Ricci signed a recantation of his errors and accepted Auctorem fidei in 1805 during an audience in Florence with Pope Pius VII, who treated him with great kindness. Nevertheless, if Pistoianism was never formally schismatic, de’Ricci and his movement fostered a sectarian spirit that vilified other positions and closed themselves off from a great deal of the church.

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217 See Auctorem fidei 61–63, addressing the Pistoian statements in the Decree on Faith and the Church, §3 (Atti, 76), the Decree on Prayer §10 (Atti, 198–99), and de’Ricci’s pastoral instruction of 3 June 1781 on the “new devotion to the heart of Jesus” in Atti Appendices, 92–95. Fascinatingly, from de’Ricci’s perspective, his opponents were the ones bordering on Nestorianism. See his letter of 9 April 1781 to Francesco Seratti in Carte Ricci 45:37–42. See also his 30 July 1781 letter to the Augustinian Father General in which he argues the Sacred Heart devotions is “useless,” “unknown” for most of the church’s history, and bordering on Nestorianism (Carte Ricci 45:109–12).


219 De’Ricci did, however, see himself in communion with the schismatic Church of Utrecht, writing to Archbishop Nieuvenhuyzen that he wished to send him “a sign of communion” (signe de communion) but recognized that Nieuvenhuyzen could not publicize this gesture, lest it cause “a more cruel persecution” (plus cruelle persécution). See De’Ricci’s letter of 7 October 1790 in Carte Ricci 53:782.

This attitude was abundantly clear in de’Ricci’s correspondence, which mimicked the late Jansenist tendency to refer to fellow Jansenists and their sympathizers as “friends of the truth” (*amici della verità*). Their opponents they routinely termed “fanatics,” “prejudiced,” or “enemies of the truth” (*nemici della verità*). This language underlines the spiritual danger that the international Jansenist movement sometimes got dangerously close to: not regarding the church as the Body of Christ, but, even if only implicitly, just those of their own party. The papacy was so wary of the Jansenist penchant for positing an elite church-within-a-church that *Auctorem fidei* impugned the Pistoian appeal to the image of the Mystical Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{222}

Again, Congar’s analysis of Saint-Cyran and early Jansenism is apropos. The Pistoians, true to the Jansenist spirit, had much to offer by way of *ressourcement*. They relentlessly and bravely confronted the contemporary church with forgotten or obscured elements of her doctrinal, liturgical, and devotional heritage. But in seeking to plumb the depths of scripture and tradition, they failed the church of their day by ignoring its concrete reality or, worse, having contempt for it. As Congar wrote:

> In searching for communion with a richer tradition, it is necessary not to lose communion with the actual concrete church, which remains the norm for everything. When Saint-Cyran wrote, for example, that “to judge the spirit of the church fairly and even its true doctrine, it is not enough to see what is commonly practiced or one of the opinions of the modern schools, but it is necessary... to go back to the purest sources of the most universal tradition,” he articulated essentially what we have just explained [the principle of *ressourcement*]. But he didn't stop there. With the Jansenist taste for going back to the past, he left out, both in his thinking and his practice, a consideration of the necessity to keep a living relation and a real obedience to the actual church.\textsuperscript{223}

\textsuperscript{221} On the “friends of the truth,” chapter three, section 2.3. An example of de’Ricci referring to his opponents as *nemici della verità* is in *Memorie* 2:236.

\textsuperscript{222} See Denzinger 2615 (*Auctorem fidei* 15). The bull censured only an understanding of this image that sees only “perfect adorers in spirit and truth” as truly members of the church, a use of the image that de’Ricci argued the he and the Synod never intended. Relevant to this church-within-a-church mentality is the Jansenist figurist idea of the “general obscuration of the truth” which was advanced by the Synod and condemned in *Auctorem fidei* 1. See chapter four, 1.1.

\textsuperscript{223} Congar, *True and False Reform*, 259.
Congar reminds us that, while “Pelagius had an authentically Catholic insight,” the whole truth is grasped only in communion with the church. While not actually separating from the church, the Pistoians came dangerously close to falling afoul of Cajetan’s admonition to be content to be ut pars and of the traditional ideal sentire cum Ecclesia.

This was a common issue for Jansenists.

One of the fundamental errors of Jansenism was to take its inspiration from the texts of St. Augustine without maintaining sufficient docility toward the concrete life of the contemporary church. Here again there is a dynamic of tension...between an appeal to a broader and more ancient tradition, on the one hand, and the requirements for communion with the church of the present, on the other hand; between fidelity to insights of unquestionable authenticity and submission to the living church.

The rejection of certain rights claimed by the papacy, understandable in some circumstances, became an all-encompassing program of anti-papalism that obscured many positive elements of the Pistoian reforms. Instead of making a measured contribution to the centuries-old debate over the rights of the episcopacy vis-à-vis the pope and Curia, the Pistoians forced Rome’s hand by outright rejecting any papal power of reservation of canonical cases. Even more inflammatory was the verbatim inclusion in the synodal acts of the Four Gallican Articles, which had been repeatedly condemned by the papacy and formally retracted by the King of France (although they were still prominent in French theological thought).

The powerful and prophetic Pistoian statements regarding the inability of “prison and fire” to reform the heart, and the incipient recognition of religious liberty contained in them, were drowned out by the same decree’s challenge to the right of the church to any external

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224 Ibid., 233.

225 Ibid., 235–36.

226 See the Decree on Orders §25 in Atti, 180 and the letters of the Segretaria del Regio Dirrito (1 February 1785) and of de’Ricci (1 March 1785) on the reservation of cases in Atti Appendices, 50–51. The papacy’s response was in Auctorem fidei 6 and 8 (Denzinger 1506; 1508). On the reemergence of this debate at Vatican II, see chapter six, section 2.

227 See 293n121, above.
coercion whatsoever.\textsuperscript{228} These admirable assertions could have been couched in ways that did not provoke a power struggle between de’Ricci and Leopold, on the one hand, and the pope, on the other (who, after all, was also a temporal sovereign). In an age of anticlerical revolution, in which popes only tenuously clung to their sovereignty in the papal states, Pius VI could only reject the assertions denying the church’s temporal power as framed by the Pistoians. The inevitability of such a rejection became particularly clear when the French Revolution proceeded from initial calls for an expansion of toleration into bitter and violent anti-Catholic persecution.

Nevertheless, de’Ricci was not in fact schismatic. True to his final exhortation to his people, the bishop of Pistoia remained in communion with the successor of Peter even at the cost of formally accepting \textit{Auctorem fidei}, which caused him great mental agony and humiliation. In 1805, after a series of exiles, house-arrests, and even a stint in prison in the tumultuous Tuscany of the Napoleonic era, de’Ricci received an ultimatum. During the papal visit to Florence, Pius VII (r. 1800–23) demanded that de’Ricci sign a formula accepting \textit{Auctorem fidei} and the condemnations of Baius, Jansen, and Quesnel. This ultimatum caused de’Ricci a highly anxious crisis of conscience. Some of his friends (including Palmieri) advised him to submit in order to avoid the serious consequences of not doing so but also because \textit{Auctorem fidei} had almost always couched its condemnations in \textit{quatenus} and \textit{sic intellecta}. De’Ricci finally consented to sign, but he drafted a statement saying he did not hold, and had never held, the propositions in the sense in which they were condemned.\textsuperscript{229}

Pius VII received de’Ricci in Florence with great kindness. After reading de’Ricci’s statement, the pontiff replied that there was no need for the appended lines, since he had

\textsuperscript{228} See chapter four, section 2.

\textsuperscript{229} These events are narrated by de’Ricci in \textit{Memorie} 2:233–48. See also Bolton’s summary, \textit{Church Reform}, 140–43.
never believed that de’Ricci in fact held the propositions in the sense condemned. This generous statement might not have been only politeness, especially since when he was Bishop Chiaramonti of Imola, Pius VII had actually approved of some of Leopold’s reforms in Tuscany.

De’Ricci’s conscience was not violated by his submission to the pope, and his true Catholic sense was highlighted by this episode. In a letter to a Pistoian priest soon after, who had also submitted to Pius VII in May 1805, de’Ricci showed authentic humility and a concern for the good of the church:

Catholic doctrine is safe; we have done what was necessary for the edification of the people by showing our love for unity; we have removed the scandal that some took through ignorance, others through malice. To want to defend our own position (estimazione) would not have conformed to the example of Jesus Christ.

De’Ricci still regarded his own doctrine as orthodox, but he had managed to convince himself that Auctorem fidei gave him enough room for interpretation to reconcile his views with it. De’Ricci accepted that most of his disciplinary reforms had simply been rejected, but he was willing to accept this “sacrifice” for “love of peace and unity.” Indeed, “if such reforms could have caused a schism in the Church, for me to persist in maintaining and

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230 For de’Ricci’s account of his submission to Pius VII, see his letter to Giulio Porrini, 29 May 1805 in Memorie 2:400–2. De’Ricci was so “confused” and emotionally moved by Pius VII, who embraced, kissed, and took the hand of de’Ricci (“like a father and a son, or a friend”) that the event felt like “a dream” to him (401). De’Ricci gave a longer account in ibid., 2:240–48. The Dichiarazione di Scipione de’Ricci (9 May 1805) is in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, 667–68. This statement was quite all-encompassing: it professed adhesion “purely and simply, in heart and spirit” to all the papal condemnations of Baius, Jansen, Quesnel, “and their disciples,” formal subscription to Auctorem fidei, and a desire to atone for the “scandal” that the Synod had caused.


232 De’Ricci to Ferdinando Panieri, 15 June 1805, in Memorie 2:404. De’Ricci also appealed to the meekness of Francis de Sales against his detractors. Panieri (1759–1822) was an erudite Pistoian priest and involved in the redaction of the Pistoian decree on the Eucharist. See the index entries in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, 726; Atti, 2:685. He signed a letter of submission similar to de’Ricci’s on 17 May 1805, available in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, 702–3.

233 Memorie 2:248–51.

234 Ibid., 2:249–50.
defending them would have been for me to render poisonous that which had been proposed as medicinal.”

This approach differed from an earlier, more stubborn attitude, which cast these disciplinary proposals as necessary to protect true doctrine about the episcopacy, the priesthood, Christian devotion, and a number of other matters.

De’Ricci lived the rest of his life in quiet, reading and tending gardens at his family villa in the Tuscan countryside. He corresponded amicably with the pope several times after his submission. These exchanges comforted de’Ricci, who was plagued by the severity with which people spoke and wrote about him, including in the Roman consistory announcing his submission. While de’Ricci accepted that his reforms had been soundly rejected, and he feared further suffering and scorn, he also genuinely moderated some of his doctrinal extremism. He came to believe, at the end of his life, that the two parties [Jansenists and their opponents] were equally the enemies of error as they could see it. The discussions of the schools, the exasperation produced by the examination of unintelligible dogmas, and more than all, the pride of the human mind and sectarian jealousy, had dictated mutual sentences of condemnation, which rendered discord and hatred perpetual. And then, Biaus and Jansen, had not they submitted themselves to the Holy See? And had not all Catholics condemned, at least externally, the five propositions?

Certainly, a spirit of “sectarian jealously” characterized some of the decrees of the Synod of Pistoia and certain elements of Riccian reform. In this sense, the Pistoians did not adequately remain in communion with the whole church, even if they did so formally. However, while de’Ricci entertained schismatic tendencies and rhetoric during the aggressive phase of his reforms.

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235 Ibid.

236 Such a position intimately linking doctrine and discipline is apparent in many parts of the Atti. See especially the sixth session dealing with issues such as the reform of regulars (191–243), and many of the appended documents.

237 Ten letters exchanged between de’Ricci and Pius VII, from 1805 to 1809, are in Stella, La Bolla Auctorem fidei, 704–14. The originals are in Carte Ricci 104.

238 Roscoe, ed., Memoirs of Scipio de Ricci, 2:249–54; Memorie 2:257–60; Bolton, Church Reform, 142–45.

239 De’Ricci cited in Roscoe, ed., Memoirs of Scipio de Ricci, 2:244. On the five propositions, see chapter two, section 2.1.
episcopacy, he was ultimately too catholic to consider his reformist vision more important than the visible unity of the church. The end of his tumultuous and, in some ways, pitiable life illustrates how a talented, zealous reformer with true prophetic insights can ultimately accept defeat with a spirit of resignation and humility, for the sake of unity.

3.3 – The Third Condition: Patience with Delays

In stark contrast to the spirit of the moderate Third Party reformers, especially that of the long-suffering Lodovico Muratori, the Pistoians emphatically failed Congar’s third condition. We have already detailed the speed with which de’Ricci and the synod fathers made liturgical and devotional changes in the diocese of Pistoia-Prato. While the intentions behind many of these changes were noble and evangelical, the haste and abruptness with which the Pistoians undertook these reforms was a key part of their undoing.

One can sympathize with the desire to push through some reform at the local level, since those who saw the need for devotional reform could have “no expectations from Rome” in this period. Nevertheless, the perfectly reasonable devotional and liturgical reforms – encouraging vernacular Bible reading, translations of the liturgy and increased lay participation in it, vernacular songs and litanies, and a Christocentric devotional life – were partially or completely swept away because of widespread resentment at swift external changes to cherished elements of local devotional life like the veneration of the Madonna dell’Umiltà and Our Lady’s Girdle. The resentment arose because de’Ricci and the Pistoians fell prey to an error of their age in thinking these reforms could simply be imposed on the people by episcopal or governmental fiat. In fact, many of the reforms they sought would


241 Niccolò Rodolico faults de’Ricci for believing “that it was possible to pass over the strength of the tradition of a people,” which Rodolico notes “was a common mistake of the philosophers and legislators of the time.” See Rodolico’s 1936 entry “Ricci, Scipione de” in Enciclopedia Italiana is available at: http://www.treccani.it/encyclopedia/scipione-de-ricci_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/.
have required much education, preaching, and catechesis. This preparation could have taken a
great deal of time and patience, possibly even several generations.

Likewise, the Pistoians lacked patience in their treatment of the religious orders.
De’Ricci had some good reasons to wish for their reform. Some groups of monks and nuns
lacked discipline, and young men and women frequently came into religious life too young
and without real vocations. These situations cried out for change. But the swift and unilateral
attack on certain traditional forms of religious life effected no lasting change and merely
inflamed opposition. It also offended the papacy.

The impatience of the Pistoian project came less from failures of principle or of
theory than from imprudence. The Pistoians’ lack of patience seriously harmed their reform
agenda and muted many of the positive elements of that agenda, allowing the papacy to
ignore these because it could sensibly claim that the Synod was revolutionary, not
reformative. Congar related that church leaders should not be too patient in enacting reform,
and he applied Ephesians 6:4 to the church hierarchy, which exhorts fathers not to provoke
their sons to wrath. We should have, then, some sympathy for de’Ricci’s frustration with
the reluctance of Rome to bless reform, but Paul’s admonition impugns the bishop of Pistoia,
too. De’Ricci, the father of his diocese, provoked his spiritual children to wrath through his
rash impatience, particularly in his tone-deaf devotional changes. He also needlessly
provoked his brothers in the episcopate, not only those in Tuscany but also the Bishop of
Rome, whose successors, ironically, would ultimately bless so many reforms de’Ricci
desired.

242 Congar, True and False Reform, 289.
3.4 – The Fourth Condition: Renewal through a Return to the Principle of Tradition

We have already pointed out many positive elements in the *ressourcement* attempted by the Pistoians. Indeed, they remarkably anticipated Vatican II reforms, born of *ressourcement*, in the areas of liturgy, the encouragement of Bible reading, Christocentric devotion, and religious liberty. The Pistoian desire to exalt the “original rights” of the episcopacy and increasingly to include the laity not only in the liturgical life of the church but also in certain sorts of deliberative roles are based on ancient, well-established Catholic ideas. These Pistoian reforms sunk their roots in the same sources as did the twentieth-century reformers on the eve of Vatican II; the Pistoians wanted to go back to scripture, the church fathers, and, through new historical investigations, to early liturgical sources.

