

THE PENDULATING PAPACY

SINCE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, THE POPES HAVE
OSCILLATED BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT PATHS REGARDING
THE RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH TO THE MODERN WORLD

The general thesis. In this series of articles entitled *The Roots of Vatican II*, I am attempting to explain how a Vatican II was possible in a monolithically stable institution such as the Catholic Church. How could it, by means of a single council, radically alter its dogmas, liturgy, disciplines, and attitudes so as to approve of everything it once condemned, and to condemn everything it once approved?

Our answer to the problem is that Vatican II is not the work of the Church, since it is not the work of those who truly represent the Catholic Church. It is the work of Modernists, heretics or those favoring heresy, who slowly infiltrated the Church until they managed to be appointed to high positions, and from such a vantage point to infuse their deadly venom into the Church's veins. The result is that the Church has poisoned institutions, starting from the Vatican itself, and extending down through its dioceses, great religious orders, seminaries, universities, convents, down to the smallest and least significant entities. The poisoning, however, was not done by those invested with the authority of Christ, but by aliens —

Modernists and modernizers — who were permitted, nevertheless, to come into the sheepfold by the legitimate authority.

The opening of the door to the heretics by the legitimate authority is the subject of our series. The process of getting through the gate first as seminarians and priests, and from thence proceeding up so as to receive the miter and finally the papal tiara, was long, slow, and relentless.

It started, in my opinion, in the eighteenth century. This century was characterized by two very strong anti-Catholic forces: (1) the spirit of *unbelief*, typified by Voltaire and the Encyclopedists; (2) the spirit of *Jansenism*, typified by the supposedly Catholic monarchs and their courts, notably those of Spain, Portugal, France, and Austria, as well as those of many smaller kingdoms. These two forces were closely allied, having as their common enemy the Pope of Rome and the papacy itself. Indeed, all of "Catholic" Europe was filled with a pungent odor of anti-Catholicism. Ironically, the Church found more peace, at times, in the lands of those ruled by Protestants and schismatics.

The popes of the eighteenth century faced a difficult dilemma. How does the Church deal with Catholic states which are actually hostile to it? How does one save the rights of the Church? How does one preserve these states from going into schism, as their leaders would happily do, and threatened to do?

Among the college of cardinals, there were two schools of thought on this issue. Some said that the rights of the Church must be preserved at all costs, and that the pope should assume a hard line against those who trampled upon these rights. They called for an uncompromising practical attitude against the “enlightened” — unbelieving, freemasonic, jansenistic, and liberal — royal courts. This party was known as the *zelanti*, Italian for the zealous, *zealot* not being an appropriate translation in English. Opposed to them were the more accommodating cardinals, who comprised (1) those who were not infected with any of the modern ideas, but who felt the need to compromise in the practical order in order to preserve the Church’s position in these states, and (2) those who were actually infected to a greater or lesser extent by the modern ideas, *without, however, any diminution of the doctrine of the Faith*.

It is important to emphasize that the “accommodationists,” as we shall call them, were not Modernists. They were not in favor of diluting the doctrine of the Faith or the Church’s holy practices in order to please the then modern mentality. They favored merely a road of compromise with the hostile states in the hope of finding some solution with them which would preserve the Church from a worse evil, for example, that France, Spain, Portugal, or Austria should go into schism. Even if one of these states had become schismatic, the consequences for the Church

would have been inestimable, when one considers the immense empires which each of these countries possessed, empires in which Catholic missionaries had been toiling for hundreds of years in order to convert the natives and establish the Church. The Church, after all, always had won the waiting game. The Church as an institution always survived its persecutors. Storms came and went, but the Church and the papacy with it always emerged intact, if perhaps a little jostled. From the dry decks of the Barque of Peter one could, as time passed, observe the sinking ships of its enemies.

On the other hand, the *zelanti*, or “anti-accommodationists,” as we shall call them, said that the unbelief of the “Enlightenment” was diabolical, and that no possible compromises could be made with it, even those of the practical order which regarded the Church’s relations with states.

