

# Apostate Antipopes, Heretical Books, and the Salvation Heresy



R. J. M. I.

By

The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ,  
The Grace of the God of the Holy Catholic Church,  
The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Our Lady of Good Counsel and Crusher of Heretics,  
The Protection of Saint Joseph, Patriarch of the Holy Family,  
The Intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel  
and the cooperation of

Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

To Jesus through Mary

*Júdica me, Deus, et discérne causam meam de gente non sancta:  
ab hómine iníquo, et dolóso érue me*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Original version: 9/2008; Current version: 7/2013 [needs more editing]

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## Abbreviations

AER1	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i> , v. 110, 1944, “Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus,” Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton.
AER2	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i> , April 1948, “The Theological Proof for the Necessity of the Catholic Church, Part 2,” Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton.
AER3	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i> , v. 124, 1951, “The Meaning of the Church’s Necessity for Salvation, Part 1,” Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton.
AER4	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i> , v. 124, 1951, “The Meaning of the Church’s Necessity for Salvation, Part 2,” Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton.
AER5	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i> , v. 130, 1954, “Two Recent Explanations of the Church’s Necessity for Salvation,” Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton.
CCS	<i>The Catholic Church and Salvation</i> , by Monsignor Joseph Clifford Fenton. Nihil obstat: Edward A. Cerny, S.S., D.D., <i>Censor librorum</i> . Imprimatur: +Francis P. Keough, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore, May 12, 1958. Sands & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., Glasgow.

## Apostate Antipopes Betray Their Good Words by Inaction

In 1950 Apostate Antipope Pius XII warned that the salvation heresy had crept into imprimatured books by so-called Catholic theologians who were denying the salvation dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula:

Apostate Antipope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, 1950: “27. ...Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the True Church in order to gain eternal salvation. 28. These and like errors, it is clear, have crept in among certain of Our sons who are deceived by imprudent zeal for souls or by false science.”

However, Apostate Antipope Pius XII betrayed his good words by not putting them into action. He did not denounce the innumerable so-called Catholic theologians by name as heretics who were reducing the salvation dogma to a meaningless formula. Nor did he condemn by name their innumerable heretical imprimatured books and place them on the Index of Forbidden Books. Instead, he let these notorious heretics and their notoriously heretical books with imprimaturs fester within the Catholic Church and spread their heretical infection among the flock like wildfire. Obviously he knew by name some of these heretical theologians and their heretical books with imprimaturs or else his statement that “some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the True Church in order to gain eternal salvation” would have been a rash judgment not based on facts available to him. Fr. Fenton makes this same observation:

AER5: “[pp.261-262] In the *Humani generis*, however, Pope Pius XII mentions, among the ‘poisonous fruits’ of the doctrinal novelties with which he is primarily concerned in this encyclical letter, the fact that ‘Some reduce to an empty formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order that eternal salvation may be attained’. According to the Sovereign Pontiff, then, there were theologians who explained this dogma inadequately and inaccurately.”

But who these heretical theologians were, Apostate Antipope Pius XII did not say. Pius XII’s good words as opposed to his inaction can be compared to a mayor who condemns houses of prostitution that exist in his city and the immoral corruption they cause but does not denounce by name the owners of the houses of prostitution nor condemn by name the houses of prostitution nor arrest the owners and close the houses down. What speaks louder—words or actions! Everyone would know that such a mayor is really a promoter of houses of prostitution and immoral corruption in spite of his correct words against these evil houses and the immoral corruption they cause. His lack of action speaks louder than his words.

And so it is with all the apostate antipopes who spoke correctly but betrayed their words by doing nothing effective to enforce their correct words. Jesus Christ warned us about these wicked apostate antipopes who speak the truth but deny it by their actions, when “*Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying: The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not.*” (Mt. 23:1-3) The wicked high priests and other religious rulers of the Old Covenant Church were guilty of speaking the truth but betraying and undermining it by their actions. Indeed the same applies to the wicked popes, apostate antipopes, and other religious rulers or so-called rulers of the New Covenant Church, the Catholic Church, who teach the truth but undermine it by their actions. These are the ones that St. Paul said profess to know God by speaking the truth but deny it by their evil works. St. Paul teaches that “*They profess that they know God: but in their works they deny him; being abominable, and incredulous, and to every good work reprobate.*” (Titus 1:16)

Apostate Antipope Pius XII is not the only wicked apostate antipope who spoke the truth but betrayed it by his actions. Other wicked and evil apostate antipopes did the same thing, especially from the 14th century onward. Their encyclicals against those who were denying dogmas proved that they knew so-called Catholic theologians were denying dogmas in their heretical imprimatured books. Yet these apostate antipopes did nothing effective to stop the spread of the infection. They did not denounce these so-called Catholic theologians as heretics, nor declare that they had been automatically excommunicated because of their heresy, nor condemn by name their heretical imprimatured books and place them on the Index of Forbidden Books. These apostate antipopes betrayed their good and infallible words regarding the dogmas by acting as if phantoms committed these public crimes of heresy and as if their heretical imprimatured books were invisible. In the mean time these phantom theologians and their invisible books that evaded papal detection were very real and very visible to the flock that was being poisoned by them.

That popes and apostate antipopes may not know of every heretical theologian and their heretical imprimatured books is certain. But to believe that they did not know about any of them or only very few is illogical and a lie because their encyclicals that condemned the heresies and denounced the heretics in general proved that they had to

have specific evidence that certain heretics were teaching heresy in their imprimatured books. If they had no specific evidence, then their papal encyclicals that condemned in general heresy and heretics would have been rash and false judgments because they were not based on any real evidence.

## **Unlike Apostate Antipopes, Fenton Identifies Heretics and Bad Books**

How could it be that a local priest had more information than the apostate antipope in Rome regarding heretical theologians and their heretical imprimatured books that exist in many places around the world and in many centuries? That some may have escaped an apostate antipope is believable. But that *all* of them escaped him is impossible and a lie because the apostate antipopes' own encyclicals prove that they knew about some of the heretical theologians and their heretical imprimatured books or they could not have denounced in general theologians who were denying dogmas or condemn in general imprimatured works that contain heresy.

How could it be that a local priest and theologian had more information about the many salvation heretics, about those who were reducing the salvation dogma to a meaningless formula, from around the world and in many centuries, while the apostate antipopes in Rome had no specific knowledge of any of these so-called Catholic theologians and their many heretical imprimatured books?

In 1950 Apostate Antipope Pius XII promulgated his encyclical *Humani Generis* in which he correctly warned that there were so-called Catholic theologians who “reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation.” Yet he never denounced by name the so-called Catholic theologians that were denying the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula nor did he condemn by name their heretical imprimatured books that contained this heresy. Instead it was a priest and theologian from the United States, Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, who identified by name these heretical perpetrators and their heretical imprimatured books after he was alarmed by Pius XII's warning in *Humani Generis*.

Monsignor Joseph Clifford Fenton was a member of the Pontifical Roman Theological Academy, a counselor of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, a professor of Fundamental Dogmatic Theology at the Catholic University of America, and the editor of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*.

### ***Fr. Fenton condemned heresy by implication but not explicitly***

When I say that Fr. Fenton condemns an opinion as heresy or denounces a heretic, I mean he does so by implication because Fr. Fenton never uses the “H” words of heresy and heretic even though what he declares to be erroneous is heresy by its very nature. (See in this book [Fenton Was Also a Non-Judgmentalist Heretic](#), p. 38.)

## ***When the Salvation Dogma began to be progressively denied***

In 1951 in his article “The Meaning of the Church’s Necessity for Salvation, Part II,” from the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Volume 124, Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, a salvation heretic himself, teaches that the salvation heresy first entered into books with imprimaturs in the 16th century and progressed from that point forward:

AER4: “[p. 207] The many faulty presentations of the teaching on the Church’s necessity for salvation have a definite background in theological history. First of all, this thesis is so bound up with the fundamental teaching of the nature of the Church itself that any misunderstanding about one of these doctrines inevitably brings about an erroneous grasp of the other. Moreover, as it stands now in the body of scholastic ecclesiology, the thesis of the necessity of the Church is not the development of the doctrine on this subject in the works of the older theologians, but rather the continuation of what was basically only a group of answers to certain objections inserted into the treatises of the great controversialists of the late sixteenth century. Finally there have been many transmutations in the meanings attached to the terms ‘body’ and ‘soul’ of the Church from the time of St. Robert [Bellarmine] until the early part of the nineteenth century. These are factors which definitely must be taken into consideration if we are to gain anything like an adequate understanding of the thesis as it has hitherto appeared in Catholic literature.

“[p. 209] A greater enlargement of this thesis came about in the post-Reformation period [16th century], it came as the development of a group of answers to objections, and not as progress along the line of the pre-Reformation treatment of the thesis. Ultimately this enlargement or progress considered the question from the point of view of the minimum in the way of attachment to the Church that could be considered as sufficient for salvation, rather than in line with a study of the conditions divine revelation ascribes to salvation itself, conditions which indicate the living and visible Church of Jesus Christ as involved in the necessary *terminus ad quem* of the process of supernatural revelation.

“[pp. 210-211] Turrecremata’s masterpiece had a distinctly polemical orientation. Written in mid-fifteenth century and printed for the first time in Cologne in 1480, the *Summa de ecclesia* was directed against *pestilentes quidam homines, spiritu ambitionis inflati*,<sup>1</sup> the members of the anti-papal faction at the Council of Basle. Despite its controversial orientation, however, the book contained a relatively complete and quite objective statement of the basic characteristics of the Catholic Church. *The Summa de ecclesia* gives an early and careful consideration to what Turrecremata calls ‘the pernicious error of those men who, animated by evil sentiments towards the dignity of the holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church and the sacrament of its inseparable unity, presume to declare that anyone can be saved in his own sect outside this holy Church.’<sup>2</sup> He declares this teaching to be ‘not only false or erroneous, but also heretical.’<sup>3</sup> He expressly teaches that the contradictory of this heretical doctrine can be demonstrated in many ways, but he professes himself as content, in this instance, to base his own arguments on what the Scriptures teach about the virtue of faith, ‘since the unity of the holy Catholic and apostolic Church springs primarily from the unity of faith.’<sup>4</sup> The chapter containing this material contains no less than seven distinct proofs or demonstrations of the Church’s necessity based on the divine teaching about that faith which is a basic bond of unity within the Church. In following this procedure, John de Turrecremata was contributing to and developing a theological tradition accepted by St. Thomas

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<sup>1</sup> *Summa de ecclesia* (Venice, 1561), p. 1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



Aquinas himself. Commenting on the Fourth Lateran Council's words, 'There is one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved,' the Angelic Doctor writes that 'the Church's unity exists primarily for the unity of the faith, for the Church is nothing but the congregation of the faithful. And, because without faith it is impossible to please God, it follows that there is no opportunity for salvation outside the Church.'<sup>5</sup> Had the tragedy of the Reformation never come to pass, it seems entirely probable that subsequent theologians would have gone on to cultivate this tradition which St. Thomas had accepted and which John de Turrecremata had so magnificently enriched. Pressing practical considerations, however, brought the great Catholic writers of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries to adopt an entirely different course. These men were primarily controversialists."

For a record of the first so-called Catholic theologians who began to deny the Salvation Dogma in the 16th century, see my book "*Bad Books on Salvation: Heretical Books That Contain the Salvation Heresy*."

### ***Ways the Salvation Dogma was being denied***

In 1944 in his article "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus" contained in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Volume 110, pages 310-302, Fr. Fenton lists three ways the Salvation Dogma was being denied:

#### **Heresy 1 - The Catholic Church is necessary only as a necessity of precept**

AER1: "[p. 300] The first interpretation would state the necessity of the Church for salvation merely in function of our Lord's *command* that all men should enter the society which He established. If this explanation should be accurate, then the proposition *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* would be restricted to mean: 'No one who is culpably outside the Catholic Church can be saved.'"

#### **Heresy 2 - The Catholic Church is the ordinary but not only means of salvation**

AER1: "[pp. 300-301] A second interpretation of the dogma on the necessity of the Catholic Church would tell us that *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* means merely that the Church is the *ordinary* means of salvation. Like its predecessor, this explanation falls afoul of the Conciliar pronouncements on the necessity of the Church."

#### **Heresy 3 - Men can belong to the soul of the Catholic Church and not Her body**

AER1: "[p. 301] A third interpretation is much more common. It asserts that, in order to be saved, a man must belong at least to the *soul* of the Catholic Church. ... According to the proponents of this interpretation no man whatsoever can be saved unless he belongs in some way at least to the soul of the Catholic Church. ... Those who would 'belong to the Soul of the Church' or be 'members of the Soul of the Church' in this way would be those who live the life of sanctifying grace which comes to men in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. As far as these theologians are concerned, the axiom *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* means that there is no salvation for the man who is not at least in the state of grace. Looked on in this way, the axiom would insist upon the necessity of sanctifying grace rather than on

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<sup>5</sup> *In decretalem I expositio ad Archidiaconum Tridentinum*. This work is numbered 23 in the old Roman edition and 31 in the edition of Mandonnet. The passage is found in the Mandonnet edition (Paris: Lethielleux, 1927), IV, 338.

that of the Catholic Church. It is difficult to see how this explanation could stand as a fully adequate interpretation of the doctrine set forth by the Fourth Lateran and Florence. ...When a man tries to explain the necessity of the Church for salvation by stressing the connection of the life of grace with the Church, he does not take into account any immediate adherence of the person who is to be saved with the Church as such. The Conciliar pronouncements insist that no man can be saved outside the Church. ...Moreover this explanation is subject to disapproval on the grounds of terminology. If we take the soul of the Church to mean either God the Holy Ghost or the life of grace which exists within men as a result of the inhabitation of the Blessed Trinity in their souls, then certainly the expressions 'member of the soul of the Church' and 'belonging to the soul of the Church' are quite inadmissible. The term 'soul of the Church' is metaphorical, and there is an inexcusable mixing of the metaphors when a person is described as a 'member' of the Holy Ghost, or as 'belonging to' the state of grace.

"No such difficulty exists of course when another, and an unfortunately all-too-prevalent notion of the soul of the Church is used in explaining the statement *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*. ...The persons who utilize this concept interpret the teaching on the necessity of the Church by stating that, in order to be saved, a man must belong either to the body of the church, which they understand as the actually existing and visible society founded by our Lord, or the soul of the Church, which is the invisible and spiritual society composed exclusively of those who have the virtue of charity. No such society, however, exists on this earth. As a result any explanation of the axiom in terms of such a gathering cannot be other than inaccurate. Thus, taken as a whole, the attempt to explain the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation in the light of the soul of the Church is either unsatisfactory or downright incorrect."