Again, however, the extremist elements in the Jansenism of de’Ricci and his circle seriously marred their admirable endeavors. While, like all Jansenists, de’Ricci and the Pistoians were deeply committed to the theology of St. Augustine, they had lost the vital link between Augustinianism (a venerable tradition of thought) and the contemporary organic life of the church. This loss was motivated, at least initially, by good intentions. The Jansenists believed that only a return to the pure theology of Augustine, as it existed before (perceived) scholastic confusion, could communicate the true faith to Protestants, stamp out an outbreak of Pelagianism in the church, and lead to Catholic revival. But one cannot simply leap from the early modern period back to the fifth century. Augustine’s opponents were fifth-century heretics, they were not seventeenth-century Protestants or Jesuits, or eighteenth-century ultramontanes or enlightened freethinkers. The categories with which Augustine’s thought and the manner in which he expressed his theology, brilliant and timelessly relevant though that theology is, could not simply be imported directly into the early modern doctrinal

243 See chapter two, 2.1. See also Guglielmo Bartoli’s speech to open the Synod in chapter four, 1.1.
controversies. Augustine was addressing a specific problem, Pelagianism, he was not addressing Molinism, Thomism, or early modern scholasticism. The Jansenists erred not in mistaking Augustine’s actual theological claims, but in their practice of reading him ahistorically, as if he had written to address the early modern situation.

Impatient reformers like the Pistoians did not adequately grasp how complex a return to tradition is. In fact, it is impossible to return to tradition without maintaining a living link with the most recent expressions of that tradition. This is why Congar does not claim the true reformer renews the church through a return to tradition, but rather to the principle of tradition. If a reformer is to initiate a true reform, and thus stay in communion with the church, that reformer must be in touch with this principle, which is a cause and an origin, leaven for the yeast always active in the church’s present.\(^2\) Even if one is calling for radical changes, for changes to l’état des choses, the true reformer can call only for the application of old principles to new problems. This results not in a return to a fabled past, but progression to a new state of affairs, for the fertile generativity of the principle of tradition always leads to something new.

In addition to a ressourcement, then, the Pistoians also needed an aggiornamento. The nouvelle théologie understood this need in the twentieth century. This is why the French Jesuit Henri Bouillard (1908–81) could hold to the ancient faith while maintaining that “if theology is not related to contemporary life, it is a false theology,”\(^2\) a sentence that de’Ricci (or any Jansenist) could never write.\(^2\) Of course, de’Ricci and the Pistoians cannot be blamed for not having a theory (or even a sense) of doctrinal development in 1786. However,


\(^2\) “Une théologie qui ne serait pas actuelle serait une théologie fausse” (Conversion et grâce chez saint Thomas d’Aquin (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 219).

\(^2\) This is not to claim the Pistoians or the Jansenists did not want to diagnose and address contemporary problems. They clearly did. Nevertheless, their application of the past to the present was severely flawed. Any theological, disciplinary, or pastoral differences between the past and the present that the Jansenists encountered in their books was simply a deficiency on the part of the present church.
they can be blamed for thinking that centuries of theological thought, liturgical custom, and ecclesiological developments could (and should) be wiped away by the decrees of diocesan and national synods and the power of enlightened monarchs, rather than be slowly reformed, updated, and corrected through decades or centuries of struggle, dialogue, and compromise. The Pistoians (and the Jansenists in general) fit Congar’s description of those who had “vast historical knowledge” without a “sense of history.” Nevertheless, the ressourcement of the Pistoians was still an attempt, however flawed, at aggiornamento. Even though they thought they were recreating an imaginarily pristine church of antiquity, the Pistoians were in fact in touch with concrete, contemporary pastoral needs in liturgy, devotions, the life of the laity, and ecclesiastical problems. Their attempt followed the general trend of the Jansenist movement: “recourse to the past was a radical response to the questions posed by a society in transit and a church in disarray after long periods of conflict and stagnation.”

Congar saw the Pistoians as, rather unambiguously, false reformers. Specifically, he agreed with Pius XII and regarded them as the example par excellence of how ressourcement should not function and of how primitivism can go haywire. In his rather cursory judgment, Congar also lumped Pistoia alongside others he believed capitulated to a mechanical and rationalistic “spirit of the century.” But Congar’s references to Pistoia are too inexact and his conclusions too broad to fairly evaluate the complexities of de’Ricci and

247 Congar, True and False Reform, 350. Congar’s citation of Lacordaire’s assertion that eighteenth-century people read history like children is harsh and hyperbolic, but not wholly off base.

248 Simmonds, “Jansenism: An Early Ressourcement Movement?” 24. For a fuller discussion see chapter two, 2.4.

249 Congar, True and False Reform, 294. Congar cites Pius XII’s censure of the “Jansenists in Pistoia” in the encyclical Mediator Dei (1947). The point Pius XII was making was that there is a difference between going back to the sources and “textual archaeology.” For a discussion of this and other evocations of Pistoia on the eve of Vatican II (and in the context of the liturgical movement), see the Introduction.

250 See the discussion in Congar, True and False Reform, 299. The notes suggest Congar, excepting of course his familiarity with Auctorem fidei (probably from Denzinger), was familiar with Pistoia only through secondary source discussions of reform and the liturgy in the Enlightenment. He moves seamlessly between movements, texts, and individuals that are related but certainly deserve distinct consideration.
his circle. The Synod of Pistoia was certainly related to broader eighteenth-century enlightened Catholic reform movements, and it shared with other movements common motifs exalting utility and comprehensibility and denigrating “superstition.” However, familiarity with the character of de’Ricci and the Acts of the Synod itself forces one to conclude that Pistoian reform, whatever its faults, was not rationalistic at all; it was deeply Catholic and, indeed, evangelical. It is surprising that Congar does not afford the Pistoians the nuanced and at times even sympathetic judgment he reserves for earlier Jansenists such as Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, and Pascal. Congar’s brief and unfair treatment of the Pistoians might have been due simply to a lack of direct familiarity (he cites only the 1929 article of Rinaldo Pilkington on Pistoia and the liturgy), but it could also have been due to a conscious or unconscious desire to adhere to the overwhelmingly negative narrative that arose in the nineteenth-century, particularly given that Congar and the nouvelle théologie were seeking to combat the image that they were doctrinally suspect or even a second wave of Modernism.

Still, our study shows that Congar was correct in his basic overall judgment on Pistoian reform. While we have demonstrated that the Pistoians did indeed propose and attempt to enact elements of true reform, aided by their powerful impulse for ressourcement, their fanatical attachment to “the opinions of an exploded sect” (in the words of Joseph Berington) ultimately derailed what was good, true, and needed in their bold reformist agenda.

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251 Simmonds is also critical of Congar’s hasty and sweeping rejection of the Pistoians. “Congar was aware of the futility of ‘archaeolatry’ and denied that twentieth-century ressourcement was a scholarly reconstruction or ‘repristination’. Repeating Pius XII’s criticism of the Synod of Pistoia’s ‘exaggerated and senseless antiquarianism’, he did less than justice to the Synod’s long-term goals and Jansenism’s clear development, by the 1660s, into a movement that had reforming aims based on concrete contemporary pastoral needs.” See “Jansenism: An Early Ressourcement Movement?” 33–34.


253 See above, page 285.
Conclusion: The Tragedy of Pistoia

While Congar is not particularly fair or nuanced in his brief indictment of Pistoian reform, his study of reform in the church is a comprehensive guide for an evaluation of de’Ricci and the Synod. While we have examined the many positive elements of Pistoian reform, they do not pass, at least without great qualification, three of Congar’s four conditions, although they did remain in communion with the whole church (the second condition). It is not difficult to convict the Pistoians of violating the fifth condition for true reform, proposed to Congar by Louis Bouyer: “good sense.”254 If, despite his many frustrations, Muratori always kept a sense of peace and good sense, we must conclude that, considering their record of antagonizing their opponents, forcing abrupt liturgical and devotional changes on the laity, and failing to cooperate even with committed Augustinians in Tuscany who were not Jansenists, the Pistoians failed most miserably on this last point.

In the judgment of Jozef Lamberts, the defeat of Pistoian reform marked the closure of a long series of Jansenist-Gallican attempts at liturgical and devotional reform. It took nearly two hundred years for some of these reforms to come to fruition in the church at and after Vatican II.255 This defeat had important, negative consequences for reform in the church. Just as some overreacted to the Waldensians and Utraquists, and people were even reluctant to speak of “peace of the soul” after Quietism,256 there was an extreme overreaction to ideas regarding liturgical reform and even biblical ecclesiological images like the Mystical Body of Christ since they were linked with condemnations of Jansenism and Pistoianism.257

254 Congar references Bouyer’s suggestion in True and False Reform, 213.
256 Congar, True and False Reform, 211.
257 See the Introduction.
While the debate over the merits of the Synod of Pistoia in the 1790s was lively, the triumph of ultramontanism in the nineteenth century led to the widespread and rather indiscriminate marginalization of ideas considered Jansenist. De’Ricci and the Synod of Pistoia remained ecclesial taboos even as the church was reawakening to a ressourcement that had many uncomfortably close affinities with that of the Pistoians. In the decades leading up to Vatican II, there were some judgments more measured and fair than Congar’s and Pius XII’s. In 1936, Niccolò Rodolico evaluated the legacy of de’Ricci thus:

In a time of laxity in ecclesiastical customs, of ignorance of the clergy, of superstition of the faithful, and of the intrusion of religious indifference and atheistic rationalism, Ricci longed for and willed, though he also committed errors, a learned and selfless clergy and a fervent and devoted people. However, his reforms ended up pushing the Church towards heresy and schism, and his political attitude ended up letting the Church fall under the subjection of the State.

Ultimately, the failure of de’Ricci and the Pistoians was tragic. The overt challenge to the papacy and the religious orders, the abrupt shock to the liturgical and devotional life of the people, and the flagrant assertions of Baianist and Jansenist doctrines obscured their compelling vision. It was tragic because there was so much good in the Pistoian reform that seemed to be condemned along with the extremist elements. They had a real concern for the involvement in, and comprehension of, the liturgy by laypeople. The Pistoians were awake to the value of the scriptures in the life of the believer. They had an understanding of the need for conversion of the heart rather than just outward conformity which pushed them, however incipiently, past toleration and towards religious liberty. Their theology was an attempt to return to scripture and the church fathers in order to meet the religious needs of their day. Ultimately, the Pistoian project, however flawed, was trying to re-center the life of the church

258 See Stella, “L’Auctorem fidei sull’onda dell’ultramontanismo fino al primo ‘900 [1900’s],” in La Bolla Auctorem Fidei, cxiii–cxl. See also chapter six.

259 See Congar’s Introduction (1950) to True and False Reform, 37.

260 Rodolico’s entry in the Enciclopedia Italiana is available at: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scipione-de-ricci_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/.
on Jesus Christ, which is how Congar defined *ressourcement*. Finally, the character of
deer’Ricci and the Synod he led were tragic because their sectarian attitude blinded them to
possible avenues of cooperation that could have born great fruit in the life of the church. S. J.
Miller wonders what de’Ricci and the Pistoians could have accomplished had they effectively
collaborated with leading Third Party prelates.

[I]t is instructive to compare [de’Ricci’s] career and its shipwreck with the equally
reform-minded but compromising attitude of such contemporaries as Antonio Martini,
Archbishop of Florence, or Andrea Gioanetti, Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna. Had
the three above seen their way clear to joint action, the Church might have developed
a style of reform that would have avoided the exaggerated Ultramontanism of the
nineteenth century or the frequently manic practices that grew out of a misreading of
the work of Vatican Council II.\(^\text{261}\)

It is to the Second Vatican Council that we now turn, and to efforts to construct a style of
reform that avoided exaggerated ultramontanism or manic progressivism.

CHAPTER VI: THE GHOST OF PISTOIA
THE LEGACY OF AUCTOREM FIDEI AT VATICAN II

Introduction: The Memory of Pistoia at the Council

There has been little scholarly attention given to how the legacy of the Synod of Pistoia and Auctorem fidei impacted the drafting of conciliar documents and subsequent debates. In this chapter, I will show that Pistoia was one “ghost” among many present on the council floor, by which I understand a key moment in the church’s collective memory which influenced the drafting of texts and the subsequent debate over them. The episodes this chapter explores show the effect of eighteenth-century Catholic reform on Vatican II and the contemporary church. This influence can be described as positive when the council fathers pick up and continue some of the constructive projects of the Pistoians. Many of these were pointed out in chapter four. On the other hand, this influence was negative when a continued aversion to certain eighteenth-century movements (like Jansenism) and the censures of eighteenth-century doctrinal documents (like Auctorem fidei) functioned as points of reference for some council fathers when they debated church reform. These important ecclesiological debates at Vatican II and afterwards interest not only the historical theologian, but the contemporary systematician as well, since in certain key respects some of the ecclesiological issues themselves, like the proper instantiation of episcopal collegiality, remain contested.

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1 I take this image from Francis Oakley, who sees the “ghost of Bellarmine” as the only survivor of the bitter ecclesiological wars which intermittently raged between conciliarists and ultramontanists from 1300 to 1870. “[After Vatican I] a great silence continued to brood over what had, until recently, been considered the very centre of the line. And the solitary horseman to be observed picking his confident way through the poignant litter and lonely detritus of battle turns out, on closer inspection, to be the none other than the resilient ghost of Bellarmine.” See Oakley, The Conciliarist Tradition, 216.

Although the Synod’s theological project was very broad, debate over Pistoia and *Auctorem fidei* at the Second Vatican Council was chiefly ecclesiological, and in particular related to the episcopacy. A holistic examination of these evocations will demonstrate that the “minority”³ (exemplified by Bishop Luigi Carli of Segni) wanted to frame the debate over episcopal collegiality – including the relationship between the episcopate and the papacy, the episcopate and the Roman Curia, and the function and status of national episcopal conferences – through *Auctorem fidei*. The minority also used *Auctorem fidei* and the memory of Pistoia to insinuate that a contested idea, episcopal collegiality, at least had roots in condemned movements like Jansenism, Josephinism, Gallicanism, Richerism, and Febronianism. Their agenda was this: if they could successfully argue that episcopal collegiality (or certain forms of it) had already been condemned by Pius VI in *Auctorem fidei*, then they could stall or end the debate or confine any doctrinal conclusions to narrower theological and juridical affirmations than their opponents wished.

The “majority,” typified by the German Hermann Schäufele (Archbishop of Freiburg) and the Chilean Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez (Archbishop of Santiago), responded to the minority’s evocations of Pistoia by demanding a contextualization of the Synod and *Auctorem fidei*, either through a close reading and thus a more hermeneutical approach (Schäufele) or through a thorough historical contextualization (Silva Henríquez). Thus, the positions of Schäufele and Silva Henríquez prevailed in seizing hermeneutical control by successfully rejecting the claim or insinuation that the ecclesiological aims of the majority had already been condemned in *Auctorem fidei*. However, the minority was successful in a rear-guard action, as their protests forced deadlocks which necessitated compromises ensuring the final documents did not contradict the ecclesiological censures of *Auctorem fidei*.

³ For the common heuristic of a conciliar “majority” and “minority,” see chapter one, section 1.
This episode exemplifies a conflict of hermeneutics at Vatican II. The council fathers constructively dealt with ecclesiastical censures and problems of the past to issue documents which achieved a wide consensus. In order to deal with these past conflicts, which were resurfacing in their conciliar debates, the council fathers had to investigate not only the papal censure of Pistoia, but the event itself and the historical world in which it occurred. These efforts can be understood as part of a larger process of a growth of historical consciousness and an increasing understanding, not always explicit, of the development of doctrine. Episodes such as this illustrate the usefulness of reading the Council through the “hermeneutic of reform” envisioned by Pope Benedict XVI and John O’Malley. The affirmations of the Council stand both in continuity and discontinuity with the past, and in dynamic and critical dialogue both with the official magisterium and with failed reformers of previous centuries. Examining these episodes can also help mediate between the methods and goals of the Text-Continuity and the Spirit-Event paradigms described in chapter one.