The problem was a thorny one, to be sure. The eighteenth century nations preserved, in their political institutions and in their Church-State relations, the whole medieval system. The monarch was considered to be the protector of the Faith in his realm. He enjoyed all of the privileges and concessions which were made to his predecessors in view of this end. In practically all cases, for example, it was the monarch who would name the bishops of his kingdom, and it was the pope who would approve the nomination and invest them with jurisdiction. Even in an age of faith, such a system was dangerous and fraught with problems. In the Middle Ages the Church was constantly hounded by the interference of these monarchs in her affairs. Lay investiture was a plague which seemed impossible to eradicate. The appointment of morally unworthy bishops, their title to the

office resting on the fact that they were the king's friends, was another infection which led to dreadful abuse and scandal. Why did the Church tolerate such things? Because there was an immense good to be gained by it, namely that the State would be a Catholic State, which recognized legally and culturally the kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This Catholic State and Catholic culture would immeasurably outweigh the evils of the interfering kings. The culture of faith produced a fresh air of public and legal adherence to supernatural truth and morality. In this healthful atmosphere the Church could pursue her mission conferred by God: the salvation of souls, the making of saints.

And saints she made. The Catholic truth and piety of the home was confirmed by the public support and acceptance of the same norms in society. Although not all lived up to the commandments, to be sure, the fact that all regarded the commandments to be the true rule of life lent incalculable support to anyone who did wish to live by the commandments.

The occasional meddling of monarchs in the Church's affairs was, in the age of faith, no more annoying to the Church than a fly would be to a great sculptor who was deeply absorbed in the creation of a magnificent work of art.

As time progressed, however, the faith of the people started to weaken. This was especially true of the upper classes. Protestantism came, and owed its success not to the attractiveness of Lutheran doctrine, but to the attractiveness of filthy lucre, since Luther made the prince of the region the head of the church. Ecclesiastical property, naturally, passed to him. Needless to say, this had a wonderful effect on his income. The prince was furthermore freed of having to be

obedient to Rome, and of fearing the loss of his power through the excommunication of the pope.

With the passage of the decades, the Catholic monarchs looked rather longingly at the situation of the kings and princes of Protestant realms and dukedoms, what with their enriched coffers and their freedom from Rome. So they too sought a system whereby to profit from the Church. One such attractive system was *Jansenism* —“Catholic Protestantism” — so called because it preserved the outer trappings of Catholicism while its innards were thoroughly Calvinistic. By the eighteenth century, Jansenism had not only a theological program of reforming the Church from within in order to make it Protestant, but also a political agenda, anti-monarchist and pro-revolutionary. Monarchies, in their view, had to cede to the demands of the Protestant mentality, i.e., they had to content themselves with being a figurehead which presided over a democratic regime. The pre-revolutionary monarchs distrusted them, naturally, but often allied themselves with them, and chose Jansenists to be their ministers, since they always favored the control of the Church by the monarch, good Protestants (inwardly) that they were. So the eighteenth century monarchs gorged themselves on the power and wealth which their Jansenist ministers would feed them, subtracting these same things the storehouse of the power of the papacy and the wealth of the Church in their lands. Little did the portly monarchs realize that they were being fattened for the kill.

Another strong movement in this century was that of *Febronianism*, a system which denied papal authority, to put it simply, and made the bishop independent from Rome and

subject only to the king or local prince. It had made great inroads into many of the courts of Europe, and consequently into the heads of the bishops whom these courts would appoint.

The eighteenth century was, furthermore, the age of unbelief, of a downright denial of Christianity altogether, naked apostasy from the Faith. It was fashionable to be irreligious and irreverent. The blasphemous joke made you socially acceptable. This intellectual and moral disease was widespread, devastating nearly entirely the aristocrats, and making serious inroads into the middle class. The lower classes were as yet not affected, and managed to retain and practice their faith quite fervently.

The popes of this century, therefore, inherited a situation in which the Catholic monarchs enjoyed, on the one hand, all of the privileges accorded to them in better times by the Church regarding the government of the same in their lands, but on the other hand were polluted with anti-Catholic ideas and attitudes. Not only did they exercise their ancient privileges, conceded to their pious ancestors (e.g., the appointment of bishops), but also demanded more and more concessions, more and more independence from Rome. It was clear that they wanted to do away with the papacy altogether, if they could, or at least reduce it to an utterly insignificant office.