AER4: "[pp. 204-205] Despite the fact that many reputable theologians employed it in the past, the use of the terms 'body' and 'soul' of the Church in explaining the Church's necessity for eternal salvation proved ultimately to be unacceptable. Thus, recent theologians have noted with Dublanchy, in his article 'Eglise' in the Dictionnaire de theologie Catholique, that the official documents of the Church universal never used this particular terminology in discussing or explaining the necessity of the Church.<sup>6</sup> This 'body' and 'soul' terminology is metaphorical. When it is applied to the question of the necessity of the Church, it is taken out of context in which it was first employed, and within which it was acceptably effective, and made to serve a purpose it was never meant to accomplish. ...It is useless to assert that the 'body' of the Church is necessary in one way and the 'soul' of the same society in another, when no one can be quite certain, without further explanation, as to exactly what is meant by either expression. All too frequently the meaning behind one of these metaphors is such as to render any explanation constructed in function of that meaning utterly inadequate. Such, for instance, is the case where the 'soul' of the Church is depicted as some fancied invisible society of the just, distinct in one way or another from the true and visible Church of Jesus Christ in this world. At other times the confusion of the terminology leads otherwise magnificently competent authors into ineptitudes and inaccuracies into which they would never have fallen otherwise."

### **More ways the Salvation Dogma was being denied**

In 1951, Fr. Fenton listed the just mentioned three ways and other ways, seven in all, that the Salvation Dogma was being denied by being reduced to a meaningless formula by so-called Catholic theologians:

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. DTC, IV, 2166.

AER4: “[pp. 203-204] An examination of ecclesiological writings which have appeared since the time of the Vatican Council [1870] reveals a wide variety of statements and explanations of the Church’s necessity for eternal salvation proposed by Catholic authors. ... There have been more divergent views about this teaching than about most... The writings examined in the first installment of this article show some explanations of the doctrine which are obviously faulty and unacceptable... Those who have given faulty instruction on this point... have thus been reproved by the Holy Father as tending to ‘reduce to an empty formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation.’ ... They likewise show an approach to the teaching which is ineffective and confusing at best... We can distinguish seven faulty presentations of the material:

- 1) An explanation which contains or involves a contradiction to the assertion that no one is saved outside the Church;
- 2) The teaching that the necessity of the Church for salvation admits of exceptions or that the Church is, for adults at least, merely the ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’ way of salvation;
- 3) The doctrine that the Church requisite for salvation is an invisible group, in any way distinct from the visible society over which the Roman Bishop presides as acknowledged Vicar of Christ on earth;
- 4) The statement that the *ecclesia* envisaged in the formula *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is primarily or only the Church Triumphant;
- 5) The assertion that the Catholic Church is necessary for adults merely with the necessity of precept;
- 6) A presentation which limits the meaning of the Church’s necessity to an acknowledgment of the fact that the supernatural gifts through which men are saved actually belong to the Church;
- 7) An interpretation involving the over-extension of the concept of membership in the Church or of ‘belonging to’ the Church in such a way that the union with the Church required for salvation would be represented as something found in practically all non-members of the Church apart from any real steps or efforts on their part towards the Church and away from religious conditions or societies opposed to it.”

### ***Which theologians and imprimatured books denied the Salvation Dogma***

Fr. Fenton does not just identify the theologians that denied the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula. He also identifies the so-called Catholic theologians who were denying it and identifies their heretical imprimatured books. In his works regarding the Salvation Dogma, Fr. Fenton speaks of the ways this dogma was being denied, of the great danger caused by the theologians who were denying it, of the great danger caused by their heretical imprimatured books, and of his obligation to identify the heretical theologians and their heretical imprimatured books. And he then identifies them:

AER5: “[pp.259-260] Yet it is axiomatic that by far the greater number of the people do not, and, practically speaking cannot, obtain their explanations of Catholic dogma directly from the authoritative documents of the ecclesiastical

*magisterium*. In their younger days they gain that knowledge in an orderly, yet necessarily in an elementary, way through their catechism lessons. Then, throughout their lives, they receive their instruction in matters of faith from the sermons they hear and from the Catholic books and periodicals they read. In our own time the printed word seems to play an ever increasing part in that process of instruction.

“So it is that the book or the article dealing with matters of Catholic doctrine must be judged by inexorably high standards. No man writes a doctrinal work except to convince. It is a necessary consequence of his activity that the people who read his publication will tend to believe that his explanation of a Catholic dogma is true, or, at least, quite acceptable. If he should be unfortunate enough to present that teaching inaccurately, the final result would be that someone for whose salvation Our Lord died on the Cross would accept as God’s teaching something which is not in His revealed message, or would reject some truth which God actually has revealed. Objectively, there could hardly be a more fundamental frustration of the activity of one who sets out to work as an ambassador of Christ than the production of such an effect.

“Just as there is no function greater than that of an ambassador of Christ, one who is privileged to bring His divine truths to the people for whom He died, so there is objectively no greater misfortune than to cause people to form a misapprehension of the divine teaching. There are practical and concrete evil consequences of inaccurate doctrinal instruction in the field of morality. Thus it is quite possible that an incorrect notion of the Church, gained through some imperfect presentation of Catholic doctrine, may be the source of lamentable conduct towards the Church itself. Yet the evil of inexact doctrinal teaching is not, in the last analysis, to be estimated in terms of the untoward effects which may or may not follow from it in the practical order. The misrepresentation of Our Lord’s divine message is calamitous in itself, when we consider it objectively.

“It is clear that a doctrinal book or article does its work properly when, and only when, its content is strictly in line with the pertinent authoritative statements of the ecclesiastical *magisterium*. Naturally, this does not mean that the book or article in question must limit itself to a bare and literal translation of the official ecclesiastical documents which have to do with the subject discussed in the book or the article. But, on the other hand, no literary explanation of a dogma will be in line with the teaching of the *magisterium* if it presents as acceptable or as true some statement manifestly contradicted by or incompatible with a declaration of the *ecclesia docens* on this subject. And, if the teaching contained in some book or article is not completely in accord with the teachings of the Church’s *magisterium*, then definitely it is not proper intellectual nourishment for the children of the Church.”

AER3: “[pp. 124-125] The appearance of the Holy Father’s encyclical *Humani generis*, with its reproof of those who ‘reduce to an empty formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation,’<sup>7</sup> has made it expedient to take up in some detail the question of the form and the fundamental explanation of this doctrine. The teaching of the *Humani generis* is of the utmost importance. ...In view of the seriousness of this teaching, and because of the fact that the doctrine on the Church’s necessity for salvation is one of the theses that have been mishandled throughout the world and not merely in one particular region, a consideration of this thesis, particularly from the point of view of the recent encyclical, should prove advantageous.

“Thus, in the present article, we shall first inquire into the meaning of the encyclical’s expression, ‘reduce to an empty formula.’ We shall try to see what the expression means and look into its connotations as it is applied to the Catholic teaching on the necessity of the Church for salvation. This section of the article will be followed by a listing and an explanation of some presentations of the thesis

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<sup>7</sup> In the *NCWC* edition, p. 12, n. 27.

found in current theological literature, some of which in one way or another certainly tend to reduce this doctrine to a vain and empty formula.

“The second portion of this article will consider the background of the various inadequate presentations of this section of sacred theology. As it stands in modern theological textbooks, the teaching on the necessity of the Catholic Church for eternal salvation has a distinctive and a somewhat unfortunate background, a history such as to make inadequate presentation of the material somewhat easier and more likely here than in other sections of sacred doctrine. Apart from this general consideration, some of the less laudable statements of the thesis have their own particular histories in the chronicle of sacred theology...

“[p. 126] One...reduces the doctrine of the Church’s necessity for salvation to an empty formula when, professing to retain and to explain the assertion that there is no salvation outside the Church, he actually presents a teaching that runs counter to the obvious and primary meaning of this doctrine. The man who acts thus claims to hold the axiom ‘*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*’ as an unquestioned statement of Catholic dogma while, at the same time, he holds that *de facto* people can save their souls even though they live and die outside the true Church of Jesus Christ.

“There is still another way in which the usual statement of the Church’s necessity for eternal salvation can be reduced to a mere empty formula. This occurs when the assertion is explained in a way that is incompatible with the statement of this truth in the documents of the Church’s magisterium...

“[p. 128-130] Certain Catholic publicists and not a few theologians have misinterpreted...the expression ‘no one can be saved outside of the Catholic Church’ [to] mean merely that the Church is necessary with a necessity of precept.

“The assertion that ‘there is no salvation outside the Church,’ or, to use the form in which it is presented in most ecclesiastical documents, that ‘no one at all can be saved outside the Church,’ becomes merely a meaningless series of sounds or ‘an empty formula’ in the hands of a Catholic teacher who presumes to interpret it in some manner incompatible with the manifest significance of any one of these declarations of the Church’s magisterium in which the assertion occurs, in one way or another...

“It is imperative that we examine the various statements of the thesis on the Church’s necessity for salvation in current theological literature in order that we may see which among them can be said to fall under the censure of the Holy Father.

An examination of the literature on this subject produced since the time of the Vatican Council [1870] shows that...among scholastic writers...some statements and explanations of the Church’s necessity for salvation...lay themselves open to the charge that they reduce this teaching to an empty formula. Some writers on this subject have carried through their attempts to minimize the significance of this teaching to such an extent that, for all intents and purposes, they have left the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church void of all real meaning.”

Fr. Fenton then goes on to identify the so-called Catholic theologians and their heretical imprimatured books that denied the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula in one way or another. Below is a list of some of the heretical theologians from Fenton’s articles, followed by the text from the articles:

### **Table of heretical theologians identified by Fenton**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Article and Page</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Death</b>
Bainvel, Jean Vincent, S.J.	AER2, p. 215	1858	1937
Adam, Dr. Karl	AER2, pp. 215-217	1876	1966

Billuart	AER2, p. 296	1846	1931
Cano, Melchior	AER2, p. 296	1509	1560
Salmanticenses	AER2, p. 296	1700's	1700's
Suarez	AER2, p. 296	1548	1617
Beraza, Blasio	AER2, p. 297	1862	1936
Mathew, Arnold Harris	AER3, p. 130	1852	1919
Otto Karrer	AER3, p. 131	1888	1976
Newman, "Cardinal"	AER3, pp. 131-132	1801	1890
Saiz-Ruiz, Valentine	AER3, p. 133		1900's
Blanch, Michael	AER3, p. 133	1927	alive
Wilhelm	AER3, p. 133		1900's
Scannell	AER3, p. 133	1854	1917
Scheeben	AER3, p. 133	1835	1888
Lombardi, Fr. Ricardo	AER3, p. 134	1908	1979
Lutz, Fr. A.J.	AER3, p. 134		1900's
Sertillanges	AER3, pp., 134-135	1863	1948
Lippert	AER3, pp., 134-135		1900's
Michalon	AER3, pp., 134-135		1900's
Heris	AER3, pp., 134-135		1900's
De Lubac, Henri	AER3, p. 135	1896	1991
De Montcheuil, Yves	AER3, pp., 135-136	1899	1944
Danielou, Jean	AER3, p. 136	1905	1974
Watkin, Edward Ingram	AER3, p. 136	1888	1981
Falcon, Joseph	AER3, p. 136		1900's
Mazella, "Cardinal" Camillus	AER3, p. 137	1833	1900
Marchini	AER3, p. 137		1800's
Prevel	AER3, p. 137		1900's
Hugon, Edouard	AER3, p. 137		1929
Tepe	AER3, p. 137	1833	1904
MacGuinness	AER3, p. 137		
Tanquerey	AER3, p. 137	1854	1932
Herve	AER3, pp. 137-138	1881	1958
Zubizarreta	AER3, p. 137		1900's
Lahitton	AER3, p. 137		1900's
Garrigou-Lagrange	AER3, p. 137	1877	1964
Egger	AER3, p. 137		
Brunsmann	AER3, p. 138	1870	1900's
Van Noort	AER3, p. 138	1861	1946
Hurter	AER3, p. 138	1832	1914
Ottiger	AER3, p. 138	1822	1891
Schouppe	AER3, p. 138	1823	1904
Casanova	AER3, pp. 138-139		
Mazzella, Archbishop Orazio	AER3, p. 138	1860	1934
Pesch	AER3, p. 138	1836	1899
Herrmann	AER3, p. 138	1849	1927

Dorsch	AER3, p. 138	1867	1934
Calcagno	AER3, p. 138-139	1867	1939
Marengo	AER3, p. 138		
Michelitisch	AER3, p. 138		
Bartmann	AER3, p. 138	1860	1938
Franzelin, Johann Baptist	AER3, p. 139	1816	1886
Hunter	AER3, p. 139		
Crosta	AER3, p. 139		
Billot	AER3, p. 139	1846	1931
Palmieri, Domenico	AER3, p. 139	1829	1909
Lambrecht	AER3, p. 139		
Straub	AER3, p. 139		
Herrmann	AER3, p. 139	1849	1927
Schultes, Reginald Maria	AER3, p. 139	1873	1928
Egger	AER3, p. 139		
Calcagno	AER3, p. 139		
Liebermann, Bruno Franz Leopold	AER4, p. 220	1759	1844
Legrand, Louis	AER4, p. 220	1711	1780
Bonal	AER4, p. 220	1600	1653
Vigue, Paul	AER4, p. 220		1900's
Karrer, Otto	AER4, p. 221	1888	1900's
Murphy, Fr. John L.	AER5, pp. 260-261	1900's	
Trese, Fr. Leo J.	AER5, pp. 260-261	1902	1970

## AER2

### Fr. Jean Vincent Bainvel, S.J.

“[p. 215] The illustrious French Jesuit Jean Vincent Bainvel combines the second, the fifth, and the sixth of our formulae in his teaching. He holds that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation, and that all of those who are saved are members of the Church, even though they enter it only by desire.”

[Footnote: “Cf. *Is There Salvation Outside the Catholic Church?* Translated by Fr. Weidenhan (St. Louis: B Herder Book Co., 1920), pp. 25 ff.”]

For evidence of the salvation heresy contained in Fr. Bainvel’s book, see my book *Bad Books on Salvation*: Fr. Bainvel.

### Dr. Karl Adam

“[pp. 215-217] The German writer, Dr. Karl Adam, employs the second, the third, and the fourth of our formulae in the following passage from his *The Spirit of Catholicism*.