This chapter argues that *Auctorem fidei* did not ultimately exert the strong controlling function that Bishop Carli wanted it to, and that the majority seized hermeneutical control by historically contextualizing the condemnations of Pistoia successfully. Through surveying the contexts in which *Auctorem fidei* was cited in conciliar draft documents (*schemata*), the Constitution will be presented as a bulwark of ultramontanist thought. An analysis of six evocations of Pistoia and *Auctorem fidei* during conciliar debate on ecclesiology and the episcopacy will follow. These evocations constitute the most detailed discussion of an eighteenth-century doctrinal document at the council, and they prove that Pistoia was a “ghost” in the aula. The chapter’s conclusion briefly summarizes the trajectory of the debate over collegiality and comments on the enduring significance of these issues for the postconciliar Catholic Church especially now, during the papacy of Francis.
1. *Auctorem fidei* in Conciliar Drafts: A Bulwark of Ultramontanism

*Auctorem fidei* functioned as a bulwark of ultramontane thought in early drafts of conciliar documents. Most significantly, *Auctorem fidei* was cited four times in the first draft of the schema *De Ecclesia*, but all of these references were eventually deleted in what became *Lumen gentium* (the whole document, of course, changed tremendously). In this early draft, *Auctorem fidei* 4–5 was cited to support the right of bishops to coerce the erring.⁴ Articles 6–8 were used to support the thesis that the pope has sovereign authority over the entire church, including bishops – a prelude to the use of these same articles by Bishop Carli in later debates.⁵ *Auctorem fidei* 5 supported the thesis that the church was a “perfect society,”⁶ and the rejection of the Gallican Articles in §98–99 was also repeated.⁷ The use, then, of *Auctorem fidei* in the early draft of *De Ecclesia* was in support of an ultramontane agenda – to assert the church’s coercive power, to support papalist ecclesiology against episcopalism, Gallicanism, and Erastianism, and to reaffirm the scholastic notion of the church as a *societas perfecta*.⁸

The Dogmatic Constitution *De Beata Maria Virgine Matre Dei et Matre hominum* cites *Auctorem fidei* 71, which condemned the Pistoian censure of images and titles of

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⁴ The draft is available in *Acta* I/4, 12–91. Joseph Komonchak has provided an English translation on his personal website, accessible at https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/draft-of-de-ecclesia-chs-1-11.pdf. The draft argues that bishops can “coerce, compel, and punish” (coercere, cogere atque punire possunt) in external matters if the public good or that of souls is at stake. *Auctorem fidei* 4–5 are cited, as well as Benedict XIV’s *Ad assiduas* (which is also cited in *Auctorem fidei*). See page 25 (30 for the note).

⁵ *Acta* I/4, 26 (note on 31)

⁶ *Acta* I/4, 65 (note on 68).

⁷ *Acta* I/4 66 (note on 70).

⁸ This has been sometimes misunderstood as a claim to ecclesial perfection or sinlessness when in fact it refers to possession of the fullness of the means to achieve the church’s ends. The key concepts are very old, but the *societas perfecta* ecclesiology was developed explicitly by Francisco Suárez, SJ (1548–1617). See Suárez, *De legibus*, lib. I, cap. VI, nn.18–19, 21–22; lib. III, cap. 2, n.4; cap. XI, n.6. The Catholic Church’s autonomy from the state and the church’s indirect power were central concerns in this ecclesiology.
saints, especially Mary, that are non-biblical in nature. Also in the first session, the Bull against the Pistioans was cited in the draft of the dogmatic constitution De ordine morali Christiani, repeating the censure of the Synod’s assertion that venial sins should not be confessed too often. Article 60 was cited to support ecclesial authority in matters of marriage in another unpromulgated draft document. In the fourth session it was cited only twice, in connection with errors concerning indulgences.

In fact, no references to Auctorem fidei remained in any of the officially promulgated Vatican II documents. While this detail might have been easy for an observer of the Council to miss, the deletion of Auctorem fidei symbolizes the shift from the pre-conciliar theology many of the minority supported to the ressourcement theology of the majority. As diverse as the canopy of that theology no doubt was – it included Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Küng, Henri de Lubac and Edward Schillebeeckx – it was not the prevailing theological culture of 1850–1950, in which Auctorem fidei had thrived.

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9 Acta I/4, 91–121, at 93 (note at 108). This Constitution was never promulgated, although the Council included teaching on Mary as the eighth chapter of Lumen gentium.

10 The Schema, which was never promulgated, is in Acta I/4, 695–713. Auctorem fidei 39 is cited at 709 (note on 712).

11 This document was called the Dogmatic Constitution De Castitate, Matrimonio, Familia, Virginitate. See Acta I/4, 743n41, referring to page 736.

12 The draft document De sacrarum indulgentiarium recognitione is in Acta IV/6, 131–148 (see 131–98 for surrounding documentation, debate, and commentary). Auctorem fidei 41, censuring the Pistoian rejection of the “treasury of merits” is cited on page 137. Article 40, rejecting the notion of an indulgence as only a remission of canonically imposed penances is cited on page 144.

13 However, Paul VI’s Apostolic Constitution Indulgentiarium Doctrina (“Whereby the Revision of Sacred Indulgences is Promulgated,” 1 January 1967), was published in place of the original conciliar document and did include Auctorem fidei. Articles 40–42 (Denzinger 2640–42) are cited in note 40, supporting the statement that “the Magisterium of the Church has defended and illustrated this doctrine in various documents.” Following the lead of the draft schema, Leo X’s Exsurge Domine is not cited, but the footnote correctly notes that Pius VI was renewing the condemnations of Luther (Exsurge Domine 17, 19, and 22) in Auctorem fidei.
2. Six Evocations of Pistoia during the Conciliar Debate over Collegiality

Five of the six evocations of Auctorem fidei during ecclesiological debate at Vatican II concerned collegiality and the proper relationships between the pope, the Curia, and the episcopacy. All of the evocations we will examine took place during the second session, held from 29 September to 4 December 1963. This chapter cannot give a full account of the debate over collegiality. Rather, it will reconstruct the debate about the controlling function\(^\text{14}\) of Auctorem fidei during ecclesiological debate, and chiefly during the controversy over episcopal collegiality, which ended in November 1963.

2.1 – Auctorem Fidei as a Confirmation of Hierarchical Centralism – Bishop Eduardo Martínez Gonzáles – 9 October 1963

During the General Congregation of 30 September 1963, in the Council’s second session, a draft of the Schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae de Ecclesia (henceforth De Ecclesia) was presented.\(^\text{15}\) The original schema had already undergone debate and revision, and it now began with the famous words Lumen gentium. On October 4, the fathers in the aula began debate over chapter two of De Ecclesia, which contained the controversial doctrine of episcopal collegiality. On October 9, and in the name of 63 French bishops, Cardinal Achille Liénart (Lille) gave a forceful speech in favor of episcopal collegiality. Quid vero fecit Jesus? asked Liénart. He spent the night in prayer, and then he chose the Twelve. The college of the apostles with Peter never separate from it, Liénart argued, was instituted by Christ the Lord, by whose disposition the episcopal college united with the pope manifested and increased the church’s catholicity. Cast primarily in the biblical language of

\(^{14}\) By “controlling function” I refer to a past doctrinal pronouncement which continues to frame Catholic doctrinal debate by setting boundaries of discussion. For example, no council father at Vatican II challenged the primacy or infallibility of the pope because the judgment of Vatican I’s Pastor aeternus was definitive and thus had a controlling function in discussions of the pope’s ministry.

\(^{15}\) The proceedings of the General Congregation begin at Acta II/1, 205. The draft Schema is at 215–81.
ministry and service to the mission of evangelization, Liénart’s implication that episcopal collegiality was *de iure divino* was strong and unmistakable.16

The first explicit reference to *Auctorem fidei* came in response to interventions like Liénart’s.17 Eduardo Martínez Gonzáles, Bishop of Zamora in Spain, intervened the same day, requesting that the fathers speak clearly of these weighty matters lest the way be opened (*ansam praebeat*) for errors already condemned by the church.18 González implied that the schema was in danger of insinuating what *Auctorem fidei* condemned as heretical (cf. Denzinger 1502) in the following Pistoian ecclesiological proposition, which he cited in a note:

“Power was given by God to the Church, that it might be communicated to the pastors, who are her ministers for the salvation of souls,” if this is understood in the sense (*sic intellecta*) that from the community of the faithful the pastors derive the power of ecclesiastical ministry and of governing.19

In light of the condemnation, González first explained the foundations of his view of the hierarchy’s mission as a power to give spiritual life, a mission passed from the Father to Jesus to the apostles and to the church’s hierarchy. He rooted this conception in the New Testament (John 10:10–11 and 20:21, 23; Acts 2:3–4; Heb 5:1–2; 1 Cor 4:15) and the magisterium (Clement of Rome; Leo XIII’s *Satis cognitum* and *Immortale Dei*; Pius XII’s *Mystici corporis*). González then stated four principles: “Logically, some points of not trifling importance follow.”20 He proceeded to list them in an orderly, scholastic manner. First, there is an inequality between pastors and the faithful (*inaequalitias inter pastores et fideles*). This

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17 Also of interest are the interventions of Félix Scalais, Archbishop of Léopoldville in the Congo (*Acta II/2*, 53–57) and Giuseppe D’Avack, Archbishop of Camerino, Italy (ibid., 77–79).


19 *Auctorem fidei* 2 (Denzinger 2602). The Latin text is cited in chapter four, section 1.4. González’s citation is in *Acta II/2*, 358.

20 *Acta II/2*, 356. All translations from the *Acta* are my own.
inequality has its roots in the fact that the hierarchy generates the others in the church and not the opposite, just as parents generate children and not the opposite.\textsuperscript{21} Second, the hierarchy, as institution, is ontologically and logically prior to the people of God.\textsuperscript{22} Third, the hierarchical organization of the church is in opposition to democracy. To describe how this is so, González stated that it is clear (\textit{prorsus}) that authority descends from God to Christ, from Christ to His Vicar (the pope) and the apostles, and from them to certain others (\textit{ceteros quosdam}).\textsuperscript{23} Fourth, González explains further why his view of Catholic ecclesiology excludes the idea of the hierarchy as “servants or agents of the people” (\textquotedblleft \textit{ministros” seu mandatarios populi}). With St. Paul, refracted through Pius XII’s \textit{Mystici corporis}, González rather sees members of the hierarchy as “servants of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1) because they receive their authority and mission directly from God, not from the people of the church.\textsuperscript{24}

González argued that a document treating the faithful before the hierarchy would be ambiguous and confusing, and his gesture to \textit{Auctorem fidei’s} condemnation of a heretical doctrine indicates unambiguously where he thought organizing the Constitution in this way would lead. González concluded by requesting that the ambiguous passage of \textit{De Ecclesia} which proceeds from “\textit{populo fideli ad hierarchas}” be excised since it did not accord with objective reality.\textsuperscript{25} That the final version of \textit{Lumen gentium} placed the chapter on the People

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 356–57.
    \item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 357, quoting \textit{Mystici corporis} 42 (though he cites it as 41).
    \item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 358. \textit{“Quoniam ergo primae pararaphi \textit{huius capitis} procedendo a populi fidelis ad hierarchas, ut videtur, realitati obiectivae non \textit{bene congruit}, et insuper, phrasis \textit{‘qui vero ut ministri potestate pollent, fratribus suis inserviunt’, obscurae et aequivoceae interpretatione obnoxio esse potest; dum e contra pararaphus secunda optime argumentum inducit et claram doctrinam tradit, propono ut eiusmodi prooemium, \textit{expuncta prima illa paragapho, a secundo incipit.” The first two italicized phrases mark \textit{deest} (meaning words that were spoken but did not appear in the submitted text) and \textit{apietur} (“adjusted”), respectively. The final italicized phrase is not marked with any footnote.}}
\end{itemize}
of God (which, however, is all of those baptized, not just the laity) before the chapter on the hierarchy lends added interest to González’s intervention, although the question of ontological priority is not taken up in the final text.

In this first case, *Auctorem fidei* and the memory of Pistoia were used to assert the priority and authority of the hierarchy over the faithful, even though the manner in which González did so was not necessarily explicit in the Bull. González does not attack episcopal collegiality, nor does his argument center on the *de iure divino* nature of the papacy as an argument against episcopal collegiality (although he does emphasize that power flows to Christ’s vicar and his apostles: *auctoritas...descendit...a Christo in eius vicarium et apostolos.*\(^{26}\) This evocation of *Auctorem fidei* is noteworthy insofar as it indicates a general ecclesiological view common to the minority, a view that sought to emphasize the difference between the laity and the clergy, exalt the authority of the latter, and stress that the supernatural community of the church was not a democracy, but was a hierarchical society.

While González was careful to ground his arguments in the New Testament and the Church Fathers (Clement of Rome), he did not seem to tackle the arguments of Liénart and other proponents of collegiality head on. None of their arguments advocated a radical Richerian conception of church authority. The issue, as we will see in the rather more prescient critiques of Carli and the responses of Schäufele and Silva Henríquez, was whether episcopal collegiality was *de iure divino*; and, if so, how it should function as a canonical and juridical force within a church in which the pope held the *plenitudinem potestatis.*\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 356

\(^{27}\) Vatican I taught this prerogative. See *Pastor aeternus*, chapter 3 (Denzinger 3064) cited below, 352–53.
The first reference to Pistoia during debate over episcopal collegiality occurred during the discussion of chapter two of the schema De Ecclesia (which became Lumen gentium). On October 11, Archbishop Nicodemo gave a nuanced speech evoking Auctorem fidei. Enrico Nicodemo was himself a noteworthy figure: a member of the Theological Commission of Italian Bishops established in August 1963 by Archbishop Alberto Caselli, the secretary of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). The president of the Commission was Archbishop Raffaele Calabria (Benevento), and there were seven others in this body, including Luigi Carli and Ermenegildo Florit, the Archbishop of Florence. Their job was “to examine closely the schemas and the observations to be passed to all the Italian fathers.” Thus, we should consider Nicodemo’s understanding of the genesis and aims of the text to be of crucial importance and his judgment significant, at least for the Italian episcopate.

Nicodemo’s speech began by evoking Auctorem fidei 2, but he sandwiched this papal condemnation in a chronological line between similar statements concerning the divine institution of the hierarchy (quae divina ordinatione instituta est): first the Tridentine decree (Session 23, chapter 4), then Auctorem fidei, and finally the 1907 decree Lamentabili, from the Holy Office under Pope Pius X, with Acts 20:28 also cited in a footnote.

Nicodemo seemed to be signaling, at the beginning of his intervention, what De Ecclesia was not doing (or should not do), and he had a trio of authoritative texts to do so. By calling to mind errors condemned at Trent, in Auctorem fidei, and in Lamentabili, Nicodemo

28 See Acta II/2, 459–61


30 See Denzinger 2602 (old numbering, 1502).

31 Acta II/2, 459.
was also, at least implicitly, evoking the memory of Protestantism, the Pistoians, and Modernism, albeit without using those potentially volatile terms. Yet, Nicodemo did not seem to intend to besmirch anyone by insinuating an association with these theological camps. He was rather calming concerns over the nature of episcopal collegiality that had already been voiced.

Indeed, Nicodemo’s intervention is remarkable insofar as it asked something of everyone in the debate. While he began with clear doctrinal parameters, which would challenge any naïve progressivism, he also asked for a certain openness to the possibility of a growth in the understanding of the deposit of faith, and consequently change on at least some level. He acknowledged “neuralgia” (nevralgicum) around the discussion of certain points (even around the centrale punctum), and followed his framing of the questions with a noteworthy statement:

But, on account of this very thing [the fact that bishops are put in place by the Holy Spirit to rule the church], the highest duty (officium) of our responsibilities stands forth. We ourselves are certainly at the end (in termino) of our conciliar labors the “teaching church” (ecclesia docens), but on the journey (in itinere) of our labors, rather we could be called the “seeking church” (ecclesia quaerens). Therefore, it ought to be sought by us from the deposit of divine revelation what other things should come to be affirmed about this matter, besides those things which have already been affirmed and defined by the magisterium of the Church.

While clearly acknowledging that there are boundaries of orthodoxy, Nicodemo also asked the council fathers not to regard past condemnations as ending all discussion of matters like episcopal collegiality. From the treasury of the deposit of faith, the council fathers were to seek “other things” which had not yet been defined. Like many, he considered necessary a deepened theology of the episcopacy, which was not developed at Vatican I. This moderate

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32 Ibid, 459.