So the problem facing the popes of this century was how to deal with these monarchs, and at the same time protect the rights of the Church. It was not an easy task, it is of no wonder that there were two parties, two opposing schools of thought, on how to do it.

The deepest roots of Vatican II, in my opinion, are to be found in the

accommodationism of the eighteenth century popes.

A pendulating papacy. In the face of this overwhelming problem, therefore, different popes proposed different solutions. There were, as I said, two parties, each representing an opposing approach. The accommodationists favored a soft approach, in the hope that time would heal the problems and that the Church would outlive and outrun her persecutors. The anti-accommodationists countered that the hard approach was necessary since the forces which were being conjured against the Church were not merely oppressive, but lethal. No compromise was possible, come what may, even the threatened schism of the various states.

The Second Vatican Council proves, beyond all doubt, that the anti-accommodationists were correct. They read accurately the nature of the enemy in the eighteenth century. History clearly demonstrates that the poison of the eighteenth century gradually became the French Revolution, which in turn produced the Liberal Catholic of the early and mid-nineteenth century. The Liberal Catholic, by the end of the nineteenth century, was a Modernist, plotting the interior overthrow of the Church with patience and cunning. The Modernist embodies in one person the toxic movements of the eighteenth century: (1) *unbelief* in the form of rationalism, subjectivism, and ecumenism; (2) *Jansenism* in the form of the transformation of the Church's sacred rites and disciplines according to Protestant norms; (3) *Febronianism*, by the reduction of the papacy to merely an office of honor, through the doctrine of collegiality of the bishops.

If the accommodationists had seen the future, certainly they would have abandoned their program of accommodation. They desired the good of the Church, and wanted to see her flourish. They were not desirous of any transformation of the Church which Vatican II and its effects have given us.

If one studies the persons elected to the papacy since the middle of the eighteenth century, as well as their policies, one can see a definite trend of oscillation between accommodationist and anti-accommodationist. Let us have a look:

Benedict XIV (1740-1758)	accommodationist
Clement XIII (1758-1769)	anti-accommodationist (very)
Clement XIV (1769-1774)	accommodationist (very)
Pius VI (1775-1799)	anti-accommodationist
Pius VII (1800-1822)	accommodationist (very)
Leo XII (1823-1829)	anti-accommodationist
Pius VIII (1829-1830)	accommodationist
Gregory XVI (1831-1846)	anti-accommodationist (very)
Pius IX (1846-1878)	accommodationist (very); then anti-accommodationist (very)
Leo XIII (1878-1903)	accommodationist (very)
St. Pius X (1903-1914)	anti-accommodationist (very)
Benedict XV (1914-1922)	accommodationist (very)
Pius XI (1922-1939)	accommodationist
Pius XII (1939-1958)	accommodationist (very)

In looking over the history of the popes since 1740, one sees a definite *pendulating* trend, a swing back and forth of policy regarding how, in the practical order, the Church would live with an increasingly hostile world. I emphasize again that we are speaking here of the *practical* order, since all of these popes, whether accommodationist or anti-accommodationist, all defended the Faith brilliantly in their teachings against liberalism,

Modernism, rationalism, and similar effluent from the eighteenth century onwards. On the other hand, one ought to observe that from 1878 to 1958, the government of the Church was accommodationist, with the exception of the eleven magnificent years of Saint Pius X, the Great, who more lucidly than any of his predecessors or successors, read the signs of the times, and took the necessary and efficacious means to prevent a Vatican II from happening. One should also notice that the pendulum stops swinging after 1914. Indeed, in the 1922 conclave, the anti-Modernist party, headed by Cardinal Merry del Val, the secretary of state of Saint Pius X, could not muster enough votes to produce an anti-accommodationist candidate. The pendulum stopped, and was stuck on the side of accommodation.

The effect was disastrous. Under St. Pius X, Angelo Roncalli was summoned to Rome to account for his Modernism. Cardinal De Lai wrote in his file, despite protestations of innocence from Roncalli, the words “suspect of modernism.” In 1925, this same Roncalli, ever loaded with his Modernist ideas, still connected to the worst elements in the Church, would be consecrated a bishop in Rome by the mandate of Pope Pius XI. In 1954, after a scandalous tour of duty in France as nuncio, Pope Pius XII would nominate him as Patriarch of Venice. The Holy Father himself would clothe the wolf in not merely sheep’s clothing, but as well in cardinalatial red silk, poisoning him perfectly to become the next Vicar of Christ. In 1958, nightmare would become reality, and the day of glory would arrive for all the enemies of the Church: a Modernist would be elected to the papacy.