‘True there is only one Church of Christ. She alone is the Body of Christ and without her there is no salvation. Objectively and practically considered she is the

ordinary way of salvation, the single and exclusive channel by which the truth and grace of Christ enter our world of space and time. But those also who know her not receive these gifts from her; yes, even those who misjudge and fight against her, provided they are in good faith, and are simply and loyally seeking the truth without self-righteous obstinacy. Though it be not the Catholic Church itself which hands them the bread of truth and grace, yet it is the Catholic bread that they eat. And, while they eat of it, they are, without knowing it or willing it, incorporated in the supernatural substance of the Church. Though they be outwardly separated from the Church, they belong to its soul.’

“There are numerous doctrinal pronouncements on the Church’s necessity for salvation, as we can readily see from an examination of the text of Cavallera’s *Thesaurus doctrinae catholicae* or the index of Denzinger’s *Enchiridion symbolorum*. If we examine a selected five of these texts, however, we shall find in them all of the basic truths which the Church has proclaimed about its own necessity. The first of these five passages is to be found in the first chapter of the Fourth Council of the Lateran. The second occurs in the Bull, *Unam sanctam*, written by Pope Boniface VIII. The third is in the Decree for the Jacobites, issued by the Oecumenical Council of Florence. The fourth is in the allocution *Singulari quadam*, given by Apostate antipope Pius IX, while the fifth and last is to be found in that same Pontiff’s encyclical *Quanto conficiamur moerore*.<sup>8</sup>

“The Fourth Lateran Council teaches that ‘there is one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved.’[4] It is important to note that the expression ‘*fidelium universalis Ecclesia*,’ employed by this Oecumenical Council, is exactly the equivalent of the formula ‘*catholicorum collection*,’ which Gratian’s *Decretum* attributed to Pope Nicholas.[5] In the language of the Church the *fidelis* is and has always been the Catholic, the full fledged member of the true Church of Jesus Christ. An ecclesiastical document like the so-called seventh canon of the second Oecumenical Council could qualify the catechumen as a Christian.[6] The title of *fidelis*, however, was always reserved for the baptized person fully joined to Our Lord’s society by its external bonds of unity.

“It is thus the visible Catholic Church, the society formed by the Catholics or the *fideles* throughout the world, which the Council describes as so requisite for salvation that outside of it no one at all is saved (*extra quam nullus omnino salvatur*). In consequence, the teaching which holds the Church to be the ‘ordinary’ means of salvation can never be accepted as an explanation of the truth proposed in this statement. If the Church were actually and merely the ‘ordinary’ means of salvation, the Council would have been decidedly in error in stating that outside of that Church ‘no one at all (*nullus omnino*)’ would be saved. Moreover the teaching that the visible Church is requisite for salvation only with the necessity of precept must also be rejected in the light of the Lateran Council’s pronouncement. A thing which is necessary *only* by the necessity of precept is incumbent only upon those to whom the promulgation of the precept has come. The fact that the Fourth Lateran declared the visible Catholic and Roman Church to be necessary

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<sup>8</sup> Pius IX actually denied the Salvation dogma in his encyclical *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*. Pius IX lost the papal office in 1856. See RJMI article “Pius IX Denied the Salvation Dogma and Lost His Office.” (Added in October 2012)



in such a way that outside of it no one at all would be saved is clear indication that this assembly did not consider the Church as requisite merely with the necessity of precept.”

### Billuart, Cano, Salmanticenses, Suarez, Beraza

“[pp. 296-297] Nevertheless, there have been divergent teachings on this point in Catholic theological literature. Thus Billuart teaches that since the gospel has been sufficiently promulgated, explicit belief in both the Trinity and the Incarnation must be considered as necessary for all, with the necessity of means, for eternal salvation. Billuart regards the time when the gospel of Christ could be said to have been sufficiently promulgated as something about which we have no certain information. He hazards the opinion, however, that the gospel could be said to have been sufficiently promulgated about forty years after Our Lord’s ascension into heaven.<sup>9</sup>

“Melchoir Cano offers an interesting variation of this opinion. He holds that explicit faith in Christ is necessary for eternal and final salvation, while an implicit faith suffices for the remission of sins and thus for justification.<sup>10</sup> Suarez<sup>11</sup> and the Salmanticenses<sup>12</sup> were of the opinion that, since the promulgation of the gospel, an explicit faith in Christ is *per se* a necessary means for salvation, but that, as a matter of fact, some people are saved apart from this means *per accidens*. This opinion, for all practical purposes is equivalent to the teaching of Blasio Beraza in our own times. Beraza holds that explicit faith in Our Lord as mediator is not absolutely requisite for salvation even in the New Testament.<sup>13</sup>”

### **AER3**

### Arnold Harris Mathew

“[p. 130] One group of writers and teachers who have set out to explain this thesis have offered what seems to be nothing more or less than an outright denial of the teaching they intended to interpret. Such is the case with Arnold Harris Mathew’s exposition of the formula ‘*extra ecclesiam salus nulla*’ in the symposium he edited forty-five years ago.

‘Now the further question arises as to how far Catholics are bound to hold that for those outside the Roman Church there is no salvation. Catholics are not bound to hold anything of the kind. The question resolves itself into the other question, how far those who are outside the Roman Church are in good faith or not.’<sup>14</sup>”

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Billuart’s *Tractatus de fide*, Dissertatio III, art. 2, in the *Cursus theologiae* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1904), V, 29 f.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Cano’s *Reflectio de Sacramentis in genere*, Pars II, conclusion 3, in the *Melchioris Cani opera theologica* (Rome: Filiziani, 1900), III, 230 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Suarez, in the *Tractatus de fide*, Disp. IX, section 1, in the *Opus de triplici virtute theologica* (Lyons, 1621), p. 160.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the Salmanticenses, *Tractatus de gratia Dei*, Disputatio II, dubium, 6, in their *Cursus Theologicus* (Paris and Brussels, 1878), IX, 249 ff.

<sup>13</sup> “Cf. Beraza’s *Tractatus de virtutibus infuses* (Bilbao: El Mensajero del Corazon de Jesus, 1929), pp. 448 ff.”

<sup>14</sup> Mathew, in his chapter, “Extra Ecclesiam Salus Nulla,” in the symposium *Ecclesia: The Church of Christ*, edited by Arnold Harris Mathew (London: Burns and Oates, 1906) p. 148.

## Otto Karrer

“[p. 131] Because of the manifest incoherence of his teaching, and particularly because of his unfortunate defection from the Catholic Church during the latter phase of the Modernist crisis, Mathew as an individual never had any direct influence in the field of theological writing. Nevertheless, explanations of the Church’s necessity for salvation roughly similar to his have appeared in Catholic periodicals from time to time during the past half-century, produced by...ill informed individuals who were so intent upon the task of overthrowing charges of intolerance that had been leveled against the Church that they completely overlooked the bounds of doctrinal accuracy in their own statements. Sometimes this tendency to explain the doctrine of the Church’s necessity by what amounts to a denial of its practical import has assumed a less offensive though equally inaccurate form, as in the case of Otto Karrer’s *Religions of Mankind*, the thirteenth chapter of which is entitled ‘Salvation outside the Visible Church.’<sup>15</sup>”

## “Cardinal” Newman

“[pp. 131-132] A second type of explanation of this thesis is to be found in Cardinal Newman’s last published study of this subject, a study incorporated into his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*. Mathew, who quoted the entire section *in extenso*, was convinced that the Cardinal had ‘dealt with the question in such a masterly way that it is impossible to improve upon what he says.’<sup>16</sup> As a group, the theologians of the Catholic Church have shown no disposition to share Mathew’s enthusiasm.

“The great English Cardinal considered this teaching in his *Letter*, not directly for the sake of the doctrine itself, but primarily as an example of something which he believed could offer ‘the opportunity of a legitimate minimizing.’<sup>17</sup> Following this line, he held that the principle ‘out of the Church, and out of the faith, is no salvation,’ admits of exceptions, and he taught that Apostate antipope Pius IX, in his encyclical *Quanto conficiamur moerore*, had spoken of such exceptions.<sup>18</sup> Newman quotes these words of Pius IX.

‘*We and you know*, that those who lie under invincible ignorance as regards our most Holy Religion, and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts, which are engraved by God on the hearts of all, and prepared to obey God, lead a good and upright life, are able, by the operation of the power of divine light and grace, to obtain eternal life.’<sup>19</sup>”

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<sup>15</sup> In Karrer’s *Religions of Mankind* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938), pp. 250-78.

<sup>16</sup> Mathew, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> In *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), II, 334.

<sup>18</sup> Fenton makes excuses for Pius IX’s notorious heresy. See RJMI article “Pius IX Denied the Salvation Dogma and Lost His Office.”

<sup>19</sup> DB. 1677. Newman quotes this passage in *op. cit.*, pp. 335 f.

“Newman believed these words conveyed what he called ‘the doctrine of invincible ignorance—or, that it is possible to belong to the soul of the Church without belonging to the body.’<sup>20</sup> He concluded his treatment of this thesis by the following question:

‘Who would at first sight gather from the wording of so forcible a universal [Out of the Church, and out of the faith, is no salvation], that an exception to its operation, such as this, so distinct, and, for what we know, so very wide, was consistent with holding it?’<sup>21</sup>

“It is hard to see how a universal negative proposition that admits of ‘distinct, and, for what we know, so very wide’ exceptions can be other than an empty or meaningless formula. As we have seen, the statement on the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation must be considered, not as a mere series of words taken out of all context, but precisely in the manner in which it stands in the various monuments of the Church’s official *magisterium*. As that teaching is found in, for instance, the *Cantate Domino*, it definitely does not admit of any ‘exceptions.’ If Newman was right, and if persons in invincible ignorance can be saved other than in the Church, the teaching of Eugenius IV and of the Council of Florence is definitely inaccurate. And, on the other hand, if it be Catholic dogma that none of those who dwell outside the Church can be saved unless before they die they become joined to the Church, then there is certainly no room for any sort of ‘exception’ to the rule of ‘the Church’s necessity for eternal salvation.’

“It is interesting to note that Newman interpreted the doctrine of invincible ignorance as meaning that ‘it is possible to belong to the soul of the Church without belonging to the body.’<sup>22</sup> He was convinced that his citation from the text of the *Quanto conficiamur moerore*, the citation reproduced a few lines above, constituted an expression of this teaching. There is absolutely nothing in the statement by Pope Pius IX to give the impression that a man could be saved apart from those factors which some writers of the time designated collectively as the ‘body’ of the Church, just as there is nothing to indicate that he considered the possibility of ‘exceptions’ to the sovereign rule of the Church’s necessity for salvation.”

Valentine Saiz-Ruiz, Michael Blanch, Wilhelm, Thomas Scannell, Joseph Scheeben, Fr. Ricardo Lombardi, Fr. A.J. Lutz

“[pp. 133-134] There have been a few recent theologians who have attempted to explain the necessity of the Church exclusively, or at least primarily in terms of the ‘soul’ of the Church. In this group we find the Spanish writer, Valentine Saiz-Ruiz, who insisted that the teaching ‘Outside the Church, no salvation,’ could be considered as absolutely true and could be fully grasped only when it is understood with reference to the Church’s soul.<sup>23</sup> The Claretian, Michael Blanch, sets out to prove the thesis that ‘the Church is a necessary society, into which all men and all civil societies are bound to enter, and which

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>23</sup> *Synthesis sive notae theologiae fundamentalis* (Burgos, 1906), p. 328.

they are bound to obey.<sup>24</sup> When he comes to discuss what is usually termed the ‘necessity of means,’ however, he speaks of ‘sanctifying grace, which is the soul of the Church,’ and makes no adequate reference to the necessity of any factor designated as the ‘body’ or the visible aspect of the Church. One of the most striking instances of this mentality, however, is to be found in the influential English manual of sacred theology which Wilhelm and Scannell based upon the ‘dogmatik’ of Scheeben. These writers conclude that ‘not every member of the Church is necessarily saved; and, on the other hand, some who belong only to the soul of the Church are saved.’<sup>25</sup> The first portion of their conclusion is magnificently accurate. The second section, however, is inadequate in that it discounts the real necessity of the visible Church itself.

“We find a somewhat similar approach to the question in the recent treatise of Fr. Riccardo Lombardi. He teaches that the means of salvation willed by God is the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church alone, in such a way that no man can be saved outside of it. He is convinced that the normal means of salvation is official membership in the visible Church. He also teaches, however, that there are many who belong to the soul of the Church who are not members of its body.<sup>26</sup> Thus, in the last analysis, it is the soul of the Church which is essential for salvation according to his doctrine.

“Fr. A. J. Lutz also explains the Church’s necessity in function of the ‘soul,’ but he makes this metaphor refer to God the Holy Ghost. This writer holds that ‘the Protestant in the state of grace is in reality a Catholic,’ by reason of what he considers the fact that ‘a person can be a member of the Church without being incorporated visibly into it.’ He continues: ‘What difference does it make if he thinks differently from the Catholics! We do not belong to Christ primarily by reason of our thought, but through His Spirit which gives us life.’<sup>27</sup>

“It would appear that this type of explanation of the Church’s necessity serves to reduce this teaching to an empty formula. As it stands in the *Cantate Domino*, to take one example, the teaching on the necessity of the Church for salvation manifestly involves the fact that no one can attain to the beatific vision unless he attaches himself to the Church before the end of this mortal life.

“The teachings that stress the necessity of the Church’s ‘soul,’ and which do not insist upon the necessity of the visible Church itself, leave one under the impression that union with or entrance into the visible and true Church need not be a matter of anxiety for anyone. Attachment to the Church is represented as something necessarily involved in the process of acquiring grace itself, and not as a matter of immediate urgency.”

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<sup>24</sup> *Theologia generalis seu tractatus de sacrae theologiae principiis* (Barcelona, 1901), p. 346.

<sup>25</sup> *A Manual of Christian Theology*, 3rd edition (London: Kegan Paul, 1908), II, 344.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *La Salvezza di chi non ha fede*, 4th edition (Rome: Civiltà Cattolica, 1949), pp. 523, 574 f.

<sup>27</sup> *Jésus-Christ et les Protestants* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1939), p. 226.

Sertillanges, Lippert, Michalon, Heris

“[pp. 134-135] Some other strange methods of explaining the Church’s necessity for salvation have been employed during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, Sertillanges, followed by Lippert, Michalon, and to a certain extent by Heris, gave the impression that no man could be considered as completely outside the Catholic Church.<sup>28</sup> This teaching would certainly reduce the thesis on the Church’s necessity to an empty formula, since it would imply that no man had any particular reason to adhere to the Church before his death, since he is in it necessarily and always.”