33 Ibid, 460. Emphasis in original. “At, propter hoc ipsum, maximum exstat nostrae responsabilitatis officium. Sumus nos profecto in termino nostri conciliaris laboris « ecclesia docens », sed in itinere nostro « ecclesia quaerens » potius dici possemus. Quaerendum ergo a nobis est ex divinae revelationis deposito quid ulterius hac de re affirmandum veniat, praeter ea quae ab Ecclesiae magisterio iam affirmata et definita sunt.”
position of Nicodemo’s is well represented in the final documents. None of the affirmations of Vatican I (including many papal prerogatives which the Pistoians rejected) are denied or unsaid,\textsuperscript{34} but there is a deliberate development of the theology of the episcopate and a clear effort to establish a fruitful \textit{communio} between the bishops with and under the pope.\textsuperscript{35}

Nicodemo sought to encourage the council fathers by recalling the words of Pope Paul VI, who explicitly encouraged debate and exploration about “our specific matter” (the episcopate). The pope’s optimistic view was grounded, in his own words, in “great hope and sincere trust,” and in reflection on the nature of the church as mystery “which admits ever new and deeper explorations of itself.”\textsuperscript{36} The goal of these reflections, according to Nicodemo, was “declaring things which were not yet declared, or declaring more explicitly those things which were declared less explicitly; therefore, in no way constricting or diminishing, but always enriching.”\textsuperscript{37} Such assurances were necessary to counter the “perplexities,” which were not “simple anxieties,” of those who feared that “by strengthening the episcopal office \textit{(munus)}, the primacy of the Supreme Pontiff might be detracted from.”\textsuperscript{38}

As Cardinal Liénart had done two days previously, Nicodemo also called for a fresh look at the New Testament witness concerning Jesus, Peter, and the apostles.\textsuperscript{39} However, Nicodemo cautioned the fathers toward careful moderation; any doctrinal or juridical

\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, the affirmations of Vatican I were mostly repeated at Vatican II (especially in \textit{Lumen gentium} chapter 3), although in the context of the deliberate development of the theology of the episcopate.

\textsuperscript{35} This effort is apparent in \textit{Lumen gentium} chapter 3 (§18–29) and in \textit{Christus Dominus}.

\textsuperscript{36} Pope Paul VI’s introductory speech for the Second Session, cited in \textit{Acta II/2}, 460. “Nam Ecclesia, uti S. Pater Paulus VI ait initio huius periodi, « mysterium est... ac propterea talis est naturae, quae novas semper altioresque suiposius explorationes admitit ». Ad rem nostram autem specificam quod attinet ipse Summus Pontifex ad disceptandum et ideo ad quaerendum « magna spe et sincera fiducia » - sunt eius augusta verba nos omnes invitat.”

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 460. “Ulterius, dixi, nempe declarando quae nondum declarata sunt vel explicitius declarando quae minus explicite sunt declarata; nullo modo itaque coarctando aut imminuendo, sed semper locupletando.”

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. “...ut quis putare posset, simplices anxietates, ne roborando munus episcopale primatus Summi Pontificis drectetur.”

\textsuperscript{39} See Liénart’s spirited intervention, quoted above, page 336.
teaching of a dogmatic constitution must be beyond dispute, and firmly grounded in revelation.40

What is established, according to Nicodemo (“without disputing about the name,” that is, collegialitas) is that the college of bishops succeeds the college of the apostles. This succession is de iure divino, constituted by the divine will. However, “episcopal collegiality, as presented by some others is not in the same way so well known. For often, even very often, those things which are said about collegiality labor under a subtle ambiguity by replacing the juridical order with the theological.”41 While Alberto Melloni sees Nicodemo complaining about a lack of “juridical” precision in the text, Nicodemo seems in fact to be interested in making a clear distinction between the theological and the juridical.42

According to Nicodemo, there were two broad and separate issues at play. The doctrinal one concerned the relationship between the pope and the other bishops, between the successor of Peter (a position strongly fortified by Vatican I) and the college of bishops, which Trent taught succeeded the college of the Apostles (qui in apostolorum locum successerunt).43 The doctrinal issue had already been discussed by the Theological Commission.44 “Speaking theologically,” the only clear instance of an exercise of the fullness

40 Acta II/2, 460. “Therefore what Sacred Scripture tells us, what is drawn out (eruatur) from Tradition concerning the apostles and the successors of the apostles and of their offices (munera) in the Church, what is found there chiefly concerning the college of the apostles and the college of bishops comes into question. However, the responses must be completely certain to us who are seeking, since it is evident that every affirmation of any dogmatic constitution must rest on solid and firm proof.” (“Quid igitur nobis Sacra Scriptura dicit, quid e traditione eruatur circa apostolos et apostolorum successores horumque munera in Ecclesia; quid potissimum de collegio apostolorum et de collegio episcopali ibidem habeatur venit quaerendum. Respondiones vero nobis quarentibus omnino certae esse debent, cum evidens sit omnes affirmationes aliquid constitutionis dogmaticae solida et inconcissa probatone fulcirci debere.”)

41 Ibid, 460.


43 Acta II/2, 459. Nicodemo cites Trent session 23, chapter 4. This decree of 15 July 1563 (“The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and Ordination”) is in Denzinger, 1768.

of power granted to the episcopacy was in an ecumenical council, although it can also happen in the ordinary magisterium.\textsuperscript{45}

Although the two relationships cannot be entirely separated, one can differentiate from the theological relationship between pope and bishops their legal or canonical relationship, which was to be discussed in what ultimately became \textit{Christus Dominus}.\textsuperscript{46} This latter document treated the relationship between the pope and the local bishop, the role of papal nuncios, and the role of the Roman Curia, all contentious issues at Pistoia (and in many other eighteenth-century theological controversies) as well as at Vatican II. Nicodemo concluded his intervention with an honest appraisal of the difficulty and obscurity of the situation:

Doubtless, relative to the government of the universal Church, the Supreme Pontiff can benefit from the collegiality of bishops in very many other modes. And this, according to the circumstances of the times, can be discerned to be opportune; but forms of this sort are foreign to the theological order, although they concern the juridical order, and therefore they do not bear the plenitude of power committed to the episcopal college. Moreover the words “college” and “collegiality” patently designate different meanings. I say this not to be contrary in any way, but, as a lesser expert (\textit{minus peritus}), proposing objective difficulties to those who are more expert so that the investigation might be more accurate and the response more secure.\textsuperscript{47}

Nicodemo’s intervention offers a roadmap for the debate and its resolution. He began with framing the debate through three documents that were aimed at ecclesiological errors, one of them \textit{Auctorem fidei}. But, while apparently holding these past doctrinal statements as inviolable, Nicodemo thought there could (and should) be a real doctrinal development,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{45} \textit{Acta II/2}, 460.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Mörsdorf in Vorgrimler, \textit{Commentary} 2:165. \textit{Christus Dominus} was a combination of the schema \textit{Commissio conciliaris de Episcopis ac de dioecesium regimine} and a document “on the care of souls” which had to be combined with \textit{De Episcopis} (the “more important parts” included in \textit{De Episcopis} because of a lack of time).
  \item \textsuperscript{47} \textit{Acta II/2}, 461. “Procul dubio plurimis quidem aliis modis episcoporum collegialitate Summus Pontifex frui potest relate ad universae Ecclesiae regimen et hoc, pro temporum circumstantias, et opportunum potest dignoscit; at huiusmodi formae ab ordine theologico exulant, cum ordinem iuridicum respicient, et ideo plenitudinem potestatis episcoporum collegio commissam minime secumferunt. Ceterum vocabula ipsa «collegium» et «collegialitas» patenter diversam designant significacionem. Haec dico non ad quomodocumque negandum, sed, uti minus peritus, ad obiectivas difficultates peritioribus proponendas ut accuratior sit investigatio et securior responsio.”
\end{itemize}
accomplished through a *ressourcement* of scripture and tradition and a consequent explicit teaching of things held in the past only implicitly. *Auctorem fidei* pointed to a doctrinal boundary, but did not prohibit further discussion. In this sense, Nicodemo portrays a hermeneutic of openness and a presumption of trust, that deliberation as a “seeking church” will only help what must ultimately be a “teaching church.” Because of this hermeneutic, he challenged the council fathers to allow themselves to trust the Spirit and each other *in intinere*, on the journey. On balance, Nicodemo pointed to objective difficulties that continued to haunt the ecclesiological debates at the council, but also wanted to be conciliatory to “minority” sensibilities while acknowledging the positive successes of then-chapter two of *De Ecclesia*.

2.3 – “*Truths already in the peaceful possession of the Church*”: Framing the Questions with *Auctorem fidei* – Bishop Luigi Carli (Segni), 5 November 1963

The rest of the evocations of Pistoia and *Auctorem fidei* concerned a debate sparked by Bishop Carli, the *Relator* of the schema *De Episcopis ac dioecesium regimine* (which ultimately become *Christus Dominus*). Carli staunchly supported the conciliar minority, which, on the issue of episcopal collegiality, attempted to guard against what they perceived as threats to papal authority and as doctrinal novelty.

The *emendationes* proposed by various fathers to the schema *De Episcopis* shed further light on the tenseness with which both episcopal collegiality and the relationship between diocesan bishops and the Roman Curia were being discussed at the council. Even the title of the document came under scrutiny. Carli submitted an *animadversio generalis* (general observation) that the title should read “*De Episcopis* in [not “ac” (and)] *dioecesium*”.

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48 The *Relator* functioned as the official presenter of a draft text, with commentary. For an important account of the history of *Christus Dominus*, see Mörsdorf, *Commentary*, 2:165–97.

49 For a helpful overview of this moment in the debate, see Massimo Faggioli, *Il vescovo e il concilio: Modello episcopale e aggiornamento al Vaticano II* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 186–89.
...lest it be considered that here we treat of the dogmatic and juridical figure of the Bishop.” In Carli’s view, such questions were for the Theological Commission, and ultimately for the schema De Ecclesia, not for the text on which he was working. Although these statements only prove Carli was reticent to discuss these questions in the context of the schema De Episcopis, when this reticence is coupled with his charged criticism of the moderators for allowing the vote on De Ecclesia, there is evidence of Carli’s overall discomfort with any discussion of these questions.

The frustration of many bishops with the canonical status quo was apparent: a group of East African bishops called for an abrogation (abrogentur) of “all limitations of his [the diocesan bishop’s] rights or their exercise.” Presumably, they meant no cases involved in the government of a bishop’s diocese were to be reserved to the pope or the Curia at all. The frustration with the Roman Curia, which some bishops saw as infringing on the role of the residential bishop, was palpable. Bishop Alfred Couderc (Viviers, France) put his frustrations bluntly. “The episcopal power is bound in many things…. [T]he Roman Curia” should rather be “primarily the helper of the bishops and not their tutor.” Archbishop Schäufele also made a strong statement in favor of local bishops having all faculties required by his duties in his diocese, a stance Schäufele was later to reiterate and to attempt to square with Auctorem fidei.

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50 Acta II/4, 394. “Ne putetur hic agi de figura dogmatica et iuridica Episcopi.”


53 Acta II/4, 395. “Curia Romana est primario Episcoporum adiutrix et non tutrix ... Potestas episcopalis ligatur in multis...”

54 See Acta II/4, 399 emendatio 52.
In the context of this debate, Carli evoked Pistoia and *Auctorem fidei* during his *Relatio* on the November 5, 1963 draft of the schema *De Episcopis*. The critical comments came in Carli’s discussion of episcopal faculties. While explaining the diocesan bishops should have all “normal rights” (*iure communi*) article 3 of the schema (“Concerning Episcopal Faculties”) begins thus:

> [Fundamental principle]: § 1. The power of the Roman Pontiff to reserve cases to himself is always secure; whether by the nature of the matter, or for the conservation of the unity of the Church, he should judge necessary to reserve cases to himself because of the circumstances of places or times…”

Carli announced that the Commission elaborated such formulas in order to keep from treating theological questions that belonged to *De Ecclesia*. Surely the Commission “neither could nor should withdraw (*abstrahere*) from truths already in the peaceful possession of the Church, namely, from the definitions of the First Vatican Council and from doctrines already declared by Pius VI” (in *Auctorem fidei* 6 and 8). Carli’s implication was that not only neither should nor could the Commission tackle such questions, but, by extension, neither should the council fathers at large. It was not only during the discussion of *De Episcopis* that such questions should be avoided. Carli plainly cast *Auctorem fidei* as a document which should limit and circumscribe the debate *tout court*, since in it the Church had already

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55 Carli’s *Relatio* is in *Acta II/4*, 439–45.

56 The draft of *De Episcopis* is in *Acta II/4*, 364–92.

57 See *Acta II/4*, 365–66 for the fundamental principle concerning episcopal faculties. Carli refers to it in *Acta II/4*, 442, but does not quote it directly (it was the text under discussion, however). While Carli is concerned with defending the beginning of the fundamental principle, which asserts the unlimited right of the Pope to reserve cases, he does in fact approve substantially of the text, which seeks, even if guardedly, to expand the rights of local bishops. The fundamental principle continues: “local Bishops have, by common right, all faculties which are demanded for the more suitable and freer exercise of their ordinary and immediate power, which exercise is to be accomplished under the Roman Pontiff’s primacy of jurisdiction. Wherefore the faculties recognized for them up to this point should be increased; among other faculties, they should have those which are listed in the Appendix to this chapter. § 2. All bishops, even only titular bishops, should enjoy stably those faculties that fit with the episcopal dignity.”

58 *Acta II/4*, 442.

definitely decided upon at least some critical questions. This stance is narrower than the
cautious openness of Nicodemo. At least for Carli, *Auctorem fidei* exerts a very strong
controlling function in the conciliar debate.60

But what were these critical questions? Provocatively, Carli did not simply allude to
*Auctorem fidei* articles 6 and 8, but quoted them in full in the text of his *Relatio*. Pius VI had
declared it:

to be surely schismatic, and at least erroneous what the Pistoians maintained: *A bishop
receives from Christ all necessary rights for the good rule of his diocese*, as if higher
ordinances that deal either with faith and morals or with general discipline and that
can come from the Supreme Pontiff and the general Councils for the universal Church
are not necessary for the good rule of each diocese.61

Carli next accurately noted that *Auctorem fidei* labels as “inducing to schism and subversion
of hierarchical rule and erroneous,” the Pistoian proposition that

“The rights of a bishop received from Jesus Christ for governing the Church can be
neither altered nor hindered (nec alterari nec impediri posse), and, when it should
happen that the exercise of these rights has been interrupted for any reason
whatsoever (quavis de cause fuisse interruptum), a bishop can and should always
return to his original rights, as often as the greater good (maius bonum) of his church
requires it”; insofar as it [this proposition] intimates (innuit) that the exercise of
episcopal rights can be hindered or restricted by no higher power, whenever a bishop
by his own judgement (*proprio iudicio*) reckons that it is less expedient for the
greater good of his church.62

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60 See Guido Bausenhart’s treatment of this episode in his commentary on *Christus Dominus* 8 in *Herders theologischer Kommentar* 2:225–314, at 259–60.

dioecesis’; perinde ac si ad bonum regimen cuiusque dioecesis necessariae non sint superiores ordinations
spectantes sive fidem et mores sive ad generalem disciplinam, quarem ius est penes Summos Pontifices et
Concilia generalia pro universa Ecclesia: schismatica, ad minus erronea.” The Pistoian Decree on Ordination
§25 is cited (see *Atti*, 180).

persuasum esse ait, ‘iura episcopi a Iesu Christo accepta pro gubernanda Ecclesia nee alterari nec impediri
posse, et ubi contigerit, horum iurium exercitium quavis de causa fuisse interruptum, posse semper episcopum
ac debere in originalia sua iura regredi, quotiescumque id exigat maius bonum suae ecclesiae’; in eo, quod
innuit, iurium episcopaliun exercitium nulla superiore potestate praepediri aut coerceri posse, quandocumque
episcopus proprio iudicio censuerit, minus id expedire maiori bono suae ecclesiae: inducens in schisma et
subversionem hierarchici regiminiis, erronea.” The Pistoian citation is the same as §6 (Decree on Ordination §25
in *Atti*, 180).
“Hence,” Carli continued, “it is clear why, though obliquely (unde clare patet cur, licet in obliquo), the Schema affirms the right which the Roman Pontiff enjoys to reserve to himself, according to his prudent judgment and the circumstances of various times or places, so called ‘greater cases’ (causas maiores).”