Jansenism, gallicanism, regalism, Febronianism. We have already mentioned

these “isms” of the eighteenth century. It is necessary to take a closer look, since we must understand them in order to comprehend the decisions made by the popes of that time.

First let us look at Jansenism. It is a very difficult movement to define, but it was nonetheless a strong and defined movement in eighteenth century Europe. Its origins are in a man called Bishop Jansenius of Ypres in Belgium (1585-1638). In his book entitled the *Augustinus*, he gave an interpretation to St. Augustine’s doctrine of grace which did not differ essentially from that of Calvinism. The essential point of the Jansenist doctrine of grace is the denial of sufficient grace. They deny that there is a grace given to every man which is sufficient to save his soul. For the Jansenist, all actual grace is efficacious grace, whereby the recipient loses his freedom, and is led to good acts in the manner practically of a robot. Those who receive this efficacious grace, who are few, go to heaven; those who do not receive this efficacious grace, who are many, go to hell. Right away we can tell what the social effects of this awful doctrine will be. It will produce on the one hand a haughty elect, the pure, who have convinced themselves that they are under the robotic spell of efficacious grace. They become incapable of sin. They are sure of their salvation. They are so sure of their salvation, in fact, that they have no need for the Church with her hierarchy and sacraments. On the other hand it will produce in the more humble people a despair of their eternal salvation, convinced as they are that they are not supernatural robots, but commit sins from time to time. They have no motive to better themselves spiritually, to aspire to the virtue of charity and eternal beatitude, since they are among the masses of the reprobate.

While these reprobate will hand themselves over to debauchery, the pure will maintain, at least exteriorly, fine moral lives, but inside will be as proud as devils. This pride will express itself in the ecclesiastical and political order in the form of rebellion. Louis XIV understood this quality about them. Unlike his feckless successors, he literally rooted them up by destroying their center in Port-Royal, burning it to the ground and exhuming the bodies in the cemetery and burying them elsewhere. Unfortunately this decisive action was not enough to crush this heretical contagion. Jansenists multiplied not only in France, but throughout all of Europe, including Rome itself.

Jansenism was something like Modernism. Jansenists considered themselves to be Catholics, even though their doctrines were condemned by the pope, indeed many popes. They repudiated the papal condemnations as documents which did not understand them properly, which did not faithfully represent their doctrines. The Modernists said the same thing as the Jansenists when they were condemned by Saint Pius X. Furthermore, the Jansenists did not condemn the Mass and sacraments, as Luther and Calvin did, nor did they reject the authority of the pope, at least in theory. But like the Modernists, they wanted to *transform* Catholicism from within. They knew better than the hierarchy what Catholicism should be like. As a result, they had a whole program of the reform of the Church from the role of the pope down to how many flowers, if any, should be on the altar. When one reads the reforms which were enacted by the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia in 1786, for example, it sounds like Vatican II and the New Mass. They even concocted their own breviary, stripped of everything they

regarded as improper. The breviary imposed by John XXIII in 1962 is remarkably similar to the Jansenist breviary of the eighteenth century.

Likewise they wanted to transform the political order from within. Jansenists were not typically pig farmers, but were either aristocratic or upper middle class people who wielded some influence. Note that it was these same classes that were badly infected with the incredulity and impiousness of the “Enlightenment.” These two movements went hand in hand, and had similar goals. The Jansenists in these classes of people were intensely democratic — a natural consequence of Protestantism — and they detested the monarchies in their respective nations. Ironically Jansenists inserted themselves deeply into the governments of these monarchs — Pombal in Portugal, Choiseul in France, Kaunitz in Austria — and became virtual prime ministers. It is of little surprise that during the tenure of these Jansenists, pretending all the while to serve their “beloved” monarchs, the power and prestige of these monarchies were being gradually eroded, until finally they would be swept away in the gale of Revolution.