Henri De Lubac, Yves De Montcheuil, Jean Danielou, Edward Ingram Watkin, Joseph Falcon

“[pp. 135-136] Henri De Lubac taught that infidels can be saved, though not in the normal way of salvation, by reason of the mysterious bonds that join them to the faithful. He considers these individuals as contributing to the good of the Church through their efforts in building up and maintaining the various cultures in which the Church is meant to live and to praise God.<sup>29</sup> Thus, he believed that these men ‘can be saved because they constitute an integral part of the humanity that will be saved.’<sup>30</sup> It was his contention that God, who wills that all men should be saved and who, in practice does not permit all men to be visibly in the Church, has nevertheless decreed that all who answer His call should be saved in some way through the Church.<sup>31</sup>

“Yves De Montcheuil has followed and developed De Lubac’s teaching. He has put on a level with the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church, the assertion that ‘no one anywhere, before or after Christ, will be condemned if he has not sinned against the light, if there is nothing culpable in the religious ignorance in which he finds himself.’<sup>32</sup> In line with that contention, he taught that some of those to whom the Gospel has been preached and who have not accepted it must not be considered to have been lacking in good will.<sup>33</sup>

“Primarily, according to De Montcheuil, the formula ‘outside the Church no salvation’ refers to the Church triumphant.<sup>34</sup> He has taught that non-believers, though not belonging visibly to the Church militant, must not be considered as absolutely without connection with it. They belong invisibly to the Church, not only because the grace by which they

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Sertillanges, *The Church* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1922), p. 225; Lippert, *Die Kirche Christi* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1935), p. 271; Michalon, in his essay, “L’étendue de l’église,” in the symposium *Église et unité* (Lute: Editions “Catholicité,” 1948), p. 119; Hérès, *L’église du Christ* (Juvisy: Éditions du Cerf, 1930), p. 21. Hérès teaches that all the souls *susceptibles de recevoir la grâce* belong visibly or invisibly to the Church as they do to Christ.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Catholicisme*, 4th edition (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947), pp. 193 f.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>32</sup> *Aspects de l’église* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1949), p. 131.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 132.

are saved is joined to the Church, but also because, even without knowing it, they are preparing the material of the Church in civilizations and in individuals.<sup>35</sup>

“Another member of this same group, Jean Danielou, accepts and attributes to ‘most theologians’ the belief that belonging to the visible Church is not an absolutely necessary condition for salvation, and holds we can think that souls of good will outside the Church are saved.<sup>36</sup> It does not seem that this type of explanation can legitimately be employed since the appearance of the *Humani generis*.

“With these statements we must class the teachings of other writers, who have interpreted the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church in terms of an invisible Church. Thus Edward Ingram Watkin wrote that ‘it is therefore only the invisible Church whose membership is absolutely and without qualification necessary, since incorporation into the invisible Church is one and the same thing as supernatural union with God.’<sup>37</sup> Astonishingly enough, Joseph Falcon, an apologist and theologian of deservedly high reputation, employs this terminology in the course of his own explanation of the Church’s necessity for salvation. According to Falcon, the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church can be understood as a law or as the assertion of a fact. In the first case it simply marks the Church as something which is necessary with the necessity of precept. In the second, it applies to an invisible Church, whose members are to be found both within and outside of the visible society. Those who live outside the visible society ‘are only deprived, by reason of their outward position, of the abundance of spiritual helps which are the privilege of this society.’<sup>38</sup>”

“Cardinal” Camillus Mazzella, Marchini, Prevel, Edouard Hugon, Tepe, MacGuinness, Tanqueray, Herve, Zubizarreta, Lahitton, Garrigou-Lagrange

“[p. 137] A rather considerable number of theologians, in explaining the Catholic Church’s necessity for eternal salvation, employ the distinction between the ‘body’ and the ‘soul’ of the Church and state that it is necessary with the necessity of means to belong to the ‘soul,’ while it is necessary only with the necessity of precept to belong to the ‘body’ of this society. The manuals of Cardinal Camillus Mazzella, and those of Marchini and of Prevel all offer this type of explanation.<sup>39</sup> The theory, however, has become linked to the name of Edouard Hugon, the great theologian of the Angelico, who developed it at some length in his monograph, *Hors de l’église, point de salut*. Hugon speaks of the obligation of belonging to the body of the Church, and of the necessity of pertaining to its soul.<sup>40</sup> Tepe, MacGuinness, Tanqueray, Hervé, Zubizarreta and Lahitton all employ the notions of ‘body’ and ‘soul’ in their explanations, but speak of attachment

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 135 f.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Le mystère du salut des nations* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1946), p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> In his essay, “The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ,” in the symposium, *God and the Supernatural*, edited by Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1920), p. 266.

<sup>38</sup> *La crédibilité du dogme catholique* (Lyons: Vitte, 1948), p. 488.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Card. Mazzella, *De religione et ecclesia praelectiones scholastico-dogmaticae*, 6th edition (Prato, 1905), pp. 394 f.; Marchini, *Summula theologiae dogmaticae* (Vigevano, 1898), pp. 47 ff.; Prevel, *Theologiae dogmaticae elementa* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1912), I, 188 ff.; 194.

<sup>40</sup> *Hors de l’église point de salut*, 3rd edition (Paris: Téqui, 1927), pp. 153 ff.; 266 ff.

to both as necessary with the necessity of means.<sup>41</sup> They teach that salvation is possible only for those who are joined to the body of the Church either *in re* or *in voto*. Garrigou-Lagrange holds this same view, although his terminology agrees in some respects with that of Hugon.<sup>42</sup>”

Egger, Brunsmann, Van Noort, Hurter, Ottiger, Schoupe, Casanova, Orazio Mazzella, Pesch, Herrmann, Dorsch, Calcagno, Marengo, Michelitisch, Bartmann

“[p. 137-138] An astonishingly large number of theologians explain that the formula *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in itself signifies that the Church is requisite for salvation with the necessity of precept, even though their own teaching on the Church’s necessity for salvation takes cognizance of a real necessity of means. Egger, Brunsmann, and Van Noort, among others, claim that historically the axiom that there is no salvation outside the Church has reference to the necessity of precept.<sup>43</sup> Hurter, Ottiger, Schoupe, Casanova, and Orazio Mazzella all insist upon the necessity of precept, and despite the comparative complexity of his explanation, Pesch centers his teaching on this thesis around this same notion of the necessity of precept.<sup>44</sup> Herrmann, Dorsch, Hervé, and Calcagno all claim this as the meaning of the axiom, although they give a far stricter interpretation of the thesis itself.<sup>45</sup> Marengo interprets the axiom as signifying that those who belong in no way to the Church, or who do not belong to the body of the Church through their own fault, cannot be saved.<sup>46</sup> Michelitisch combines this teaching on the necessity of precept with the explanation that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation,<sup>47</sup> and the teaching of Bartmann on this thesis can be reduced to the same type of explanation.<sup>48</sup>”

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Tepe, *Institutiones theologiae in usum scholarum* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1894), I, 361; Tanquerey, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae fundamentalis*, 24th edition, revised by Fr. Bord (Paris: Desclée, 1937), p. 555; Hervé, *Manuale theologiae Dogmaticae*, 18th edition (Paris: Berche et Pagis, 1939), I, 342; Zubizarreta, *Theologia dogmatico-scholastica ad mentem: S. Thomae Aquinatis*, 3rd edition (Bilbao: Elèxpuru, 1937), I, 333; Lahitton, *Theologiae dogmaticae theses* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932), III, 129-37.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *De revelatione per ecclesiam catholicam proposita*, 4th edition (Rome: Ferrari, 1945), II, 407.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Egger, *Enchiridion theologiae dogmaticae generalis*, 6th edition (Brescia, 1932), p. 517; Brunsmann-Preuss, *A Handbook of Fundamental Theology* (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), III, 328; Van Noort, *Tractatus de ecclesia Christi*, 5th edition by Fr. Verhaar (Hilversum: Brand, 1932), pp. 183 f.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hurter, *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, 2nd edition (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1878), I, 190; Ottiger, *Theologia fundamentalis* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1911), II, 261; Schoupe, *Elementa theologiae dogmaticae*, 22nd edition (Lyons: Delhomme et Brigue, 1861), I, 176; Casanova, *Theologia fundamentalis* (Rome, 1899), p. 254; Archbishop Orazio Mazzella, *Praelectiones scholastico dogmaticae*, 6th edition (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1944), I, 394.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Herrmann, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae*, 7th edition (Lyons: Vitte, 1937), I, 377; Dorsch, *Institutiones theologiae fundamentalis*, 2nd edition (Innsbruck: Rauch, 1928), II, 539; Hervé, *op. cit.*, p. 345; Calcagno, *Theologia fundamentalis* (Naples: D’Auria, 1948), p. 169.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Institutiones theologiae fundamentalis*, 3rd edition (Turin: Salesian Press, 1894), II, 251.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Elementa apologeticae sive theologiae fundamentalis*, 3rd edition (Graz: Styria, 1925), p. 278.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Bartmann, *Précis de théologie dogmatique* (Mulhouse: Salvator, 1936), II, 166. Bartmann combines a teaching on the visible Church as necessary for salvation with a teaching on the absolute necessity of the “community of grace.”

Franzelin, Hunter, Crosta, Billot, Palmieri, Lambrecht, Straub, Casanova, Herrmann, Schultes, Egger, Calcagno

“[p. 139] Franzelin and Hunter added the explanation that it is possible to belong to the visible Church invisibly.<sup>49</sup> Crosta spoke of the possibility of being in the Church either *corde seu affective* or *corpore seu effective*.<sup>50</sup> Most of the others have followed the example of Billot, Palmieri, Lambrecht, and Straub, and have explained that it is possible to be saved if one is within the Church *in re* or *in voto*.<sup>51</sup> Casanova, Herrmann, Schultes, Egger, and Calcagno all base their explanation of the thesis on this form of teaching, although they weaken it to some extent by introducing other elements into it.<sup>52</sup>”

**AER4**

Legrand, Liebermann, Bonal, Paul Vigue, Otto Karrer

“[pp. 220-221] Legrand, Liebermann, and Bonal completed the devastation, and defined the ‘soul’ of the Church as an invisible Church of people possessed of charity, the very thing which St. Robert set out to prove did not and could not exist.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note that Liebermann refers his teaching on this matter to St. Robert, the theologian whose teaching he was contradicting by this use of St. Robert’s old metaphorical terminology.

“This tragi-comedy of misinterpretation and misunderstanding resulted finally, in the twentieth century, in such statements as that of Paul Vigué, to the effect that ‘the theologians distinguish two Churches, the one visible and the other invisible, the body and soul of the Church,’<sup>54</sup> and that of Otto Karrer that ‘theology has deduced the doctrine of an invisible Church of good men and women, even outside the communion of the visible Church.’<sup>55</sup> The theologians who acted thus were men who thought that they were interpreting the teaching of St. Robert, when they were actually employing his own terminology to contradict the thesis he had upheld.

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Franzelin, *Theses de ecclesia Christi* (Rome, 1887), p. 424; Hunter, *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd edition (New York: Benziger, 1894), I, 255.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Theologia dogmatica*, 3rd edition (Gallarate, 1932), I, 195.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Billot, *Tractatus de ecclesia Christi*, 5th edition (Rome: Gregorian University, 1927), I, 117 ff.; Palmieri, *Tractatus de Romano Pontifice cum prolegomeno de ecclesia*, 2nd edition (Prato, 1891), pp. 15 ff.; Lambrecht, *Demonstratio catholica seu tractatus de ecclesia* (Ghent, 1890), p. 30; Straub, *De ecclesia Christi* (Innsbruck, 1894), pp. 233 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Casanova, *op. cit.*, p. 254; Herrmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 372 ff.; Schultes, *De ecclesia catholica praelectiones apologeticae* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1931), pp. 267 ff.; Egger, *op. cit.*, pp. 514 ff.; Calcagno, *op. cit.*, 166 ff.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Legrand, *De ecclesia*, in Migne’s *Theologiae cursus completus*, IV, 25; Liebermann, *Institutiones theologicae* (Brescia, 1831), II, 55; Bonal, *Institutiones theologicae ad usum seminariorum* (Toulouse, 1887), I, 400.

<sup>54</sup> Vigué, in *Ecclesia: Encyclopédic populaire des connaissances religieuses* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1933), p. 101.

<sup>55</sup> *Religions of Mankind*, translated by E. I. Watkin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938), p. 262.



“It was confusion on this point, perhaps more than any other, which occasioned most of the extravagances and errors on the subject of the Church’s necessity for salvation which have been noted in recent theological history, and which have been reproved by the Holy Father in the *Humani generis*.”

## AER5

AER5: “[pp. 260-261] Recently [1954] two very well written books have been published in our own country. Neither of them is primarily concerned with the dogma of the Church’s necessity for the attainment of eternal salvation, but both of them offer explanations of this teaching. One of these books, *The Living Christ*,<sup>56</sup> by Fr. John L. Murphy, has already gained the widespread recognition to which it is entitled. The other, *Wisdom Shall Enter*,<sup>57</sup> by Fr. Leo J. Trese, will undoubtedly prove to be equally popular. Fathers Murphy and Trese are certainly to be numbered among the ablest exponents of Catholic teaching in our country at the present time.

“It is precisely because of the extraordinary ability of these two writers, and by reason of the extensive circulation their most recent literary productions have achieved and will undoubtedly continue to gain, that it is important to examine what their books have to say about the Church’s necessity for salvation. Inevitably there will be a great many of our people who will accept as true and as genuine Catholic doctrine the explanations of this dogma contained in these two books. Objectively the people will suffer harm if the teachings contained in these books should be in any way opposed to or incompatible with what the authoritative documents of the ecclesiastical *magisterium* tell us about the meaning of the dogma that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.”

### Fr. John L. Murphy

AER5: “[pp. 261-266] Father Murphy’s chapter on ‘The Church and Salvation’ ... should be corrected in the subsequent printings...