It is significant that, while only mentioning Vatican I, Carli chose to cite two lengthy articles of Auctorem fidei in full, including the degree of condemnation they assigned to Pistoian propositions. One could argue that, by including the text of Auctorem fidei 6 and 8 in his Relatio, Carli was consciously contributing this citation to the Council’s future hermeneutics. Thus, the mere citing of such documents created a permanent record of opposition that could be used in the future for polemical purposes and the creation of one’s own historical narrative. Such a strategy had precedent: some of the minority anti-infallibilist bishops at Vatican I had evoked the canons of the Council of Constance in St. Peter’s, in the face of much ultramontane hostility. However, in this case, not only would his speeches form part of the official conciliar Acta, but as a Relatio on a text to be voted on, Carli knew his words had special hermeneutical value. As Relator, Carli’s role was to give an official report (not a private opinion) on the meaning of the text on which the fathers were to vote. Thus, the debate over the theological and juridical nature of the episcopacy would be linked to Auctorem fidei in a more official way than if a minority father had raised the specter of Pistoia in a personal capacity.

The “definitions of Vatican I” were too well known to be quoted in full, and no council father had challenged the primacy or infallibility of the pope. While the discussions

63 Acta II/4, 442. “Unde clare patet cur, licet in obliquo, schema ius affirmet quo Romanus Pontifex gaudet sibi reservandi, pro suo prudenti iudicio et pro variis temporum locorumve circumstantiis, sic dictas « causas maiores ».”

64 Archbishop Darboy (Paris), Bishop Strossmayer (Djakove, Croatia), and Augustin Vérot, Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida (but educated at Saint-Sulpice in France), all evoked the decrees of Constance during debate at Vatican I. See Oakley, Conciliarist Tradition, 215.
of collegiality and reserved canonical cases were not efforts to challenge Vatican I per se, they were unmistakable attempts to revisit what some considered the “unfinished business” of that council. Many of the fathers of Vatican II were attempting to reexamine the question of how the office of bishop and its accompanying rights and duties related to the papal primacy. Quoting Auctorem fidei 6 and 8 in full as examples of settled doctrine on the matter was therefore a strong statement of opposition to such reexamination, and consequently a statement of support for the then-current papal limitation on the exercise of faculties bishops had in virtue of their office. By associating the views of his opponents with the condemned ecclesiology of Pistoia, Carli was both attempting to circumscribe the debate and to make insinuations about the dubious doctrinal heritage of his opponents. Predictably, this resulted in a number of fathers taking offense, including Archbishop Schäufele, a leader in a group of progressive Northern Europeans.

2.4 – “The Error of the Pistoians Is Not Advanced”: A Close Reading of the Bull — Archbishop Hermann Schäufele (Freiburg), 6 November 1963

The next day, speaking in the name of many German bishops and the Scandinavian episcopal conferences, Schäufele vehemently rejected Carli’s insinuations. Schäufele himself was a popular figure, having been elected to the Commission for Bishops during the

65 This is a common phrase for a desire to balance Vatican I’s focus on the centrality and prerogatives of the papacy with the more multifaceted emphases of Lumen gentium. See, for example, Patrick Carey, Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ: A Model Theologian, 1918–2008 (New York/Mahwah, NJ: 2010), 233.

66 By stating that the Commission that produced the text he is introducing must not violate Auctorem fidei 6 and 8, Carli is also implying that some of the council fathers might want the document to do so.

67 Carli acknowledged this consequence of his remarks eight days later (13 November 1963). See Acta II/5, 72.

first session with the second-highest overall vote tally (1658). Schäufele had been appointed “reporter” for one of De Episcopis’ five subcommissions (his subcommission was “on pastoral care”), making his clash with Carli a dispute between two of the most prominent figures in this discussion. Indeed, since the full commission had not met for almost a year, Schäufele was bringing his own concerns and those of many others to the council floor with some sense of frustration.

Instead of going on the offensive immediately, however, Schäufele first diplomatically outlined where the advantages of the schema lay. He saw them in the principle of subsidiarity (which, he noted, Pius XII had commended) contained in chapter three, on national episcopal conferences. Then he turned to matters which needed to be “completed” or “improved” (perficienda).

For Schäufele, the “fundamental principle” concerning episcopal faculties required crucial emendation. The text delivered in the schema should be conceived differently. It ought to begin rather thus:

In virtue of his episcopal office, the residential bishop must have all the faculties which befit him as ordinary and immediate pastor, for the shepherding of his flock, always keeping firm the Roman Pontiff’s power to reserve. Therefore, his original rights ought to be restored (restituenda sunt) to the residential bishop.

Schäufele argued that the Council should sanction an Index Reservationum rather than an Index Facultatum. This proposed shift, from declaring what was granted (Index Facultatum)


70 Alberto Melloni, “The Beginning of the Second Period,” in ibid., 3:23n89

71 “The conciliar Commission for Bishops did not hold a single plenary meeting between December 1962 and November 1963; each of the several times such a meeting was announced, it was canceled.” Joseph Famerée, “Bishops and Dioceses and the Communications Media (November 5–25, 1963),” in Alberigo, History 3:117–88, at 117. Carli’s behavior prompted some proponents of collegiality, such as Cardinal Veuillot, to appeal to Cardinal Tisserant (head of the Council of Presidents) as early as October 29. See Melloni, “The Beginning of the Second Period,” in ibid., 3:53.

72 Acta II/4, 496. “…episcopus residentialis vi officii sui episcopalis omnes habere debet facultates, quas ipsi ut pastori ordinario et immediato ad gregem suum pascendum competunt, firma semper Romani Pontificis potestate reservandi. Quare restituenda sunt episcopo residentiali sua iura originaria.”
to what was reserved (*Index Reservationum*) would not be mere rhetoric, but a strong
statement about who has the original right. The German and Scandinavian bishops were
calling for the residential bishop to have, in virtue of his office, all faculties except those
reserved to the Holy See, rather than the bishop having no faculties except those granted by
the pope as he sees fit. Presumably, under this configuration, a case or faculty would have to
be explicitly declared by the pope or Curia to be reserved, otherwise it would be assumed the
local bishop had the right to adjudicate the case or to exercise the faculty. The norm should
be that the bishop has, in virtue of his office, all the faculties and jurisdiction necessary for
his “ordinary and immediate” rule in his diocese. Clearly under the surface is the repeated
grievance that bishops were treated as mere vicars of the pope and as subjects of the Curia. It
should be recalled that this grievance animated Scipione de’Ricci’s most heated rhetoric and
also drove Febronianism, Jansenism, Josephinism, and Gallicanism, in distinct but similar
ways.

Indeed, by speaking of “restoring” to the bishops their “original rights,” Schäufele
took up one of the chief demands of the Pistoians, one which was common in late Jansenist,
Gallican, Febronian, and Josephinist rhetoric.73 It is striking that Schäufele chose to
approximate such language so closely, since these eighteenth-century groups who used that
language had been repeatedly condemned. In the case of the Pistoians, *Auctorem fidei*
IMPLIED THE LANGUAGE ITSELF IS DOCTRINALLY SUSPECT.74 Schäufele’s language of “restoring

73 See *Punti ecclesiastici* §5, p. 6 (the fifth of the “Fifty-Seven Points”). Grand Duke Peter Leopold decreed that
the “original rights” (*diritti originari*) of his bishops had been “usurped from them by abuse of the Court of
Rome” and gave the Tuscan bishops the right to examine canonical dispensations reserved to Rome and reclaim
those which were taken unlawfully.

74 This is clear in *Auctorem fidei* 7 (Denzinger 2607). During the 16 December 1790 meeting of the prelates
investigating the Synod of Pistoia, Cardinal Campanelli argued that appealing to “original rights” was the
beginning of a chain of democratizing and Protestantizing errors of both a political and a theological nature.
Bishops claiming “original rights” is “related to the current errors in *France*, and in *Germany*, and while the
Bishops under the pretense of the authority conferred to them by God rebel against the Apostolic See, so the
*parrochi* under the same pretense rebel against the Bishops, and, may God not permit, even also the Princes;
likewise the People arrogate to themselves rights concerning religion, which they get from the example of the
*parrochi.*” When these ideas reach the priests, the errors of Wycliff and Calvin are revived. Regarding the laity,
original rights” certainly endorses a view of the history of the episcopate and of its relations to the papacy and the Curia that is at least sympathetic to that of the Pistoians and other likeminded eighteenth-century groups.

Moreover, in Schäufele’s twentieth-century context, such language could imply an indirect attack on Vatican I as having usurped rights. Pastor aeternus 3 speaks of papal jurisdictional power as ordinary and immediate in every diocese and over all the faithful. The canon of Pastor aeternus 3 may also have targeted Pistoian ecclesiology. Certainly, the errors condemned in the following give a good summation of the sort of ecclesiology embraced by late Jansenists, Febronians, and the followers of van Eybel:

Therefore, if anyone says that the Roman pontiff has only an office of supervision or guidance, and not the full and supreme power of jurisdiction in the universal church, not only in matters which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those things which pertain to the discipline and government of the church dispersed throughout the whole world; or that he has only the principal part (potiores partes), but not the complete plenitude of this supreme power; or that his power is not ordinary and immediate both over each and every church and over each and every one of the pastors and faithful: let him be anathema.75

The phrase “principal part” echoes the Pistoian Decree on Faith and the Church (session 3), which was directly adopting the Gallican articles.76

Campanell made clear allusion to the French Revolution (“current errors in France”). The antidote to such errors was the “subordination of the Bishops to the Roman Pontiff, vicar of Jesus Christ, and Primate not only of honor, but of jurisdiction.” See ASV, Pistoia 1, intervention of Campanelli.

75 See the canon attached to Pastor aeternus 3 (Denzinger 3064). “Si quis itaque dixerit, Romanum Pontificem habere tantummodo officium inspectionis vel directionis, non autem plenam et supremam potestatem jurisdictionis in universam Ecclesiam, non solum in rebus, quae ad fidem et mores, sed etiam in iis, quae ad disciplinam et regimen Ecclesiae per totum orbem diffusae pertinent; aut eum habere tantum potiores partes, non vero totam plenitudinem huius supremae potestatis; aut hanc eius potestatem non esse ordinariam et immediatam sive in omnes ac singulas ecclesias sive in omnes et singulos pastores et fideles: anathema sit.”

Pastor aeternus 3 (Denzinger 3060) speaks of papal jurisdictional power as ordinary and immediate in every diocese and over all the faithful: “this power of jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is also immediate. Therefore both pastors and faithful, of any rite and dignity, both individually and collectively, are bound to submit to this power by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience.” (“…hanc Romani Pontificis jurisdictionis potestatem, quae vere episcopalis est, immediatam esse: erga quan cujuscumque ritus et dignitatis pastores atque fideles, tam seorsum singuli quam simul omnes, officio hierarchicae subordinationis veraeque oboedientiae obstringuntur.”)

It is extremely improbable that a learned man such as Schäufele was unaware of such associations, since the Denzinger doctrinal handbook was a common teaching tool, and Schäufele’s native country had a history of such thought in Febronianism and the episcopalism of the prince-bishops of the Rhine. Not only that, but just a day earlier Carli had read the condemned proposition (*Auctorem fidei* 8) which read in part that “a bishop can and should always return to his original rights,”⁷⁷ which makes Schäufele’s speech even more likely to be a direct statement of opposition to the attempted seizing of hermeneutical control of the debate by Carli, but also a daring push against the ultramontanism present and implied in documents like *Auctorem fidei* and *Pastor aeternus*.

Were Schäufele and his 80 confreres advancing an error of the Pistoians, already condemned by the Church? The Archbishop of Freiburg was eager to counter: “the principle now proffered does not labor under the error of the Pistoians; the essential difference is in this: that the Pistoians denied to the Roman Pontiff the right of reserving.”⁷⁸ Schäufele, or those in his party, had subjected *Auctorem fidei* to a close reading. The proposition in question was condemned as schismatic only “insofar as it (*quod innuit*) intimates that the exercise of episcopal rights can be hindered or coerced by no higher power.”⁷⁹

While Schäufele’s statements had an intentionally sharp polemical edge to them, this stance was not really a stand against the papacy per se. Rather, it was a shrewd rhetorical manoeuver to gain control over the hermeneutic of the council during the present drafting of texts and its future reception. Schäufele and the German and Scandinavian signatories were signalling that although there were striking similarities with the Pistoians, the intention and scope of twentieth-century reformers were different; while the Pistoians argued that the pope

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⁷⁷ *Auctorem fidei* 8 (Denzinger 2608) cited in *Acta* II/4, 442.

⁷⁸ *Acta* II/4, 496. “Principium modo prolatum non laborat errore Pistoriensium; essentialis differentia est in hoc, quod Pistorienses denegabant Romano Pontifici ius reservandi.”

⁷⁹ *Auctorem fidei* 8 (Denzinger 2608) cited in *Acta* II/4, 442.
did not have the right of reserving cases to himself, Schäufele’s group technically did not advocate the errors Pius VI had identified. Rather, they attempted to pick and choose reformist ideas from the church’s past that they perceived to be doctrinally sound and disentangle them from heretical or schismatic theses to which their forebears had connected them.

While there is no doubt that the rhetoric of “restoring” to bishops their “original rights” sounded dangerously radical to many, both in 1786 and in 1963, Schäufele insisted that only careful interpretation of Auctorem fidei could circumscribe discussion; one could not broadly insinuate that the aims or even the rhetoric of the proponents of juridical reform of the relationship between the Vatican and the local bishop were Pistoian and thus beyond the pale. Schäufele, however, was not the only one offended by the evocation of Pistoia.

There was to be one more major rebuttal of Carli’s evocation of Pistoia.

2.5 – “The Norms of Sound Theology”: Historical Contextualization of the Synod of Pistoia – Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez (Archbishop of Santiago, Chile), 8 November 1963

From the Spanish-speaking global South came the next retort to Carli’s insinuations. A fascinating rebuttal came from the Salesian Cardinal Silva Henríquez of Santiago, Chile.

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80 This position appears, for example, in the Raccolta. Tract four even argues that the traditional oath of allegiance to Rome at episcopal ordinations should be abolished. On the Raccolta see chapter three, section 2.1. See also Bolton, Church Reform, 28–29, 35. De’Ricci had actually abolished reserved cases in his diocese at the request of the Grand Duke.


82 For biographical information see Mario I. Aguilar, A Social History of the Catholic Church in Chile, vol. 2: The Pinochet Government and Cardinal Silva Henríquez (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellin Press, 2006). See esp. 141–47 for his activity during the Second Session of the Council; for the third session and his clashes with Cardinal Ottaviani on issues such as the veneration of Mary and whether there ought to be a separate schema on her, see 153–60; for the fourth, and Silva Henríquez’s enthusiasm for Dignitatis humanae and Gaudium et Spes, see 165–170.
in the form of a written intervention two days later, arguing for a historical contextualization of *Auctorem fidei*. Silva Henríquez wrote in Spanish rather than Latin. His words deserve close attention because the Chilean presented the most detailed rebuttal of Carli’s evocation of Pistoia.

Silva Henríquez was attacking the idea that faculties of any kind were “granted” to bishops by the pope, and he was supporting the contention that the bishop receives from Christ all that is necessary for the governance of his diocese. For him, the language of “amplifying” the faculties of the bishops (*amplificentur*) that the schema *De Episcopis* used, however well-intentioned, can easily be understood in a problematic way:

If we read these affirmations in the light of the explanation given in [Carli’s *Relatio*], we are not able…to shirk the impression that the title (*título*) on which these faculties are based is not the ordination to the episcopacy and the assignment to a particular diocese, but a “gracious concession” on the part of the Roman Pontiff. This *Relatio*, in fact, alludes to two propositions of the Synod of Pistoia.

Silva Henríquez proceeded to quote portions of *Auctorem fidei* 6 and 8 (as Carli had in full) in Latin, and then concluded:

> From the citation of these two schismatic propositions in the *Relatio*, it would seem we must logically come away with this conclusion: the bishops do not receive, by the fact of their episcopal character and their assignment to a particular diocese, all the powers necessary to rule their diocese; and here they have need of the Roman Pontiff’s “granting” (*ortogue*) these powers.