Gallicanism was, and still is, an attitude among the French that the Church of France is somehow independent of the authority of Rome. In itself Gallicanism is not infected with heresy, but it reeks of schism. Theoretically they recognize the primacy of the successor of St. Peter, but they hold that his decisions must meet with the approval of the French hierarchy before they can be considered valid and applicable in France. The Bourbon monarchy in the eighteenth century was thoroughly and utterly Gallican, together with most of the bishops and clergy. They

were never excommunicated by the popes, for fear that a worse evil would result, namely a French version of Henry VIII. So for many decades popes looked the other way and bore whatever they could in order to preserve this great country from going the way of England.

Regalism is merely Gallicanism in other countries, since the word *gallicanism* would not apply. It comes from the Latin word *Gallia*, which means France. But in essence it was the same, whether it was Spain, Portugal, Austria, the Kingdom of Naples, Russia, Prussia, or the many petty states of Germany.

Febronianism is related to Gallicanism, but with a German accent. In 1763, there appeared in Brussels a book entitled, *A Book of Justin Febronius on the Present Condition of the Church*. Febronius was a pseudonym for a bishop, one of the auxiliaries of Trier, a certain John Nicholas von Hontheim. He said that the Church was a republic, and that the pope has usurped the authoritarian and monarchical role which he has. His work was an expression of a grassroots feeling among many of the German clergy that the Catholic Church was in a state of corruption, both with regard to doctrine and discipline. They wanted to see a complete reform of Catholicism. They wanted to bring back the Church to the days of early Christianity, at least as they imagined it. Sound familiar? Febronius (Hontheim) called for a reunion of all Christians. To effect this end, he wanted to restrict the power of the Roman Pontiff, to call a council of all Christians to which the pope would be subject, and to reform the “abuses” of the Roman Church. Sound familiar? He wanted the pope to have a primacy of direction, but not of jurisdiction. Sound familiar? What Febronius demanded, Vatican II and the false popes of Vatican II have delivered.

Not a pretty picture. As the eighteenth century popes looked out of their window on the world, they found little consolation. Gone were the days of the Catholic monarchies of the Middle Ages which, although unruly from time to time, believed in the Catholic Faith deeply and recognized the rights and prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ. Now one third of medieval Christendom has passed into heresy, including the whole kingdoms of England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Prussia, many of the small dukedoms of Germany, most of the Swiss cantons. Catholic Ireland was under the thumb of arch-Protestant England, where the Faith was still banned. Bishop Challoner, the famed reviser of the Douay-Rheims Bible, was saying Mass in English taverns, in constant fear of the arrival of the police.

Could these popes be consoled by their Catholic subjects? Hardly. France, Spain, Naples, Austria, the Catholic parts of Germany, Portugal, the states of Northern Italy, together with the vast empires of France, Spain, and Portugal, were all under the influence of monarchs who were infected with Gallicanism, regalism, Jansenism, and/or Febronianism. Add to this disgusting stew the ingredient of the eighteenth century so-called *philosophy*, which was pure impiety and godlessness “flown in” from hell.

These five elements, Gallicanism, regalism, Jansenism, Febronianism, and philosophic unbelief differed among themselves, even sometimes rather sharply. But they all had a single hated enemy: Rome.

The destruction of the power of the pope was the point at which all of these movements converged. They joined forces and pursued this goal with demonic vigor. Their first victim would be the Society of Jesus.

The popes of the eighteenth century, therefore, had a choice to make in view of this gathering storm of inimical power and influence against the power of the papacy and really against Catholicism itself. How would the Church survive all of this? How could Christendom be preserved?

It is the answer to this question which divided the cardinals, and consequently the popes, into two parties: (1) those who favored compromise with the devouring forces, in order to appease them, and satisfy their appetite (*accommodationists*); (2) those who favored a hard line, no compromise or appeasement, even at the risk of offending the Catholic states. (*anti-accommodationists*). Since Benedict XIV, the papacy has pendulated back and forth between these two stratagems, until finally in the twentieth century the first party, the accomodationists, won out with three successive papacies from 1914 to 1958. Profiting from these forty years of weakness, the relentless enemies pounded and rammed the gates of the Church until, in October, 1958 these gates were breached, and the enemies poured into the sacrosanct interior courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church in the person of the Modernist John XXIII. They are still there.