“1) He seeks to give the impression that there has been no important and genuine variance among Catholic theologians in their explanation of the dogma. We are told that ‘Theologians have regarded the axiom [“Outside the Church there is no salvation”] in different ways in their attempts to explain it, but basically they all say the same thing; it is more a question of words than of ideas... Despite the varying nuances, however, all of them tell us the same thing.’<sup>58</sup> In the *Humani generis*, however, Pope Pius XII mentions, among the ‘poisonous fruits’ of the doctrinal novelties with which he is primarily concerned in this encyclical letter, the fact that ‘Some reduce to an empty formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order that eternal salvation may be attained.’<sup>59</sup> According to the Sovereign Pontiff, then, there were theologians who

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<sup>56</sup> John L. Murphy, *The Living Christ* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1952), pp. xii + 228.

<sup>57</sup> Leo J. Trese, *Wisdom Shall Enter* (Chicago: Fides Publishers, 1954), pp. 144.

<sup>58</sup> *The Living Christ*, p. 105.

<sup>59</sup> DB. 3019.

explained this dogma inadequately and inaccurately. The teaching that all the theologians tell us the same thing, or even approximately the same thing, about the dogma of the Church's necessity for salvation is quite out of line with the actual declaration of the ecclesiastical *magisterium* on this subject.

“2) Father Murphy makes a problem out of the juxtaposition of ‘two seemingly opposed truths,’ set forth by Pope Pius IX in the *Singulari quadam*. The author of *The Living Christ* writes that Pope Pius IX ‘tells us first that “We must, indeed, hold on faith that no one can be saved outside the Apostolic Roman Church, that she is the only ark of salvation, that whoever shall not have entered her will perish in the flood”; yet, on the other hand, he adds that “We must equally hold for certain that those who labor under ignorance of the true religion, if such ignorance be invincible, are not held guilty before the eyes of the Lord.”’<sup>60</sup> In the actual text of the *Singulari quadam*, however, there is not a trace of any even apparent opposition between the two principles enunciated by Pope Pius IX. According to the second of these principles, ‘qui verae religionis ignorantia laborent, si ea sit invincibilis, nulla ipsos obstringi *huiusce rei* culpa ante oculos Domini.’<sup>61</sup> The translation given in *The Living Christ* takes no account of the two words I have italicized in citing the passage from the original. When these two words are excluded from the passage, we have an absolute and bald assertion to the effect that persons who are invincibly ignorant of the true religion are guiltless in the sight of God, a statement which would make invincible ignorance of the true religion look something like a sacrament. When, on the other hand, we look at this passage exactly as Pope Pius IX presented it, we find it to mean that invincible ignorance of the true religion is not a sin, that people will not be blamed and punished by God for being invincibly ignorant of the true religion. Seen in the context of the *Singulari quadam*, this second of the two principles set forth by Pope Pius IX manifests itself as a development of the great Sovereign Pontiff's assertion that ‘the dogmas of the Catholic faith are in no way opposed to the divine mercy and justice.’<sup>62</sup>

“3) Father Murphy seriously weakens and confuses his explanation by speaking sometimes of ‘the necessity of belonging to the Church’ and sometimes of ‘the necessity of membership in the Church.’ He makes the assertion that ‘While the axiom, “Outside the Church there is no salvation,” undoubtedly refers to actual membership in the visible Church, there is still a deeper meaning involved in that statement.’<sup>63</sup>

“There would seem to be very little excuse for imagining or for leading the Catholic reading public to imagine that the axiom of no salvation outside the Church *undoubtedly* refers to actual membership in the visible Church. There is no statement of the ecclesiastical *magisterium* to the effect that actual membership in the Church is requisite for the attainment of eternal salvation. The Fourth Lateran Council designates the Church as that ‘outside of which no one at all (*nullus omnino*) is saved.’<sup>64</sup> The *Unam Sanctum* of

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<sup>60</sup> *The Living Christ*, pp. 105 f.

<sup>61</sup> DB. 1647.

<sup>62</sup> DB. 1646.

<sup>63</sup> DB. 1646.

<sup>64</sup> DB. 430.

Pope Boniface VIII speaks of it as that ‘outside of which there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins.’<sup>65</sup> The most forceful and arresting of all the older authoritative statements of this dogma, that made by the Council of Florence in its Decree for the Jacobites, asserts that those ‘intra catholicam Ecclesiam non existentes’ will go into everlasting fire ‘nisi ante finem vitae eidem [Ecclesiae] fuerint aggregati.’<sup>66</sup> The *Humani generis* mentions the ‘necessitatem pertinendi ad veram Ecclesiam, ut sempiterna attingatur salus.’<sup>67</sup> In no case is there any reference to a necessity of actual membership in the true Church. The *Suprema haec sacra* is quite explicit on this point. ‘Quandoquidem ut quis aeternam obtineat salutem, non semper exigitur ut *reapse* Ecclesiae tamquam membrum incorporetur, sed id saltem requiritur, ut eidem *voto et desiderio* adhaereat.’<sup>68</sup> In other words, according to this authoritative instruction issued by the Holy Office at the command of the Holy Father himself, the dogma that there is no salvation outside the Church definitely does not mean that a man has to be an actual member of the Church in order to be saved...

“4) In *The Living Christ*, two diverse and mutually incompatible explanations of the dogma are represented as differing only in a relatively unimportant matter of terminology. We are told that ‘Whether one wishes to interpret the axiom [“Outside the Church there is no salvation”] as referring only to actual membership and consider others outside the Church as divinely intended “exceptions”; or whether one wishes to interpret it as meaning “outside either actual membership in the Church, or an implicit or explicit desire for membership there is no salvation,” it tells us the same thing. The terms are really a subtle question for theologians to debate.’<sup>69</sup>

“The author of *The Living Christ* makes it quite clear that he prefers to interpret the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church in terms of membership in the Church rather than in terms of either membership or a desire for membership. He states that some have ‘explained the axiom as saying that unless one were a member of the Church either actually or in desire, there is no salvation.’<sup>70</sup> But, according to him, ‘This interpretation does seem to force the meaning of the axiom itself, which seems always to have indicated the ideal plan of God’s economy; and also, the very term “member in desire” is liable to the criticism of being bad English and clumsy theology.’<sup>71</sup>

“Father Murphy’s strictures against the use of the expression ‘member in desire’ are quite justified in the case of those men who would speak in such a way as to give the impression that a member in desire was one kind of member of the Church, with a membership in some way distinct from that of a member *in re*. Such a procedure is definitely bad English and clumsy theology. When, on the other hand, we say that a man can attain eternal salvation as a member of the true Church or as one who desires to belong to it, we are simply repeating the teaching of the *Suprema haec sacra* itself. This teaching does not ‘force’ the meaning of the axiom ‘Outside the Church there is no

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<sup>65</sup> DB. 468.

<sup>66</sup> DB. 714.

<sup>67</sup> DB. 3019.

<sup>68</sup> AER, CXXVII, 4 (Oct., 1952), 308.

<sup>69</sup> *The Living Christ*, p. 117.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

salvation' in any way. It is, on the contrary, a part of the Church's own interpretation of the dogma of which the axiom itself is the expression.

"If, however, we choose to interpret this axiom as referring only to actual membership in the Church, considering others outside the Church as divinely intended 'exceptions,' we are offering an explanation of the dogma and of the axiom quite incompatible with the explicit statements of the ecclesiastical *magisterium*. The axiom, in the last analysis, is nothing more or less than the common and popular statement of a dogma which the *ecclesia docens* has set forth and has explained many times. The statements of the *magisterium* with regard to the Church's necessity for salvation are always unrestricted and universal. Thus the *magisterium* tells us that *no one at all* (*nullus omnino*) is saved outside the Church and that *none of those who are not within the Catholic Church* (*nullo intra catholicam Ecclesiam non existentibus*) can become partakers of eternal life. Statements like these do not admit of exceptions. If there are individuals who attain eternal salvation outside the Catholic Church, according to the way in which the *magisterium* itself interprets the meaning of the word 'outside' in this context, then these declarations of the *ecclesia docens* are simply not true.

"Thus the two explanations of the axiom which Father Murphy offers as at least practically equivalent are, in point of fact, disparate and mutually incompatible. One turns out to be a statement of the Church's own teaching. The other involves an opposition to authoritative declarations of the Church's *magisterium*. The fact that the great Cardinal Newman himself taught that the dogma of the Church's necessity for salvation admitted of exceptions in no way justifies the employment of this device."<sup>72</sup>

"5) Father Murphy has weakened his explanation of the dogma by use of the term 'ideal.' We are told that 'Here we have the statement of the *ideal*: that every single man in the New Testament era should become an actual member of this visible Church established by Christ, and through her receive the graces of Redemption. Yet God knew from all eternity that there would actually be men who would not become members of this Church through no fault of their own.'<sup>73</sup> Again, we are told that 'Looked at in this way, the axiom may be understood as referring to the *ideal* plan of providence; it is the rule and not the exception. Those who are saved outside the Church are the exceptions...'<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, he states that 'It is the order primarily desired by God, the rule that He lays down, that all should be saved within the Church. In establishing this general rule, however, God did not fail to provide for those whom we may call the exceptions.'<sup>75</sup> Thus we see the practical equivalence, for Father Murphy's explanation of the dogma, of being actually a member of the Church, and being 'within' the Church. This is not in accord with the teaching of the *magisterium*. Likewise, there is a tendency to see in the axiom merely a statement of an antecedent decree of the divine will. The body of authoritative teaching of which this axiom is the commonly employed expression, however, bears no such interpretation. All of these claim to be statements of actual fact. They are intended as expressions of the consequent will of God. They mean, according to the *Suprema haec*

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), II, 336.

<sup>73</sup> *The Living Christ*, p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

*sacra*, that the Church is necessary for salvation with the necessity of means as well as with the necessity of precept. The Church is not merely an entity which was necessary for all according to an antecedent decree of the divine will. It is a society, the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, outside of which actually no one at all can be saved.”

### Fr. Leo J. Trese

AER5: “[pp. 266-269] Father Trese’s approach to this teaching is somewhat different from that of Father Murphy. He seeks, in the best sense of the term, to popularize Catholic teaching. He writes simply and incisively to explain the fundamentals of our doctrine.

“Yet it is by reason of this very tendency towards simplicity that *Wisdom Shall Enter* presents a somewhat undesirable explanation of the Church’s necessity for salvation. ‘These then,’ Father Trese tells us, ‘are the ones of whom it is true to say that, “Outside the Church there is no salvation”’: the Catholic who already has the faith and cannot lose it except through his own fault; and the non-Catholic who knows, or at least suspects, that the Catholic Church is Christ’s own.’<sup>76</sup>

“*Wisdom Shall Enter* was published long after the publication of the full text of the *Suprema haec sacra*. In this authoritative letter of the Holy Office, sent at the command of the Holy Father himself, we read: ‘Neque enim in praecepto tantummodo dedit Salvator ut omnes homines intrarent Ecclesiam, sed statuit quoque Ecclesiam medium esse salutis, sine quo nemo intrare valeat regnum gloriae caelestis.’<sup>77</sup> This is part of the Church’s own explanation of the dogma that there is no salvation outside the Church. Hence people are seriously misled if they are persuaded to believe that this dogma applies only to Catholics and to those non-Catholics who know or suspect that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ. Yet this is precisely the impression that is gained from a declaration that these are *the ones* to whom the dogma applies.

“Father Trese, it is true, teaches that the state of mind of a Protestant (or a Jew or a Mohammedan) who is sincerely convinced that his religion is the true religion, and who lives up to his religion to the very best of his ability is this: ‘I want to do everything that God asks of me, no matter what.’<sup>78</sup> He does not, however, connect this teaching with the dogma that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.

“He terminates his own explanation of this subject with the following paragraph.

‘But this fact still remains: Christ’s own Way of Salvation is bound to be the best, the surest, the safest way. There are good Protestants, and there are bad Catholics. But in no other church can personal sanctity reach such heights as in Christ’s own Church; in no other church will goodness be so widespread, nor salvation so certain. With all the helps which Christ has entrusted to His Church—the Mass, the Sacraments, the fulness of Truth—the “good Catholic” has an advantage over the “good non-Catholic” beyond all compute.’<sup>79</sup>

“It would be difficult to find a defense of the Catholic Church elaborated more completely in terms of distinctly Protestant ecclesiology. The Catholic Church is presented, not as the Mystical Body of Christ, actually requisite for all men, but merely as

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<sup>76</sup> *Wisdom Shall Enter*, p. 142.

<sup>77</sup> *AER*, CXXVII, 4 (Oct., 1952), 308.

<sup>78</sup> *Wisdom Shall Enter*, p. 143.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143 f.

the best of the religious organizations available to men. Indeed, the paragraph seems to imply that there is some way of salvation available other than through Our Lord. It is painful to realize that some Catholic people will be led to imagine that a statement like the first sentence of the paragraph cited above is an accurate expression of genuine Catholic doctrine.

“In point of fact, the Catholic Church does not present itself merely as the best or the most effective religious society on earth. It is the Mystical Body of Christ, the only religious society objectively approved by and acceptable to God Himself. It is the one kingdom of God on earth, the true *ecclesia* of Jesus Christ.

“According to the original Protestant theory of ecclesiology, on the other hand, the kingdom of God, the *ecclesia* of the Scriptures, is not an organized society at all. It depicts this true *ecclesia* as an *invisible* church, as the sum-total of all the good people or the predestined people on earth. In the light of this erroneous theory, the visible churches, the organized societies into which men who wish to follow Our Lord are organized, play a distinctly subsidiary part. If the Gospel is preached sincerely and sacraments administered rightly within these organizations, they appear as more or less acceptable and useful aids for people who are supposed to be joined to Our Lord in the invisible church.

“No proponent of this theory ever held that all religious denominations are equally good. Quite on the contrary, an organization was supposed to be more acceptable or more useful than others if it could offer more effective spiritual guidance and help to its members. Naturally, each denomination would claim a high degree of excellence for itself, while, at the same time, it held, according to this same general theory, that other religious societies which passed muster under the Protestant notes of the church were legitimate and really, though perhaps in a lesser degree, effective.

“The theory itself is hopelessly erroneous because the Mystical Body of Christ actually is the visible Catholic Church. The religious society over which the Bishop of Rome presides as Our Lord’s Vicar on earth is the one and only social unit within which men may achieve salvific contact with God in Christ.

“Yet, in this final paragraph of *Wisdom Shall Enter*, we find the Catholic Church presented in the light of this theory. ‘Christ’s own Way of Salvation’ is designated as the best, the surest and the safest, but definitely not as the only way. There are other ‘churches’ in which salvation itself will be found, even though not as certainly as in the Catholic Church.