Silva Henríquez then pointed to a tension between a critical affirmation in the text, that the residential bishop does indeed receive all that is necessary for the rule of his diocese from

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84 Ibid., 658. “[S]i leemos estas afirmaciones a la luz de la explicación dada en la relatio super schema decreti de episcopis ..., pág. 12, no podemos sin embargo rehuir la impresión de que el título en que se basan estas facultades no es la ordenación al episcopado y la asignación a una diócesis determinada, sino una «graciosa concesión» por parte del Romano Pontífice. Esta relación, en efecto, alude a dos proposiciones del Sinodo de Pistoia[.]”

85 Ibid., 659. “De la citación de estas dos proposiciones cismáticas en la *relatio*, parecería desprenderse lógicamente esta conclusión: los obispos no reciben, por el hecho de su carácter episcopal y por la asignación a una diócesis determinada, todos los poderes necesarios para regir su diócesis; y de aquí que haya necesidad de que el Romano Pontífice les «ortogue» estos poderes[.]”
Christ, and the interpretation that the *Relatio* seemed to give, framed as it was within Carli’s reading of *Auctorem fidei*, or insinuations from the text. This was deeply problematic for the Cardinal, because if Carli’s interpretation were true, “it cannot be affirmed that the bishop, in virtue of his ordination and given the assignment to a diocese, has all the necessary powers to rule his diocese, except those that the Holy See holds to be reserved in view of the common good of the Church,” as the “fundamental principle” of the draft schema on bishops’ rule in dioceses affirmed.86

Silva Henríquez proceeded to a detailed historical contextualization and theological analysis of *Auctorem fidei* and the Pistoians that showed an ability to read doctrinal documents of the past in their proper historical context, an ability that many *periti* and council fathers were insisting was necessary to do good theology. He began by inviting the fathers to contemplate the history of the problem, and proceeded to outline the affinities of the Pistoians with Jansenism.

The propositions of the Pistoians are condemned in so far as they match a Jansenist, Gallican, and episcopalist mentality. The influence of Jansenism on the Pistoians has been made manifest by the authors that have specialized in the history of this religious movement in Tuscany.87 If not necessarily Bishop Ricci, all of the Italian Jansenist movement was marked by a deep animosity toward the Holy See (cf. Matteucci, *op. cit.*, p. 164 s.). This was translated, in theory, into Gallican and episcopalist thought, in which Ricci and the other Pistoians certainly participated, as was noted already by Pius VI in his two briefs to the Bishop of Chiusa and Pienza (cf. *Mansi* 38:1103–1108). It is thus not at all strange that these ideas and attitudes appear in the writings of the Pistoians. Thus, for example, Gallican Jansenism shows itself clearly in the “Decree on the Faith and on the Church” of the Synod of Pistoia: “although the pope has the principal part in questions of faith, and his decrees pertain to all the church and to each church in particular, his judgement is not irreformable, if the consent of the church does not intervene” (number 16 of the Decree, *Mansi* 38:1017).88

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86 *Acta II/4*, 659. “Si la interpretación sugerida en la *relatio* es verdadera, ya no se podría afirmar que el obispo, en virtud de su ordenación y dada la asignación a una diócesis, tenga todos los poderes necesarios para regir su diócesis, salvo aquellos que la Santa Sede tenga a bien reservarse en vista del bien común de la Iglesia.”


88 *Acta II/4*, 659. “Las proposiciones de los pistorienses son condenadas en cuanto responden a una mentalidad jansenista, galicana y episcopalista. La influencia del jansenismo sobre los pistorienses ha sido puesta de manifiesto por los autores que se han especializado en la historia de este movimiento religioso de la Toscana. Si no necesariamente el obispo Ricci, todo este movimiento jansenista italiano estaba marcado por una profunda
Indeed, the cited *ex consensu* clause was part and parcel of Gallicanism and so popular in anti-ultramontane circles that *Pastor aeternus* deliberately rejected it in the conciliar definition of papal infallibility: the definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable “of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church” (*ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae, irrefromabiles esse*). In order to prove his point that Pistoia was following radical, now defunct theological currents, Silva Henríquez quoted three excerpts of Ricci’s letters (in Italian) to Grand Duke Peter Leopold.

In light of this historical contextualization, Silva Henríquez then set out to provide his fellow bishops with an outline of his careful hermeneutic of *Auctorem fidei*:

According to the norms of all sound (*sana*) theology, these two propositions must be understood in the light of their historical context. In other words, the error of the Pistoians, and that by which the qualifier “schismatic” fits them, consists in not acknowledging the Roman Pontiff’s power to intervene in matters of doctrine and of the government of residential bishops. It is, in brief, its Gallicanism and its episcopalism. Hence, what was condemned by the Bull *Auctorem fidei* are these errors. It would therefore violate the sense (*sentido*) of the Bull of Pius VI to read in these two propositions the affirmation that the bishop, in virtue of his consecration and by the assignment of a diocese, *does not receive* all the powers for the administration of his flock, except those that the Pope reserves to himself, without which it would be required that the Pope graciously “grant” (*concediese*) them. Concerning this question *Auctorem fidei* does not pronounce. It should therefore be wished that in the *Relatio* the necessary clarifications be made so that the two citations against the Pistoians might not be taken as a criterion that has to guide the interpretation and the discussion of the problem of the origin of episcopal power.

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89 *Pastor aeternus* 4 (Denzinger 3074).

90 *Acta* II/4, 660, emphasis Silva Henríquez’s. “Según las normas de toda sana teología, estas dos proposiciones deben ser entendidas a la luz de su contexto histórico. En otras palabras, el error de los pistorienses, y aquello por lo cual les cabe el calificativo de «cismáticos», consiste en no reconocer al Romano Pontefice su poder de intervenir en los asuntos de doctrina y de gobierno de los obispos residenciales. Es, en resumen, su galicanismo y su episcopalismo. De aquí que lo condenado por *Auctores fidei* sean estos errores. Sería, por tanto, violar el sentido de la Bulla de Pio VI el leer en esas dos proposiciones la afirmación de que el obispo, en virtud de su consagración y por la asignación de una diócesis, *no recibe* todos los poderes para administrar su grey, salvos...
First, Silva Henríquez’s text makes clear that the historical context of a condemned or censured proposition must necessarily be considered if one is to judge it justly, and he does the contextualizing himself in this case. It would follow that *periti* and council fathers should provide such context if they cite condemnations. For Silva Henríquez it was clear that the propositions could not be considered as timeless truth claims per se. The use of past condemnations from Denzinger’s collection without knowledge of the historical context in which such censures arose could lead one to uncritically reject reform that was not in fact rejected by the condemnations in question. It could even lead to rejecting healthy reformist ideas of the past that were historically linked with rightly rejected ideas. Thus, Silva Henríquez rejected Carli’s insinuation that his opponents were merely repeating Pistoian errors, already condemned, on the origin of episcopal power.

Secondly, Silva Henríquez insisted that any reading of a magisterial text needs a careful hermeneutic to guide interpretation. He adopted a close, almost contemplative reading of the text with a generous hermeneutic. This generous hermeneutic does not unnecessarily demonize the Pistoians, but interprets them as bound up with certain erroneous doctrinal systems of their day. He isolates these two ideologies (which he calls “Gallicanism and episcopalism,” both practically defunct amongst Catholic bishops in the 1960s, at least in their eighteenth-century sense) and then interprets the condemnations of *Auctorem fidei* in a sense which restricts them to those conflicts of the past. While from Carli’s *Relatio* it “logically” seemed to follow that residential bishops do “not receive” all necessary rights and powers (from their ordination and assignment to a diocese), that is not in fact what *Auctorem fidei* says. If one read quickly, or uncritically, one could easily misunderstand it to state that

*aquéllos que el Papa se reservase, sino que se requeriría que el Pontífice se los «concediese» graciosamente. Sobre esta cuestión no se pronuncia Auctorem fidei. Sería, pues, de desear que en la Relatio se hicieren las aclaraciones necesarias para que no se tomen las dos citas contra los pistorienses como un criterio que ha de guiar la interpretación y discusión del problema del origen del poder episcopal.”*
denial, and there certainly were ultramontanist theologians who argued that such was the implication of papal primacy. But the Cardinal made clear that Pius VI declared only that it was schismatic to assert that bishops receive all necessary powers from Christ, if by that it is intimated (quod innuit) that the Pope cannot condition the exercise of those powers. Such an intimation was simply not being made at Vatican II. Thus, Silva Henríquez’s hermeneutic allowed him to interpret the intentions of the majority of his confreres, which was to affirm the rights of local bishops, in a positive light. How the Pope’s recognized superior power related to the local bishop and the full teaching on the origin of the bishop’s authority to govern his local church were the questions at present. However, Silva Henríquez’s emphasis was that Auctorem fidei did not require a belief that he implied was unacceptable: that all the faculties necessary for governing a local church are granted to a bishop by a “gracious concession” of the Roman Pontiff. He found this belief unacceptable because he wanted to leave room for the notion that ordination together with assignment of a diocese is what invests a bishop with these faculties, and thus he wanted to conceive of ordinary episcopal power coming directly from Christ.

Thirdly, Silva Henríquez thought it important to differentiate carefully between doctrinally orthodox reformist ideas and other unacceptable notions with which they were entangled in the past. If one conflated the two, one could easily stifle the freedom for the healthy theological debate and discernment that Archbishop Nicodemo had urged the council fathers to be open to. Silva Henríquez favored one position on an open question: “the problem of the origin of the episcopal power.” But Auctorem fidei, read strictly and properly understood in its historical context, had not pronounced on this most important question.


92 This was really a question for De Ecclesia and not De Episcopis, although the latter had to be deeply informed by the former. The critical vote of October 30 had already partially addressed this issue, but the text on this
Silva Henríquez offered the most detailed analysis of an eighteenth-century doctrinal text and the debate surrounding it in the acts of Vatican II. Moreover, he offered a generous hermeneutical outline for the historical contextualization of doctrinal documents that became widely accepted, albeit perhaps not openly acknowledged. This hermeneutic was critical because Silva Henríquez’s demonstration of the importance of historical contextualization for the consideration of past doctrinal teachings was necessary in light of the council’s coming formal recognition of at least some sort of doctrinal development (see *Dei verbum* 8). These skills were to become even more relevant as debates over religious liberty came to the fore (especially in light of numerous magisterial documents of Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X) in some of the bitterest conflicts in sessions three and four.

Silva Henríquez’s wish that the *Relatio* be amended and that *Auctorem fidei* “might not be taken as a criterion that guides the interpretation and discussion” of the issues surrounding the origin of episcopal power and episcopal collegiality is as clear a statement as possible against allowing *Auctorem fidei* and the memory of the Pistoians to exert what I have called a “controlling function” over the debate.

2.6 – “Sub luce illius Bullae”: Bishop Carli’s Response to his Critics – Bishop Luigi Carli (Segni), 13 November 1963

The heated exchanges sparked by Carli’s public reading of *Auctorem fidei* 6 and 8 in his *Relatio* of 5 November 1963 on *De Episcopis* constituted a major controversy at the

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93 Silva Henríquez had developed his theological ideas in the days leading up to the council by establishing a working group of young Chilean theologians to assist him, most from the faculty of the Catholic University in Santiago. This group prepared responses to the preparatory documents. Gérard Philips of Louvain, a major architect of *Lumen gentium*, praised the Chilean contribution several times. Cardinal Frings (Cologne) also supported their work. See Aguilar, *A Social History of the Catholic Church in Chile* 2:121–22, 142. At the Council, a major advisor to Silva Henríquez was the canonist Jorge Arturo Medina Estevez. See Mathijs Lamberigts and Leo Declerck, “La contribution de la «squadra belga» au Concile Vatican II,” *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* 21 (2012): 157–183, 162.
Council, as they touched upon the hotly contested questions of episcopal collegiality and the relationship of residential bishops to the pope and the Curia. The perceived “assimilation” by Carli of his opponents to the Pistoians in his *Relatio* was found offensive (*contumeliosam*) by many. Carli’s defense was delivered on 13 November. He claimed to speak in the name of thirty council fathers, and his rebuttal “appears to have been a reply to the earlier speech of Msgr. Schäufele.” Although Silva Henríquez had offered the more detailed rejoinder, Carli’s main target in his defense was Schäufele, whose speech had been in a plenary assembly; moreover, he was the spokesperson of a large group of progressive Germans and Scandinavians. It was thus imperative that Carli defend himself against this “very strong statement.”

Carli’s speech began with the presentation of his credentials as a *Relator* chosen according to the Council’s rules of procedure, so as to parry the procedural criticisms levelled at him in the first and second conciliar sessions. Then, he defended his evocation of *Auctorem fidei* by claiming that his mention of the Pistoians was not intended to slander any of his fellow bishops. Rather, he argued that the preparatory commission had worked specifically within the bounds of *Auctorem fidei* to avoid giving the impression of being “unjust” (*iniustam*) and “injurious” (*iniuriosum*) to the Roman Pontiff, by implying that the pope and the Curia were guilty of encroaching on the rights of the episcopate. This was

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95 Carli in *Acta II/5*, 72.

96 Joseph Famerée relates that “when the list was checked [*Acta II/5, 75*] it contained only nine signatures.” There is little doubt, however, that a greater number of fathers who were skeptical of episcopal collegiality would have supported Carli’s restricted interpretation of *De Episcopis*. See Famerée, “Bishops and Dioceses,” in Alberigo, *History* 3:149n109.


98 Famerée, “Bishops and Dioceses,” in *idid.*, 3:150.

99 *Acta II/5*, 72–73.
always his intention, argued Carli, for it was precisely “in light of that Bull” (*sub luce illius Bullae*) that the preparatory commission in the plenary sessions of 26 April and 28 September 1961 had deliberated on the sections of *De Episcopis* in question.¹⁰⁰ For him and the commission, Carli argued, it was important that any expansion of episcopal power would not be construed as the return of something unjustly taken away (*quasi de redditione iniuste ablate*) and would not be insulting to the pope. Carli’s argument cannot be said to lack historical grounding. After all, Pius VI had rejected many reform attempts of Pistoia with the argument that if they had been accepted, the Catholic teaching and practice of that day would rightly have been called into question.¹⁰¹

On one hand, Carli did not directly answer the allegation that he had “assimilated” (*assimilato*) the opinions of his opponents to those of the Pistoians.¹⁰² But, by calling attention to two Plenary Sessions of 1961 – before any conciliar debate had occurred, before the council fathers had even been presented with the first drafts of *De Ecclesia* or *De Episcopis* – Carli was offering an olive branch of sorts. It might not be satisfying to those pushing hardest for reform, but Carli’s speech of 13 November was attempting to be conciliatory insofar as it demonstrated that the evocations of *Auctorem fidei* originally came

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¹⁰⁰ *Acta* II/5, 72. See Massimo Faggioli, *A Council for the Global Church*, 241. “During the April 20, 1961 meeting of the preparatory commission on the episcopate Pasquazi presented his report, which contained the suggestions on the first two drafts of the schema about the relations between the local bishops and the Roman Curia. He underlined the theological issues and noted that they had some links with the Synod of Pistoia (1786), condemned by Pius VI. The reactions of the commission’s members were almost unanimously critical, except for the position of Monsignor Carli, who desired to avoid questioning the relationship between local bishops and the Roman Curia, in order to avoid the risk of echoing the statements of the aforementioned synod. The commission’s president, Cardinal Marella, had to close the debate in the commission on this subject. See *Verbale della sessione generale del 25 aprile 1961* (vespere) and *Verba della sessione generale del 26 aprile* (mattina), in Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), file Conc. Vat. II, 980.” For a full account of the relevant commission meetings in April 1961, see Faggioli, *Il vescovo e il concilio*, 90–94.

¹⁰¹ See the discussion of the charge that the Pistoians were “favorable to the charges of heretics” in chapter four, section 3.3.

from a preparatory phase, in which some fathers\textsuperscript{103} had always wanted to avoid implying any of the radical claims of the Pistoians.

It should also be noted that \textit{Auctorem fidei} does insinuate that the language of “restoring” original rights to bishops was at best erroneous, and it was well known that the Pistoians and the Jansenists often wrote, in sometimes extreme language, about recovering episcopal rights unjustly taking from them by the pope and the Curia. Wanting to guard against such an interpretation is not a misuse or misreading of the document at all. But, as Schäufele pointed out, it cannot be maintained that \textit{Auctorem fidei} explicitly condemned the position advanced by the Vatican II majority; it only explicitly condemned denying the right of a \textit{superior potestas} to limit the exercise of a local bishop’s rights. The general orientation of Carli’s thought is clearly closer to that of Pius VI and \textit{Auctorem fidei}, which is precisely why the majority did not want attention called to \textit{Auctorem fidei}, just as \textit{Dignitatis humanae} cited John XXIII and Pius XII, but not Gregory XVI or Pius IX.\textsuperscript{104}

The strategy of the majority was to contextualize \textit{Auctorem fidei} historically and dismiss it from the discussion as not touching upon their present debates; evoking it was “neither pertinent nor legitimate.”\textsuperscript{105} The majority could make a strong case for dismissing it, and this dismissal was not just a negative cancellation, but a positive attempt to advance a

\textsuperscript{103} Although Faggioli suggests it could have been very few, even Carli and one other. See 362n100, above.

\textsuperscript{104} The papacies of Pius VI (1775–99), Gregory XVI (1831–46), and Pius IX (1846–78) had all issued doctrinal documents condemning religious liberty. The conciliar majority, however, who desired a clear doctrinal development on the question, relied mainly on the more open attitudes that can be found in some of the teaching of Leo XIII (1878–1903), Pius XI (1922–39), and especially Pius XII (1939–58) and John XXIII (1958–63). Indeed, out of 38 footnotes in the document, Pius XII and John XXIII are cited seven times each. No eighteenth-century popes are cited, and the only nineteenth-century pope cited is Leo XIII (four times). While there was a plurality of views on the question and on the interpretation of the document, that put forward by John Courtney Murray, SJ, was a common one (Murray was closely involved in the composition of \textit{Dignitatis humanae}). Murray sought to interpret the document as a bold development but also as in continuity with important Catholic principles. See John Courtney Murray, “The Declaration on Religious Freedom,” \textit{Concilium} 5 (1966): 3–10. This English edition issue was titled “War, Poverty, and Freedom: The Christian Response,” and edited by Franz Böckle.

\textsuperscript{105} Ulianich, “Il Sinodo di Pistoia,” 321. This article is significant since it was published only days after Carli’s intervention (17 November 1963), and in the organ of the Italian episcopate (\textit{l’Avvenire}). It is evidence of the uproar the Carli incident caused both inside and outside St. Peter’s.
certain hermeneutic, and thus take hermeneutical control of the debate. First and foremost, no bishop at Vatican II “would ever think of putting in doubt the validity of the papal primacy.” The ecclesiological common ground of 1963 was radically different from that of 1786, when diverse forms of anti-papal conciliarism flourished before the catastrophe of the French Revolution and the triumph of ultramontanism. But even in the days of Pistoia, as Boris Ulianich noted in his coverage of the Carli incident in *l’Avvenire d’Italia*, Cardinal Gerdil of Savoy had interpreted *Auctorem fidei* (of which he was a principal author) to teach that as long as the “immediate superior authority of the Roman Pontiff over all the faithful” is secure, there is no “prejudice to the ordinary power of the bishops in their respective dioceses.” Of course, it is critical how “ordinary powers” are defined and whether the origin of episcopal authority is directly from Christ or whether it flows through His Vicar, the pope. It was these questions that Silva Henríquez wished to become the focus of attention.

After Carli attempted to clear up what he claimed was confusion about the *Relatio* (he wanted to establish “the real situation”), he immediately attacked the notion that episcopal collegiality could be *de iure divino*, specifically when this collegiality was claimed to take shape in national episcopal conferences. His arguments were varied, and some of them are in force today, such as the inadmissibility of a national episcopal conference interfering in the authority of a local bishop in his diocese without the consent of the Holy See. While an analysis of these perspectives and the wider debate at the Council on these points is beyond the scope of this work, it is important to note that for Carli, as well as for his opponents, there

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106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
was an intimate connection between the debate over the restoration of “original rights” to the 
bishops and ecclesiologies that leaned toward the papalist stance or toward the episcopalist 
stance.110 Silva Henríquez rightly reminded the council fathers that Auctorem fidei cannot be 
understood in a vacuum; its eighteenth-century context must frame our understanding. While 
Silva Henríquez intended to bolster the position of the majority, and his arguments were 
prescient, this ability to historically contextualize cuts both ways. For it is surely not a 
coincidence that the same eighteenth-century voices calling for a reform of canon law and the 
Curia, and restoring bishops’ “original rights” were also calling for Febronian, Gallican, and 
Josephinist church structures. The issues are intimately related in the minds of these 
reformers in their eighteenth-century context, and, while many council fathers deeply 
resented his insinuations, Carli understood this relationship. For this reason, he could move 
seamlessly from a defense of his evocation of Auctorem fidei 6 and 8, which do not explicitly 
address episcopal collegiality, to an attack on episcopal collegiality.

The contemporary reports of this series of events enlighten us as to the emotional 
atmosphere in which it occurred, an atmosphere that made all parties prone to exaggeration 
and caricature. For example, on 14 November L’Avvenire d’Italia reported the events in a 
slanted and incomplete manner, reporting that Carli was a “direct collaborator of Cardinal 
Ottaviani in the Theological Commission.”111 L’Avvenire went on to allege a certain 
dissimulation on the part of Carli, implying that he supported the text as Relator only to 
slander it in his personal capacity (a titolo personale). This was simply not the case. Nor was 
the L’Avvenire report correct in the detail (no doubt intended to tar Carli) of his close 
association with Ottaviani, who by the second session was already being cast by many as the

111 L’Avvenire d’Italia cited in Caprile, Il Concilio Vaticano II, 263.
bête noire of the council. These errors were pointed out, and L’Avvenire issued a retraction of its slanted reporting, concluding with the following:

Apropos, then, of the reference made in this discourse of Msgr. Carli to the bull of Pius VI, Auctorem Fidei, with which the theses of the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia were condemned, we can now take a view to the integral text of his intervention, and we are therefore able to give the exact version of the passage in question, the sense of which appears different from that reported earlier.112

In perhaps the most influential history of the Council, Joseph Famerée sees Carli’s full retort of 13 November as meriting the sub-heading “a new attack on collegiality.”113 However, concerning the references to Pistoia, Famerée argued that Carli was at least partially misunderstood. The hasty and inaccurate attack on Carli by L’Avvenire makes “clear the atmosphere at the Council, but it also shows how the commentaries and rumors that circulated about the event often distorted it, consciously or not, in accordance with the views of the journalist or the newspaper.”114 Since Carli was seen as the “paragon of the ‘anti-collegialists,’” he was “spontaneously associated with Ottaviani.” While it might seem that Carli had “likened the fathers of the majority to the Pistoians condemned by Pius VI,” in fact “the reality was somewhat different from this account [L’Avvenire’s]….Carli mentioned the Bull Auctorem Fidei simply in order to explain the uncontroversial meaning that, he maintained, the citation had had in his report of November 5.”115 These are helpful clarifications from a historian who presents Carli on the whole unflatteringly, as “one of the most obdurate representatives of the minority at the Council.”116 Famerée’s sympathy for Carli concerning his evocations of Auctorem fidei is not shared by all historians of the

112 Ibid.
113 Famerée, “Bishops and Dioceses,” in Alberigo, History 3:149.
114 Ibid, 151.
115 Ibid.
Council. Also writing in Alberigo’s *History of Vatican II*, Jan Grootaers narrates Carli’s speech of 13 November thus:

[He] went on the offensive and created a sensation at the Council by attacking the moderators for allowing the recent vote on preliminary questions on collegiality and by defending the invocation in the schema of the condemnation by Pius VI of the heresy of the Jansenists of Pistoia.¹¹⁷

These contemporary reports and later accounts are stimulating for our study not so that we can pass judgment on Carli, but because they shed much light on how evocations of *Auctorem fidei* functioned at the Council, and how they were received and countered. It is clear that to evoke Pistoia, and in particular to “assimilate” the views of opponents to the Pistoians was not merely to conjure up an abortive reform attempt by an obscure diocesan council. It was to rake up old graves, but very real ones: bishops who felt juridically denigrated by the Curia and theologically bullied by ultramontanists as mere vicars of the pope rather than true successors of the apostles. From the ultramontanist perspective *Auctorem fidei* functioned as an important monument of a besieged papacy’s victory over both a cluster of ecclesiological errors and the worst and most despotic forms of Erastianism. From this perspective, fear of such errors colored perception of all attempts to affirm the prerogatives of bishops.¹¹⁸

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¹¹⁷ Grootaers, “The Drama Continues,” in Alberigo, *History* 2:453n234. Grootaers accurately reports that Carli did indeed attack the moderators for allowing the collegiality vote and Carli defended his evocation of Pistoia, but he did so in the careful manner described above.

¹¹⁸ It was reported to Yves Congar that minority evocations of Pistoia continued after the exchanges in the Aula centered around Carli, but they were delivered privately by minority fathers directly to Pope Paul VI. See Congar’s journal entry of 16 November 1963: “On the conservative side, attempts are being made to instil fear into [Paul VI]….Possible or threatening dangers are pointed out to him and, for example, in the case of collegiality, the spectre of the Synod of Pistoia.” Dom Leclerq delivered this news to Congar, having heard it from Alberigo. See *My Journal of the Council*, trans. Mary John Ronayne and Mary Cecily Boulding, ed. Denis Minns (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 426.
Conclusion: The “Controlling Function” of Auctorem fidei

In this chapter, I have shown that the Synod of Pistoia was a “ghost” on the council floor, that is, a key moment in the church’s collective memory which influenced the drafting of texts and subsequent debate. The debates discussed in this chapter show that the council fathers were not concerned only with the legacy of the First Vatican Council, Modernism, and the renewal movements of the twentieth century. The conflicts, hopes, and fears of the eighteenth-century Catholic Church also made themselves felt in the aula. One of these “ghosts” was that of Pistoia, and the legacy of the thought of de’Ricci, Tamburini, and Peter Leopold, which was itself the culmination of a long line of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century attempts at Catholic reform, from the most radical strains of Jansenism to some fairly moderate Gallican notions.

We have seen that citations of Auctorem fidei buttressed drafts of early documents, all of which were never promulgated or were published in greatly amended form. These changes always included the deletion of any reference to Auctorem fidei. The Constitution against the Pistoians was also evoked by some council fathers in an attempt to orient discussion in a particular direction, to exert a “controlling function” in certain debates over ecclesiological issues surrounding the nature and role of the episcopacy. Most notably, Carli, a central figure at the Council, used the memory of Pistoia to liken his ecclesiological opponents to schismatics. Ultimately, the majority dealt with Auctorem fidei by subjecting it to close textual scrutiny (Schäufele) or by applying a rigorous historical contextualization (Silva Henríquez) to argue that the condemnations of Auctorem fidei could not be appropriately applied to the ecclesiological issues facing the council, in particular the problems of both the origin of episcopal power and reserved canonical cases.

However, while not evoking Pistoia to frame their presentation of issues, the final documents did not technically violate the ecclesiological parameters of Auctorem fidei (and
Pastor aeternus) either; the rights of the papacy were vigilantly guarded. In this sense, the explicit ecclesiological condemnations in Auctorem fidei did have a controlling function. However, the condemnations did not condition debate in the way Carli wished them to do, by the insinuations of the text and through the ultramontanist theology from which it arose. These did not ultimately circumscribe debate and were not determinative of the final ecclesiological affirmations of Lumen gentium and Christus Dominus. It was an advance for the majority that something like Bishop Nicodemo’s cautious optimism (and openness to change) prevailed in the tense ecclesiological debates over a renewed theology of the episcopacy and its relations to the Holy See.

Along with debates over Dignitatis humanae and Nostra aetate, the theological and juridical issues surrounding episcopal collegiality remained some of the most controversial and time-consuming on the Council’s agenda. Lumen gentium was finally promulgated on 21 November 1964; chapter three having been one of the most intensely scrutinized and debated of any conciliar passage. On 28 October 1965, in the fourth and final session of the Council, Christus Dominus was promulgated by an overwhelming vote. The judgement of Gilles Routhier broadly encapsulates the qualified, perhaps heavily qualified, optimism of many in the conciliar majority.

Vatican II succeeded, not without difficulty, in providing the Catholic Church with a conciliar text on bishops [Christus Dominus]; it seemed thereby to balance the unfinished teaching of Vatican I on the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. On the other hand, chapter I, on the role of the bishops in relation to the universal Church, did not manage to give a concrete insight into the application of the principles set down in chapter III of Lumen gentium, which dealt with the episcopate. While the new schema did assert once again that collegial authority can be exercised outside a council (no. 5), it did not elaborate either the means of this exercise or the norms of defining it.

119 See, for example, Lumen gentium 21–23; Christus Dominus 2, 4–5, 8 (formerly De Episcopis). The prerogatives of Vatican I are clearly retained.

No. 6 did reaffirm the concern of the bishops for the entire Church, but it did not suggest any way of making this concern effective….It did indeed include the seeds of renewal, but nothing had yet been done about them.\textsuperscript{121}

Just as concerns about the “unfinished business” of Vatican I survived long after that Council closed in 1870, so have the concerns described by Routhier endured past the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of Vatican II. There were important moments in this continued debate in the Catholic Church in the postconciliar period, such as the revision of Canon Law in 1983, the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985, and the promulgation of \textit{Ut unum sint} (1995) and \textit{Apostolos suos} (1998) by Pope John Paul II. In the papacy of Francis, however, calls for a re-examination of collegiality, often through appeals to “synodality,” are increasing. In light of the collegial deliberations of the Synod on the Family (4–25 October 2015) and the widely diverging reactions to the Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Amoris laetitia} (19 May 2016), the Catholic Church may again be preparing for a major debate surrounding the exercise of the papal primacy in light of episcopal collegiality.

CONCLUSION: THE MEMORY OF PISTOIA AND THE HERMENEUTIC OF TRUE REFORM

This dissertation has argued that Vatican II should be understood as a point on an arc of reform extending all the way back to the eighteenth century. Pushing the roots of the Council back beyond the twentieth-century reform movements, Modernism, Newman, and the Tübingen School helps us to better understand and interpret Vatican II reforms. Thus, the complexities of a hermeneutic of reform, which interprets the Council as in continuity and discontinuity, on different levels, with past Catholic teaching and theology, become clearer. A hermeneutic of reform should not only return to the “deepest patrimony” of the fathers or the early church, but must also recognize that the agendas of failed Catholic reformers of the more recent past have sometimes survived, and have even been vindicated in certain situations. John O’Malley’s work has shown that to fully understand Vatican II, we must understand that “in St. Peter’s, beside the thousands of [Council] Fathers...Pius IX and Pius XII, Marx and Freud, Lagrange and Rosmini, and De Maistre and Lamennais were there, listening to the infinite debate that changed the church[.]”¹ Now that I have demonstrated that, beside De Maistre, Lammenais, and Pius IX stood other, older ghosts – those of de’Ricci and Tamburini, Muratori and Pius VI – that story has become even more complex.

Many of the “discontinuities” in conciliar thought pointed out by those in the “Spirit-Event” paradigm (and bemoaned by some traditionalists) are in fact realizations of the agendas of failed eighteenth-century Catholic reformers that sought ecclesiological, devotional, and liturgical renewal, and who were open, however inchoately, to religious liberty and ecumenism.

The continuity stressed by “Text-Continuity” Catholics is deep when the Council is read in light of the whole tradition, but some of this continuity is more immediate with failed reformist groups than with the early modern magisterium. One need only compare Vatican II with the attitudes towards liturgical reform and Bible reading in *Auctorem fidei* and in the *Atti* of the Synod of Pistoia.  

This work has also sought to accurately and critically contextualize late Jansenist reform efforts because the memory of Jansenism still functions as a term of abuse in Catholic discourse. It is indeed “curious…to see this old heresy resurrected in modern debates,” including recent debates in popular Catholic periodicals over divorce, remarriage, and the reception of communion.  