“Such teaching is not in conformity with the declarations of the Church’s *magisterium*. Thus, to cite only one example, in the *Singulari quadam*, the great allocution which Pope Pius IX delivered on the day following his definition of the dogma of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception, the Holy Father said that it was his duty to admonish the Bishops who were listening to him to do all in their power ‘to drive out of men’s minds that equally impious and deadly opinion according to which the way of eternal salvation can be found in any religion.’<sup>80</sup> That error is present even when the way of salvation is represented as available in other religions less perfectly or less certainly than in the Catholic Church.

“Those who will benefit from reading *Wisdom Shall Enter* will be benefited far more if, in future printings of this work, the part on the necessity of the Church for salvation is

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<sup>80</sup> DB. 1646.

revised in line with the pertinent statements and explanations of the ecclesiastical *magisterium*.”

## **Fenton Proves Apostate Antipopes Betrayed Their Words by Inaction**

Even after Fr. Fenton’s works were completed and made public, Apostate Antipope Pius XII said and did nothing about these heretical perpetrators and their heretical imprimatured books that reduced the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula. Pius XII continued to close his ears and mouth and remained deaf and dumb to these notorious perpetrators and their notoriously heretical books. While Pius XII warned Catholics about the great evil of those who were reducing the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula, he effectively did nothing to identify, ban, and punish the perpetrators who were reducing the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula. Fr. Fenton’s massive and overwhelming evidence proves that Pius XII had to know about these so-called Catholic theologians and their heretical imprimatured books that were denying the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula. But instead of weeding out this deadly infection from within the ranks of the Catholic Church by taking appropriate action, he did nothing and hence let the infection fester and spread like wildfire. Oh, one cannot conceive of a greater evil than a man who knows evil is being done and allows it to continue to kill souls and harm and destroy the reputation of the Catholic Church when it is within his power to stop it. Did not Pius XII speak good and true words when he said that certain so-called Catholic theologians are reducing the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula, but did he not also deny these good words by inaction by not doing anything effective to identify and eliminate the heretical perpetrators! Indeed, he betrayed his good words by inaction.

It is ironic and hypocritical that those who deny the Salvation Dogma say that Pius XII had to know about Fr. Feeney and his beliefs even though he never mentioned Fr. Feeney by name. But they do not equally admit that Apostate Antipope Pius XII had to know about the many heretical perpetrators and their heretical imprimatured books that denied the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula, as identified by Fr. Fenton.

The Salvation Dogma began to be denied in the 16th century by nominal Catholic theologians. (See RJMI book *Bad Books on Salvation*) As the salvation heresy made progress inside the teaching instruments of the Catholic Church, more and more theologians held and taught the salvation heresy to the point that almost all if not all of them held the heresy. For example, in the 18th century the notorious heretic Alphonsus Liguori taught the salvation heresy in his infamous Moral Theology book (the *Moralia Theologia*). He taught that it is an allowable opinion and thus not heresy to believe that men can be saved during the New Covenant era without explicit belief in Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Trinity.

As time progressed from the 16th onward, it would be illogical and wilfully blind to believe that no pope or apostate antipope knew about the salvation heresy either before or after they became popes or apostate antipopes, especially the popes and apostate antipopes who were theologians. There can be no doubt, then, that many of these so-

called popes either denied or doubted the Salvation Dogma or at least remained silent and thus defended the heresy and heretics by sins of omission. In both cases they would have been automatically excommunicated formal heretics and thus banned from holding offices and thus were apostate antipopes.

Because the Salvation Dogma is a basic dogma, the doubt or denial of it makes a Catholic an automatically excommunicated formal heretic who is thus outside the Catholic Church and no longer Catholic. No excuse can eliminate or diminish the mortal guilt incurred for denying or doubting a basic dogma.<sup>81</sup> Hence the so-called popes who doubted or denied the Salvation Dogma were not popes because formal heretics are banned from holding offices.

As the salvation heresy progressed and gained credence among nominal Catholics and non-Catholics, one would expect that a pope or apostate antipope would eventually notoriously and officially doubt or deny the Salvation Dogma. That apostate antipope was Pius IX. From the information I have, the first so-called pope who notoriously and officially denied the Salvation Dogma was Apostate Antipope Pius IX. (See RJMI book *Apostate Antipopes: Pius IX.*)

## **Fenton Proves Many Imprimatured Books Contain Heresy**

Fr. Fenton's works that expose the heresies in imprimatured books that reduce the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula are more proof that imprimatured books can contain heresy and other errors. That means even Fr. Fenton's imprimatured works can contain error and heresy. Indeed Fr. Fenton's imprimatured works *do* contain heresy. He, too, denied the Salvation Dogma!

## **Fenton Himself Denied the Salvation Dogma**

The saying that "there is no honor among criminals" applies most to heretics because they are the most dangerous of all criminals because they murder souls. And the most dangerous of all heretics is the one who mixes 99 percent truth with 1 percent heresy or, as Apostate Antipope Leo XIII says, with one drop of poison:

Apostate Antipope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, 1896: "There can be nothing more dangerous than those heretics who admit nearly the whole cycle of doctrine, and yet by one word, as with a drop of poison, infect the real and simple faith taught by our Lord and handed down by Apostolic tradition."

While identifying many salvation heretics and their heretical books, Fenton himself denied the Salvation Dogma by mixing 1 percent heresy with 99 percent truth. He, too, reduced the Salvation Dogma to a meaningless formula. He believed in the heresy that certain baptized men who believe in the Incarnation and Holy Trinity but adhere to false

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<sup>81</sup> See RJMI book *Heresy and Heretics*: Baptized men who do not know or believe all the basic dogmas are formal heretics.



churches and false religions, such as Protestants and schismatics, could be inside the Catholic Church and in the way of salvation:

**Title:** *American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 110, 1944, “Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus”

**Author:** Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton

AER1: “[p. 303] Strictly speaking, it is not necessary that the person who has charity should be fully informed about the identity of the true Church of Jesus Christ in this world. Thus it is perfectly possible that a man should intend to live within the Sheepfold of Christ and at the same time not be aware that the Roman Catholic Church is the society he seeks. The error which beclouds his mind does not change his vital orientation... He lives as one possessed of that *amor fraternitatis*... as the essential factor in the Catholic Church’s inward bond of unity. He truly intends to be a member of Christ’s Mystical Body.”

**Title:** *The Catholic Church and Salvation*

**Author:** Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton

**N.O.:** Edward A. Cerny, S.S., D.D., *Censor Librorum*

**Imp.:** +Francis P. Keough, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore, May 12, 1958

**Pub.:** Sands & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., Glasgow

CCS: “[p. 69-70] It is definitely not a teaching of the Catholic theologians that there can be no true act of divine or supernatural faith apart from an explicit awareness and acceptance of the Catholic religion as the true religion and of the Catholic Church as the true kingdom of God... True supernatural faith can exist even where there is only an implicit belief in the Catholic Church and Catholic religion. ... A person invincibly ignorant of the true religion can attain eternal salvation. ... Hence since it is possible for a man to have genuine supernatural faith and charity and the life of sanctifying grace, without having a distinct and explicit knowledge of the true Church and of the true religion, it is possible for this man to be saved with only an implicit knowledge and desire of the Church.”

In this just quoted passage, Fr. Fenton denies another dogma regarding supernatural faith, which only comes by hearing dogmas from a Catholic source and believing in them. He heretically believes that a man can have supernatural faith without hearing dogmas from a Catholic source and hence without believing in them:

CCS: “[p. 75] (2) The person who is invincibly ignorant of the true religion, and who sedulously obeys the natural law, lives an honest and upright life, and is prepared to obey God, can be saved through the workings of divine light and grace. (3) Such a person has already chosen God as his ultimate End. He has done this in an act of charity. He is in the state of grace, and not in the state of original or mortal sin. In this act of charity there is involved an implicit desire of entering and remaining within God’s true supernatural kingdom. Such a person has had his sins remitted ‘within’ the true Church of Jesus Christ.”

Hence Fenton says in his below quote that it is possible for a schismatic, such as a Greek schismatic, to be in a state of grace and thus receive the Holy Eucharist fruitfully:

CCS: “[pp. 94-95] It remains true that by reason of invincible ignorance, some of the members of these dissident and schismatical communities may receive the Eucharist and take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice fruitfully. Nevertheless the fact remains that this is possible only in the terms of inculpable ignorance. ... It is easy to see that the person who has even the valid Eucharist in a religious community apart from and opposed to the Catholic Church is at a great disadvantage compared with a member of the true Church. The great advantages in the possession of members of the Catholic Church and not available to people who are in the Church only by force

of an implicit desire or intention to enter it can thus be summed up under the headings of the authorized and infallible teaching of divine public revelation, the guidance of Our Lord through the government of the true Church; and the sacramental and liturgical life within the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. With these go the various blessings and prayers and indulgences which together constitute a benefit beyond price for those who seek and serve God in the true Church of His Divine Son. The non-member of the Catholic Church is comparatively insecure with regard to the affair of his salvation precisely because he lacks these benefits. Even though he should be in a state of grace and even though he should implicitly intend to enter the true Church, he has not the benefit of a visible and living magisterium which can speak to him with the voice and power of Our Lord Himself. He is not the beneficiary of a visible rule in which Our Lord Himself directs and guides His Church. And he cannot live, until he actually enters the Church as a member, the sacramental life within the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.”

### ***Fenton denied the Salvation Dogma with a different theology***

The only difference between Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton and the other salvation heretics he denounced for denying the Salvation Dogma is the theology he used to justify his denial of the dogma. For instance,

- Fr. Fenton correctly taught that it is erroneous to believe that certain Protestants and schismatics can belong to the soul of the Catholic Church but not Her body. So he said that they belong to both the soul and the body of the Catholic Church. But just like the other salvation heretics, Fenton has these self-professed Protestants and schismatics inside the Catholic Church and in the way of salvation, which is a denial of the Salvation Dogma.
- Fr. Fenton correctly taught that it is heresy to say that these Protestants are saved by their false church and false religion and hence that the Catholic Church is not the only means to salvation but only the ordinary means to salvation. So he said that the Catholic Church provided these Protestants with the means of salvation in order to place them in a state of grace while they adhere to their false churches and false religions. Even though Fenton believed they are not saved *by* their false religions, he did believe that they are saved *in* their false religions. Hence just like the other salvation heretics, Fenton has self-professed Protestants and schismatics inside the Catholic Church and in the way of salvation, which is a denial of the Salvation Dogma.

### ***Fenton condemned by his hypocrisy***

#### **On being saved by belonging to the state of grace**

Fr. Fenton correctly condemns the opinion that speaks only of the necessity of being in a state of grace to be saved without any reference to the necessity of belonging to the Catholic Church to be saved, which in essence excludes the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation:

AER1: “[p. 301] A third interpretation is much more common. It asserts that, in order to be saved, a man must belong at least to the *soul* of the Catholic Church.

...As far as these theologians are concerned, the axiom *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* means that there is no salvation for the man who is not at least in the state of grace. Looked on in this way, the axiom would insist upon the necessity of sanctifying grace rather than on that of the Catholic Church. It is difficult to see how this explanation could stand as a fully adequate interpretation of the doctrine set forth by the Fourth Lateran and Florence. ...Moreover this explanation is subject to disapproval on the grounds of terminology. If we take the soul of the Church to mean either God the Holy Ghost or the life of grace which exists within men as a result of the inhabitation of the Blessed Trinity in their souls, then certainly the expressions 'member of the soul of the Church' and 'belonging to the soul of the Church' are quite inadmissible. The term 'soul of the Church' is metaphorical, and there is an inexcusable mixing of the metaphors when a person is described as a 'member' of the Holy Ghost, or as 'belonging to' the state of grace."

Yet Fr. Fenton in essence professed belief in this same opinion that he condemned but used a different theology to do so. Below he teaches that a man who belongs to a false religion can be in the way of salvation if he is in a state of grace, and hence Fenton has this man who neither believes in nor obeys the Catholic Church being saved because he is in a state of grace and not because he believes in and obeys the Catholic Church:

AER1: "[p. 303] Strictly speaking, it is not necessary that the person who has charity should be fully informed about the identity of the true Church of Jesus Christ in this world. Thus it is perfectly possible that a man should intend to live within the Sheepfold of Christ and at the same time not be aware that the Roman Catholic Church is the society he seeks. The error which beclouds his mind does not change his vital orientation... He lives as one possessed of that *amor fraternitatis*...as the essential factor in the Catholic Church's inward bond of unity."

CCS: "[p. 75] (2) The person who is invincibly ignorant of the true religion, and who sedulously obeys the natural law, lives an honest and upright life, and is prepared to obey God, can be saved through the workings of divine light and grace. (3) Such a person has already chosen God as his ultimate End. He has done this in an act of charity. He is in the state of grace, and not in the state of original or mortal sin. In this act of charity there is involved an implicit desire of entering and remaining within God's true supernatural kingdom. Such a person has had his sins remitted 'within' the true Church of Jesus Christ."

Hence Fr. Fenton, just like the other salvation heretics, has men who belong to false religions being saved because they are in a state of grace in spite of the fact that they do not believe in and obey the Catholic Church. In essence Fr. Fenton has these men being saved by "belonging to the state of grace" and hence belonging to the Catholic Church because they are in a state of grace and not because they believe in and obey the Catholic Church.

### **On the best and surest helps to be saved**

Fr. Fenton correctly condemns those who teach that the Catholic Church is the best and surest way for salvation but not the only way and thus that false religions are also ways for salvation:

AER5: "He [Fr. Trese] terminates his own explanation of this subject with the following paragraph.

'But this fact still remains: Christ's own Way of Salvation is bound to be the best, the surest, the safest way. There are good Protestants, and there are bad Catholics. But in no other church can personal sanctity reach such heights as in Christ's own

Church; in no other church will goodness be so widespread, nor salvation so certain. With all the helps which Christ has entrusted to His Church—the Mass, the Sacraments, the fulness of Truth—the “good Catholic” has an advantage over the “good non-Catholic” beyond all compute.’

“It would be difficult to find a defense of the Catholic Church elaborated more completely in terms of distinctly Protestant ecclesiology. The Catholic Church is presented, not as the Mystical Body of Christ, actually requisite for all men, but merely as the best of the religious organizations available to men. . . . In this final paragraph of *Wisdom Shall Enter*, we find the Catholic Church presented in the light of this theory. ‘Christ’s own Way of Salvation’ is designated as the best, the surest and the safest, but definitely not as the only way. There are other ‘churches’ in which salvation itself will be found, even though not as certainly as in the Catholic Church. Such teaching is not in conformity with the declarations of the Church’s *magisterium*.”