Very often, these evocations lack grounding in the history of the movement or its actual theological positions. In the age of ecumenism, it has become less and less acceptable for

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2 It is often pointed out that the style of Vatican II was different from other ecumenical councils. Comparing Vatican II with Trent and Vatican I easily establishes this point. However, the novelty of Vatican II is perhaps even more stark when comparing its ecumenical openness with the attitude of Pius VI’s committee of prelates who investigated the Synod of Pistoia. They recommended the censure of Pistoia (which ultimately occurred, on many points) even when the Synod itself may not have been in error, but could be read to aid and abet the Protestant enemy in any way, either by echoing any of their critiques of Catholic doctrine or practice or by using language which in any way approximated that used by Protestants. Compared with *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio* (not to mention postconciliar magisterial documents like *Ut unum sint*), this development and change in magisterial styles is striking indeed. See chapter five, section 2.1 (the ASV Pistoia file contains all of the committee’s reports).

Catholics to dismiss the legacy of Protestantism or evaluate it as wholly negative.\textsuperscript{4} It is expected that criticisms be made with nuance, and that interpretations be as  irenic and generous as possible. Little such courtesy is extended to “Jansenists” (even the term itself is often used incorrectly), whose memory much Catholic discourse looks on with contempt, as if the various Jansenist movements had no positive content whatsoever and were not responding to real problems. While not ecumenical per se,\textsuperscript{5} fairer and more honest evaluations of the legacy of Jansenism would reap similar theological fruit as the contemporary Catholic reassessment of Protestantism and Protestant authors.

Catholic theology should be honest about the fact that key elements of the Jansenist agenda (and the Pistoian agenda in particular) were accepted by the Catholic Church at Vatican II.\textsuperscript{6} The Council initiated sweeping liturgical reforms that remarkably paralleled the Synod of Pistoia’s decrees, including the introduction of the vernacular, the loud and clear pronunciation of the Eucharistic canon, an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, and the active participation of the faithful in the Mass.\textsuperscript{7} The Christocentric foundation of Catholic devotional life was stressed. In stark contrast to the cautious negativity of \textit{Unigenitus}, against which the Pistoians and other Jansenists had rebelled, Vatican II proclaimed Bible reading to be integral to the spiritual life of the laity. After a long process of doctrinal development, punctuated by the

\textsuperscript{4} The ecumenical movement, the Council, and postconciliar dialogue has had a notable effect on how Catholic theologians and prelates think and speak of both the Reformers and contemporary Protestants. Consider, for example, the difference between Congar’s treatments in \textit{Vrai et fausse réforme dans l’église} (1950) and \textit{Martin Luther: Sa foi, sa réforme} (1983).

\textsuperscript{5} This task is not unrelated to ecumenism, however, since honest historical evaluations of Catholic history, particularly the history of reform, have great ecumenical importance.

\textsuperscript{6} Parallels between the agenda of the Third Party and the reforms that came to fruition at the Council are also striking. See Appolis’ summary quoted in chapter two, section 3.1.

\textsuperscript{7} Of course, all of these were themes of twentieth-century liturgical renewal which predated Vatican II, and postconciliar implementation and interpretation of \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} makes this history more complicated.
experience of anti-Christian twentieth-century totalitarian regimes, the Catholic Church came to agree with the Pistoians against “forcing the inconstant and stubborn by exterior judgment and salutary punishments.” *Dignitatis humanae* promoted only “means that depend on persuasion,” that is, it proclaimed religious liberty.⁸ Late Jansenists sought to be irenic with Protestants, but explicit ecumenical concerns were undeveloped and only inchoately present. Nevertheless, Vatican II’s commitment to ecumenism built upon the an irenicism like that of the Pistoians and other eighteenth-century Catholic reformers who preferred to speak of Protestants as “separated brethren” rather than as obstinate heretics, and who placed some of the blame for the sixteenth-century separations on poor formulations of Catholic doctrine and not just moral abuses or pastoral failures. While not ecumenical in the modern sense, they clearly saw that the reunification of the Christian churches would require movement on both sides, that is, the Catholic Church would first and foremost have to be concerned with its own purification, even while it asserted the truth of its doctrine and the necessity of full, visible ecclesial unity.

The opponents of the Pistoians and of many other eighteenth-century Catholic reformers had clearly seen that the most radical propositions under discussion were not related to liturgy or devotions, but to ecclesiology, to the very nature of the church. It is no accident, then, that it was during ecclesiological debate that *Auctorem fidei* and the memory of the Pistoians were most often evoked at Vatican II. These ecclesiological debates yielded *Lumen gentium* and *Christus Dominus*.⁹ The Council taught that episcopal consecration is the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders, that the college of bishops succeeds the college of the Apostles and possesses full and supreme power in the church (with no prejudice to the pope), and that this authority is *de*

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⁸ The condemned Pistoian propositions regarding religious liberty and toleration are quoted here. See Denzinger 2604–5 (*Auctorem fidei* 4 and 5). See the discussion in chapter four, section 2.

⁹ Both of these documents are examined in chapter six.
Episcopal collegiality, which caused probably the fiercest debate at the Council, was sketched in *Lumen gentium* 22–25. A renewed theology of the laity, emphasizing their baptismal call and the priority of the whole People of God, was a central component of conciliar thought, and *Lumen gentium* in particular. The laity can advise their bishops (§37) and they also participate in ecclesial infallibility, according to §12, which teaches that the People of God as a whole, through the *sensus fidei*, “cannot err in matters of belief.” Taken as a whole, this renewed ecclesiology of the episcopacy and the laity pointed to a more diffuse understanding of teaching authority.

Thus, the Jansenist and Gallican concern to locate infallibility in the entire church did ultimately bear fruit at Vatican II. Of course, Vatican II was not as explicit as de’Ricci and the Pistoians regarding the role of lay people in councils and synods. Nor did Vatican II resuscitate conciliarism, properly speaking – the text of *Lumen gentium* strongly reasserted papal supremacy and the appended *Nota explicativa praevia* made very clear that collegiality could in no way impinge upon this supremacy. Still, *Lumen gentium* presented a diffuse understanding of teaching authority that is hierarchical yet communal, organic, and inclusive. By tackling thorny problems from the early modern period in many areas – the liturgy, devotions, religious liberty, ecumenism, and ecclesiology (especially the relationship between the pope and the episcopate), Vatican II evinced deep reform and rejuvenation.

The postconciliar period bears clear witness: the debates that consumed eighteenth-century Catholicism are still with us. Tension between some local bishops’ conferences and the

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10 See chapter one, 1.7.

11 Fascinatingly, it might be the *Nota praevia* that preserves the strongest footprint of *Auctorem fidei*. Congar recorded in his conciliar journal that influential members of the minority were using “the spectre of Pistoia” in their direct appeals to Paul VI about the danger of the doctrine of collegiality. See the conclusion to chapter six.
Roman Curia regarding the revision of liturgical books and translations remains a neuralgic issue in the postconciliar church. Pope Francis’ *motu proprio* Magnum principium (2017), which revises canon law, is an attempt at placing more authority in bishops’ conferences.\(^\text{12}\) Calls for synodality and collegiality have marked the papacy of Francis. Some see a church governed primarily through synodality as the unfinished business of Vatican II that is finally being realized.\(^\text{13}\)

However, the most recent synod, the Synod on the Family, and the document it produced, Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (2016),\(^\text{14}\) have led to a doctrinal controversy with some intriguing parallels to the *Unigenitus* crisis (although not nearly on the same scale). This controversy includes both supporters and opponents of Pope Francis’ position on the possibility of communion for the divorced and remarried\(^\text{15}\) being accused (rather dubiously) of Jansenism or errors approximating Jansenism.\(^\text{16}\) Four cardinals submitted a “*dubia*” (a document formally requesting clarification on a doubtful matter) to Pope Francis, asking whether *Amoris laetitia* contradicted the teaching of his predecessor John Paul II, a highly unusual query to a reigning pope.\(^\text{17}\) When Francis did not answer, the cardinals published the *dubia*, causing a great deal of controversy. While the parallel with the four Appellant bishops is striking, the theological

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\(^\text{15}\) See his letter to the Argentinian bishops, interpreting *Amoris laetitia*, in *AAS* 108.10 (October 2016): 1071–74.

\(^\text{16}\) See 372n2, above. These accusations are normally based on poor understandings of Jansenism.

and contextual differences are significant. One of the signatories of the *dubia*, Cardinal Raymond Burke, has even suggested that what these critics of Pope Francis see as doctrinal confusion could be a sign of the “end times,” a reaction to a perceived betrayal by the papacy similar to that of the Jansenist figurists.

How could the Catholic magisterium reject so many reform proposals by groups like the Pistoians in the eighteenth century and yet accept them, in some cases so emphatically, in the twentieth? An adequate answer to this question would require a lengthy study. Nevertheless, some facts could already be generally agreed upon. The theological, historical, political, and cultural contexts, of course, were tremendously different. For the pope to bless religious liberty in the context of the French Revolution would have meant something very different from doing so in the 1960s. Another factor is that many twentieth-century reformers, like Congar and Guardini, knew of the mistakes (and character flaws) of failed reformers of the past, like de’Ricci and Lamennais, and self-consciously sought to avoid those mistakes. Some of the key individuals from these two eras, such as Pope Pius VI and Pope John XXIII, had very different

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18 While both sets of prelates expressed concern that an individual pope (Clement XI, Francis) has contradicted the teaching of a hallowed doctor or papal predecessor (St. Augustine, St. John Paul II) and the true meaning of scripture, the Appellants appealed to a future ecumenical council while the *dubia* cardinals appear to believe that only Francis can rectify the situation with a formal clarification or abjuration. However, one of the cardinals, Burke, has claimed some sort of “formal correction” from concerned prelates could become necessary should Francis fail to teach “the truth.” The difference in the nature of the appeals is telling: conciliarist Jansenists wished for a council to correct an erring pope, while these post-Vatican I prelates wish for the pope himself to correct alleged errors or ambiguities in his own teaching. On Cardinal Burke’s notion of a “formal correction,” see Edward Pentin, “Cardinal Burke Outlines Formal Correction of Pope Francis’ Teaching,” *National Catholic Register*, 17 August 2017 available at http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/cardinal-burke-outlines-formal-correction-of-pope-francis-teaching.


20 Neither the traditionalist attempt to use these parallels as a means to dismiss or denigrate Vatican II reforms (see the Introduction), nor the tendency to claim only a surface-level similarity between suppressed eighteenth-century reform and Vatican II does justice to the complexity of the historical record and the theological issues at stake.
perspectives and backgrounds. Finally, the twentieth-century reform movements generally proceeded slowly, with a respectful stance towards ecclesial authority.

Notwithstanding these somewhat obvious facts, I propose that, rather paradoxically, the First Vatican Council helps provide a more complete explanation for why the church could ultimately accept these reforms. It is certainly true that *Lumen gentium*, in particular, can be read as an attempt to “balance” the rather lopsided papalism of *Pastor aeternus* and that many council fathers at Vatican II believed such balancing was necessary.\(^\text{21}\) However, it was precisely Vatican I’s settling of the debate over fiercely disputed ecclesiological questions, those of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction, which allowed the Catholic Church to later receive collegiality.\(^\text{22}\) Even those most in favor of a strong statement of the doctrine of episcopal collegiality at Vatican II, the *ressourcement* party and many other members of the conciliar majority, simply took papal primacy and infallibility for granted. The victory of the ultramontane majority at Vatican I was so decisive that, ironically, it allowed Catholic reformers the demilitarized space they needed to build on and qualify these dogmatic commitments with affirmations on the episcopacy and the rest of the People of God.\(^\text{23}\) Had the majority bishops at Vatican II suspected that Congar, Ratzinger, de Lubac, and others in the *ressourcement* party were in fact attempting to resurrect Gallican or Jansenist ecclesiology, any affirmation of the rights of the episcopacy or of a diffuse understanding of ecclesial authority might have been

\(^\text{21}\) It should be remembered that *Pastor aeternus* was not intended as a comprehensive treatise on the church but rather to address certain questions on the papacy. Vatican I was interrupted by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War so no document on the church could be promulgated.

\(^\text{22}\) It is important to point out that the presence of Gallican-trained bishops at Vatican I was an important check on excessive ultramontanism. The actual definition of papal infallibility was very carefully circumscribed. Congar even called these Gallican-leaning bishops “the vanguard of Vatican II.” See chapter two, section 1.2.

\(^\text{23}\) I am grateful for illuminating exchanges with Andrew Meszaros on these points.
blocked. But by the twentieth century, the teaching of Vatican I was simply assumed – virtually all Catholic ecclesiastics believed it.

This perspective on the paradoxical role of Vatican I is shared by Emile Perreau-Sassine, who argues for understanding Vatican II from “the perspective of the longue durée.”24 His work Catholicism and Democracy proposes that the Council was not in fact a fundamental break with tradition, and indeed that it was actually a continuation of the work of Vatican I. The secularization of the state that followed the French Revolution necessitated a change of allegiances. Catholic had to look to Rome for the religious authority that could no longer be found within the framework of the nation, because they sensed the degradation of the body politic in the age of secularization….In this perspective, Vatican II becomes inseparable from Vatican I. The adaption of the church to the democratic world order came in two stages, at the two councils. The continuities outweigh the discontinuities.25

Although Perreau-Sassine’s evaluation is primarily political, he highlights a coherent way to understand the great changes and apparent reversals the Catholic Church has taken since the late eighteenth century. Seeing with Perreau-Sassine “a coherent ‘Vatican reform’” in the two councils is not to argue that they said the same thing or that Vatican II contained no discontinuities or novelties.26 Much less is it to claim that Vatican II’s reforms were not necessary, or were a non-event. It is rather to claim that both Vatican I and II were necessary and complimentary reactions to a changing world: the disintegration of the ancien régime, the rise of secularization, and, ultimately, of democracy. In contrast to Francis Oakley, who sees Vatican I as obliterating Gallicanism and conciliarism,27 Perreau-Sassine correctly recognizes that

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24 Perreau-Sassine, Catholicism and Democracy, 140.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Oakley, The Conciliarist Tradition, 13–14, 16.
ultramontanist and conciliarist tendencies still exist in the Catholic Church, and both can be healthy and even necessary. From this perspective, early modern reformers like de’Ricci can be blamed for being too old-fashioned when they naively trusted in Catholic princes to reform the church. As S. J. Miller wryly commented, this was “a fatal trend once princes ceased being Christians at the end of the century.” On the other hand, late Jansenists in particular can also be blamed for a too-hasty progressivism when they backed the Revolution and antagonized the papacy. The Pistoians were not wrong because the reforms they desired were wrong (many of them were not) but because they sought to realize them proleptically, before they were due. Ironically, the failure of these radicals was a failure of imagination.

28 Catholicism and Democracy, 150–52. Perreau-Sassine argues that the postconciliar church has seen a “Gallican resurgence” (140). He cites contemporary anti-ultramontanist literature (140n92) as well as interesting details such as the postconciliar tendency for many priests to wear contemporary clothing rather than cassocks, “retrieving another old Gallican idea.” Henri Maret (1805–84), one of the last great Gallican theologians, lamented that so many nineteenth-century priests separated themselves from the laity through the cassock. Maret considered the resulting division “one of the greatest evils of modern times” (cited in ibid., 138). Perreau-Sassine even points out (178n3), correctly in my view, that widely accepted positions such as those taken in John F. Kennedy’s address to a Protestant gathering in Houston in 1960 are “the American equivalent” of the first Gallican Article. In the modern Catholic Church of the Vatican councils, Gallicanism and ultramontanism have found certain modes of coexistence. A key part of the Gallican agenda – the independence of governments from clerical rule – can and has been realized alongside, and not in opposition to, ultramontanism.

29 S. J. Miller, “Portugal and Utrecht,” 226.
Ecclesial Documents

Most ecclesial documents cited – this includes conciliar, papal, and other ecclesial doctrinal and disciplinary documents – are in Denzinger, *AAS*, or the Vatican website. The Vatican website has all modern (1800 to present) papal, conciliar, curial, and CDF documents.

All of the ecclesial documents issued by de’Ricci or the Pistoian circle are in *Atti, Atti Appendices*, *ASF*, *ASV*, *Lettere*, or the *Raccolta* series.

See the Abbreviations section (pages viii-ix) for full bibliographic entries of these collections.

All other ecclesial documents cited are listed below.


The acts of the Provincial Council of the schismatic Church of Utrecht are available at Actes et décrets du II. concile provincial d'Utrecht, tenu le 13 septembre M.DCC.LXIII. dans la chapelle de l'église paroissiale de saint Gertrude, à Utrecht. Utrecht: Au dépens de la compagnie, 1764.

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