Yet Fr. Fenton himself believes that certain men who belong to false religions can be inside the Catholic Church and in the way of salvation, which is the exact belief of the other salvation heretics he denounced. The only difference is that he uses a different theology to defend his heresy. He says that the Catholic Church is saving these men who belong to false religions. And Fenton teaches a modified heresy about the Catholic Church being the best and surest way for salvation by substituting the words “best and surest **way** for salvation” with the words “the best and surest **helps** for salvation.” While he teaches that those who belong to false religions can be inside the Catholic Church and hence in the way of salvation, he teaches that Catholics have the best and surest helps to be in the way of salvation because of the many benefits they derive by membership which these non-members who belong to the Catholic Church do not have. But just like the other salvation heretics, he has men who belong to false religions being in the way of salvation:

CCS: “[pp. 94-95] It remains true that by reason of invincible ignorance, some of the members of these dissident and schismatical communities may receive the Eucharist and take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice **fruitfully**. Nevertheless the fact remains that this is possible only in the terms of inculpable ignorance. . . . It is easy to see that the person who has even the valid Eucharist in a religious community apart from and opposed to the Catholic Church is at a great disadvantage compared with a member of the true Church. The great advantages in the possession of members of the Catholic Church and not available to people who are in the Church only by force of an implicit desire or intention to enter it can thus be summed up under the headings of the authorized and infallible teaching of divine public revelation, the guidance of Our Lord through the government of the true Church; and the sacramental and liturgical life within the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. With these go the various blessings and prayers and indulgences which together constitute a benefit beyond price for those who seek and serve God in the true Church of His Divine Son. The non-member of the Catholic Church is comparatively insecure with regard to the affair of his salvation precisely because he lacks these benefits. Even though he should be in a state of grace and even though he should implicitly intend to enter the true Church, he has not the benefit of a visible and living magisterium which can speak to him with the voice and power of Our Lord Himself. He is not the beneficiary of a visible rule in which Our Lord Himself directs and guides His Church. And he cannot live, until he actually enters the Church as a member, the sacramental life within the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.”

In its practical effect, Fr. Fenton’s heresy is the same as the one he condemned. Just like the other salvation heretics, he believes that certain men who belong to false

religions can be in the way of salvation even though they do not have the best and surest helps to be saved that members of the Catholic Church have. The end result is the same. Fr. Fenton and all the rest of the salvation heretics deny the Salvation Dogma in different ways—but they all deny it!

### ***Fenton defends his heresy with the heretical letter *Suprema haec sacra****

Because Fr. Fenton denied the Salvation Dogma, one would expect him to attack Fr. Leonard Feeney who upheld this dogma. Indeed, Fr. Fenton denounced Fr. Feeney even more zealously than he denounced others. Fenton used the heretical letter *Suprema haec sacra* to defend his denial of the Salvation Dogma and to denounce Fr. Feeney's belief in the Salvation Dogma:

Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton, *The Catholic Church and Salvation*: “[p. 116, 118] VII. The Holy Office Letter *Suprema Haec Sacra*: In the text of *Suprema haec sacra* we are reminded that the need for this supernatural faith holds true even where there is merely an implicit desire to enter the Catholic Church. In other words, it is possible to have a man attain salvation when he has no clear-cut notion of the Church, and desires to enter it only insofar as he wills to do all the things God wills that he should do. ... (8) It is possible for this desire of entering the Church to be effective, not only when it is explicit, but also (when the person is invincibly ignorant of the true Church) even when that desire or *votum* is merely implicit.”

Fr. Fenton resorts to lies to deceive others into believing his heresy. He refers to the heretical *Suprema haec sacra* as a Holy Office Letter when in fact it was not a Holy Office Letter. An official Holy Office decree must be registered in the *Acts of the Apostolic See* (A.A.S.). *Suprema haec* was not registered in the A.A.S. Instead it was published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* of October 1952, an unofficial American Catholic review of which Fr. Fenton was the editor, which makes him suspect of being one of the masterminds behind this heretical letter that promotes his version of the heresy. See Denzinger 3869-3872 which states that the origin of the letter *Suprema haec* is the *American Ecclesiastical Review* and not the A.A.S. And even if it were a Holy Office decree, it is not infallible because Holy Office decrees are not infallible, contrary to what Fr. Fenton would have his readers believe:

*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Infallibility: “Proof of Papal Infallibility - The pope, of course, can convert doctrinal decisions of the Holy Office, which are not in themselves infallible, into *ex cathedra* papal pronouncements...”

*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Acts of the Roman Congregations: “... (b) Authority of doctrinal decrees - Doctrinal decrees are not of themselves infallible; the prerogative of infallibility cannot be communicated to the Congregations by the Pope. On the other hand, owing to the teaching power delegated to the Congregations for safeguarding the purity of Christian doctrine, exterior compliance and interior assent are due to such decrees. However, solid proofs to the contrary may at times justify the learned in suspending their assent until the infallible authority of the Church intervenes.”

(See my books “*The Solemn and Ordinary Magisterium: Pontifical Congregations’ doctrinal decrees are not infallible*” and “*The Salvation Dogma: ... 1. The Fraudulent Holy Office Letter.*”)

## Fenton Was Also a Non-Judgmentalist Heretic

Non-judgmentalist heretics do their best to avoid using the “H” words, heresy and heretic. They do not call a heresy a heresy and they do not call a heretic a heretic. Hence they share in the guilt of the heresy they do not condemn as heresy and in the guilt of the heretic they do not denounce as a heretic. In place of the words heresy and heretic, they use other words that diminish or eliminate the evilness and danger of heresy and heretics. For instance, instead of calling a heresy a heresy, they call it an error or a deviation or an unacceptable opinion or an illegitimate opinion or a contradiction of a dogma or incompatible with magisterial statements, etc. But in none of these terms do they ever condemn the opinion as heresy and hence they do not denounce the perpetrators as heretics. This allows heresy to remain in imprimatured books under the pretense that it is only a non-heretical error. And it allows heretics to remain within the structure of the Catholic Church under the pretense that they are not heretics and thus allows them to continue to teach Catholics and corrupt them with their heresies. The end result is an endless multiplying of heretical theologians within the ranks of the Catholic Church and an endless multiplying of their heretical imprimatured books—and all unopposed because no one dare call a heresy a heresy and a heretic a heretic. This is one of the main factors that led to the Great Apostasy. From the 14th century onward non-judgmentalist popes, apostate antipopes, prelates, and theologians grew and grew within the ranks of the Catholic Church.

Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton is a good example of a non-judgmentalist heretic. In all of his works in which he identifies so-called Catholic theologians and their imprimatured books that deny the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula, he never condemns their heretical opinions as heresy and hence never denounces the heretical theologians as heretics or their imprimatured works as heretical. Instead he uses other words that reduce heresies to non-heretical errors and heretical theologians to non-heretical theologians. Hence he is a formal heretic on this point alone by sins of omission for not sufficiently condemning heresy and denouncing heretics.

For example, Fr. Fenton correctly states that many so-called Catholic theologians have presented opinions that reduce the dogma of the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation to a meaningless and empty formula, that run counter to the meaning of this dogma, and that are incompatible with the Church’s magisterium and void of real meaning in relation to dogmatic pronouncements. Yet in all of his words on this topic, Fr. Fenton never condemns these opinions as heresy:

AER3, Fr. Fenton: “One...reduces the doctrine of the Church’s necessity for salvation to an empty formula when, professing to retain and to explain the assertion that there is no salvation outside the Church, he actually presents a teaching that runs counter to the obvious and primary meaning of this doctrine. ...This occurs when the assertion is explained in a way that is **incompatible** with the statement of this truth in the documents of the Church’s magisterium...

“The assertion that ‘there is no salvation outside the Church,’ or, to use the form in which it is presented in most ecclesiastical documents, that ‘no one at all can be saved outside the Church,’ becomes merely a meaningless series of sounds or ‘an empty formula’ in the hands of a Catholic teacher who presumes to interpret it in some manner incompatible with the manifest significance of any one of these declarations of the Church’s magisterium in which the assertion occurs, in one way or another...

“It is imperative that we examine the various statements of the thesis on the Church’s necessity for salvation in current theological literature in order that we may see which among them can be said to fall under the censure of the Holy Father. An examination of the literature on this subject produced since the time of the Vatican Council [1870] shows that...among scholastic writers... some statements and explanations of the Church’s necessity for salvation...lay themselves open to the charge that they reduce this teaching to an empty formula. Some writers on this subject have carried through their attempts to minimize the significance of this teaching to such an extent that, for all intents and purposes, they have left the statement that there is no salvation outside the Church void of all real meaning.”

When an opinion reduces an infallible teaching on faith or morals to a meaningless formula or runs counter to the meaning of a dogma or is incompatible with the Church’s solemn magisterium, then that opinion is heresy. Yet never in all his works does Fenton condemn such opinions as heresy, and hence he is a formal heretic on this point alone by sins of omission and by defending heresy and heretics for not condemning heresy as heresy and denouncing heretics as heretics.

Fr. Fenton says that the opinion of certain theologians is an imperfect presentation of Catholic doctrine and is evil and inexact. Yet again Fr. Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

AER5: “Thus it is quite possible that an incorrect notion of the Church, gained through some imperfect presentation of Catholic doctrine, may be the source of lamentable conduct towards the Church itself. Yet the evil of inexact doctrinal teaching is not, in the last analysis, to be estimated in terms of the untoward effects which may or may not follow from it in the practical order. The misrepresentation of Our Lord’s divine message is calamitous in itself, when we consider it objectively.”

An inexact doctrinal teaching that is evil and calamitous to the divine message has to be heresy or else Fenton would have overstated the case. Yet Fenton never condemns such an opinion as heresy. If it were simply an error that does not contradict the magisterium, then it is an allowable error and hence cannot be called evil or calamitous to the divine message.

Fr. Fenton says that the opinion of certain theologians falls afoul of conciliar pronouncements on the necessity of the Church. Yet again Fr. Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

AER1: “A second interpretation of the dogma on the necessity of the Catholic Church would tell us that *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* means merely that the Church is the *ordinary* means of salvation. Like its predecessor, this explanation **falls afoul** of the Conciliar pronouncements on the necessity of the Church.”

Opinions that fall afoul of “Conciliar pronouncements” that deal with the Catholic faith have to be heretical. Yet Fenton never condemns the opinions as heresy.

Fr. Fenton says that “Cardinal” Newman’s opinion reduced the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation to an empty and meaningless formula and by its inaccuracy opposed the teaching of the Council of Florence’s Bull *Cantate Domino*.<sup>82</sup> Yet Fr. Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

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<sup>82</sup> Even though the *Council of Florence* was invalid because an apostate antipope approved it, Fr. Fenton nevertheless believed it as infallible. (See RJMI book *Apostate Antipopes*: Eugene IV.)

AER3: “A second type of explanation of this thesis is to be found in Cardinal Newman’s last published study of this subject, a study incorporated into his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*. ...The...English Cardinal...held that the principle ‘out of the Church, and out of the faith, is no salvation,’ admits of exceptions... It is hard to see how a universal negative proposition that admits of ‘distinct, and, for what we know, so very wide’ exceptions can be other than an empty or meaningless formula. As we have seen, the statement on the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation must be considered, not as a mere series of words taken out of all context, but precisely in the manner in which it stands in the various monuments of the Church’s official *magisterium*. As that teaching is found in, for instance, the *Cantate Domino*, it definitely does not admit of any ‘exceptions.’ If Newman was right, and if persons in invincible ignorance can be saved other than in the Church, the teaching of Eugenius IV and of the Council of Florence is definitely inaccurate. And, on the other hand, if it be Catholic dogma that none of those who dwell outside the Church can be saved unless before they die they become joined to the Church, then there is certainly no room for any sort of ‘exception’ to the rule of ‘the Church’s necessity for eternal salvation.’”

Fr. Fenton says that A.J. Lutz’s opinion reduces the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation to an empty formula and opposes the decree *Cantate Domino* from the Council of Florence. Yet again Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

AER3: “Fr. A. J. Lutz also explains the Church’s necessity in function of the ‘soul,’ but he makes this metaphor refer to God the Holy Ghost. This writer holds that ‘the Protestant in the state of grace is in reality a Catholic,’ by reason of what he considers the fact that ‘a person can be a member of the Church without being incorporated visibly into it.’ He continues: ‘What difference does it make if he thinks differently from the Catholics! We do not belong to Christ primarily by reason of our thought, but through His Spirit which gives us life.’ It would appear that this type of explanation of the Church’s necessity serve to reduce this teaching to an empty formula. As it stands in the *Cantate Domino*, to take one example, the teaching on the necessity of the Church for salvation manifestly involves the fact that no one can attain to the beatific vision unless he attaches himself to the Church before the end of this mortal life.”

Fr. Fenton proves that other theologians also denied the Salvation Dogma by reducing the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation to an empty and meaningless formula but again does not condemn their opinion as heresy:

AER3: “Some other strange methods of explaining the Church’s necessity for salvation have been employed during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, Sertillanges, followed by Lippert, Michalon, and to a certain extent by Heris, gave the impression that no man could be considered as completely outside the Catholic Church. This teaching would certainly reduce the thesis on the Church’s necessity to an empty formula, since it would imply that no man had any particular reason to adhere to the Church before his death, since he is in it necessarily and always.”

Fr. Fenton says that Otto Karrer denied the practical import of the Salvation Dogma by presenting an inaccurate explanation of it. But again Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

AER3: “Sometimes this tendency to explain the doctrine of the Church’s necessity by what amounts to a denial of its practical import has assumed a less offensive though equally inaccurate form, as in the case of Otto Karrer’s *Religions of Mankind*, the thirteenth chapter of which is entitled ‘Salvation outside the Visible Church.’”



Fr. Fenton says that Jean Danielou's explanation of the Salvation Dogma cannot be legitimately employed. Yet again Fenton does not condemn his opinion as heresy:

AER3: "Another member of this same group, Jean Danielou, accepts and attributes to 'most theologians' the belief that belonging to the visible Church is not an absolutely necessary condition for salvation, and holds we can think that souls of good will outside the Church are saved. It does not seem that this type of explanation can legitimately be employed..."

An opinion that cannot be legitimately employed because it contradicts a dogma has to be heretical. Yet Fenton never condemned the opinion as heresy.

Fr. Fenton refers to Paul Vigue's and Otto Karrer's denial of the Salvation Dogma as confusion and extravagances of errors. Yet again Fenton does not condemn their opinions as heresy:

AER4: "[p. 220] This tragi-comedy of misinterpretation and misunderstanding resulted finally, in the twentieth century, in such statements as that of Paul Vigué, to the effect that 'the theologians distinguish two Churches, the one visible and the other invisible, the body and soul of the Church,' and that of Otto Karrer that 'theology has deduced the doctrine of an invisible Church of good men and women, even outside the communion of the visible Church.' The theologians who acted thus were men who thought that they were interpreting the teaching of St. Robert, when they were actually employing his own terminology to contradict the thesis he had upheld. It was confusion on this point, perhaps more than any other, which occasioned most of the extravagances and errors on the subject of the Church's necessity for salvation which have been noted in recent theological history..."

Fr. Fenton says that Fr. Murphy's opinion regarding the Salvation Dogma was opposed to and not in accord with authoritative declarations of the Church's magisterium. Yet again Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

AER5: "Thus the two explanations of the axiom which Father Murphy offers as at least practically equivalent are, in point of fact, disparate and mutually incompatible. One turns out to be a statement of the Church's own teaching. The other involves an opposition to authoritative declarations of the Church's magisterium. The fact that the great Cardinal Newman himself taught that the dogma of the Church's necessity for salvation admitted of exceptions in no way justifies the employment of this device..."

"5) Father Murphy has weakened his explanation of the dogma by use of the term 'ideal.' We are told that 'Here we have the statement of the *ideal*: that every single man in the New Testament era should become an actual member of this visible Church established by Christ, and through her receive the graces of Redemption. Yet God knew from all eternity that there would actually be men who would not become members of this Church through no fault of their own.'<sup>83</sup> Again, we are told that 'Looked at in this way, the axiom may be understood as referring to the *ideal* plan of providence; it is the rule and not the exception. Those who are saved outside the Church are the exceptions...' ... This is not in accord with the teaching of the *magisterium*."

Fr. Fenton says that Fr. Trese's opinion regarding the Salvation Dogma is an undesirable explanation, a distinctly Protestant ecclesiology, an inaccurate expression of genuine Catholic doctrine, hopelessly erroneous, not in conformity with the declarations of the Church's *magisterium*. Yet again Fr. Fenton does not condemn the opinion as heresy:

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<sup>83</sup> *The Living Christ*, p. 106.

AER5: “Yet it is by reason of this very tendency towards simplicity that *Wisdom Shall Enter* presents a somewhat undesirable explanation of the Church’s necessity for salvation. ...It would be difficult to find a defense of the Catholic Church elaborated more completely in terms of distinctly Protestant ecclesiology. The Catholic Church is presented, not as the Mystical Body of Christ, actually requisite for all men, but merely as the best of the religious organizations available to men. Indeed, the paragraph seems to imply that there is some way of salvation available other than through Our Lord. It is painful to realize that some Catholic people will be led to imagine that a statement like the first sentence of the paragraph cited above is an accurate expression of genuine Catholic doctrine. ...The theory itself is hopelessly erroneous because the Mystical Body of Christ actually is the visible Catholic Church. The religious society over which the Bishop of Rome presides as Our Lord’s Vicar on earth is the one and only social unit within which men may achieve salvific contact with God in Christ. Yet, in this final paragraph of *Wisdom Shall Enter*, we find the Catholic Church presented in the light of this theory. ‘Christ’s own Way of Salvation’ is designated as the best, the surest and the safest, but definitely not as the only way. There are other ‘churches’ in which salvation itself will be found, even though not as certainly as in the Catholic Church. Such teaching is not in conformity with the declarations of the Church’s *magisterium*.”

Indeed, Fr. Fenton was a non-judgmentalist heretic who denied the true nature of heresy and heretics by not condemning heresy as heresy and by not denouncing heretics as heretics. Instead he used other words that replaced the “H” words of heresy and heretic and in so doing presented heretical errors as non-heretical errors and heretical theologians as non-heretical theologians. Hence he is a formal heretic on this point alone.

### ***Non-judgmentalists attack one another***

Because he turns to men and not God for acceptance, he wants to remain in good standing with his heretical brothers who themselves are in good standing because bad and unvigilant popes, apostate antipopes, and bishops have not weeded them out. Hence the non-judgmentalist goes as far as to praise men who teach heresy and to praise their heretical works before, during, and after he insufficiently accuses them of erroneous beliefs so that they do not get too angry. I say too angry because modern theologians even get angry and more irrational than they already are when they and their works are even insufficiently criticized. Because of their non-judgmentalist heresy, they cannot even bear to be criticized in the least; and when they are, they fight with one another like a bunch of crybabies and sissies. Their effeminacy caused by their non-judgmentalism stinks to the high heavens!

You will see how one non-judgmentalist gets angry at another non-judgmentalist for judging his works to be erroneous even though he did not judge them to be heretical. Regarding the Salvation Dogma, Fr. Hartnett accused Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton of beclouding, misunderstanding, and harshly interpreting the Salvation Dogma and of falling far short of the so-called Holy Office’s explanation of the dogma. However, in none of Fr. Hartnett’s accusations against Fr. Fenton are the “H” words of heresy and heretic ever mentioned, which is what the charges should have been if Fenton, indeed, was misinterpreting a dogma. Hence Fr. Hartnett is a non-judgmentalist just like Fr. Fenton. You will also observe that Fr. Fenton gets very angry at Fr. Hartnett for criticizing him. Fr. Fenton says that Fr. Hartnett’s charges against him are grave and frightfully serious and, if true, serious enough for him to give up his jobs as editor and

teacher. Yet Hartnett never condemned Fenton's teachings as heresy or denounced Fenton as a heretic. And Fenton likewise never said that these grave and frightfully serious charges were heresy even though Fenton admits that the charges against him involve the denial of a Catholic dogma. Below is a quote from "A Reply to Father Hartnett," 1952, by Fr. Joseph Clifford Fenton:

"The last two paragraphs of Fr. Hartnett's Sept. 20 editorial contain some very grave doctrinal charges against myself. It will be impossible to discuss these charges, or even attempt to defend myself against them, unless the two pertinent paragraphs from Fr. Hartnett's editorial are quoted in full. Fr. Hartnett wrote as follows:

'Unfortunately, the proper interpretation of this doctrine has again been clouded, this time in a recent criticism, by a Catholic theologian [Fr. Fenton], of James M. O'Neill's excellent reply to Paul Blanshard. In his *Catholicism and American Freedom*, Mr. O'Neill called the Catholic doctrine on the necessity of membership in the Church for eternal salvation, *as portrayed by Mr. Blanshard*, "this ancient nonsense." Mr. O'Neill was not attempting to explain the full meaning of the doctrine in theological terms. He was answering Blanshard and his answer was substantially correct. Why, then, has the reviewer [Fr. Fenton] in the June issue of the *American Ecclesiastical Review* taken Mr. O'Neill severely to task?

'If what the reviewer himself has written about this doctrine were interpreted as harshly as he interpreted what Mr. O'Neill wrote, it would be found to fall far short of the Holy Office's authoritative explanation. By brushing off Mr. O'Neill's clarification without unfolding the doctrine in its fulness, he seems to have helped revive the very misunderstanding which the letter of the Holy Office aims to dispel.'<sup>84</sup>

"Here are three definite charges stated explicitly, and one more implied. Fr. Hartnett accuses me of 1) beclouding the interpretation of that teaching on the Church's necessity for salvation which has been set down in the letter from the Holy Office to Archbishop Cushing; 2) having written on this subject in such a way that, should these writings be interpreted other than charitably, these writings will be found to fall *far short* of the Holy Office's authoritative explanation; and 3) having helped revive the very misunderstanding which the Holy Office letter meant to dispel.

"The last sentence in the first of the two paragraphs just quoted from Fr. Hartnett's editorial is a question which charges me by implication, but nonetheless clearly, with having criticized Mr. O'Neill's book unjustly. Any Catholic, and particularly any priest, can see that these charges are quite serious. The first three are frightfully serious. If it be true that I have brought confusion into the Holy Office's explanation of the Catholic dogma of the Church's necessity for salvation, that my rather extensive writings on this subject are in some measure opposed to the Holy Office teaching, and that I have caused a revival of the erroneous teachings which had been set forth by the St. Benedict's Center group, and which had occasioned the issuance of the Holy Office instruction; then it is rather obvious that I have failed lamentably in my work of teaching the *tractatus de ecclesia* in our pontifical University's school of sacred theology, and that I have misused my position as editor-in-chief of *The American Ecclesiastical Review*. Should the first three of Fr. Hartnett's charges be true, then it would be obviously necessary for me to relinquish these positions."

Why all this fuss from the non-judgmentalist Fenton? After all, the non-judgmentalist Hartnett did not condemn him for teaching heresy nor denounce him as a heretic. Fr. Hartnett did the exact same non-judgmental thing that Fenton did to others,

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<sup>84</sup> *America*, LXXXVII, 25 (Sept. 20, 1952), 583.

yet Fenton could not take it when it was done to him. After all, how many modern theologians did Fr. Fenton say were contradicting and misinterpreting the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula while not condemning their teachings as heresy and denouncing them as heretics! (See in this book [Which theologians and imprimated books denied the Salvation Dogma](#), p. 11.) And if Fr. Fenton believed that the non-heretical charges against him were serious enough for him to lose his jobs as editor and teacher, then why did he not believe the same thing regarding those whom he accused of beclouding and misinterpreting the Salvation Dogma by reducing it to a meaningless formula? Instead of saying they should be removed from their teaching and writing jobs, he praises them and their works and treats them as Catholics in good standing. And why? - Because he is a non-judgmentalist and hence does not want them to get too angry with him so that he can stay in good standing with them. Therefore he insufficiently judges their heretical works as non-heretical works while praising the works at the same time. Let us listen to Fr. Fenton praising Professor O'Neill's book while saying that the book contains "statements at variance with the accurate and authoritative Catholic teaching" and statements that are false because they deny and misinterpret a dogma of the Church. Yet Fenton never says that this denial of a dogma is heresy and hence never denounces O'Neill as a heretic; instead, he praises him and his works:

"A Reply to Fr. Hartnett," by Fr. Fenton: "Where there are reasons for praising Prof. O'Neill's book, I have tried to indicate them. But where there are statements at variance with the accurate and authoritative Catholic teaching, I believed and I still believe that it was my duty to indicate them. Fr. Hartnett seems to feel very strongly that I should not have objected to anything in the book because Prof. O'Neill 'was answering Blanshard.' I cannot subscribe to the double standard of truth here implied. A dogma of the Church is true, and its denial or misinterpretation is false, in any book or in any article. To allow a seriously inaccurate passage to get by without challenge because the book in which it is contained is a prominent and well-written work, directed against a particularly vicious and malign enemy of the Church, seems to be a dereliction of duty on the part of any Catholic book reviewer. It is a dereliction of duty to be avoided, even at the cost of defamatory publicity in America."

Professor O'Neill indeed denied a dogma of the Church if he said the Salvation Dogma was "ancient nonsense." And O'Neill denied another dogma—the dogma that dogmas can never change their meaning by the passage of time or for any reason. Hence heresy is the correct charge against O'Neill and thus he must be denounced as a heretic. Therefore Fenton was obliged to condemn O'Neill's error as heresy, denounce his book as heretical, denounce O'Neill as a heretic, avoid him in religious matters, warn others, report him to the proper superiors, demand that his book be condemned and his other books be banned, and demand that he be removed from any teaching position and be declared as an automatically excommunicated heretic by competent authorities. Instead of doing all these things he was obliged to do, Fenton praises O'Neill's book and treats him as a Catholic in good standing. It only takes belief in one heresy to become a heretic and fall outside the Catholic Church and on the broad road to hell and to lead others into heresy and onto the broad road to hell. What, dear reader, is there to praise in all of this!

Fr. Fenton makes a point to proclaim his non-judgmentalist policy of not condemning as heresy any teaching by so-called Catholic theologians nor denouncing

them as heretics no matter how much their teachings contradict dogmas, which he considers “legitimate literary criticism”:

“A Reply to Fr. Hartnett,” by Fr. Fenton: “It may be objected at the very outset that I am taking too serious a view of what might be regarded, after all, as a mere academic dispute. And it may be said that the editor of *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, who has given many unfavorable notices on other men’s writing, is somewhat over-sensitive when he is confronted with an adverse criticism of his own material. The answer to that objection involves an explanation of one very basic process in legitimate literary criticism. Our controversial articles and book reviews in *AER* have never attacked the person or the orthodoxy of any Catholic. When we have found some point of disagreement with a man whose writings are under consideration, we have always taken out and indicated the statement or the passage to which we have taken exception, and have tried to give the reason for our disagreement. This I believe to be the only legitimate procedure for a responsible writer in any Catholic publication. Fr. Hartnett, on the other hand, has followed an entirely different procedure. . . .He has set himself up as both witness and judge. Whatever evidence there might be to support his accusations, it is evidence which he has not troubled to show to his readers or to the priest he has set out to assail. His attack is not against any statement or portion of my writings, but against myself, my own doctrinal soundness and competence.”

Has not Fr. Fenton also “set himself up as both witness and judge” of other so-called Catholic theologians in the same way Fr. Hartnett judged him! Regardless of whether Fr. Hartnett took the time to produce the reasons for his charges against Fr. Fenton, he never charged Fenton with heresy. So Hartnett is only following the same non-judgmentalist policy of Fenton’s in which none of these so-called Catholic theologians condemn the heretical works of another so-called Catholic theologian as heresy nor denounce him as a heretic.

These so-called Catholic theologians, these notorious formal heretics, this gang of criminals, made a pact with one another to respect one another and their works no matter how heretical their works are and hence never to denounce one another as heretics no matter how heretical they are. And this they have the audacity to call respectful and “legitimate criticism”! Where is the respect due to the Catholic God and the Catholic Church and Catholic dogmas in all of this! And if any theologian rises up among these non-judgmentalist theologians and condemns their heresies as heresy and denounces them as heretics, he is banished from theological circles and banned from teaching by the local Ordinary or religious superior—and if not explicitly banned, then banned by other means. This keeps the criminal theologians safe and sound within the structures of the Catholic Church while the good theologians are cast out and ignored. After all, dear reader, how else could Catholics fall into apostasy in great numbers to the point that Jesus said it would seem as if no one at all had the Catholic faith on earth when He comes the second time:

“I say to you, that he will quickly revenge them. But yet the Son of man, when he cometh, shall he find, think you, faith on earth?”  
(Saint Luke 18:8)